No outside speaker for 1981 commencement

By Stephanie Pullack

The Commencement Committee concurred with President Paul Gray’s decision to discontinue efforts to invite an outside speaker to graduation during a meeting Monday.

Special Assistant to the President Walter Milne informed the committee of Gray’s belief that inviting a speaker at this late date would demean both the person in- vited and the Institute.

Mitchell Brook, President of the Class of 1981, called the decision “a disappointment to the senior class.” Brook cited a survey conducted on Registration Day of last term in which more than 85 percent of the seniors who responded favored an outside speaker at commencement.

Ronald Verret, a member of the committee, said “My impres- sion is that, among graduating seniors, there are still a few people that they would like to hear Gray, especial- ly since it is his first presidential year.”

Professor John Kassakian, chairman of the selection subcommittee, and Professor Lutynski Keyes ’67, chairman of the full committee, were invited to a meeting of the Class of 1981 Exec- utive Committee held Wednesday afternoon.

According to Brook, the purpose of the meeting was to “talk about the reasons why it was rejected at a late date.”

The idea of having the class sponsor a senior service and invite a prominent guest speaker was raised at the Wednesday meeting. According to permanent class president Lynne Radlauer ’81, “The Executive Committee is in- vestigating the possibility of having a senior service on Sunday afternoon or Monday morning after graduation.” Radlauer stressed that the proposal is only being tentatively discussed at this time.

She called the idea “a viable alternative” to a speaker at com- mencement, noting that the Ex- ecutive Committee was “trying to provide the class with the best possible senior week and com- mencement.”

Verret and Brook both ex- pressed disappointment at the decision not to have an outside speaker at commencement. “I think the administration should have allowed more student par- ticipation in the selection proces- s,” Brook added.

Kassakian concluded that “we all knew when we started that there was a chance we would not end up with a speaker.” He said that the speaker selection subcommittee had presented Gray with a list of seven candidates, and that “once the list left our hands it was en- tirely up to” Gray to make the decision.

Back-up plans for commencement in the event of rain were also discussed at the committee meeting. Magic rain pants will be distributed to graduates and their guests if it rains during com- mencement, according to Verret, a member of the back-up subcom- mittee. Verret noted that “Har- vard has always packed out rain- coats” and has never had any problems.

“No other back-up could satisfy the pomp and circum- stance demanded by parents,” ac- cording to Verret. In case of heavy rain, the diplomas would be handed out in the Special Events Center to avoid their damage.

Coop tension mounts

By Ivan Fong

The management of the Har- vard Cooperative Society has rejected an invitation to debate representatives from Local 1445 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), claiming “such a debate could not be fair and still stay within the law,” according to a letter issued to Coop employees yesterday by General Manager James A. Argeron.

“I will not be a party to the un- ion’s attempt to manipulate the law for political advantages,” continued the letter, which was a response to the union’s unofficial promise not to file charges of un- fair labor practices in exchange for a moderated debate.

MC. McDonough, an official for the UFCW, called the Coop’s action “indefensible,” explaining, “There is no law anywhere saying we can’t debate ... it is, however, illegal to commit unfair labor practices,” referring to recent al- leged anti-union efforts by the Coop management.

Another union representative, Mark Govoni, explained that the challenge to an open forum was the result of the union’s request to proceed with the March 26 union- ization vote, despite a union charge of unfair labor practices against the Coop. The complaint was filed after the February 20 arrest of six Tech Coop employees by MIT Campus Police on the grounds of trespassing. The union requested a public hearing.

“The management seems to think we will make wild promises which we can’t keep, but that is not the case,” he added.

Both McDonough and Govoni mentioned that Coop officials have been calling employing meetings during which “managers emphasize that there is nothing to be gained from unionization.” (please turn to page 1)