Welcome Freshmen '91

MIT Cambridge Massachusetts
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Wellesley bus catches on fire

By Ben Z. Staiger
A fire on the exchange bus to Wellesley Tuesday night forced students to abandon the vehicle. The fire was apparently caused by a misfiring cigarette lodged in one of the rear seats, according to Linda Carol, owner of the Crystal Transport bus company. The 9:35 pm bus was traveling on the Massachusetts Turnpike when "the driver was startled that there was smoke coming from the rear," Carol said. The driver pulled off the road at what he thought would be a safe place for passengers to depart, according to Carol.

After the passengers got off, the driver checked the back of the bus and found that the engine was not on fire, Carol continued. He went inside the bus and saw smoke coming from beneath the back seat, but was unable to lift the seat, she said. The driver went back outside to try to reach the seat through the engine, but by this time the smoke was thick and dark, and flames appeared, she said.

Student accounts of the fire differed from Carol's. "When it really started to smell like a fire, we went to the front of the bus and said, 'We think there's fire in the back of the bus,'" according to passenger Barbara A. Masi G. ("The driver said, 'It's just exhaust fumes,'" Masi continued.

"At this point you could see smoke pouring out of the back of the bus, and six people stood over the bus driver saying 'Stop now! He didn't say anything more and pulled slowly over to the side," she said.

Other passengers concurred in the statement that it was several minutes before the driver pulled the tide, to dispel the smoke which was filling the back of the bus. But Carol said that the driver only waited about 100 feet before pulling over, and she commended his response.

Carol said that a mechanic and state trooper "excluded any vehicle problem" as the cause of the fire. They concluded that a cigarette behind the rear seat had started the fire, she said.

The engine is still in "perfect condition" and will be installed in another bus, Carol added.

Passengers could not be sure where the fire started. "We were on the bus for a good half hour, and the smoke was there the entire time," Masi said. "It smelled heavily of exhaust fumes," Masi said.

"It was hard to tell whether it was the bus or the seat, because so much smoke was coming from behind the seat and from the engine through the window," she continued.

"The only thing we care about is that no one was hurt," Carol said. The bus company has "never experienced anything like this," before, she said. She said the bus company will be doubly sure that the no smoking rule is enforced in the future.

The same bus had been running on regular schedule from 5:30 pm on, it would have been hard to tell how long the cigarette smoke would have been catching on fire, Carol said.

Maggioni will preside over Dormitory Council

By Robert E. Potter II
Magdalen Maggioni '89 was elected president of the Dormitory Council last week, pledging to improve relations with fraternity, gain more influence with the Deans for Student Affairs, and make Dormcon more active in general.

Other officers include: Lee Shlegler '89, vice president; Sue Beboun '88, Judicial Committee chair; and Meryl Alford '90, secretary-treasurer.

Dormcon represents the underclassmen that live in dormitories, not to send representatives to Dormcon. The Intranctuctory7 Council represents those underclassmen residing in independent housing.

Maggioni hoped to increase Dormcon's influence with the new term. Dormcon's budget was doubled this year, giving the group a wider influence, she noted. "Dormcon can do whatever it wants, and can influence the (MIT) politicians," she said.

Dormcon members were echoed by their predecessor. The ODSA has tried to improve their position as much as possible in putting Projects America into the dormitories, noted Stephanie Levin '87, outgoing president.

Levin also believed that student review and recommendation on new dormitories can be improved.

Maggioni added, "It's important to have more influence on the (MIT) policies," she said.

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