

# MIT students put car on dome



CAMBRIDGE, Mass (AP) — They've put a fiberglass cow up there, and a working telephone booth. Even built a small house.

So no one was shocked Monday when MIT students somehow managed to put what appeared to be a campus police car atop the 150-foot high dome on the university's main building.

After all, MIT kids will be MIT kids.

"They never cause anyone any trouble, but they are mischievous," said Ronald I. Mendes, a physical plant supervisor.

The car appeared about 4 a.m. on the roof of the Richard C. Maclaurin Building. It was actually the shell of a car, attached to a wooden frame and painted to look like a cruiser, said MIT Police Chief Anne Glavin.

There was a flashing red light on top and a parking ticket on the windshield. Inside was a stuffed upper torso of a body — and a box of donuts.

The culprits haven't been caught, but all fingers point to "The Hackers," an informal and mysterious campus group whose name pre-dates the emergence of computer hacking.

University officials said the hackers probably

snuck into the building, climbed onto the roof and assembled the car there.

School workers disassembled it by 10:30 a.m. Practical jokes have a long tradition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the dome of the Maclaurin building has been the choice site over the last 15 years.

The building, modeled after the Roman Pantheon, is the centerpiece of the campus, fronting the Charles River that separates Cambridge and Boston.

In 1979, a life-sized fiberglass cow was placed on the dome. Three years later, a telephone booth — complete with a working phone — was installed. In 1986, hackers built a small house, complete with door and windows.

Hackers are careful not to cause permanent damage, so no one seems to mind.

"It's part of the fabric of the place," said MIT spokesman Bob Dilorio. "It's an accepted event. Nobody is in the hunt for the perpetrator."

Almost nobody. Chief Glavin said campus police will try to find the pranksters, who could face \$50 fines. But she wasn't hopeful that police will succeed.

"We have a long history in this subject and we haven't been able to identify too many people," she said.

## New program will test possible AIDS vaccines

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists must test any potential AIDS vaccine in thousands of Americans only as part of a comprehensive prevention program that includes a heavy dose of safe-sex education, the nation's top AIDS expert said Monday.

But the government hasn't decided yet whether any vaccines are promising enough to proceed to Phase III, or last-stage, research involving tens of thousands of people, said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health.

If that happens, "the only way to do a vaccine trial is to make it a prevention trial with a very, very heavy dose of behavior modification," Fauci, director of NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told AIDS activists and researchers.

Vaccine research starts with safety trials in a tiny group of people. If safe, it's tested on slightly more people to see if it produces a protective immune response. If it does, Phase III tests thousands of people at high risk for a disease to see if the vaccine really protects them.

With most vaccines, doctors use that final testing to prove that an injection alone offers protection.

But scientists don't know to measure protective immunity against AIDS because it's such a complex disease, said NIH's Dr. Patricia Fast. So they have to decide whether to mass-test unproven AIDS vaccines — a first in this country — to learn more about them or to wait another five years for improved vaccines to be developed.

In fact, the best candidates to date may offer only a 30 percent chance of protection against HIV, the AIDS virus, Fauci added.

That's why any Phase III test must include intense education about safe sex and other AIDS preventions so volunteers don't get a false sense of security, Fauci said.

"We must be totally honest with people," he said.

Fauci's comments came at a meeting of activists and researchers who are exploring the ethical issues of mass testing of AIDS vaccine. Such testing will be hard, activists warned, because the people most at risk of contracting HIV don't trust the government.

Dr. David Metzger of the University of Pennsylvania played a videotape of people questioning a government panel about AIDS. Over and over, these typical Americans accused the government of hiding an AIDS cure and exploiting people to experiment on them.

Of the dozen vaccines under study, two are promising enough that a committee of scientists recommended NIH expand research on them, either by adding to the 300 patients now in Phase II testing or by moving on to Phase III.

Both vaccines use a non-infectious HIV protein called gp 120 to generate immune response against the virus.

## U.S. troops prepared for Haitians

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military hopes it won't have to deal with huge numbers of Haitians fleeing their country under President Clinton's latest policy but stands ready if necessary, officials say.

About a half-dozen Navy ships are already in waters around Haiti to enforce U.N. sanctions, but no other military craft are being sent in, a military man said Monday.

In 1991, U.S. Coast Guard cutters and Navy ships plucked thousands of Haitian boat people from the seas as they fled the country.

Some attempt was made to process the Haitians on board, but many were instead taken to Guantanamo.

The base was used as a Haitian refugee camp until federal courts ended the practice.

Now the Clinton administration says it will screen refugees on ships at sea and is seeking assistance from other nations to help. In general, refugees seeking asylum because of political persecution can be eligible, but those trying to get to the United States because of poor economic conditions at home are not.

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