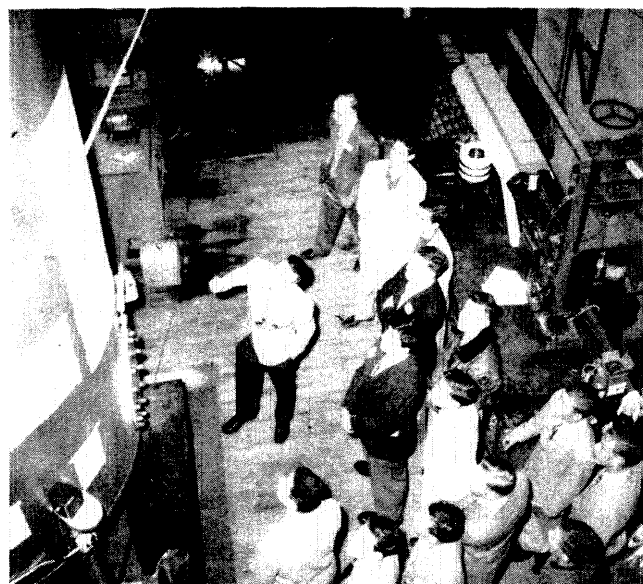




Science is wonderful



Van de Graaf Generator



Hydrodynamics Laboratory

STUDENTS' DAY 1952

GOSH. ISN'T SCIENCE wonderful! These words sum up the reactions of some eight hundred high school and junior college students to Caltech's third annual Students' Day, held on December 6. The visitors, all from schools in southern California, were given a day-long introduction to activities at the Institute in the form of demonstrations, lectures, and just plain bull-sessions.

Caltech's guests, who were all recommended by their school science teachers as being interested in science and engineering, arrived early in the morning and started on a tour which lasted until lunch time. Divided into groups of twenty, they were herded by harried undergraduate guides through a series of exhibits demonstrating technical facilities and research methods at Caltech.

Every academic department at the Institute was represented in Students' Day with at least one exhibit or demonstration. The Humanities Division produced a demonstration debate: Caltech versus UCLA.

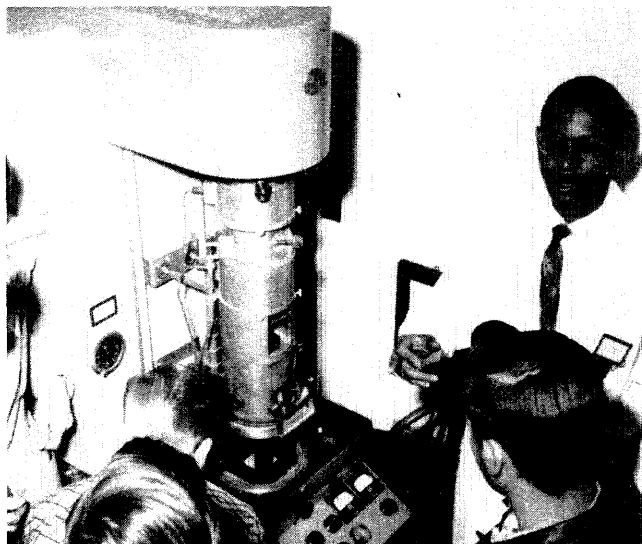
Men and machines

In general the exhibits were viewed with interest and wonder, although a few skeptics appeared among the visitors. In particular, one erudite student watched with interest a short demonstration of the electric analog computer, and then found the courage to tell the demonstrator that he thought the machine was getting the wrong answers.

As usual, the High Voltage Laboratory proved of great interest to the sightseers. Most of them enjoyed the spectacular exhibit, although more than one student turned a little green after seeing a man-made lightning bolt leap from a rail a few feet away.

Another popular exhibit was the giant magnet in the

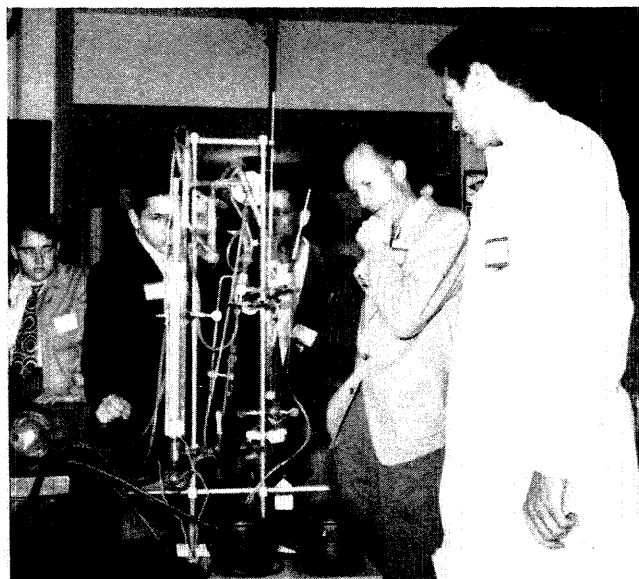
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Electron microscope



Molecular structure



Organic chemistry

Physics Department. Viewers were fascinated by its powerful attraction for iron objects, but a few unwary onlookers walked too far into the magnetic field and were seized and held fast by the magnet, which attracted the keys in their pockets.

Most of the demonstrations were planned and given by undergraduates. There were many demonstrators who had learned their speeches especially for the occasion, and more than one of these was completely stumped by an intelligent question from his audience.

Most important exhibit of all

Having been amazed by the computer, awed by the synchrotron, and stunned by the high voltage demonstration, Caltech's guests proceeded to the most important exhibit of all, the student body. A leisurely box lunch in the student houses gave them an opportunity to get acquainted with their undergraduate hosts and to learn something about student life at Caltech. In casual conversation with student house members, most of them received a good impression of what living at Tech is like.

On the lighter side, many an apprehensive visitor became even more apprehensive when he was jokingly told that most Caltech students average eight hours of studying per night. The know-it-all attitude was much in evidence among the Freshmen, many of whom were prone to take their bewildered guests aside and give them paternal advice.

Speeches on the student house lawn were the next step in introducing the visitors to Caltech. ASCIT president John Gee and Dr. Linus Pauling of the Chemistry Division addressed the group. Later in the afternoon several scientific lectures were offered as the final event in the day's program. Talks were given on subjects ranging from aeronautics to liquid air, but many preferred instead to remain in the student houses and get better acquainted with the undergraduates.

A student's Students' Day?

The general attitude of the Caltech undergraduates toward Students' Day was summed up by the Freshman who said, "I wish they would do this for us." For many, it was the first opportunity to see much of Caltech's advanced equipment, and most of those who guided students learned almost as much as their charges.

Students' Day fulfills a great need at Caltech—the need to interest high school students in the possibility of becoming undergraduates at the Institute. It is unfortunate that those who come to Caltech on Students' Day cannot learn as much about student life as they do about facilities for study and research. This side of life at the Institute is the hardest to present to prospective undergraduates, but it is perhaps the most important.

—Gordon Reiter '56