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THE MONTH AT CALTECH

NEW ASTRONOMY INSTITUTE

Fred Hoyle, distinguished British cosmologist, Cambridge professor, and science fiction writer, has just completed a six weeks stay on the Caltech campus as visiting associate in physics. He returns to England to continue his responsibilities as director of the newly established Institute of Theoretical Astronomy at Cambridge.

For many years Professor Hoyle has worked almost singlehandedly to get the support and financial backing to establish such a study center. The building, now under construction, is scheduled for completion in June, and the staff is beginning to assemble. The group will eventually number about 50. Approximately half will be permanent, with the rest short-term visiting scientists; half will be from England and the others from foreign countries.

Both Hoyle and Caltech expect there will be intermittent crossing of the Atlantic by Caltech physics and astronomy personnel to participate in programs of the Cambridge Institute.

HUMANITIES GRANT

Caltech's division of the humanities and social sciences has received a grant of $200,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation to study the impact of science and technology on society. The grant will finance the first two years of an eight-year program. Initial emphasis will be on developing a substantial program in political science. The division's staff will be strengthened by appointments this year in political science and, subsequently, in economics and the study of human behavior.

To provide direct experience in the study of governmental operations, the program will include faculty visits to Washington D.C. and other capitals, facilities for interested students to spend at least one summer working in a Washington office, and an expanded program to bring men with current or recent governmental experience to the Caltech campus. Ultimately, as the program and staff develop, an undergraduate major in political science is expected to be offered.
David Elliot, Caltech professor of history, has been appointed executive officer of the division of the humanities and social sciences. In his new position Dr. Elliot will assist division chairman Hallett D. Smith in the regular operation of the division and will be especially responsible for the division’s increased emphasis on the social sciences—particularly the relationship between science and government and the effect of technology on human beings.

The creation of the new post marks a significant shift in emphasis for the Institute, as it expands its commitment to students from the areas of pure science and technology to include greater emphasis in the social sciences.

“Dr. Elliot is an extremely able administrator and is well known in the fields of international affairs and science and government,” says Hallett Smith. “His direction of Caltech’s 75th Anniversary Convocation and Conference demonstrated his fine grasp of the fields in which we are most interested. His new position will greatly strengthen our position of growth in the social science area.”

RARE BOOK

Caltech professor of history Rodman Paul has written a new book that is already so rare a single de luxe copy is worth $85 on the rare book market. A fire at the bindery is just one of the reasons.

Last spring 1,100 volumes were printed of Dr. Paul’s manuscript, The California Gold Discovery—100 de luxe, numbered, autographed copies (costing $25 each) and 1,000 regular trade copies (selling for $10). All but 300 were shipped to bookstores and libraries, and both sales and reviews were rewarding. Just when orders were accumulating, a night fire at a Sacramento bindery consumed the remaining 300 volumes. And, further curtailing the supply, the printer unwisely had broken down the type. A photo-offset edition is now being printed, but in the meantime 800 book owners have in their possession a very limited edition of Dr. Paul’s 237-page account of the discovery of gold in California.

ROSEMARY PARK, LEADER OF AMERICA

The distinguished woman educator Rosemary Park, president of Barnard College, who will officially assume the position of vice chancellor for educational planning and programs at UCLA in June, will be at Caltech February 22nd through the 24th as the second Leader of America in the YMCA’s 1966-67 series. During her three-day stay on campus Dr. Park will give an evening lecture in Beckman Auditorium, will speak to the California Institute Associates, and will meet informally with student and faculty groups.

The joint student-faculty committee that selects the Leaders chose Dr. Park not only because of her outstanding performance as an educational administrator but because of her special position as head of a women’s college associated with a men’s school and the breadth of her understanding of the essential ingredients involved in undergraduate education today.

The first Leader in the current series, writer and social critic Paul Goodman, visited the Institute in October.

CHEMISTRY GRANT

The Institute has received a $63,000 grant in support of its program in chemistry and chemical engineering from E. I. duPont de Nemours and Company. Of this amount, $50,000 is designated for the renovation of the Gates and Crellin Laboratories of Chemistry. Work on the buildings will begin following the completion next fall of the new Arthur Amos Noyes Laboratory of Chemical Physics, now under construction. The remainder of the grant includes $10,000 for fundamental and graduate study and $3,000 for a teaching assistant award.

PSYCHOBIOLOGY GRANT

A Caltech research program headed by Roger W. Sperry, professor of psychobiology, has received a $1,157,615 grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. The funds renew and extend sup—
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Dr. Sperry explains that the ultimate aim of the field of psychobiology is to understand the cerebral mechanisms underlying mental activity like perception, learning, and memory.

A large part of the Caltech research program involves delicate surgery on monkeys and cats, which severs the connection between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Tests show that each disconnected hemisphere can function independently of the other. This work, combined with various other brain research techniques, has opened promising new possibilities for detailed experimental analysis of cerebral organization.

Another major area of investigation concerns the developmental pattern of nerve networks and how they relate to behavior. Still another phase includes the search for the locus and nature of memory traces and the actual physiological basis of memory.

WHO DUN IT?

Was it a construction worker’s horrible mistake? Or just another in a long line of Student Pranks? In any case, it was all too clear that someone, over the New Year’s weekend, had placed the cornerstone of the new Millikan Library upside down (right).

Apprised of the situation, construction workers were properly aghast. Students were even aghast. Finally, under the strain of interrogation, the workers confessed. Having been harassed by Student Pranks all during the construction of the Millikan Library building, they had purposely turned the cornerstone over in the hope that the students would get the blame. This feat, it turned out, was neither as difficult, nor as final, as it appeared to be. The “cornerstone” can easily be moved in and out of place until the formal dedication of the library next fall. Here the matter rests, unless there is something to the rumor that the students have immediate concrete plans for the cornerstone.

AUFS ON CAMPUS

Dennison I. Rusinow, the first of four American Universities Field Staff representatives scheduled to visit the campus this year, arrived at Caltech on January 10 for ten days of lectures and informal talks with the students and faculty on the subject of Yugoslavia.

The second AUFS visitor, Victor D. DuBois, specialist in West African affairs, will be at Caltech from January 24 to February 2; Willard A. Hanna, authority on Indonesia and Malaysia, from February 7 to 16; and Kalman H. Silvert, whose assignment is South America, April 3 to 12.

The AUFS, sponsored by Caltech and 11 other universities, supports scholars of international affairs who study and live in the areas of their special assignments and report regularly, both editorially and in person, to the supporting institutions.