

### Students' Day

**E**ARLY ON THE MORNING of Saturday, January 12, 750 eager high school students and their teachers swarmed over the Institute for the second annual Students' Day. The Institute invited the students, all of them male high school seniors, upon the recommendation from their teachers that they exhibited interest in science and engineering. They came from 130 different high schools and prep schools in southern California, including schools as far away as San Diego and Bakersfield.

The original idea for Students' Day came several years ago from a group of imaginative undergraduates who reasoned that an Institute open house open only to prospective students would be a good replacement for the pre-war Exhibit Day, which was open to all members of the community, and which became excessively successful to the extent that it was unmanageable.

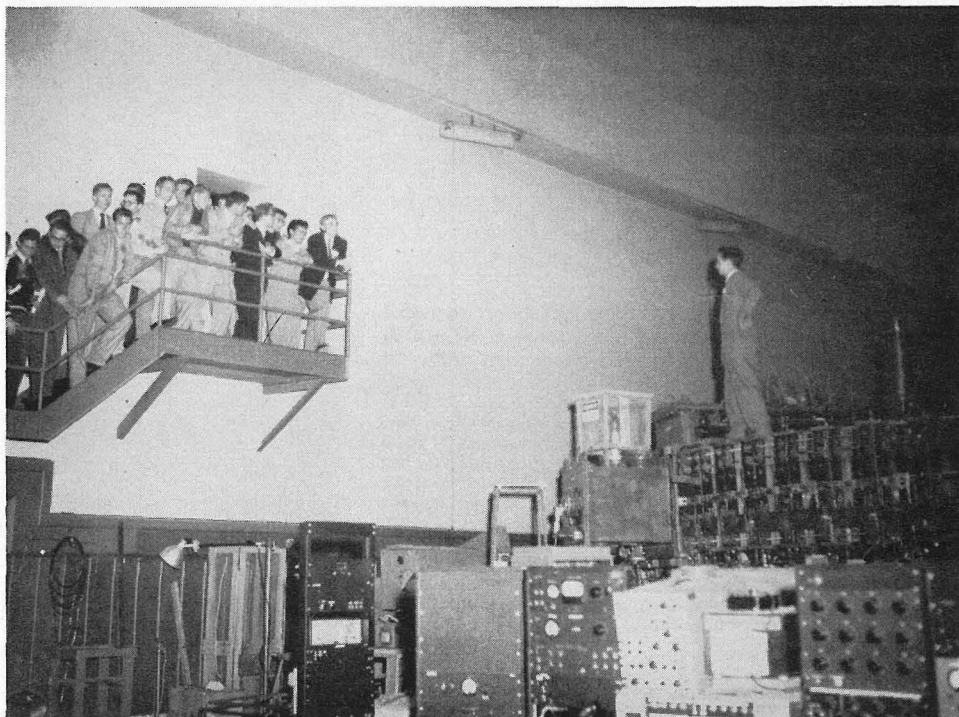
Appropriately enough, the planning and work were done mostly by the undergraduates. An elaborately efficient hierarchy of committees, technical assistants, and general flunkies functioned to make this second annual Students' Day an overwhelming success. Being a successful event, it necessarily had to produce a few experiences which, in retrospect, we can call lighter moments. There was the exhibitor in Electrical Engineering and his jumping ring, which, to his dismay, was nowhere to be found on one crucial occasion. Then there was the guide who led his group of rain-soaked guests up to a locked door, which situation he unceremoniously mastered by picking the lock.

The agenda consisted of twenty-five student-planned and student-manned exhibits in the morning; luncheon in the student houses, with addresses by Dr. DuBridges and Dave Hanna, ASCIT President; and more than a dozen lectures in the afternoon embracing everything from "Liquid Air" to "What Biologists Do."

The undergraduates contemplated smugly the entire proceedings, which they aptly termed Operation Snow Job. It seemed to them that our young visitors were amazed, bewildered, and, most important of all, impressed. Most of the exhibits lasted only ten minutes, and the exhibitors crammed as much as possible into their short speeches.

Even the least patronizing of the undergraduates could not help but regard himself as a big brother to these high school kids who seemed as impressed as farm boys in the big city. And the undergraduates remembered that they, too, thought of science and engineering in terms of such bright-eyed ambition—but that was a long time ago.

The usual topics of conversation arose when the high school students had time to talk with the undergraduates, so that a person moving from one student house lounge to another might think the undergraduates had all planned the same speech: "Why yes, we do work hard here, but not too hard . . . Geniuses? This school couldn't be full of geniuses, or I wouldn't be here." And one freshman, having the enormous benefits of more than three months at the Institute, gave some paternal words to a youngster one whole year his junior, and told how



*Richard Jaffe, Caltech junior, lectures on the synchrotron to high school students visiting the campus on Students' Day.*

he averaged four hours' homework per night here. The high school student thus addressed replied blandly that a smart fellow could do it in less time, and that he, the high school senior, would prove it when he come here next fall.

Students' Day did a good job of selling the Institute's technical facilities, and a few of its outstanding personalities. But many undergraduates regretted that it was so difficult to present more completely many details of student life. And it seemed that, at least in the minds of high school students, the weakest link in the Caltech chain of education would be opportunities for extra-curricular life at the Institute.

A considerable number of undergraduates were sorry they could not see the big show themselves. A mathematics major learns nothing about automobile engines, and an engineering student has no opportunity to see the exciting progress going on in biology. Why not, they ask, let this intellectual charity begin at home? The more thoughtful among them reasoned that the Institute has already seduced them, and would consider that such an educational luxury was no longer necessary.

## Pendulum

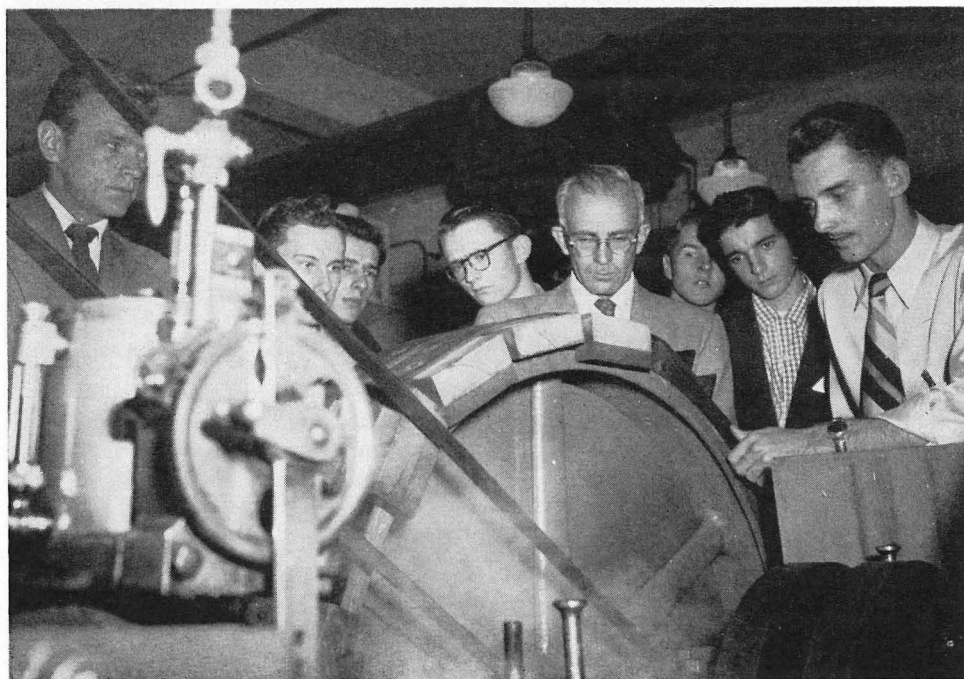
*Pendulum*, the new undergraduate literary magazine, is beginning to stand on its own feet, although its ultimate success will be largely determined by alumni subscriptions. The first issue—as was reported in this column last month—was financed by the Division of the Humanities. But from here on, the magazine is on its own. Students and faculty have already responded encourag-

ingly to the *Pendulum* subscription appeal. Now if it can get some alumni support, *Pendulum* should really be in business. Coupons for subscriptions can be found on the last page of this issue of E&S.

## Second Term

The second term generally produces more griping and ennui than is usually found tugging at the Tech man's morale. The first term offers reunions with friends, and the spirit generated by football season and frosh rotation and initiations; and there is the Interhouse Dance. The third term has the beach, and vacations and graduation looms ahead of it. The second term has nothing; the social programs are handicapped by the frequent basketball games.

It is during the second term that Milton becomes unreadable, that Econ 4 exhausts all patience, that ME 3 takes its greatest toll in human suffering. It is during the second term that desiccators fall from tables in analytical chemistry lab. And, perhaps most significant of all, it is during the second term that the bright eyes of the freshmen grow dim with disillusionment as they discover that a pure scientist is really no more spectacular than other people, and that perhaps an engineer is just another businessman. With this, the frosh scamper to their elders, the stoical upperclassmen, for comforting words and solace. And they receive it, for, in the words of the well-rounded Tech man: "We have now reached a minimum point in this closed cycle of human happiness, and our next point of inflection is due shortly before midterms next term." —Al Haber '53



*Students' Day visitors swarm over the reciprocating steam engine in Caltech's Mechanical Engineering Laboratory.*