

ogy, received a one-year grant of \$5,000 for studies of auxin physiology.

## Harrington Wilson Comet

**D**R. ALBERT G. WILSON and Robert G. Harrington, of the Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories, discovered a new comet on January 30. They've named it the Harrington Wilson Comet.

The comet is invisible to the naked eye, and was recorded on a photographic plate with the 48-inch Schmidt telescope. It's the first new comet to be found this year, and the fifth to have been discovered during the past two years by astronomers working on the National Geographic-Palomar Observatory Sky Survey. It's located in the constellation of Virgo (the Virgin) and is moving toward the constellation of Coma Berenices (Berenice's Hair).

## Civilization Against the Sea

**E**NGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS specializing in water supply problems and atmospheric phenomena met at Caltech on February 8 and 9 for a Pacific Southwest regional meeting of the Hydrology and Meteorology Sections of the American Geophysical Union.

Of the 27 papers presented—dealing with water supply and its utilization, winds, rain, the upper atmosphere and related subjects—the most interesting was probably "Civilization Against the Sea." Prepared jointly by Harvey O. Banks and Raymond G. Richter of the California State Division of Water Resources, the paper revealed that California is confronted with a constant battle with the sea to keep salt water from intruding into ground water basins bordering the coast and inland bays.

Several methods of control have been suggested to stop the encroaching sea: (1) Raising ground water levels to or above sea level by reducing or rearranging the pumping pattern; (2) Maintaining a fresh water pressure ridge above sea level along the coast; (3) Building artificial subsurface dikes along the coast and inland bays.

The California State Legislature during its 1951 session appropriated \$750,000 to the State Water Resources Board for an experimental program to discover the best control methods.

In another paper, "Water Quality Problems in California," Harvey O. Banks and Jack H. Lawrence of the State Water Resources Board reported that the Board is currently conducting a state-wide investigation of water pollution, which has been on the rise ever since California's phenomenal wartime industrial development and population increase.

## Tau Beta Pi

**F**OURTEEN CALTECH students were initiated into the campus chapter of Tau Beta Pi, national honorary engineering fraternity, last month.

The initiates included Wilbur J. Barmore, Manuel J. Crespo, Robert S. Deverill, Alan M. Haire, Rolf C. Hasturup, Clinton Lew, J. Crawford Noll, Hajimu Ogawa, William J. Rihn, Sheldon Rubin, Howard A. Shugart, Augusto L. Soux, Edwin J. Stofel, and Perry H. Vartanian.

Tau Beta Pi members are selected from the upper fifth of the senior class and the upper eighth of the junior class on the basis of undergraduate scholastic performance in scientific and engineering pursuits, as well as high qualities of character and participation in extra-curricular activities.

The Caltech chapter, one of 88 in the United States, was founded in 1921.

# THE BEAVER

## Some Notes on Student Life

**T**HE ASCIT ELECTIONS this year were unusual. In each election for at least the last four years, only two men ran for president; this year there were three. This year's student body elections were further distinguished in that only one man was nominated for the important office of vice-president.

For almost a whole week members of the student houses and Throop Club looked up from their dinners and heard the time-worn speech:

My name is....., and I'm running for the office of..... I feel that I am well qualified for this

office. In high school I was..... and here at Tech I have..... Now the duties of the office of..... are..... I have the experience, the interest, and the enthusiasm to serve YOU, the students, as a responsible.....

The triteness of the campaign speeches was not to be found in the campaign posters adorning the Olive Walk. A revolving sign encouraged voters to consider La-Tourette and Fazio, and a sign one foot high and a half block long admonished, DON'T GO INCHES, GO

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MILES! RALPH MILES FOR SECOND REP! DON'T GO INCHES, GO MILES . . . There was no shortage of pin-up girls (pictures, that is) to remind one that various candidates were in the running, and one pin-up said nothing more than I DON'T GIVE A DAMN—JUST VOTE!

## Election Rally

In addition to speeches and posters, the candidates had an opportunity to present to the masses of voters their views upon less vital topics at the annual Election Rally, held this year, as during the last few years, in Culbertson Hall. Shorn of the formalities and respect traditionally given candidates for public office, the ASCIT hopefuls had an opportunity to get down to bare facts in an atmosphere more like a typical college than Caltech. It was here that stage personality and the ability to tell a joke became decisive assets.

## The Machines

ASCIT elections have no formal relation to the political institutions of the student houses. But it seems to be a tradition, understandably enough, for each house to regard with much pride its own men elected to the ASCIT Board of Directors. And more often than not, the houses prepare their own unofficial slates, each house trying to sweep as many ASCIT posts as possible without letting the obvious seem too obvious. Very seldom do two men from the same house run for the same office, and almost never for a high office. But this year's election was again unusual in that two of the three presidential candidates were from Dabney House. Both lost, the second in a close runoff with John Gee of Fleming House.



*Posing for publicity pictures comes natural to candidates running for the job of Publicity Manager.*

The elected members of the ASCIT Board were, however, very evenly distributed among the houses.

## House Elections

Candidates defeated in the ASCIT elections have another chance to run for office in the student house elections which are held by each house and Throop Club the week after the ASCIT elections. The house candidates are well known by all the members of their respective houses, and thus campaigning has far less effect. The campaigns are generally limited to a short

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*John Gee, shown here (left) doing a little campaigning on his own account, won the election in a close runoff vote.*



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campaign speech, which is often a vehicle for humor. Last year one candidate took advantage of this opportunity to produce a rabbit to the surprise and amusement of his audience.

It is often difficult for potential house candidates to maintain that virgin-like look of political innocence when the subject of the approaching elections crops up in a bull session. An obvious candidate for a student body office who declines because he "doesn't have the time" surprises no one a week later when he suddenly finds the time to run for a house office. For a week before the nominating meeting, certain individuals are seen doing more than the usual amount of talking and joking in the lounge, attending a relatively large number of social and athletic functions, and generally calling the attention of their fellow house members to the fact that they exist. From then on, it is only a question of which office they will seek.

It is then that platforms are solemnly drawn up and personalities are considered with a thoroughness one usually reserves for such important decisions as buying a car. And it seems strange to those few who stop to think about the whole subject of the houses and their elections, that despite the varied personalities who have led each house in the past few years, the personality of each house has remained remarkably constant.

To the freshmen, the choice of who shall lead their house is nothing short of momentous; to the sophomores, the elections afford one last interesting diversion before the onslaught of second term finals. To the juniors, the elections are of some importance, and generally it is the juniors who run for the highest offices, always for president.

The seniors look upon elections as dispassionately as we moderns look upon the Battle of Marathon. It may be important—but then, so what? This is representative of all attitudes developed by Caltech seniors in the home stretch of the maddening race which constitutes their college career. As one senior, who only a year ago was completely enmeshed in the web of campus politics, haughtily remarked: "It all seems like a bunch of little men, running around on a little checkerboard, without any purpose."

### For the Stragglers

For those who are left after the ASCIT and house elections at the end of the second term, the class elections are held during the third term. A man unknown before the ASCIT elections can gain enough prestige just from running in a few elections, even though he loses, to try his luck running for a class office.

Yes, Caltech is most certainly a land of plentiful opportunity!

—Al Haber '53