

THE GREAT ROSE BOWL HOAX

Undergraduate pranks, as practically any graduate will tell you, are nothing new. In fact, freshman knowledge of English literature reveals that pranks have been around as long as the Reeve's Tale — and they probably have a long antiquity before that.

Certainly, at Caltech, undergraduate pranks are as old as the Institute. Hardly a day goes by that some Tech students aren't out-talking people at Pershing Square, or hanging funny signs in obscure places, or engaging in some other moderately interesting frolic. Every so often, however, a truly noble stunt is pulled off — a stunt involving untold man-hours of preparation and imagination above and beyond the call of reasonable likelihood. (Caltech students, so somebody said, are above and beyond reasonable likelihood anyway, so they appreciate noble stunts.)

One of these occurred this month, before a national television audience, during the half-time ceremonies at Pasadena's annual Rose Bowl football game.

On this notable occasion a group of Techmen undertook to "rewrite the scenario" for the University of Washington's half-time card demonstrations. This was a task involving Brobdingnagian dedication. Football game card-sections usually involve upwards of 1,000 students who sit *en masse* and hold up colored cards to form patterns — words and mascots' pictures are favorites. The Caltech pranksters completely changed three of Washington's patterns.

First they made the unwitting Northerners spell out "CALTECH" instead of "WASHINGTON."

Then, when the card-section was supposed to spell out "huskies" in flowing script, they arranged things so that, instead of the "h," the dot over the "i" appeared first. The tail of the "s" showed up next. And then, flowing inexorably backwards, the cards went from "s" to "e" to "i" to "k" to "s" to "u" to "h" — to finally, indeed, spell out "huskies."

Then the pranksters had the card-section depict a Caltech Beaver in place of the Washington mascot.

These surprising substitutions came in numbers 10, 11, and 12 of a projected 14-trick sequence. As a result, the frustrated Husky card-section went out of business after pattern 12.

This particular stunt was undertaken by 14 members of Lloyd House at Caltech. Most of them are in the class of 1962, and most of them belonged to

freshman section "K," which was notorious in its year for wacky stunts. Obviously, they've kept their section loyalty, and their fondness for folderol. (In fact, looking to the future, they have approximately 50 prank plans carefully filed away in two overstuffed boxes of IBM cards.)

The Fourteen started work on the great Rose Bowl hoax before Christmas by making a series of telephone calls to various Rose Bowl officials. From these, they discovered that the Washington and Minnesota card-section students would arrive on December 29, and would stay at Long Beach State and Occidental Colleges, respectively.

Picking out Washington to pick on, the Fourteen sent one of their number to Long Beach State, posing as a reporter for the Los Angeles Dorsey High School *Dorseygram*. He arrived 15 minutes after the Washington band and card-section had arrived, and asked for the card-demonstration director. He was sent to Room 105 of a Long Beach State dormitory, where he found the director stashing away his precious cards until New Year's Day. Room 105, the Techman noted, was located only two doors away from an easily-lock-picked entrance to the dormitory.

Approaching his prey and offering him a cigarette, the Techman asked the director just how his card-section worked. The director obligingly told him, down to the minutest detail.

Each of Washington's 2,232 card-section members, said the director, gets his own stack of colored cards to hold up, as well as an instruction sheet that looks something like this:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. PURPLE | 4. VIOLET |
| 2. PINK | 5. AQUAMARINE |
| 3. POLKA DOTS | 6. ZAFFER |
| | ETC. |

The card-section is divided into numbered subsections. On each stunt, the director calls out section numbers, sounding a little like a deliberate quarterback. When a subsection number is called, each of its members holds up his cards. For example, a director will call out 1-2-3-4-5, and the whole card section will spell out H-Y-M-I-E with each subsection holding up its letter when its number is called.

The would-be reporter also found out that the card-

continued on page 30

Student Life . . . *continued*

section director planned to eat dinner about an hour later. One of the Techmen came back at that time, picked his way into the room, and took an instruction sheet from the middle of the heap the director had hidden behind a table. "They'd never miss one," hissed the lock-picker.

They didn't miss one, either, as the Fourteen discovered after they had made a hurried trip to a nearby printer to have approximately 2,300 near-duplicates of the instruction sheets run off for about \$30.

They also discovered that their printer had furnished them with *manila* sheets to replace Washington's *white* ones, but after some futile attempts at dyeing, they gave up and hoped that the gods would mask the difference.

The next day, Saturday, the Techmen again arrived at Long Beach State when the Washingtonians weren't there. (The intrepid pseudo-reporter had discovered that everybody was going to Disneyland that day.) Picking the lock again, they stole the master plans — large pieces of graph paper colored the way the stunts were to appear — from the director's satchel. They then decamped for the Lloyd House lounge.

There, they spread their 2,232 substitute instruction sheets over the tables and floor, and set about

stamping them with "correct" instructions — changing the words in demonstrations 10 and 11, and rounding off the Husky's ears and giving him buck teeth to turn him into a Beaver in demonstration 12. Ten hours later, the project finished, five of the Fourteen and 2,232 new cards left once more for Long Beach and Room 105.

Knowing that Washington was elsewhere, celebrating New Year's Eve, the Techmen picked their way into the room once again, replaced the master plans, and substituted the altered instruction sheets for the original ones. Then they returned to Pasadena for a day-and-a-half wait.

Nobody knows whether Washington discovered the substitutions ahead of time — because there would have been no time for re-substitutions anyway. As it stood, the card-section director was observed riding contentedly in the Rose Parade on the morning of the game — and standing open-mouthed in the afternoon when his long-planned sequence went awry in stunts 10, 11, and 12.

Which is all the Techmen wanted anyway. As one of the Fourteen explained: "We just did it to see if it could be done."

—Lance Taylor '62



WHY DOUGLAS AIRCRAFT CHOSE "PVs"

- **BETTER LIGHTING.** "PV" means "Perfect Vision"® Luminaire. The initial foot candle reading in every section of the 120,000 square foot room illustrated above was in excess of 200 foot candles with no glare or hotspots.
- **LOWER FIRST COST.** Installed cost slightly less than \$1.20 per square foot.
- **LOWER MAINTENANCE COST.**
- **NO NOISE — NO HEAT.**

Consulting Engineers: Holmes & Narver, Inc.
Electrical Contractors: Pacific-Western Co.

WRITE FOR DETAILED INFORMATION...

SMOOT-HOLMAN Company, Inglewood, California

Among the Missing

The Caltech Alumni Association is trying to complete its file of Caltech publications and is still lacking some of the early issues of the school's annuals. Would anyone who has copies of the following publications be willing to send them to the Association?

THE POLYTECHNIC
1896 through 1912

THE THROOP TECH
1913 through 1915