

Letters

EDITOR:

After enjoying your excellent article on the Institute Archives in November's *Engineering & Science*, I thought you might be interested in the following postscript.

Over the weekend of October 18-19, a broken water pipe in the campus sprinkler system caused a flood in the basement of Millikan Library, home of the Caltech Archives. Since we have suffered flooding before, we carefully keep all collections off the floor.

Unfortunately, when a new collection arrives there is nowhere to put it during the processing period except the hallway basement, and that is where the papers of former Caltech President Harold Brown were when the flooding occurred. (See photo on page 19 of your November issue.) For reasons unknown to us the flood was not discovered until Monday morning, by which time the cartons were well soaked.

Fortunately, some quick thinking

and action on the part of the staff saved the papers from permanent damage, though for a while drying papers covered every available surface in the Archives. The cartons of Brown papers that are as yet unprocessed remain precariously balanced atop tables, filing cabinets, and each other. All we need now is an earthquake.

Carol Bugé
Assistant Archivist

EDITOR:

"In This Issue" section of the November *E&S*, which had the wonderful and timely article, "The Boat That Almost Was," omitted mention of the "real-time" participation, over one of the Athenaeum luncheon tables, by a substantial group of general faculty in Francis Clauser's saga. In the early stages, Francis had to be pretty circumspect about details, but as events proceeded to the cliff-hanging denouement, those who ate with him

were given the full story, copiously illustrated by engineering drawings and graphs on the back of the Athenaeum paper placemats. When developments were coming fast and furious, Francis would wind up commandeering all eight placemats for his presentations, and those of his auditors who had time would listen, enthralled, long after the regular lunch hour was over. Each of the drawings in your article was generated, many more than once, and argued about at length, in these discussions.

The opportunity for this sort of thing can make the Athenaeum lunch time a fabulous experience for the Caltech faculty, and many more of us are now following the America's Cup trials with intense interest and a lot more knowledge than would otherwise have been possible.

Thanks again for the great presentation.

John D. Roberts
Institute Professor of Chemistry