

CHECKERMATE

"The machine dies hard," said Saul Weslow, former checker champion of Canada, after a tough duel in the M.I.T. Computation Center recently. Mr. Weslow's opponent (who had already defeated several aspiring candidates) was the new IBM 704 computer. The occasion: introduction of "the most versatile electronic computing machine in any educational institution in the world" to a liberal gathering of press, TV men, and journalists.

The elderly Weslow was deeply respectful of the computer's performance. "It made mistakes, of course," he commented sympathetically. "And because of its limited memory I knew much more about the opening move than it did. But it played right to the finish. After all," said Mr. Weslow, "I've been playing checkers since I was 18 years old, checkers itself has been played for more than 500 years, and the machine has just begun. Perhaps one day it will store up enough knowledge to give even the experts a hard time."

Weslow makes move



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In response to the request for a rare type of blood (issue of June 18) to help the son of an M.I.T. employee over a big operation, contact man Nick Carter reports that inside of three days he received 25 phone calls on the subject. Included were students, secretaries, technicians, faculty, and general personnel from the campus and Lincoln. Due to a last-minute switch in operating plans, some volunteers were prevented from making their donations. But the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital was delighted to receive 11 pints of Group A, RH negative blood from M.I.T. employees. The record is good, the cause worthy, the appreciation heartfelt.



Morse explains

After the match, M.I.T. experts gave a run-down on computer gamesmanship.

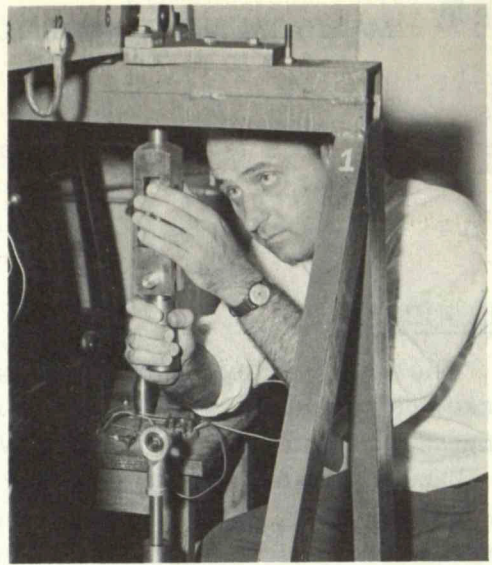
The machine, said Prof.

Philip Morse (Physics), Director of the Computation Center, can count, remember, and compare much faster and more accurately than we can. But, he added, "it is really very dumb and must be told exactly what to do every step of the way." Thus it is the man who feeds instructions to the computer who must himself know all the possibilities and work out the formulas. In the case of the checker game -- a highly complex problem in logic -- "programming" a strategy for the computer took some three months. Concluded Prof. Morse: "We don't ask the machine to think. It can't. But how nearly can it be made to think?"

CURTAIN CALL

Although M.I.T. won't have much to say about the new items now exportable to Russia (cattle hides, "inedible tallow," umbrellas, parasols, etc.), some professorial delegates did leave M.I.T. on June 17 on a plane bound for Moscow and, specifically, a big Russian conference on the physical chemistry of steel-making. Profs. John Chipman and Nicholas Grant (Metallurgy) were honored by a personal invitation to the conference from Prof. Alexander Samarin of the Moscow Academy of Sciences, who worked with Prof. Chipman at the University of Michigan some years ago and who also paid a visit to M.I.T. last September. (Marion Hoxie, secretary in Metallurgy Headquarters, still bears witness to the visit. A small, but distinguished, bottle of "Moscow Red Perfume" now resides in Miss Hoxie's closet).

The Metallurgy Department is almost a small-scale United Nations. Represented, at the moment, are Japan, France, England, Germany, Switzerland, Greece, Egypt, Yugoslavia, Hungary (post-revolution), and India. In addition, spotted by the M.I.T. Union News for an April write-up was a metallurgy technician named Constantine Kreder. Connie came to America from the Ukraine five years ago with barely enough English -- picked up from American G.I.'s in Germany during and after World War II -- to get himself from Grand Central Station to Boston. This year has been a busy one for Connie. In May he became a full-fledged U.S. Citizen; on June 15 he was married (to a fellow Ukrainian), and on June 16 he received the degree of associate in mechanical engineering from Northeastern University, where he has held down a tight schedule of evening courses for four of his five years in America.



Citizen Connie in lab



5000 feet down...under Africa

DR. HARDY, I PRESUME?

Recently returned from another part of the world is Dr. Harriet Hardy (see picture, second from left), whose ranging investigations of occupational diseases of the respiratory tract took her to coal mines in Wales, Belgium, and Germany; gold mines in South Africa (a hair-raising expedition due to the "terrible racial hostilities there"); copper mines in Rhodesia; copper and uranium mines in the Belgian Congo; and copper and tin mines in Peru ("good race relations but too many fleas"). Dr. Hardy, who had a lively time in Britain due to the Suez crisis, was prevented from exploring the Joachimsthal mines in Austria -- where the ore used by Madame Curie in her famous discovery of radium came from -- by the Hungarian Revolution.

ROYAL CUSTODIAN

The pillars of Walker Memorial remain unshaken. Not so the reputation of certain senior members of the Quarter Century Club, who, in the spirit of their recent banquet, spun such supremely tall tales about age and length of service that a new graduate to the club was heard to remark: "To catch up with these guys you gotta start working in diapers." Between stories, socializing, and speeches, announcement was made that every living member of the club, both active and retired, will be presented with an honorary M.I.T. chair, this for the first time in M.I.T. history. Gene Blacquier (Walker) may get his by mail, but he retired from the banquet -- and M.I.T. -- with a new fishing rod and reel which he hopes to put to good use off Swampscott. All in all, said banquet chairman Fred Broderick (Elec. Eng.), the event was an enormous success.

Continuing as president of the Quarter Century Club is Thomas Henry Chambers (B&P). Tom has been a friend of the boys on East Campus for some 34 years, now, and he's also chairman of the M.I.T. Employees A.F. of L. Union. "I call myself custodian," says Tom about his regular duties. "I'm the guy who takes care of the supplies," which, in Tom's case, run the gamut from Turkish towels to knotty homework problems of his East Campus students.

M.I.T. students have to be on their toes when Tom is around. "I was born full of devilment," he mutters, "and it's been with me ever since." One day when he was cleaning a student's room, Tom noticed some math homework on the desk. "I kind of looked it over in passing," he recalls, "and saw that one of the equations was wrong. The boy was just leaving for class and I told him his arithmetic was wrong. He asked me how I knew. 'I've been over it,' I said." Whereupon Tom backed up his argument with a bet of five dollars to a penny. As predicted, it was Tom's penny.

Born on the island of Monsarrat in the British West Indies, Tom left home at the age of 17 to spend a few years on neighboring San Domingo. There he received a letter from an aunt in Boston inviting him to come up north for a while. Tom thought he would head for Canada, but he stopped off to see his aunt on the way. That was in 1919, or so, and he's been here ever since -- with the exception of one return voyage to his Caribbean homeland in 1948.

Tom is very respectful of the British system of education. "Everyone has to go to school in the British West Indies," he says, "and they come after you if you don't." Tom himself dabbled in law while he was still in high school, and he reports that on Monsarrat Island college entrance exams were given after the seventh grade.

But he isn't quite so respectful of his former status as a British subject. "Subject-ed by the British, that is," Tom explains, glancing fondly at several huge pictures of Queen Elizabeth that decorate his wall. The Queen keeps good company in Tom's office. Abe Lincoln, Mr. Truman, and Haile Salassie are there, too. "Read a history of Lincoln in school," says Tom, "and I just have a liking for the man."



Pres. Chambers at home (E. Campus)

HERE AND THERE

An announcement last week gave in some detail the responsibilities established through four administrative promotions. In grasping the meaning of the changes, the thing to keep in mind is that the four officers will assist the President, Chancellor and Treasurer in these general areas:

Administrative Vice Chancellor Carl F. Floe -- research programs and inter-school laboratories.

Administrative Vice Chancellor Malcolm G. Kispert -- budget, personnel policies, academic space.

Vice Treasurer Philip A. Stoddard -- physical plant, construction and services.

Comptroller Paul V. Cusick -- contracts and accounting.

M.I.T. is too big and complex to permit sharp boundaries, but the chances are that if you are engaged in any of those areas, at least one of the four men will be involved.

Personnel Office reports that the vacation peak at M.I.T. this year is running ahead of schedule. The most popular refresher: July 1-19. Tech Talk will publish all summer, welcomes photographic (or other) evidence of vacation exploits.

Congratulations are in order for all extracurricular degree-snatchers. In addition to Connie Kreder (p. 2), 18 M.I.T. employees donned motorboards for commencement ceremonies at Northeastern University, all of them graduates of the N.U. night school.

Announcement has been made of two M.I.T. retirements. Retiring, for the second time (the first was from the M.G.H. and Harvard Medical School in 1951) is Dr. James Howard Means, who has kept regular medical hours at M.I.T. for the last six years. Dr. Means will return to two former specialties: to his study of thyroid diseases and to writing. Also retiring is John J. Rowlands, Director of News Service. Mr. Rowlands, who has been on leave of absence this year, will be living year-round in his new house about 10 yards from the ocean in Cohasset. There he is already busy with: writing, his telescope (the boat traffic in and out of Boston Harbor), carving, wire sculpture, rock gardens -- including a flourishing spinach patch, and construction of miscellaneous gadgets.

Prof. Elting Morison (Humanities) has been elected to the Harvard Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, "for men distinguished in the fields of letters, government, and art."

FOR SALE ETC.

Siamese, Blue Point male. Registered & inoculated. Championship stock. Very good show possibilities. Very affectionate pet. Betty Reid, Ext. 2427 or LA3-6890.

Mandolin (\$25) and Vega Banjo Mandolin (\$35), both in excellent condition. Frank Albee, TW4-6655 after 6 p.m. or TW3-1099 after 5:30 p.m.

Webcor Model 2711 Tape Recorder. Excellent cond., used only about 20 hours. Best offer. J. Catz, Ext. 2212 or EL4-6907.

'46 Ford customized convertible. Full race equipped 9-A. New paint & top. Very good cond. About \$2000 invested. Will sell for \$725 or best offer. R. Skinner, Ext. 2379 or MI3-3237.

'51 Plymouth suburban stationwagon (The Grey Mother Goose). Comes when called. \$400. Bob Simha, TR6-8266 or Ext. 4406.

'52 Plymouth 4-door sedan. R & H. Good cond. \$400. Ed Kapp, Ext. 2793 or Rm. 104A, Graduate House.

'53 Volkswagen. New red leather seat covers. Newly re-built motor. \$900. David Sternlight, Ext. 7331 (Lincoln).

'55 Olds Super 88 Holiday coupe. White top, black body. WW tires, R & H, power brakes. 29,000 miles. Must sell -- going to Europe late Aug. Dr. Looney, Ext. 2131.

Wellesley. White colonial. 4 bdrms, LR with fp, DR, K with dishwasher, 2 finished pine-panelled basement rms, 1½ B. Near schools & trans. 1/3 acre plus trees and shrubs. \$23,000. Ext. 2221 or WE5-0998W.

Needham. Ranch house. Young split level, 1 yr. old. 7 lg. rms, 2-car garage, 2½ B, den, elec. K. Lg. level lot. 4% mortgage available. Asking \$26,000. Miss Morgan, Ext. 3501.

M.I.T. instructor has spacious mod. furn. apt. in Cambridge he would like to share with one person. Apt. allows much privacy to each. Quiet. Cool. EL4-1979.