Heavy Weekend Rainfall Plagues MIT Basements

By Lyall Morrill

Basements throughout the Institute were flooded last weekend as a result of heavy rain since Hurricane Diane in 1955. Senior House, Walker Memorial, Hayden Library, and various basement areas were hardest hit. Maintenance crews used twenty-two auxiliary water pumps in an attempt to keep the basement areas under control.

Water continued to leak between the floor and the molding. An estimated accumulation was in the basement of Hayden Library. Members of the Lecture Series Committee vacuumed the water out of their office (right) in the basement of Walker Memorial, where the water was three inches deep before being pumped out.

—Photos by Conrad Grundshupper

MIT Meteorologist Predicts Cold Winter

By James Vollertsen

MIT can expect a colder winter this year with an above-average amount of snow. That's the advance forecast of Prof. Herc C. Willett, Meteorology Department.

November will not feature much winter weather, but cold temperatures will begin in December and reach abnormal lows throughout New England in January. Although February should be near normal, we can expect a moderately cold spring. As part of a cold-weather trend that will continue for several years, the anticipated winter will include a greater amount of snow for the Northeast.

Prof. Willett emphasizes, however, that no matter how severe the winter may be at times, the local temperature average will be merely a few degrees below normal.

He bases his predictions on a comparison of past weather patterns with current trends. The flow of prevailing westerly winds and the variations of solar activity are factors supporting his forecast.

During the late forties and early fifties, the general trend of weather was toward warmer temperatures. This trend is reversing itself, according to past observations and the fact that the last two winters have both been below normal.

Westerly winds are the chief factor in explain- ing the trend. These winds will be heading South in the years to come, resulting in colder weather. In the milder winters of a dozen years ago, these winds traveled North.

An interesting theory regarding weather cycles is the correlation of these cycles with the regular variations in solar activity. Professor Willett as- serts that the observed solar cycle of 18-40 years coincides with a corresponding climatic cycle.

In 1798 and 1898, when the level of solar activ- ity changed from low to high, the weather trend changed from warm to cold. We are now expe- riencing such a solar-climatic change.

Another solar cycle of shorter duration—about 22 yrs.—oughtly determines how wet or dry the weather will be.

—Photo by Curtiss Wiler

Teaches Americana

Prof. Wood Offers Folklore Course

By Sunita Prakash

"The purpose of the course is to interest people in this great body of traditional knowledge," I have written about folk songs, Prof. Theodore Wood of American Folklore being offered for college credit by the commission of Extension Courses.

The WGBH-TV course started October 1, and will last through the most important weeks of nineteen. "It is a kind of social history—what it was or is to be an American; what it is to live in the United States. It documents the beliefs and ways of life of the average person. A great deal of folklore is very fascinating in itself," explained Prof. Wood.

Commenting on this course is different from most ordinary courses, Prof. Wood said that the students don't need to put much effort since they are not going to be in a regular classroom. Unlike other courses, this one is not graded — so every action has to be directed.

"What would be a definition of folklore?" "There is a wrong notion in the minds of many people that folklore is only of academic interest to cultural anthropologists. Folklore is composed of many things. Superstitions, thinking twice about broken glass, even religion and other things which are passed down traditionally — all these make up folklore. Folklore is important and interesting. You learn about the real people behind the folklore. Superstitions are of true feelings, the attitudes and the way of life of a community. You learn from their superstitious habits and songs, although considerable information must be supplemented. You learn what they thought and really believed in, what their real charac- ter was."

Prof. Wood is very interested in folk singing and sings a lot himself. He talked about the importance of folk songs in folklore. He replied, "Folk songs reflect the spirits and that's the only important part of folklore. Folk singing is the most popular form of music in the community. It is different from medieval ballads, which are the poor man's story books and talked of groats and not horses. Today folklore is a part of our life and not just for the students."

"What is the correlation of these cycles with the regular weather will be."

In the course, Prof. Wood will explore every aspect of American folklore, illustrating his subject with films, photographs, scenes from great folk dramas and many folk songs.

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courses, the Professor is very interested in the different aspects of folklore. Since the war ended, there has been a great deal of folklore and not horses. Today folklore is a part of our life and not just for the students."

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