MIT scientists analyze Apollo lunar samples

By Pete Mascaro

Since the first manned lunar landing two years ago, MIT scientists have taken a large part in the study of samples returned by the Apollo crews. Study has been done at the Institute in the fields of physical properties, electrical and dielectric properties, the age of the samples, and examination for the presence of organic materials.

Professor Gene Simmons has led a group of scientists that includes Professors D. H. Chang and Nafi Toksoz in an examination of the seismic velocity, thermal conductivity, and diatomic expansion of the lunar samples. Their work was made more difficult than might be expected by small cracks made contemporaneous with the Apollo missions. These small cracks made conditions within the samples very different from what was expected. The rock, an accurate velocity can be determined to contain fifty times less than might be expected by the expansion of the lunar samples.

Although the gongs were loud and known from which fire alarm system was set up to test the system went all night on the system. When the alarm did not sound long enough, and some of the alarm system was not functioning, all the house residents were not awakened.

When it became evident to those responsible for the upkeep of the house that it was only a false alarm, they tried to contact someone in the Physical Plant to find why the alarm was sounded. No answer for the alarm has been given as yet except that the Physical Plant workers had been working on the system all night in an effort of straightening out bugs already known to be in the system. Kenneth C. Browning, Assistant to Dean of Student Affairs, and Howard Miller, Director of Housing, both showed interest in the problem when contacted by the residents of Burton-Conner House.

It is believed that of the more than 350 residents of the house--half of this number were removed by the early-morning raids. Yet only 20 to 30 residents went through some type of fire emergency procedure. There have been no detailed explanations of emergency procedures, and only a few Burton-Conner knew anything about the alarm system and the meaning of the gongs.

The electrical and dielectric properties of the lunar samples are being tested by running pulses of electricity through the rocks. In this experiment, both temperature and frequency of pulse are used as variables, with trends in capacitance noted. The results of this study indicate a similarity between the dielectric properties of the lunar materials and earth basalts. This information should be extremely useful in predicting future Apollo electromagnetic deepwater experiments.

The age of a group of Apollo 11 lunar samples was determined at MIT by Professors Hurley and Pinson using the rubidium-strontium isochron method of dating. A problem developed when the samples were determined to contain fifty times less rubidium than was originally expected. It was determined that the material was con- taminated by as much as one-hundredth of a gram of foreign rubidium, the results

By Curtis Reeves

President Jerome Wiesner appeared on television Sunday night to discuss problems that confronted him as he entered college and his outlook for the coming academic year.

Interviewed along with Dr. Wiesner on the show "The New Presidents," were Presidents Derek Bok of Harvard University, John Silber of Boston University, and Robert Wood of the University of Massachusetts. The program was aired by WGBH and was arranged by The Boston Globe.

Wiesner's first response was in answer to a question on his academic priorities for this academic year. He stated that MIT is in a difficult situation "because it's an institution focused on science and technology in those things are in particular question in society." The problems, he said, were in maintaining the momentum and quality of science and technology for the school. As in the case of the other presidents, Wiesner took one a dozen criticisms of students, but the most for granted.

On the issue of funding America's private colleges, all four presidents were in agreement on the need for federal aid. Commenting on this, Wiesner said, "We'll just have to recognize the important needs for continued higher education for a large variety of students who have not had the opportunity before."

Wiesner pointed out, however, that the answer to America's educational problems did not necessarily deal with enrollment more students per school and further diversifying curricula. "My own view is that too many institutions have become too bureaucratic, that 10,000 to 12,000 was, in his opinion, the optimum size for a manageable university."

Politics

Emphasis was placed on financial politics, and Wiesner said of the year before last, "I think it has made the university a stronger institution."

Wiesner discussed office views problems and outlook

By Norman Sandler

Though razing of several buildings on the Simplex factory site purchased by MIT over two years ago is nearly complete, plans for re-development of the area are still not formalized, according to Institute officials.

The property in question formerly housed the Simplex Wire and Cable Company and was acquired by the Institute in July of 1969. Located three blocks northwest of the MIT campus, it is approximately the size of Briggs Field in total area. At the time of acquisition then-president Howard Johnson announced that the property would be "an excellent development in the best interest of the residents of Cambridge." Members of the Corporation Joint Advisory Committee (CJAC) assured residents and students that the Simplex purchase was "not concieved as a financial venture" and that it would not be used for academic expansion. Before MIT's acquisition of the plant, which moved to North Berwich, Maine, Simplex employed a total of about 1100 people.

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By Walter Middlebrook

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