50 compete in spelling bee

By Margaret Brandona

"W...J...J..." The girl paused. The crowd waited,ushed, watching her expectantly. Drawing a deep breath she continued, "...J...J...J..." As a flood of applause burst from the crowd, the girl turned and walked back to her seat.

This was the scene in Knege Auditorium on Tuesday night, Jan. 21, when 50 of MIT's best spellers competed in the Institute Spelling Bee.

Winner of the five and a half hour marathon was Norman Brenner, a graduate student in the Earth and Planetary Sciences Department. Brenner triumphed over Jean Hunter '76 who finished second and Hilli Chai G., who placed third by correctly spelling beriberi and thoraconsy.

What is Brenner's secret? "Well, I read the Oxford English a tremendous amount," he said. "That helps a lot with word roots. I'm not really interested in spelling, but I like etymology," Brenner added that "if you know the roots of a word you can spell it much faster than an unprepared guess as to how it is spelled."

The spelling bee, which was sponsored by the Dean for Student Affairs Office and the News Office, was counseled by Harvey Einstock '73, Einstock, himself a spelling pro, and he thought of having a spelling bee because "it's a fun thing and it might be a good way to put to rest some of those ideas that MIT people are only involved in math and science."

A week before the spelling bee, about 210 students, both graduates and undergraduates, took the 150 word preliminary spelling test. On the basis of this test, 20 finalists were chosen. "I had not read all the words," said one contestant, "I just guessed at how to spell them."

At first the spelling bee contestants faced such simple words as vinegar, tramp, trespass. As the evening wore on, words like amanuensis, paroxysm, and connoisseur made the going rougher. "I guess I just lucked it out," said Brenner.

The spelling bee, which was held in the Student Union and administered by the MIT News Office, was attended by hundreds of MIT students and faculty members. The event was scheduled for Sept. 1.

Investigating the CIA: a Capitol preoccupation

By Mike McNamara

WASHINGTON - William Colby is a busy, busy man. Almost every day in recent weeks, the Director of Intelligence has had to leave his Langley, Va., office to testify before one of a number of commissions, committees, and panels about charges of "massive, widespread illegal activities" carried out by the agency he heads - the CIA.

"Things have been like a madhouse around here," CIA official talk tellingly, in the wake of the Senate Intelligence Committee's allegations made by the New York Times Dec. 23. Those allegations included charges that the CIA, contrary to its legislative mandate, had conducted surveillance and accumulated files on thousands of antiwar protesters during the 1960's at the request of Presidents Johnson and Nixon.

Colby, a 34-year CIA veteran who took charge of the agency late in 1973, has been especially in demand, and he has been a star witness - not to mention his former boss, Ambassador to Iran Richard Helms, who headed CIA during the LBJ era, before the groups which are investigating the agency.

With the Senate's passage Monday of a resolution establishing a select committee modeled after the Watergate Committee, for the first time the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has had to leave his Langley, Va., office to testify before one of a number of commissions, committees, and panels about charges of "massive, widespread illegal activities" carried out by the agency he heads - the CIA.

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