Baker programmers win nationals

By Steve Kirsch

Despite numerous difficulties, a team of four computer science majors from Baker House won the Second Annual National Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Student Programming Contest held last Wednesday in Detroit in conjunction with the 1978 ACM Conference.

The team, Abe Lederman ’80, Larry DeMar ’79, Curt Sanford ’80, and Dan D’Eramo ’80, came in first in a field of 24 teams representing schools from all over the country. Eighteen of the teams, including MIT (see The Tech, Feb. 7), had won regional contests or had come in second.

The object of the contest was to solve four computer programming problems as fast as possible using ANSI FORTRAN. All four problems were given to each team at the start of the contest, and the teams received one “problem minute” for each minute that each problem remained unsolved. Unlike the regional competition, teams were charged points for every run: 10 points for a “test run” in which the team supplies its own test data and 15 points for a “judged run.” In a judged run, the teams are only told whether their answer was (a) right, (b) right but printed in the wrong format, (c) right but did not use ANSI FORTRAN, or (d) wrong. Teams were not permitted to see the output from a judged run.

The contest was scheduled to begin on Wednesday and run till lam the next morning. But scheduling problems delayed the start of the contest until almost 7 pm so the end of the contest was extended to 1:30 am.

Michigan State turned in the first successful problem solution at 10:30 pm. Two hours later, Sanford of the MIT team turned in a successful solution to the problem he had been working on. By 11:15 pm, MIT had two solutions. Lederman had solved the problem he had been working on — the same problem Michigan State had turned in earlier. At 1:30 am, only three solu-

Students prefer Great Court

By Jordana Hellander

MIT students are more concerned about how many tickets they can get for Commencement than about where the annual ceremony is held, according to preliminary results of a survey by the MIT Student Committee on Commencement.

Students expressing concern over being limited to two tickets each, the students also noted a preference to hold the Commencement ceremonies in the Kilian Court, as opposed to the present location, Rockwell Cage.

According to the survey, the most popular plan was to divide commencement into two separate ceremonies, one for undergraduates and one for graduates. Of the students responding, 78 percent favored split ceremonies, 17 percent favored one ceremony, and 5 percent expressed no preference.

The other suggestion was to hold small ceremonies where diplomas are distributed by the department heads to be followed by a shortened Institute-wide ceremony. The general student response to this was 20 percent of the current system, 40 percent of having departmental presentations and 11 percent in difference. Of the seniors asked, 35 percent favored the present system, 33 percent favored departmental ceremonies and 12 percent didn’t state a preference. The freshman response, by comparison, was that 47 percent would rather keep the present form, 43 percent would like the change and 10 percent didn’t care.

The committees sent out three to four thousand questionnaires and have received over one hundred completed forms, an excellent response for surveys at MIT, according to Michael Tobias ’78, head of the committee. They hope to receive 1,000 answers by the end of the survey. The return rate has so far been 33 percent, with a 40 percent return for seniors.

The survey will have no effect on this year’s graduation, however, because the commencement ceremony has already been scheduled for Rockwell Cage.

Committee to study CIA link

By Elaine Douglas

MIT announced last week that it has established a committee, similar to one already in existence at Harvard University, to study the Institute’s past relationship to the CIA.

Both of the committees had been organized after the CIA notified Harvard and MIT that it was no longer interested in participating in the controversial and covertly funded CIA project on mind control, MK-ULTRA. MIT’s participants, however, was not substantiated.

The new regulations at Harvard, however, have not quelled undergraduate concerns as such. “In this era of international tensions and difficulties, it is extremely important for the United States to have an effective system of foreign intelligence,” said the newly promulgated guidelines declare.

The regulations are the result of a study made last year by a group organized to examine Harvard’s relationship to the US intelligence agencies. The recommendations were adopted by Harvard President Derek C. Bo, last month. The group was Archibald Cox and Don K. Price, faculty, and Henry Rosovsky and Daniel Stein, administrative.

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