

# Action Is Slow On Platforms

Work has been progressing slowly on State and Lion Party platforms set up in the Nov. 12 freshman and sophomore class elections, Daily Collegian inquiries indicate.

The Lion Party plank pledging work toward utilization of the Nittany-Pollock dining hall as an evening study hall is the one with which most progress has been made. The Nittany Council agreed to support the plan at its meeting Monday night.

## Union Voices Dissatisfaction Over Vacations

Dissatisfaction with the University vacation plan for technical and maintenance employees was voiced at Wednesday night's meeting of Local 67, State, County, and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Labor.

The group particularly objected to the inequities existing in different departments and those existing between different men in the same departments. The University presently grants a 12-day vacation to workers with less than ten years service and an 18-day vacation to those employed over ten years.

New officers were also installed. They include Kenneth H. Dixon, president; George W. Smith, secretary; Thomas Hartwick, treasurer; Guy Harpster, trustee; and William Benson, chief steward.

Dixon, who replaces George L. Fink, the retiring president, is employed in the Dairy department of the University. He served as the union's chief steward prior to being elected to his new office. The vice presidency is still vacant and will be filled at the next meeting.

### Vet Refunds Available

Veterans under P.L. 346 and 16 may pick up their second textbook refund check for the fall semester at the Bursar's Office in Willard Hall, Richard H. Baker, coordinator of Veterans Affairs, has announced.

Benjamin Sinclair, Lion Party clique chairman, said the plan will next go to the Dean of Men's office for consideration. Party leaders would like to have the dining hall available for studying by the beginning of fall final examinations, if possible, Sinclair said.

Other Lion Party planks pledged work toward conversion of one of the Nittany-Pollock dorms into a recreation center, improvement and expansion of decentralized registration, and a shorter, more effective customs program.

### Recreation Center

Kenneth White, State Party clique chairman, said he will meet with party leaders and class officers immediately after vacation to plan implementation of party planks. Work has been delayed, he said, by the heavy schedule of activities between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

"Will Live Up to Obligations" "However," White said, "the State Party, as in the past, will live up to its obligations to implement, to the best of its ability, the party planks."

Most of the work, he said, will be handled by Hugh Cline, sophomore class president elected on the State Party ticket.

The State Party platform pledged work toward coeducational activities, revision of the customs code, a more efficient resident counseling system, a more

# 3d Run of 'Pillars' Set For Tonight

Players will present their third performance of "Pillars in the Night," an original one-act play, at 8 tonight in the Little Theatre basement of Old Main.

The play, written by William E. Coleman, former graduate student in dramatics at the University, is concerned with the experiences of a rifle squad during the last days of World War II in Germany.

Presented as part of the new experimental program of the Dramatics division and Players, "Pillars in the Night" features Gordon Greer as Gus; William Rinken, a sentry; Gerald Denisof, Tommy; Ralph Siorta, Stephanski; Albert Sarkas, Lucco; Robert Kaiser, Fergie; Richard Weber, the Kid; Ronald Taylor, commanding officer; Nick Green, Rock; John Joyce, Edwards; and Thomas Bellin, the major.

John Solomon will be seen as Mike; John Aniston, Buster; Kenneth Williams, correspondent; Leonard Tarnowski, colonel; Robert Kennedy, Davy Wheeler; Myron Cole, Lieutenant Wright; and Boyd Freedman, Larrabee.

The all-male cast will be dramatizing Coleman's personal recollections of Army experience. The title, "Pillars in the Night," was derived from a line in Exodus: "... and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light."

Warren S. Smith, associate professor of dramatics and former playwrighting instructor of the author, is director. George B. Oliver is his assistant and technical director. Sets were designed by Richard Speiser and supervised by Russell Whaley. Myron Cole is stage manager.

extensive orientation program, establishment of a central information bureau in the new Student Union, and expansion of library facilities.

## Santa An Import?

# Christmas Customs Adopted by U.S.

By HANK DIPIPI

Although the birth of the Christ Child is probably celebrated to a greater degree in the United States than in any country in the world, few of our Christmas customs actually began in this country.

The origin of many of our most cherished Christmas institutions may be traced to ancient traditions of foreign lands, and it is doubtful that we have one good custom we can call our own.

### Santa Claus Introduced

Santa Claus himself was introduced to this country by Dutch settlers when the country was still in its infancy. The Dutch, who knew Santa as St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, called him "Sinterklass" in their native tongue. Through unsuccessful efforts to pronounce "Sinterklaas" it was changed to Santa Claus.

Washington Irving, famous writer of the 19th century, first described the jolly fellow as we know him today and in 1863, Thomas Nast, noted cartoonist, drew the first picture of Santa Claus.

Christmas seals were first used in Denmark 50 years ago and Christmas stockings are also believed to have evolved from European customs. The Christmas tree was originally a native of Germany.

Nativity scenes have been used widely since their popularization by St. Francis of Assisi in Italy in the 13th century. They appear mostly in Latin countries but are becoming increasingly popular in U.S. homes.

England has contributed yuletide holly, Christmas cards, and plum pudding. Some of the customs which the British retain are the yule log and the bear's head.

Many existing traditions of foreign lands which date far back into the histories of the countries suggest modern yuletide observance in the U.S.

Christmas in Austria begins when St. Nicholas and the Christmas angel parade through the village streets along with devils wearing frightening masks. The demons punish bad children while the good are rewarded with presents by St. Nick.

### Czechoslovakian Customs

Czechoslovakian children place their shoes and stockings on the window sills in anticipation of Santa's arrival. The same custom is observed in Brazil.

In Belgium, children place treats of hay and vegetables in their wooden shoes and awaken on Christmas morn to find candy and toys in replacement.

Carved figurines representing the three Magi who followed a star to Bethlehem when the Christ Child was born are a Christmas feature of Ecuador

### Home of the Reindeer

Finland is the home of the reindeer. The animals have long been used by the Finns to pull sleighs.

The Irish display lighted candles decorated with holly sprigs in their windows to brighten their homes on Christmas eve. Twigs of evergreen add a festive note to the interiors.

The Lithuanians fashion fragile and attractive ornaments out of straw for their trees. Bird cages, bell towers, and other designs are formed with the aid of needle and thread.

### Spanish Chimney Substitute

In Spain the balcony substitutes for the chimney, of which there are few in that temperate climate. As in Belgium, hay is left for Santa's animals, in this case camels, and gifts replace it in the morning.

In pre-communistic Russia, groups of carolers trekked through the streets pulling "snow-maidens," girls dressed in white, on sleds as they serenaded homes with "kolyada," Russian Christmas songs.

### Foreign Customs

Many interesting foreign customs seem to have found no place in our celebration of the joyous season.

The Mexican pinata, a gaily decorated jar made of clay which is filled with toys and sweets and hung from the ceiling, has not been adopted by the United States. The children are blindfolded and given sticks to break the pinata. They scramble for the contents when it is broken.

In France, at the "reveillon," the French Christmas supper, guests are presented bouquets of flowers by the host's daughter.

### The Polish Wilia

The Polish begin their Christmas Eve supper, the "wilia," at the sight of the first star of the evening. The special meal is preceded by the breaking and eating of a wafer, the "oplatek."

The adoption by the U.S. of one foreign custom would probably receive much support from the student body. In both Spain and Switzerland Christmas begins early, in the former on Dec. 13 and in the latter on Dec. 6, and extends to the New Year.

# Prof's Duck Pond Is Unique In Campus Research Projects

By PEGGY McCLAIN

One of the most unique research projects on the campus today is physics professor Henry Yeagley's six-month old duck pond, located in an east field of the Poultry department on the University farms.

The hand-built pond, constructed mainly by Dr. Yeagley himself, is the third and most expanded center of bird navigation experiments on campus. The first area was an improvised (bulldozed) mud-pond on the University farms.

Three years ago the experimental area changed to the roof of Osmond Laboratory. Last June, because more room was needed, Dr. Yeagley began construction of the present center in a field on the poultry area east of campus.

### Resembles Stockade

From the outside, the center looks somewhat like a frontier stockade, being surrounded by a picket fence over six feet high. Inside the fence, the structure resembles a greenhouse, until the squeaks and quacks of some 160 ducks are heard.

Young evergreen trees are planted for a natural habitat effect. A pipeline keeps the water in constant circulation among the ponds and the water is kept at a temperature just above freezing! The ducks are fed twice daily,

once at noon and again about ten o'clock in the evening, on a grain mixture and grass cut from the golf course and kept in a deep-freeze unit inside the building. Dr. Yeagley said that the birds are so fond of the grass that they seldom let a single particle escape them.

### Turned Loose Daily

The professor's daily routine includes at least two or three trips to the range to feed the ducks and turn them loose for flight. The flight experiments begin in the first pond, where Dr. Yeagley, garbed in knee-high boots, climbs into the pond and gently guides the birds through the openings that lead onto a long narrow enclosure.

The birds have been tamed so that they follow his guiding with little urging. From the enclosure, the professor puts the ducks into wooden crates in which he carries them by car to points for training releases.

### Flight Difficult

There the crates are opened and the birds, hesitantly at first and then with an eager abandon, take flight. Because of their small wings, the creatures often have difficulty in rising, but once in the air, they become masters of flight.

Unencumbered by heavy wings, they travel at about 50 miles per hour. While diving in a strong

wind they have exceeded 100 miles per hour.


The ducks find their way back to the pond from short flights in a matter of minutes. When the ducks were first moved from Osmond, they returned from flight to the laboratory roof, and finding the pond no longer there, eventually returned to the field establishment.

### Flight Theory

The idea of working with ducks originated when Dr. Yeagley obtained positive results with homing pigeons regarding his theory that birds in flight are guided by the strength of the earth's magnetic field (not its direction) and the effect of the earth's rotation.

For six years experiments were carried out with homing pigeons with the support of the U.S. Army Signal Corps and the Wildlife Research Group at the University.

The program has met with strong informal support from all over the campus, Dr. Yeagley said. Without this moral and freely-given help, the project could never have achieved such unforeseen results, he said.



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