

# Architect use torch as means of expression, profit and hobby

By Fran Haugen  
Zap!

A 2,100° F. blue-white flame spews orange sparks in every direction. What looks like a Fourth of July sparkler is the welding tool of artist-architect, Rodney Hill.

Zap! A butterfly's wing.  
Zap! An elephant's tail.  
Zap! Zap! The finishing touches on a 50-pound castle.

The man behind the welder's goggles in the four-pocketed, light blue sweatshirt and faded jeans knows what he's doing. With the flick of the flame pro-

duced from an oxygen-acetylene mixture he bends a rod of high tension steel to create an original wire sculpture.

He can turn out a \$30 four-inch high praying mantis in less than an hour. An elaborate castle complete with a drawbridge that can be lowered or raised, courtyard, balloon and flags flying takes two weeks. It sells for \$800.

It hasn't always been quite as easy as it is now though, Hill admits.

"What used to be painstaking, now takes me 1/3 of the time it did," he said. "You learn how

to control the melting of the steel, instead of using just guesswork."

Hill who grew up in a world of art (both of his parents are artists), began wire sculpture five years ago. Because he was shaping canvas over wire forms, he had to take up welding, and the welding "just carried on."

Hill still carves tables, doors, stairheads, crucifixes and toilet seats; paints; and dabbles in plastics, but bringing metal to life is his major interest now, in addition to being his livelihood during the summer. He teaches second year architects design at A&M during the school-year.

"Zot," Hill says and points at his forehead when asked where he gets his ideas, "from my imagination." Some of the 1,000 sculptures he has done also come from life or photographs.

"A good piece of work communicates," Hill said. "An artist receives input in five senses. He must exaggerate colors, forms and textures to stimulate the viewer and make up for the senses lost.

"Nearly all my sculptures are exaggerated. The people have bigger hands and feet and exaggerated facial features. My castles (he's done five—all different) are caricatures of any real castles." He says these super-complicated structures are a composite of castle styles over a 500-year period.

"I feel like I live in a castle when I build it," the 31-year-old sculptor. "When you can imagine you're lowering the drawbridge and walking in the courtyard, that's when it's fun. Sculpture as just a three dimensional object is useless."

Hill confesses that he sometimes discards partly completed sculptures because at these times it "takes more time to change the mistake than it does to start fresh."

Many artists have the hangup of clutching on to something they're making even if they think it's bad, he said.

"You have to be able to close your eyes and throw it away," he advised, "because no matter how good you think it is now, a year

from now you'll think it's bad. Many artists don't even look at anything they've done that's a year old because they advance so much in a year."

Aggies can view many of his pieces, including one of his castles, in the glass cases at the Memorial Student Center now through July 10.

He has also exhibited in Salt Lake City and at Macy's in New York.

The personable artist sells most of his pieces, half of them on commission.

In the future Hill says he wants to do some bigger pieces. He presently is working on a parody on attorneys for College Station law firm Goode and Jones, and he will construct a metal fountain for an Air Force retirement center in San Antonio if the plans are approved by military authorities this week.

He worked six years for architectural firms in Houston and Dallas after earning his bachelor's degree. He has also been camping in Europe, Russia and Egypt.

Hill resides with his wife Susan, also an artist; 18-month-old son Bunker and 150-pound Great Dane "puppy" at 119 Lee St. in College Station.

## Smith appointed libraries director

John B. Smith has been appointed director of libraries.

Smith, a 1960 Texas A&M graduate, has served as acting director the past year.

Announcement of the appointment was made at the Tuesday meeting of the board of directors.

After receiving his undergraduate degree in English, he earned a master's degree in library science at Columbia University in 1963.

Prior to joining the staff in 1966 as assistant librarian, Smith was assistant law librarian at Columbia.

## Fertility factor in plants is nitrogen

Nitrogen is the limiting fertility factor for forage production in most soils, the main reason being that plants don't get a real chance to use it.

Dr. Alan Swoboda, speaking during the fifth annual Pasture and Forage Crops Short Course here last week, said plant use of applied nitrogen is usually very low, ranging from 40 to 80 percent.

The reason, he explained to about 100 persons attending the session, is due to loss from the soil before plants can benefit.

Swoboda, an assistant professor in the Soil and Crop Sciences Department, described three common ways nitrogen is lost from soil: Volatilization, denitrification and leaching.

Volatilization is the gaseous loss of nitrogen from the ground surface, which Swoboda said can be reduced by working the fertilizer into the soil. Losses are heavier on alkaline soils.

Denitrification is the biological reduction of nitrate and nitrate to gases, which pass into the air. Experiments have shown that about 15 percent of the nitrogen applied is lost because of this process.

Leaching, which many farmers and ranchers are familiar with, means that fertilizer nutrients are washed down through the soil and out of reach of the plant roots. Losses are higher on sandy soils.

"It is not uncommon to lose as much as 40 to 50 percent of the applied nitrogen in sandy soils following a heavy rain," the speaker pointed out.

Swoboda said recent work indicates that nitrate leaching also can be a problem on clay soils.

"Water movement through

well structured clay soils is much faster than popular belief. It has been shown that as much as 1 inch of water per day, for a period of several weeks, can move through these soils," he said.

Another speaker, Dr. L. S. Breuer of the Animal Science Department, said the long-standing recommendation for phosphorus as supplements for beef cattle still appears to be a good one and should take care of most mineral deficiency situations.

"Use of bonemeal or a trace mineral-fortified phosphorus supplement will provide insurance against a trace mineral deficiency," he said. "Use of magnesium supplement appears justified under conditions showing a history of tetany."

Phil Nix, pasture specialist, listed the advantages and disadvantages of loose hay stacking, an old system enjoying a new popularity.

Advantages include lower harvesting costs, no hay barn investment, built-in self feeding, no big labor requirements, hay storage at higher moisture, and lower costs and upkeep of equipment.

Disadvantages are reduction of marketable hay, hay should be stacked where grown, less control of consumption by livestock, large stem forages do not stack as well as fine stem hays, and stacks must be in well-drained locations.

Nix said some producers have tried head gates, adjustable metal bars and wire gates to reduce hay wastage, but they usually have found that not enough hay is saved to justify the cost and labor.

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Any 7-day board students who will be on campus July 4, 5, 6, 1970 may dine at the MSC Snack Bar. 5-day student may dine July 6. Your meal card must be presented in order to dine without charge. Snack Bar will be open from 7:15 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. each of these 3 days. Enter through east entrance adjacent to Post Office.

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2-1	2.75	25.00	250.00
3-1	2.50	25.00	225.00
4-1	2.25	25.00	200.00
5-1	2.00	25.00	175.00
6-1	1.75	25.00	150.00
7-1	1.50	25.00	125.00
8-1	1.25	25.00	100.00
9-1	1.00	25.00	75.00
10-1	3.00	25.00	175.00
11-1	.50	25.00	25.00
12-1	.25	25.00	-0-

Upon adding the interest column, we find that this person paid a total interest of \$19.50 for \$300 loan for 1 year. By dividing by 3, we discover that even though his note called for 12% interest, he only paid \$6.50 per \$100 per year. To have the truth about interest, compare the actual dollar cost, not the percent quoted.

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