

Prof mixes biochemistry, music

SARAH WHITE
Battalion Staff

Biochemistry is a big part of Dr. Peter Rizzo's life as an assistant professor at Texas A&M University. Rizzo talks easily and after a few minutes seems like an old friend. His dark eyes look out from behind rimmed glasses and he smiles.

and he has a lot to smile about. His life is filled with teaching, research, family and music. Rizzo said that he finds both teaching and research challenging.

Teaching is challenging because the more students there are the harder you must work, he said. Rizzo has taught freshman level courses in biology and will teach a graduate course called Molecular Biology of the Nucleus this fall.

Rizzo is currently writing a grant proposal for a research project that he estimates will cost around \$106,000. He said the first year of a project is almost entirely tied up in making preparations for the actual research.

His research interests include investigations of the role of chromosomal proteins in the development and differentiation in eukaryotes, the role of hormones in the regulation of development and differentiation in eukaryotes, and the function of hormone receptor proteins, and many others. These are concerned with the regulation of gene activity in higher organisms, he said.

He is currently working on one-celled algae called dinoflagellates. He said he hopes to find information about gene regulation mechanisms in dinoflagellates that can assist in understanding gene regulation in higher organisms.

He displays his young son's art work on his office wall and his family's portrait on his desk.

The other love in his life is music. Before entering college, playing in a band was his sole support, he said. He was leader of a musical group called Sneaky Pete and the Sequents and he still has their business card. He plays the acoustic guitar calling himself a flat picker. He said that he sings a lot of Bob Dylan, Jim Croce, Elton John and the Beatles' songs. In addition, he has written 10-20 songs himself. With the exception of two or three, though, none are finished, he said.

Rizzo blames this on his limited spare time, saying he wishes he had more time for his music. He performs in a local restaurant.

Music is his hobby, but biology is an easier profession, Rizzo said. He had a bad experience in the music business back when he was "Sneaky Pete," he explained.



Dr. Peter Rizzo Battalion photo by Sarah White

Medical biologist 'wants answers'

By SARAH E. WHITE
Battalion Staff

Dr. Karin Ihler is a wife, mother of two, associate professor of medical microbiology at Texas A&M University and research scientist.

As a scientist she finds research very stimulating, she said. The aspect she enjoys is designing a method and experimenting to answer a question of practical use, Ihler said. She likened research to a puzzle and said she always enjoyed figuring them out.

Her current research interests involve transmissible plasmids. These are extra pieces of DNA that can be carried by bacteria. Some carry genes for drug resistance which render the bacteria resistant to one or more antibiotics which are used for treatment of diseases in the body, she explained. Ihler said that she is working on the mechanism by which the drug resistance is transferred, the genes which must be expressed for transfer, what specifically must happen and the products of these genes.

Plasmids caught her interest in graduate school and she has always wanted to know how they work, she said. Ihler said she became interested in bacterial genetics while doing her post doctoral work at Harvard. She enjoyed the reasoning in genetics because it is like a logician's she said. Ihler said that the research on ecoli plasmids and how they transfer drug resistance is the biggest puzzle in her field today.

She said she thinks the most interesting questions are those you can't guess the answers to. A certain determined look in her ice blue eyes when she says that makes you think you will be hearing more about her.

Ihler weaves these facets of her busy life together well with a little outside help. Her husband is the new head of the medical biochemistry department. Ihler said she took the job at Texas A&M because her husband decided to take his offer. They are enjoying their jobs, she said smiling.

They have two children, a girl four years old and a one-year old boy. Ihler has some of her daughter's art work posted on a cabinet in her office. She explains that the distinct figures are a sunny path through a ghost town.

Her children have adjusted well to having a working mother, she said, because she has always worked. She stayed home for about four weeks after each birth, she said. She has been fortunate and able to hire people that really care for children to watch over the family, she said. She added that her spare time, regardless of how sparse it seems to be, is spent with her children. Instead of going out, she said, she and her husband stay home with their children.

She is an associate professor in medical microbiology. Ihler will teach this fall but will organize her research projects which are funded by the National Institute of Health.



Dr. Karin Ihler Battalion photo by Sarah White

Orientation teaches Corps way of life

By MARY BECKER
Battalion Staff

The week before the fall semester begins, part of the incoming freshman class at Texas A&M will be learning how to make a bed, march in parade formation and what to say to an officer.

Col. James R. Woodall, commandant of the Corps of Cadets estimated that 25 per cent of the incoming freshmen at Texas A&M will be in the Corps. However, about 20 per cent of those who join will drop out because of low first-term grades and the discovery that being a Cadet takes time.

The Corps Freshmen Orientation was organized to cut down on the number of freshmen who drop out of the Corps.

The week-long camp is not a new idea at A&M according to Mike Gentry, 1977-78 cadet colonel of the Corps. But the last one held in 1967 failed because the freshmen were drilled too hard and many dropped out.

Since then, the freshmen only had a two-day training session. The idea for the week-long session was revived this year by Robert Harvey, 1976-77 cadet colonel and Gentry.

The two got the idea after visiting the Naval Academy, the Virginia Military Institute and Virginia Tech during Christmas break. The schools have training camps set up for their freshmen.

They took the idea to the commandant of the A&M Corps of Cadets and found that someone from the Navy department at A&M had worked up a similar project as a master's thesis and submitted it to General Ormond Simpson, vice-president for student services.

The company commanders were asked for ideas of what they thought the freshmen should learn during the week and before Spring break. The program was set.

"We finally got an idea of what we wanted to do that week. Then it was just a matter of allocating the time for those things and asking people to come talk to the freshmen," Gentry said.

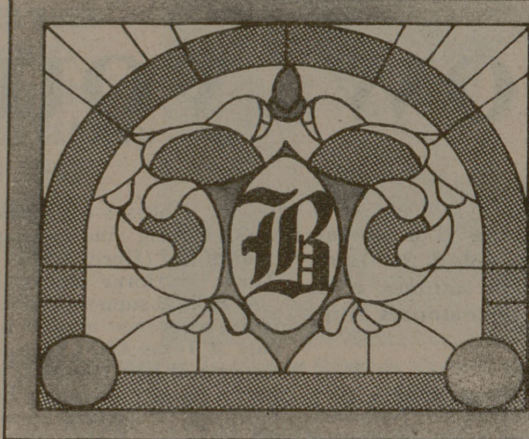
There were no historical records to draw on, but four 22-page training schedules and a 15-page manual were written. A group of eighty juniors and seniors from all the outfits were handpicked to run the program and care for the freshmen.

The other purpose of the camp is to improve the initial grades of the freshmen members.

"Every year, our goal is to increase the grades and we have progressively done better and better," Gentry noted.

"We have plans to acclimate them to the Corps. Then by taking

(See Corps, page 10B)



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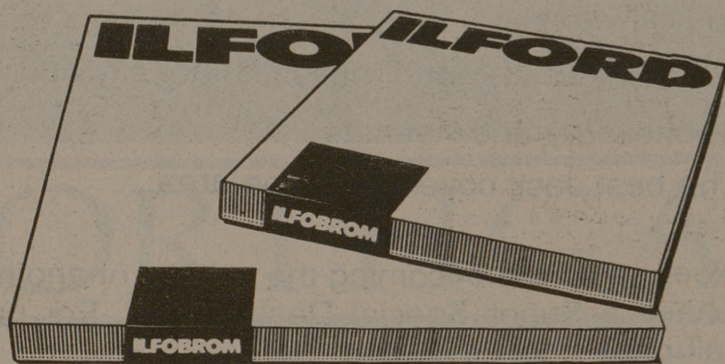
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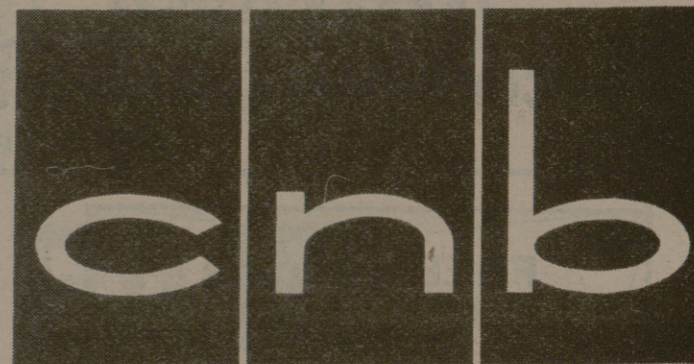
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