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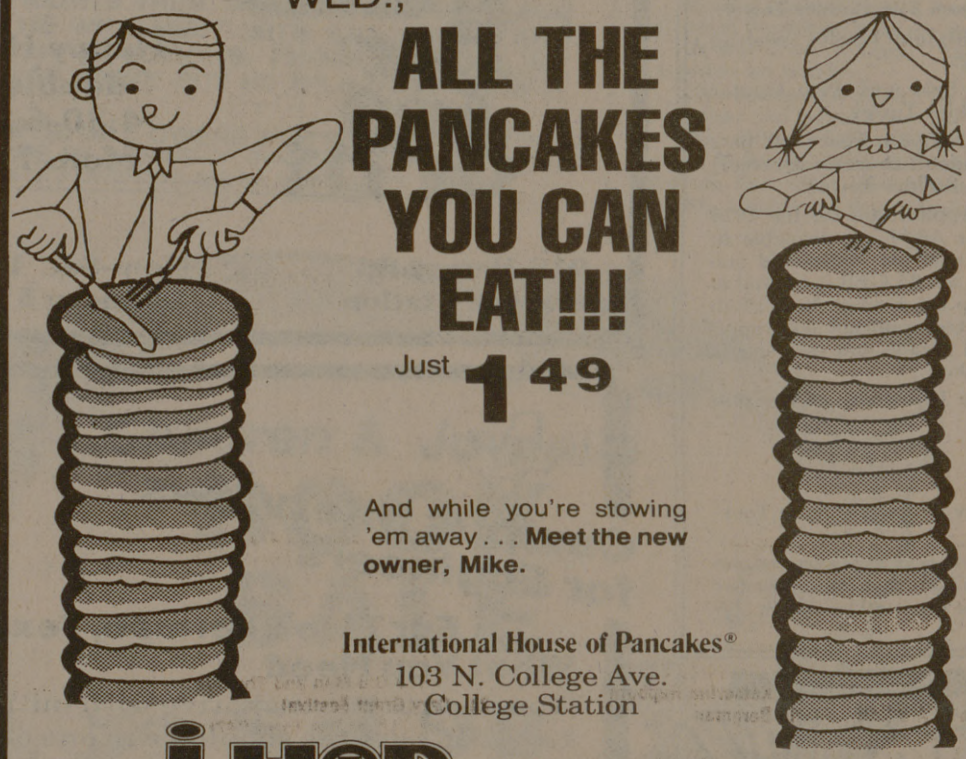
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Alther combines art with studies

Bill Alther, a 19-year-old sophomore at Texas A&M University, took a hobby, a love for birds and a talent and combined them all to turn blocks of wood into artwork.

Taking an antique razor converted into a knife, he carves mockingbirds in flight, a pheasant in midstep. He's a whittler with this philosophy:

"When you stuff a bird, there is nothing of yourself in it. It's just dead skin. When I carve a bird, I reflect myself."

The young man from Midland has drawn on the fading art of woodcarving to make his studies more meaningful and earn part of his college expenses.

"I guess I'm getting better," he said. "After the first 10 or so, there was tremendous improvement with each bird. Now, getting better is a little slower. I do more refinement of details, and worry less about getting the basic shape."

The wildlife and fisheries science major said he improved by observ-

ing real birds.

"I've been interested in birds for years. When I finish college, I would like to be a wildlife biologist, but there is always art, too."

Alther has carved more than 30 birds since he began three years ago. He sold the first one for \$10. He recently sold a scissortail fly catcher that had a 20-inch tail for \$300.

A month-long exhibition of his works was just completed at the Sterling C. Evans Library.

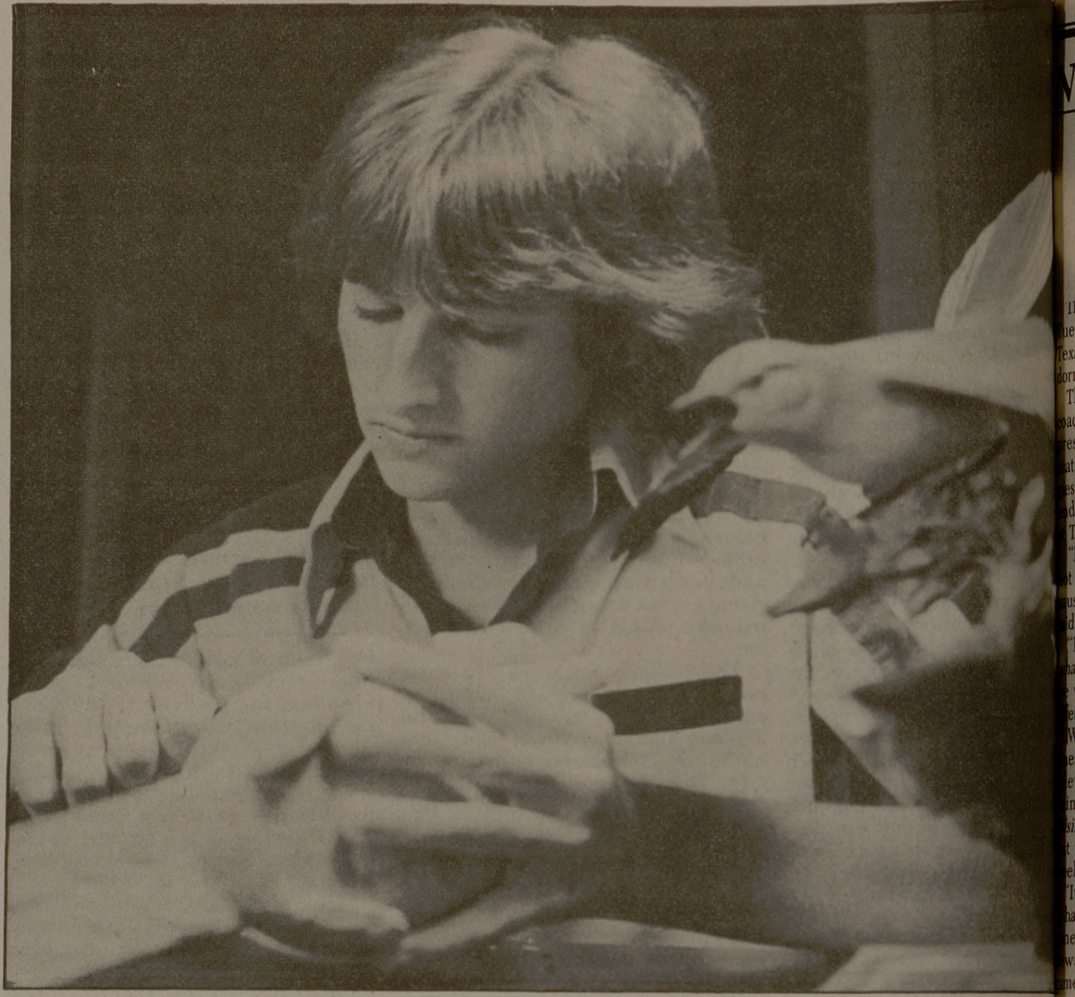
Alther said he carves his birds from a fine-grained basswood, wood which he said is perfect for carving. Completing a single bird takes between two weeks and several months, depending on the size of the carving and the action of the bird carved.

Alther does not use a wide assortment of carving tools.

"Most of the time I use a knife made from an old straight razor," he said, picking up a pheasant he is carving as a Christmas present.

He said the carving takes time, but the detail work of wood burning the veins and feathers and painting multicolored plume is excruciatingly slow.

"It was just a hobby," Alther said. "Now, it is something that makes me more aware of what is happening in my field and what effect I can have on it."



Bill Alther, a Texas A&M sophomore, carves wild birds for fun and to help pay college expenses.

Photos used to aid efficiency

NEW YORK — United Press International — Walt Disney's time lapse camera, which astonished folks 20 years ago by showing flowers growing, has been married to the computer to measure productivity in many business and industrial operations.

The technique of measuring productivity this way is being taught at Loyola University in Los Angeles by members of the staff of Manufacturers Resources and Planning, Inc., of Santa Ana, Calif. That firm has used the technology for such companies as Burroughs, PepsiCo, NCR, Bendix, Rohr Industries and Fleetwood over the past decade.

Jon M. Ament, a vice president of Manufacturers Resources and Planning, says profitability savings on some operations has been as high as 48 percent. On the average, he said, it takes 45 days to make

the observations, analyze the time lapse films with the help of a computer and institute operating changes to effect the savings. Ament says the saving can run to more than \$1,200 a year per employee.

Time lapse photography is a way to record processes that occur over hours, days or even weeks and reduce them to the essential which take only a few minutes to show. Practically everyone has seen time lapse photos in movie theaters or on television.

The firm's process for using the computer and photography to analyze time spent on a job is called Opt-Time.

The movement of people on the job is filmed and timed. The timing is compared by the computer with a "normalized curve" of the industry involved and then is evaluated by experts to identify waste motion, non-contributory activity and redundant activity handling, filing or other tasks.

Tasks that are being done inefficiently are isolated on the film in ways of accomplishing the work in less time are suggested.

The technology produces the most effective savings in manufacturing production lines, but is valuable also in studying the employment of clerical and administrative workers. Ament said Opt-Time has effected average savings of 4 percent in these areas and that this can be important in a big clerical force.

Although the technology is sophisticated, its use does not require any interruption to working schedules, Ament said.

Psychologically, the aim of the Opt-Time program is to erase bad working patterns of workers, even of engineers and other professionals, and make them willing to shift to more efficient and effective approaches to specific parts of their work, Ament said.

The objectivity of the time lapse camera and the computer is important in this process, Ament said. The computer and camera can interpret things no human observer can, he said, because the human brain cannot remain totally objective except for very short sequences of time. Then it reverts, in varying degrees, to subjectivity.

"Data collected by a person through direct observation also tends to take on that person's perspective and feelings and thus come distorted," he said.

Heat lost due to sneaky

LANCASTER, Pa. — Heating experts estimate about 40 percent of heat loss from homes is through air infiltration.

A power and light company's recent study showed about 20 percent of infiltration loss and 8 percent of the total loss was through electrical outlets. As a result, a Lancaster manufacturer developed an outlet insulator that is said to prevent 93 percent of air from entering through electrical receptacles.

The product is made of a synthetic material that fits electrical outlets and switchplates and short out or react with electricity.

Choose a windy day to test infiltration, the manufacturer says. Wet the back of the hand near an exterior wall outlet. Hold a lightweight plastic tinsel to the hand and hold it near the outlet. The hand will feel cool or the tinsel will blow if air is leaking in.

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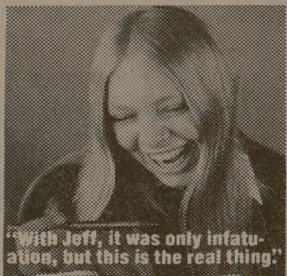

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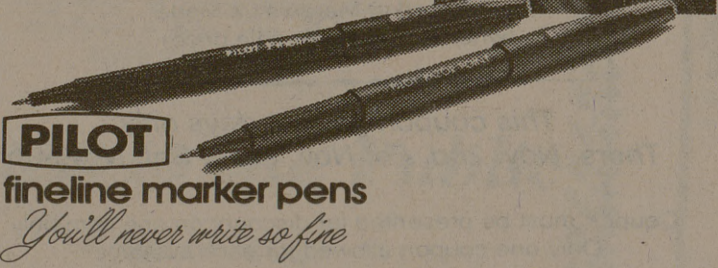
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