

## what's up

### Wednesday

**MOVIE:** "Horsefeathers," a Marx Brothers movie, will be shown at 8:45 p.m. in the Grove Theater.

**TEXAS FIREMEN'S TRAINING SCHOOL:** There will be a field demonstration of new firefighting equipment, chemicals and techniques open to the public at 8 p.m. at the Brayton Firemen's Training Field south of campus.

**CALENDAR:** Any person, group or organization who would like to have something printed in the What's Up column should fill out a form provided in Room 216, Reed McDonald. The name, date and purpose of the event should be included.

### Thursday

**THEATER:** Stagecenter Inc. presents "Dirty Work at the Crossroad," a Gay Nineties melodrama today through Saturday at 204 W. Villa Maria Rd. The musical begins at 8 p.m. and admission is \$2.50 for adults and \$1 for children under 12.

**MOVIE:** "Slaughterhouse Five," based on Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s book, will be shown at 8:45 p.m. in the Grove Theater.

**ASTROS TICKETS:** ABGS is selling tickets for the Astros vs. Dodgers game this Saturday at 7:30 p.m. There will be a charter bus available. All tickets are for seats behind first base. For more information call Becky at 845-5541.

### Friday

**GROMETS:** The Texas A&M Gamers club will meet at 7 p.m. to play wargames and role playing games in Room 137A and 140B today through Sunday at 6 p.m.

**MOVIE:** "Omen," starring Gregory Peck and Lee Remick, will be shown at 8:45 p.m. in the Grove Theater.

**MIDNIGHT MOVIE:** "M-A-S-H," starring Elliot Gould and Donald Sutherland, will be shown in the Grove Theater.

### Saturday

**MOVIE:** "Damien: Omen II," starring William Holden and Lee Grant will be shown at 8:45 p.m. in the Grove Theater.

### Sunday

**MOVIE:** "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother," will be shown at 8:45 p.m. in the Grove Theater.

## Amino acid code nears completion

Basic research to duplicate the genetic code in a laboratory at Texas A&M University has received \$44,000 in additional funding from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, bringing total support for the project so far to \$260,000.

Chemist Dr. Janos Fendler and biochemist Dr. Joseph Nagavary have already succeeded in forming a

chain of 41 amino acid units, the building blocks of protein.

That breakthrough last year was the longest molecular chain (called polypeptides) ever achieved under such laboratory condition, which include an ooze patterned after primeval conditions many scientist think once covered Earth.

By forming the polypeptides under these condition, the two sci-

entists believe they have confirmed such a spontaneous chemical reaction could occur, possible sparking the first life on this planet.

Work has been slow and time-consuming since the advances of the last year or so, said Fendler. He said it is tantamount to throwing material for several houses into the sea and hoping enough washes up to build one.

"Forty-one bricks is a long way from a house," he said.

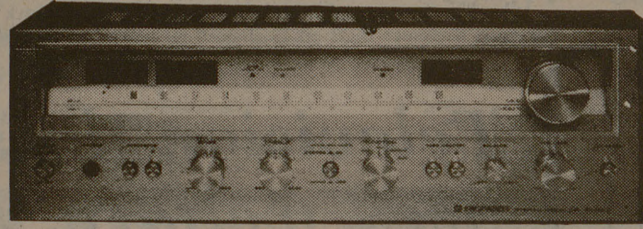
Fendler says if the research is carried to its logical end, it would be the first time that information of DNA had been copied from basic chemical reactions.

"But that conclusion is in the far distant future and each step of study becomes more complex," Fendler said.

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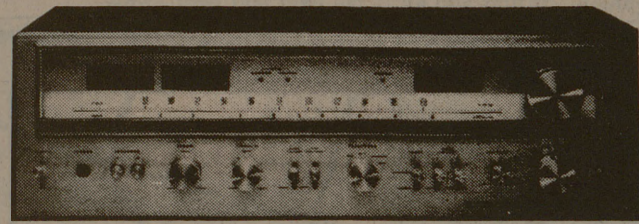


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\*Walnut grained vinyl top and side panels are used in the construction of this cabinet.

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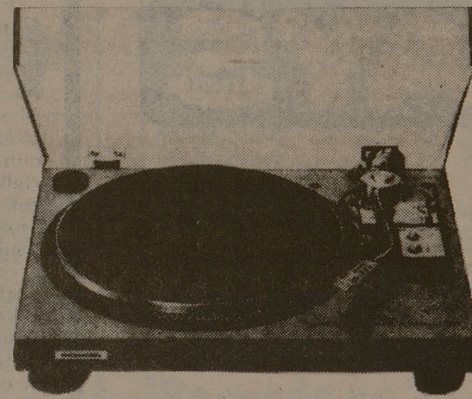


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## Sino shipbuilding techniques studied

Already credited with the invention of gunpowder and early printing, the Chinese may also have been ahead of the rest of the world as merchant marine shipbuilders, according to a Texas A&M University geographer.

Scholars have largely ignored important contributions by the Chinese to peacetime sailing, said Donald Keith, a Ph.D. student in underwater archeology.

Keith believes some of the most important features of merchant ships — from watertight bulkheads to transom stern, larger sizes and multiple masts — may even have originated in the Orient, a theory he hopes to support with other underwater digs in Korea and Thailand.

Evidence that these important features were in existence before 1300 A.D. in the Orient came in 1974 with the excavation of a presumably seagoing vessel from the waters of Ch'uanchou Bay, China, Keith said.

He said Western scholars have ignored Chinese contributions to shipbuilding and later scientists failed to double-check earlier colleagues' claims.

As recently as 1978, four years after the important Ch'uanchou Bay find, one scholar referred to the nautical achievements of China as having "little impact on ideas in neighboring land," despite the technological advances the excavation represents, Keith said.

"It seems clear that the interpretations of evidence have been consistently biased by the preconception that Oriental ships 'ought' to be different," he said.

"There is a lesson here for all scientists," the Texas A&M researcher said. "While there is security in adhering to conventional wisdom, there is also the danger of transmitting and reinforcing mistaken ideas which have found their way into discussion."

"What begins as a theory, if repeated often enough, becomes fact. Once accepted, mistaken ideas are virtually immortal," Keith said, whose recent studies of Chinese seagoing ships won a student award from the Social Science Association.

In addition to conducting his degree research, Keith spends time working with the Institute of Nautical Archaeology headquartered at Texas A&M. A nonprofit scientific body, INA relocated here several years ago to make landlocked Texas A&M the foremost world center for training professionals who dive on underwater digs.



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