

campus & city

Prof finds gene disease link

By RHONDA WATTERS
Battalion Reporter

A Texas A&M University scientist has found a possible enzyme link relating a rare strain of mouse genes to those in a group of fatal genetic diseases.

Dr. James Womack, the geneticist who discovered the link, said that the find could provide new information for treatment of diseases such as Tay-Sachs Disease, Wolman's Disease and Hurlers Syndrome.

These diseases, which are degenerative and almost always fatal, all have an enzyme missing that causes malfunction in the packaging of digestive enzymes. Womack said that part of the normal function of enzymes is to move through the cell and become packaged in bodies

called lysosomes. In his laboratory mice and in the cells of people who have these diseases, Womack said that the enzyme responsible for getting the digestive enzymes packaged is not produced by the chromosomes as it should be.

As a result, the digestive enzymes travel through the cell collecting sugar chains and never get into the lysosomes. Eventually, the cells become overloaded with their own toxic waste.

"The current theory in getting these enzymes into the lysosomes is getting rid of the sugar chains," Womack said.

Womack said he and Dr. Michel Potier of the University of Montreal have determined that an enzyme called neuraminidase will slice off the sugar chains in the mice.

Womack's theory is that if they can get neuraminidase into the cells to eliminate the sugar chains, the enzymes will pass into the lysosome and be packaged.

Womack said they will try several different methods of getting the neuraminidase into the cells.

First, it will be injected directly into the bloodstream, a method that Womack said will possibly do more damage than good.

If that fails, Womack said that with the help of medical biochemist Dr. Garrett Ihler and chemist Dr. Janos Fendler, two experts in packaging enzymes, he will try to package the neuraminidase before putting it into the bloodstream, a procedure known as enzyme replacement.

"The excitement of this is that it is a model to try different kinds of enzyme replacement therapy," Womack said.

Although practical application is far in the future, Womack said if his experiments work on the mice, the method may work in therapy for people suffering from these enzyme deficient diseases. Womack, who teaches developmental genetics at Texas A&M in addition to his research, is working under a \$26,000 March of Dimes grant.

Consol OKs bus bid; conduct code tabled

By ROY BRAGG
Battalion Staff

The A&M Consolidated School Board approved the purchase of 20 new school buses totaling \$31,605 Monday night.

One of the buses, seating 19 passengers, will be used primarily for special education and kindergarten students.

The other bus will seat 71 passengers and will be used for other students.

The request for the buses will be forwarded to the Texas Education Agency for approval by the Commissioner of Education, said Assistant Superintendent-Finance Donald Ney. The requisitions then will be submitted to the State Board of Control. The board of control will then acquire the buses for the district under state-wide bids.

The new buses should arrive within four months, Ney said.

One way to speed up the delivery process, Superintendent Bruce Anderson said, is to send two drivers to the assembly plant and have them drive the buses to College Station. This would cut the delivery time in half, he said.

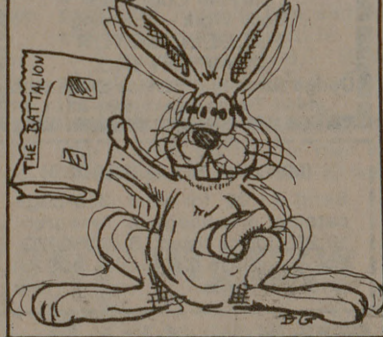
The vote to approve the purchase was 6-0. Trustee Bill Wasson was absent from the unusually short 45-minute meeting.

In other action, a vote on a new conduct code for students in the dis-

trict was postponed. Board President John Reagor said attorney Jack Woods, also absent for most of the meeting, had not completed the final draft of the code.

The board also heard Anderson's recommendation concerning the purchase of an automatic answering and recording phone set. The system could be used for announcing meetings, school lunch menus in addition to taking messages 24 hours a day. Each set installed would cost \$22 to install and \$16 to maintain, Anderson said. The set can be rented or purchased for \$250 to \$300, he added.

See what's in Focus in Thursday's Battalion.



Donations replace stolen money

By EILEEN WALL
Battalion Reporter

Corps members who lost money to thieves at the beginning of the semester have had their money partially reimbursed, thanks to donations by fellow students.

Following thefts that occurred during Freshman Orientation Week and the second week of school, word was sent down the Corps chain of command that a collection would be taken up. Dillard Stone, deputy Corps commander, said.

Each cadet person was urged to donate at least 25 cents. More than \$670, 86 per cent of the \$800 stolen, was collected, Stone said.

Everyone who had money stolen, Stone said, received back 86 per

cent of what he lost.

He added that the collection was not limited to Corps members. For example, he said, a \$5 donation was received from a civilian girl.

The first of the thefts occurred Tuesday, Aug. 28, during the Corps Freshman Orientation Week. More than \$700 was taken from unlocked rooms during a midnight yell practice.

Two weeks later, thieves struck again, this time taking \$82 from band members' rooms while the band was at drill, making the total amount stolen total about \$800.

University Police Chief Russ McDonald said there were no suspects in the thefts, and urged students keep their rooms locked.



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