A&M prof finds new analyzer

By TRACY L. FENTON

Battalion Reporter When Texas A&M University researcher Dr. R. D. MacFarlane was working on nuclear chemistry experiments at the cyclotron, he stum-bled on a new way to analyze everything from new cancer drugs to the substance that might be responsible for cavities.

Ion interference during one of MacFarlane's experiments resulted in the development of the plasma desorption mass spectrometer

The PDMS measures molecular weights and gives scientists an idea of substances

Dr. Catherine McNeal, a research scientist at Texas A&M, said PDMS is unique because of its high range. She said the PDMS is able to measure things up to five or six times larger than most mass spectro-

"It's a big advantage to be able to work in this higher mass range," she

McNeal said PDMS has been a breakthrough in the field of biomedical research because most biological molecules have a much higher molecular weight than could be mea-

Scientists can now build synthetic genes in the laboratory and analyze the structure of them with the PDMS. Recently they were able to measure a synthetic gene with a molecular weight of 12,643, the highest molecular weight ever recorded with a mass spectrometer.

McNeal said the PDMS at Texas

A&M gets samples of new drugs and substances from all over the world

for structural analysis.

"Other methods are not as successful at doing this as we are," she

It is law in many countries that the complete structure of drugs must be analyzed and mapped before the drug can be released and marketed, McNeal said.

"We get a lot of cancer drugs," she said. "We get molecules that biochemists have isolated that they believe cause things.

McNeal said they have gotten substances to analyze that scientists have isolated and believe cause asthma and cavities.

When scientists know the complete structure of a substance they can modify it to make it less toxic or less allergic

Cattle insulin is the closest thing to human insulin and is used by diabetics. The amino acids don't match completely, however, resulting in insulin allergies in one out of every five diabetics, McNeal said. With PDMS, scientists can change the amino acids with synthetic genes and reduce allergic reactions.

PDMS works by irradiation of the molecule to be studied. McNeal said a "plasma" of the molecule is spread on what looks like aluminum foil. The man-made isotope californium-252 is placed behind the foil and makes ions of the molecule bounce off the foil. She said the length of time it takes the ion to reach the detector in the front of the spectrometer is proportional to the molecular weight. If the molecule is heavy, the ion takes a long time to reach the detector. If it is light, the ion bounces off quickly.

Mini-class sign-ups available

A series of Christmas mini-classes offered by the College Station Community Education program are open for registration through Thursday.

The 20 classes, scheduled to begin Monday, will include instruction in crochet, gift wrapping, holiday cake decorating, sign language, self-defense and rape prevention for women, Spanish and several exercise classes. A smoking clinic will also be offered.

Registration will continue through Thursday in the Community Education office at 1300 Jersey from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. The average cost for one class will be \$7.

Local transit group meets on Thursday

The Bryan-College Station Urban Transportation Study Steering Com-mittee will hold a meeting at 1:30 p.m. Thursday in the Lecture Rehearsal Hall at the Brazos Center.

Items of discussion are scheduled to include an airport master plan, an energy contingency plan, an arterial system, section 18 operations and public transit.

The County Commissioners Court and the city councils of Bryan and College Station have been invited to attend the meeting.

Campus Names

Longtime Department of Agricultural Communications staff member Dorothy A. Holland, whose most recent position has been associate extension editor for publications and training, has been appointed acting head of the department.

Holland will serve as acting head while a search is being conducted for a person to fill the position vacated by Dr. William E. Tedrick, who has resigned as editor and department head to assume the position of Extension program evalua-

Dr. Robert H. Page, dean of engineering at

Texas A&M University, has been honored by the Accreditation Board for Engineering Technology for two three-year terms of service on the ABET board. He was awarded a special plaque recognizing his work as treasurer during 1977-80.

Texas A&M University students Amy Lynn Bayer, William S. Harlan, Eric P. Johansen and Katherine R. Evers have been named recipients of \$1,000 scholarships from the International Society of Exploration Geophysics (SEG) Foundation. The scholarships are among 85 awarded by the SEG Foundation for the 1980-81 academic

Harlan is a senior, Johansen and Bayer are juniors and Evers is a sophomore.

Dr. Neilon J. Rowan of Texas A&M University's civil engineering faculty has been elected president of the International Institute of Trans-

Rowan, who is also a research engineer with the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M, was IITE national vice president in 1979-80, served on the institute's board of directors and held all offices in the Texas section of ITE. He was Texas Transportation Engineer of the Year in

Talk on credit scheduled by American Express Co.

An American Express Co.sponsored discussion on the various spects of finance was scheduled for

11 a.m. in 108 Harrington. Susan Bondy, a financial consultant, was to discuss how to establish credit and credit rights, pros and cons of credit borrowing and the impact of credit controls.

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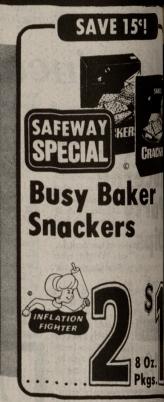
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