

Local

Aggies design coffee filter separator

By KATHY O'CONNELL
Battalion Reporter

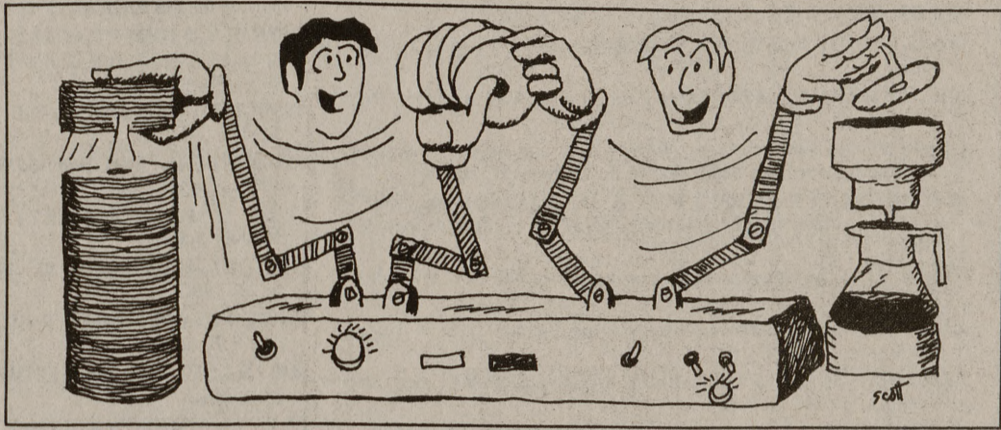
Frustrated coffee drinkers take note! Two students at Texas A&M University may have put an end to the tedious and often time-consuming task of separating coffee filters from a stack.

Forrest Heath and Rodney Hocht have designed a device that will separate coffee filters one at a time. In addition to designing the device, the enterprising students decided to patent their invention.

Heath, a 1979 chemical engineering graduate, said he and his partner applied for the patent in the spring of 1978 and are now trying to find someone to manufacture it.

Heath said the dispenser is a plastic cup with a movable arm that grabs a filter and places it in the filter holder. "When we first got the assignment," he said, "we sat and piddled around for a couple of hours and then it hit us. We realized we were making it more complicated than it really is."

Dr. Tim Coppinger, a professor in the Engineering Design Graphics department, said there is at least one other student who has pursued a pa-



tent. This student, he said, designed a sprinkler system that utilized the framework of a wire-link fence for the water distribution system. Coppinger said the student didn't hire an attorney as Hocht and Heath did. Instead, he went through a company that deals with patents. The company wasn't willing to put up the front money on the device even though they thought his invention was patentable.

"If a company like this doesn't see any money in a project, they won't have anything to do with it," he said.

Coppinger said at one time Texas A&M had a liaison with a company in New York who dealt with patents. None of the patents the University sought were accepted by the company, he said.

"The trouble with patents," he said, "is that it only prohibits other people from making, using and sell-

ing your invention. Even if you have a patent it won't guarantee success in the market place.

"All patents are good, but they're

not the answer to everything," he added.

Coppinger said the coffee dispensing assignment isn't the only one he gives out. "I've given an assignment where students have come up with a workable solution for dispensing powdered-drink mixes like Tang."

He said he tries to assign projects that shouldn't be too complicated since his students are freshmen.

"Sometimes the freshmen have come up with some ideas that are being used right now," he said. For example, he said, "In 1969 we assigned students a project to modify an existing facility, namely gasoline service stations."

"One team came up with a solution that used computerized pumps and self service," Coppinger said. "At that time, self-serve stations were almost unheard of."

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Anti-crime talk tonight

The Texas A&M University Police Department will sponsor a talk on crime prevention tonight at 7:30 in Lounge A, between Spence and Briggs dormitories on the Quad. Residents of the two dorms have been having trouble with thefts and requested the presentation, Police Chief Russ McDonald said.

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Course teaches motorcycle safety

By BELINDA McCOY
Battalion Reporter

It's not just "hippies and hoodlums" riding motorcycles nowadays, and it's not just "hippies and hoodlums" getting hurt on motorcycles nowadays either.

With more people riding motorcycles to combat the high cost of fuel, more people are getting hurt on them — usually because of inexperience, said Paul Sittler of Texas A&M University's Industrial Education Department.

Texas A&M is trying to decrease that number of injuries by offering a motorcycle riding course called Safety Education 430.

The course will be taught in conjunction with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) and will teach basic operating skills, plus give training to enable the students to teach the course to others. The course is actually an instructor preparation course, explained Sittler, graduate student and course instructor.

"Any dummy can jump on one (a motorcycle) and take off and go 50 miles an hour and not fall over," said Sittler. "The skill associated with riding a motorcycle is stopping and going in traffic."

Sittler also said the major skill involved in motorcycle riding is perception — looking out for the other guy. Research shows that in 65 percent of accident cases involving motorcycles, the driver of the other vehicle was at fault, not the motorcyclist.

"What we're trying to do in the MSF course is teach people the necessary survival skills to really watch out for the other guy," Sittler said.

Safety Education 430 is not new to Texas A&M, said Sittler. The course was taught from 1976 to 1978, but was cancelled due to lack of enrollment. It was reinstated in the spring and summer semesters of 1980, but failed again this fall.

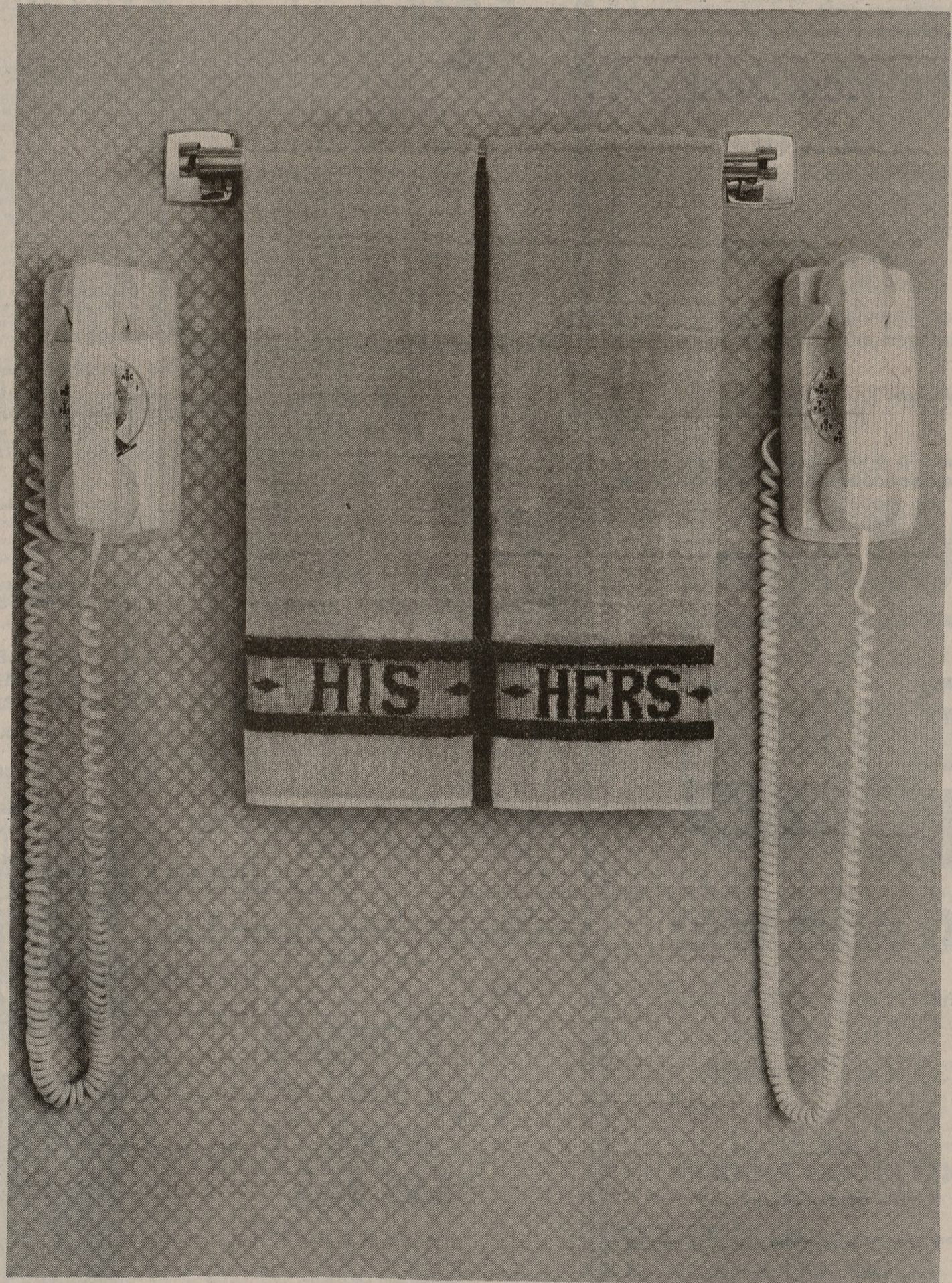
"Lack of publicity was the major cause," Sittler said. "Nobody pre-registered."

The course was originally developed by Texas A&M's Safety Education Program for the Kawasaki motorcycle company. Later, the other major motorcycle companies — Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha, and Harley-Davidson — developed similar courses. Eventually the five companies combined the course and founded the Motorcycle Safety Foundation to educate the public on the safe use of motorcycles.

Sittler said the instructor preparation course has three phases. The student first takes the Motorcycle Rider Course, which is a 20-hour course in basic riding skills. Then the student learns how to teach, organize and administer the course.

Finally, the student actually teaches the course. Successful completion of the course will certify students to teach motorcycle safety. This will be important because on January 1, 1981, a new law will go into effect in Texas requiring all persons under 18 to receive motorcycle instruction before licensing.

Students do not have to have their own motorcycle and helmet to take the course. Local motorcycle dealers furnish motorcycles and the Harley-Davidson company furnishes helmets.



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