

Local



Photo by Cindy Gee

A bird in the hand

Bob Schoolfield and his son John check out the horses, pigs, turkeys, mules, a bobcat and assorted other animals for display Thursday through Saturday.

A&M sponsors patents office

By CINDY GEE

Battalion Staff
When ground maintenance workers at Texas A&M University developed a centralized sprinkler system using radio signals, they didn't have University help to commercialize and patent their invention.

That's why Texas A&M created a patent office three years ago — to help faculty and staff patent their inventions and get them on the market. The University is trying to centralize management for inventions, patent administrator Ed Lefner said.

"Many people don't recognize that they have an invention and it's patentable," he said. "They'll realize it's important, so they publicize it and communicate all the details to other researchers. Our biggest problem is communicating with the faculty and staff that are doing research."

Lefner said that after an invention has been publicized, the inventor has one year after publication to obtain a U.S. patent.

However, an inventor cannot get a foreign patent if the invention was publicized.

The patent service is free to anyone employed by the University or anyone using facilities owned by or under the supervision of the school. Patents usually cost the inventor about \$4,000, Lefner said, and then all you have is a piece of paper which is good for 17 years. He said many patent cases take a minimum of three to 10 years from the filing date to commercialization.

"We immediately begin to contact companies," Lefner said. "Our primary goal is to get the inventions into use. Industries are very unlikely to develop a product if they don't have patent protection."

"It's not as easy as you might think. The company looks at it as an opportunity and also as a responsibility. If they don't do something with the invention, they could lose their rights."

He said the University usually tries to maintain the rights to the invention, but gives the company the right to make, use and sell the product. But very often the University gives exclusive rights to an invention, he said.

To be patentable an invention must be new, useful, and not obvious. It can never have been made or used anywhere in the world. A person can patent one component, or an entire piece of equipment.

"Many people say small companies and individuals are being squeezed out because they couldn't afford to protect their patent rights," Lefner said, "but those problems don't happen very often. Patents serve as an incentive for development."

Fourteen patents were filed by Texas A&M in 1980, Lefner said. The University patent policy says that after a reduction of 15 percent for administrative costs and a deduction for the cost of patenting

Former students set funding

By DIANA SULTENFUSS

Battalion Reporter
A budget including an 8 percent increase in unrestricted funds was approved for 1981 academic projects at an Association of Former Students meeting Saturday.

Unrestricted funds are given to the organization with no designation as to use, whereas restricted funds are earmarked for a specific purpose.

The new budget of over \$1.6 million for academic projects is all from unrestricted funds, an increase of \$122,303 over the 1980 budget.

More than 30,000 donations to the Association of Former Students provided for total funds of \$1,925,695.

The \$655,060 for academic support of Texas A&M University, 40.5 percent of the total academic projects budget, was earmarked for many purposes, including:

- \$48,400 for scholarships and student awards.
- \$20,000 for student activities.
- \$35,000 for graduate college merit fellowships.
- \$30,000 for the inauguration of the next Texas A&M president

and an evening with the president.

— \$21,200 for faculty achievement awards.

— \$45,500 for the deans' and vice presidents' funds.

— \$40,000 as a departmental enrichment fund.

— \$218,393 for computer records and provisions.

— \$10,000 for a faculty and students' fund for those unable to find other funding, such as a faculty member traveling to present a paper.

— \$25,000 for admissions and school relations.

— \$10,000 for the University Administrative Fund.

— \$23,800 to Gehring Associates for public relations work to

promote Texas A&M in publications.

— \$10,875 for high school programs.

— \$19,500 for the Forsyth Building Fund.

— \$50,000 for the University Fund for Excellence, used for projects which cannot use state funds.

— \$44,892 for University relations.

— \$2,500 for land transportation at Texas A&M University at Galveston.

The unrestricted funds budget included \$704,677, 43.6 percent of the total, for services for former students and Texas A&M.

General and administrative expenses totaled \$257,922, 15.9 percent of the unrestricted projects budget.

In her financial report, controller Juanita B. Murray said contributions were higher in 1980 than in 1979. She said that at least 7,000 former students generally contribute the \$15 minimum donation in order to get their name in the Directory of Former Students, which is published every three years.

In other sections of the financial report, Murray said the Century Club has passed the 10,000-member mark.

The memorial scholarship income totaled \$687,637, Murray said. Total funds controlled by the association in 1980 were over \$5.6 million, exceeding 1979 funds by almost \$900,000.

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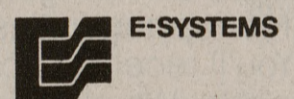
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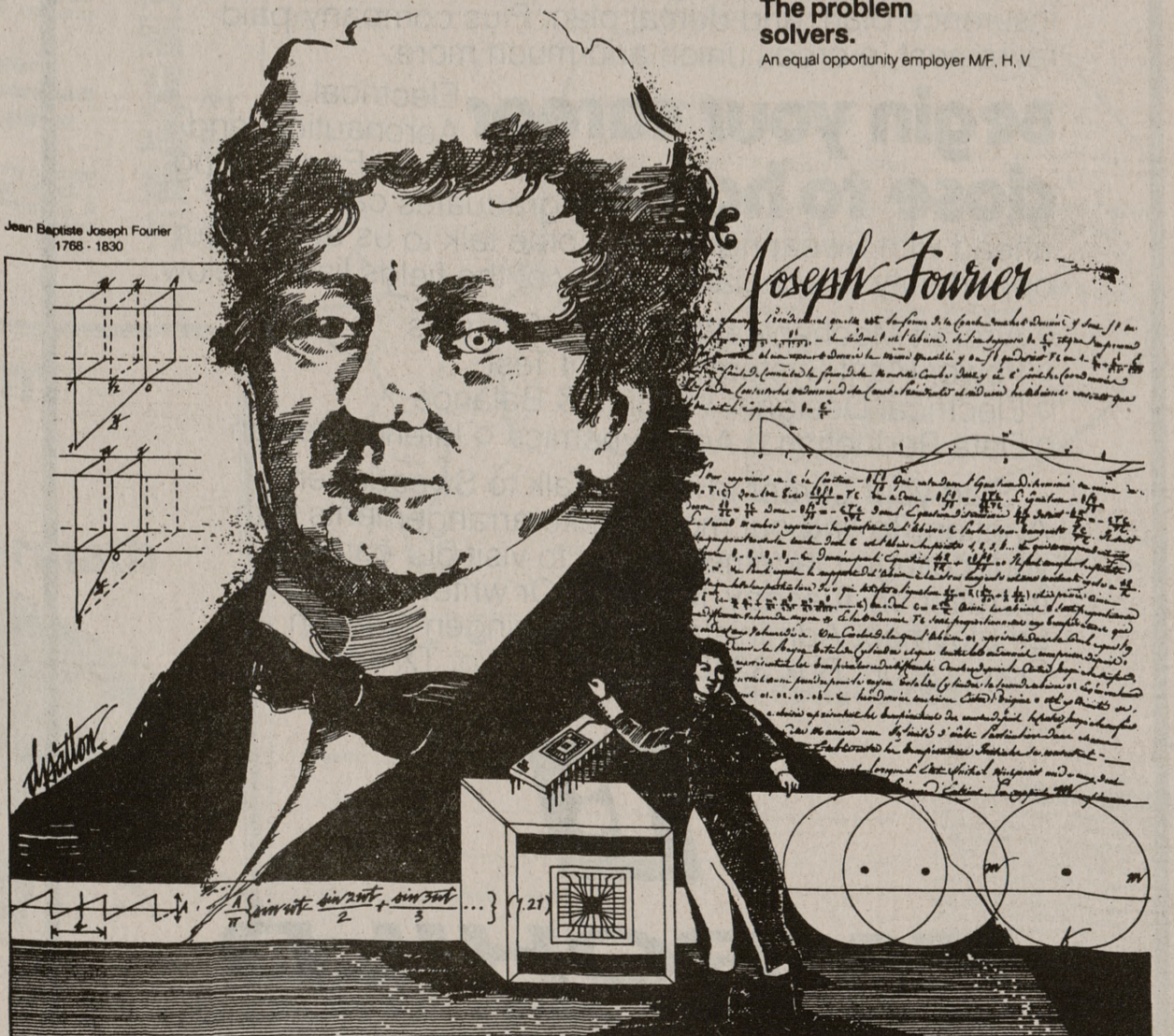
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OUR GARLAND DIVISION WILL BE INTERVIEWING ON CAMPUS FEBRUARY 24 & 25, 1981
OUR GREENVILLE DIVISION WILL BE INTERVIEWING ON CAMPUS FEBRUARY 26, 1981

New library hours start today

Reminder: Late-night research will be a bit easier when the Evans Library extends its hours Monday.

The new schedule is:
Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m.-1 a.m.
Friday, 7:30 a.m.-11 p.m.
Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, 12 noon-1 a.m.

The reserve reading room will only be open Sunday mornings from 9 to the main library's opening at noon. Entrance during this time will be through the door on the north side.



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TUES. FEB. 24TH — RUDDER FOUNTAIN

TOBACCO SPITTING CONTEST 1:00-1:30
BYOD — (BRING YOUR OWN DIP)

C & W DANCE CONTEST — 12:15-12:45
COUPLES SIGN UP FOR DANCE CONTEST AT THE SECRETARY'S DESK IN

ROOM 216 MSC OR CALL GREGG NOLA 696-7160

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