



Piano man

photo by Eileen Manton

Carl Potlik, a senior electrical engineering major from Houston, entertains students in the MSC main lounge during lunch last week.

Specialized plant study taking root

by Charlotte Boyd

Battalion Reporter
A highly specialized research center capable of upgrading the production of biological material using plant tissue culture has been established for research and graduate students at Texas A&M University.

In action Tuesday, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents authorized establishment of the administrative structure for the Center for Biological Nuclear Magnetic Resonance.

Nuclear magnetic resonance technology allows scientists to analyze enzymes and other biological compounds while they are at work in living cells, tissues and other organisms.

The center will involve the cooperation of scientists in the Colleges of Science, Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine and

the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

Texas A&M President Frank E. Vandiver appointed Dr. Ian Scott, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, as head of the center. Scott, also an expert in organic chemistry, was one of five American scientists named in 1978 as a fellow in Britain's Royal Society and is one of the world's foremost authorities on natural products.

Scott joined the Texas A&M faculty in 1977 and will return next week from a brief stay at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

The present chemistry building is to house most of the research.

"It will take a year for the very sophisticated major pieces of equipment to come in," Dr. Arthur E. Martell, head of the chemistry department, said.

Surplus, low prices cause loss to farms

by Kellie Kurtin

Battalion Reporter
Nationally imposed embargoes and a superb crop production in 1981 left American farmers with a large surplus of food reserves but little bargaining power, said Dr. William Black.

Black, a professor of agricultural economics and an economist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, said that America, one of the four countries in the world that produces more than it eats, has an excessive amount of food that can be sold, but farmers are losing a lot of money due to low prices.

"It's the inelastic demand," Black said, "when supply increases, prices decrease at a much faster rate."

Although farmers must charge lower prices for their overabundant goods, retail prices for the American consumer have risen. Costs such as labor, packaging, transportation and rent have risen, Black said, while the farmer is getting 13 percent less for his goods now than one year ago.

"I would suspect prices for consumers will increase by 7 percent this year," Black said,

"in spite of the fact that farmers are getting less."

A reconstruction of selling techniques is beginning to occur on the farmers' level, Black said, as they are starting to realize they need to sell on a collective basis rather than as individual bargainers. "I think, nationwide, farmers are beginning to organize better," Black said. "Right now, though, farmers are where labor unions were 50 years ago."

After forming their own group marketing organization, Black believes American farmers will have more bargaining power and the industry could

again be a profitable one. Problems on the farm front are not limited to home — American farmers also are having international problems such as a decreased demand among traditional importers of American grains.

"One solution is to increase world demand," Black said, "other countries could stockpile some food for themselves."

To keep reserves of food, however, is costly and requires special facilities. "It's a question of what leadership in the world really wants," Black said.

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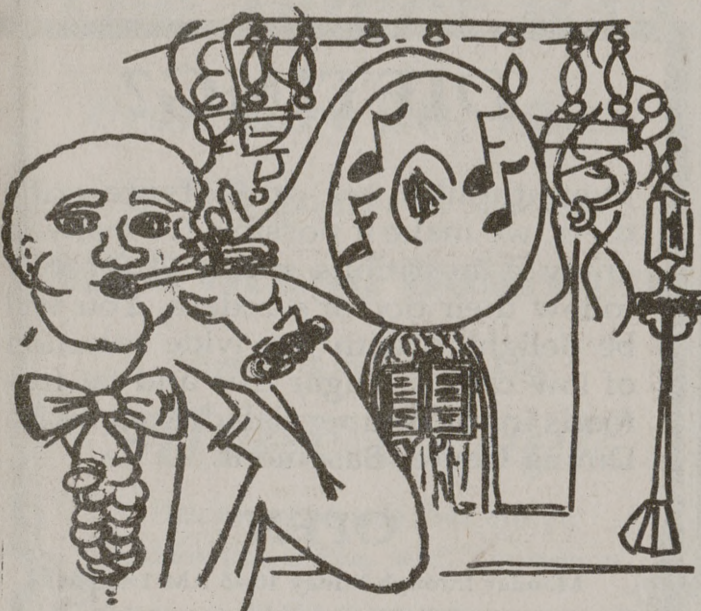
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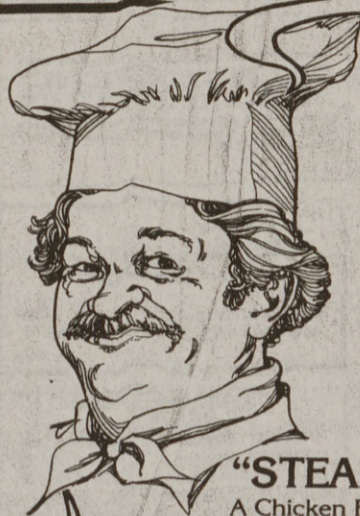
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