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Geneticist urges chromosome test

United Press International
DALLAS — A genetic pioneer insists women in families with a history of mental retardation should be tested for an elusive genetic abnormality that may be responsible for 25 percent of mental retardation found in males.

Dr. Patricia Howard-Peebles, director of the Cytogenetics Laboratory and a professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center, said it is important for women under 20 with a family history of mental retardation to be tested to determine whether they are carriers of the "fragile X" chromosome.

The disorder occurs on the X chromosome, one of the chromosomes that determines the sex of a child.

Boys have the chromosome pairing X-Y and girls X-X. If a girl has a fragile X chromosome, retardation usually fails to materialize because she has a back-up normal X chromosome, which is not the case with boys.

However, Dr. Howard-Peebles, one of the leading authorities on fragile X-linked mental retardation, admits it is not known what the fragile X site on chromosomes is.

Although the condition appears predominantly in males, and affected females are considered carriers, researchers have recently discovered some female carriers are slightly retarded.

"We like to test a retarded male family member first," she said. "If he is positive for fragile X, we say the family has it. If he is negative, we like to test another affected male before we rule it out. If both are negative, we conclude that the family doesn't have fragile X-linked retardation."

A female carrier should be tested while she is young because once she reaches the age of 25, the fragile site usually fails to show up in tests.



Finding fall fashions

Stephanie Smith looks at a shirt that she plans to enter Texas A&M in the fall. Her father, Larry, is showing her in the MSC Bookstore. Stephanie plans to enter Texas A&M in the fall. The Smiths are from Ft. Worth.

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Reagan budget cuts blamed for decline in solar interest

United Press International
HOUSTON — An imaginary oil glut is lulling the public into a false sense of energy security at the expense of vitally needed solar development, the chairman of the American Solar Energy Society warns.

"We have undoubtedly hit a bump in the road," Francis DeWinter said Tuesday at a Solar Technologies Conference and International Exposition. "The oversupply of oil on the international market has brought a temporary, if not misguided, sense of energy security."

He the Reagan Administration budget cuts hinder enthusiasm for solar energy, pointing out the proposed budget allocated \$100 million for solar energy research for 1983, a drop from \$570 million in 1980.

"The dangerous actions of a few in Washington are undercutting vitally important progress in research and development," he said.

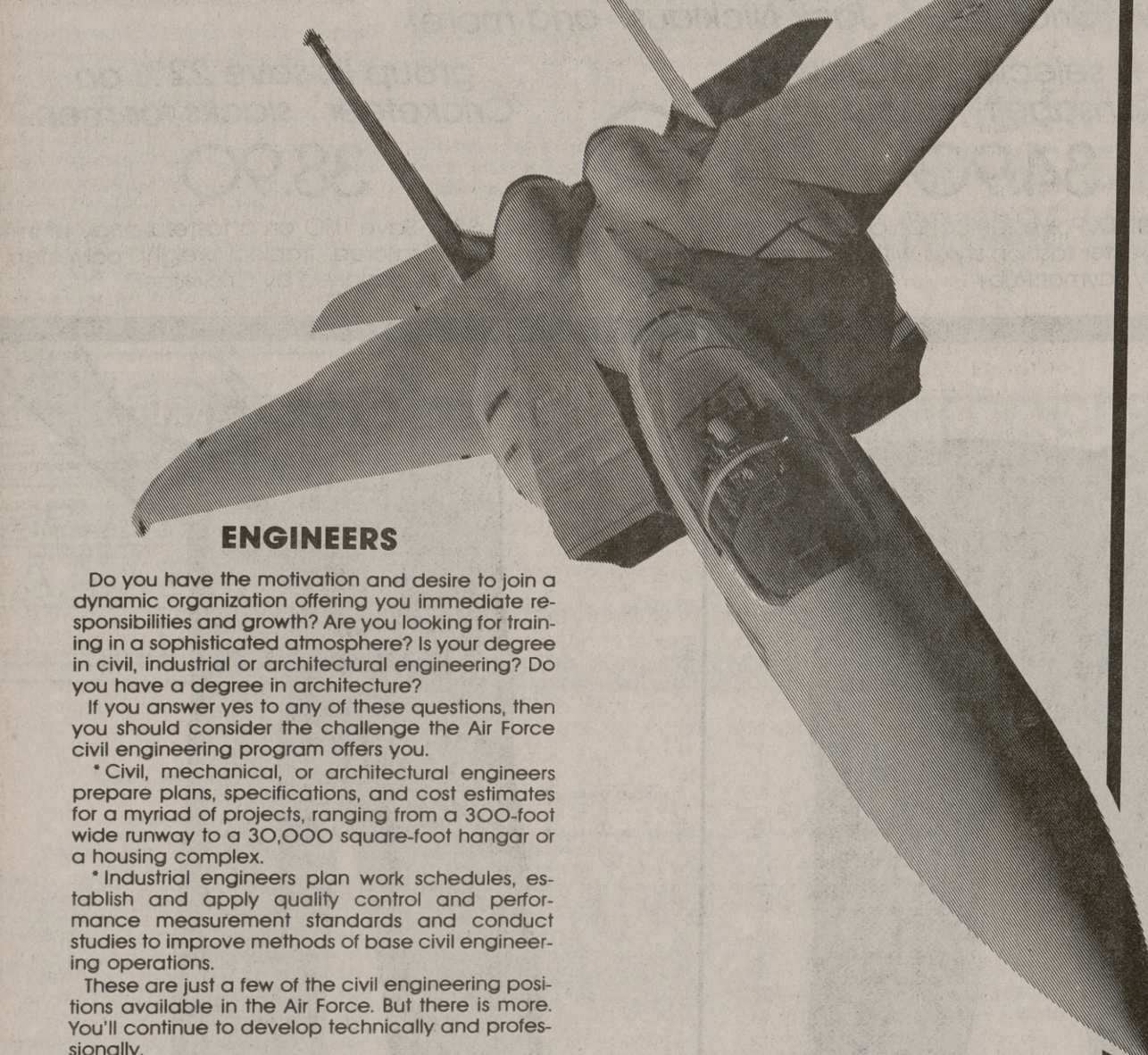
DeWinter, president of the Corp. of Santa Cruz, Calif., significant achievements have been made in the solar energy field in the past four years, including an increase from 100 homes equipped with solar energy to an estimated 800 homes today.

DeWinter said solar collector sales have increased from about \$17 million a year to an estimated \$400 million, amounting to a displacement of 1.5 million barrels of oil annually.

Despite the progress, the United States still is dependent upon foreign oil, which cost an estimated \$80 billion a year, he noted.

"The sheer size of our continued reliance on imported oil in terms of real dollars, is most troublesome," he said. "It is an unfortunate fact that we have not translated public preference for solar energy into mass action in the public marketplace."

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