



staff photo by Octavio Garcia

John Posey, left, an electrical engineering major from Huntsville, and Dr. John Painter, center, director of the electrical engineering computer facilities, look on while Dave Tabor, a

representative from Data Control Corp., types information on one of the four new computers donated by Data Control Corp. for use in the PLATO program.

## Micro-computer lab proposed for A&A

by Craig Harris  
Battalion Reporter

The accounting department at Texas A&M has received \$45,000 to establish a micro-computer laboratory for use by accounting students.

The new micro-computers are more sophisticated and expensive than the micro-computers now used in the Academic Computing Center in the Academic and Agency Building, said Dr. James Benjamin, head of the accounting department.

The computers in the ACC are TRS-80 Model IIIs and Commodores. The new computers will be IBM personal computers.

Benjamin said the computers will be used for Accounting 427, an accounting elective that will become a required course for accounting majors who enroll at Texas A&M in fall 1983.

A micro-computer laboratory proposal issued by the accounting department said that the micro-computer laboratory will be a place where students

can explore and learn about computer applications in accounting. The proposal also indicated that the micro-computer has become a permanent productive tool in the business marketplace.

Funds for the new micro-computer laboratory were contributed by ARCO Oil and Gas Co., and Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co.

The laboratory, to be located in the Academic and Agency Building, should be in operation by June 1983.

## A&M installs computer instruction programs

by Mallous Kazmzadeh  
Battalion Reporter

The idea of computer instruction instead of professor instruction may become less peculiar at Texas A&M with the installation of the Programmed Learning and Training Organization. A pilot installation of PLATO in the Sterling C. Evans Library micro-computer facility has enabled students in an honors-level computer science course to learn from the computer rather than from an instructor.

Four computers were donated to the University by the Control Data Corp., said Dr. Sallie Sheppard, instructor for the course.

She said the course material is recorded on a disk that students can check out for a two-hour period.

"So far, students have been enthusiastic about it," she said.

Although Fortran is the only course offered this semester on PLATO, various donations — including \$395,000 from the Texas A&M Board of Regents — will mean first-level courses in calculus, chemistry and physics may be offered by the summer or fall semester.

Dr. John Painter, director of the electrical engineering computer facilities, said PLATO is being used on a two-year trial basis. The money allotted for PLATO will buy 20 more computers, he said.

Three modes exist on the computer — student, instructor and author — and each have different functions, Painter said.

The student mode enables students to take tests, review grades, examine their level of performance, review notes written by the instructor, and examine the objectives of each assignment.

The instructor mode can record student rosters, examine statistics of the class, leave messages for students and add or

delete students from the class roster.

The author mode enables the instructor to develop, refine and create course material.

"PLATO will change faculty members from lecturers and graders into authors, student managers and consultants," Painter said.

Both Sheppard and Painter agreed that the main advantage of PLATO is that the computer can complete tedious grading while instructors monitor students and create course material.

Another advantage, said Sheppard, is that students can

work at their own pace and repeat lessons as many times as they wish.

Students also can ask the computer questions whenever they are having difficulty.

"The computer doesn't have human weaknesses," Painter said. "It can repeat anything an infinite number of times with infinite patience."

PLATO was developed at the University of Illinois and currently is the most broadly based and supported computer system. In addition to the courses mentioned, the system can provide instruction in remedial grammar, medicine, business and Russian.

### PHI ETA SIGMA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Seniors who plan to enter graduate or professional schools in Fall 1983 and who are members of Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society should get in touch with the faculty advisor Dr. Curtis F. Lard in Rm. 113, System Bldg., Phone 845-3712.

National Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society will award eight \$1,000 scholarships and twenty-eight \$500 scholarships this year on the basis of the student's scholastic record, evidence of creative ability, potential for success in chosen field, and character. Only members of Phi Eta Sigma are eligible for these gift scholarships. National deadline for submitting applications is March 1. Application forms are available from the faculty adviser to the local chapter. Local deadline for applications is February 23, 1983.

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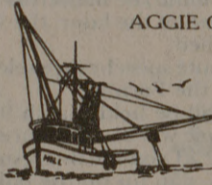
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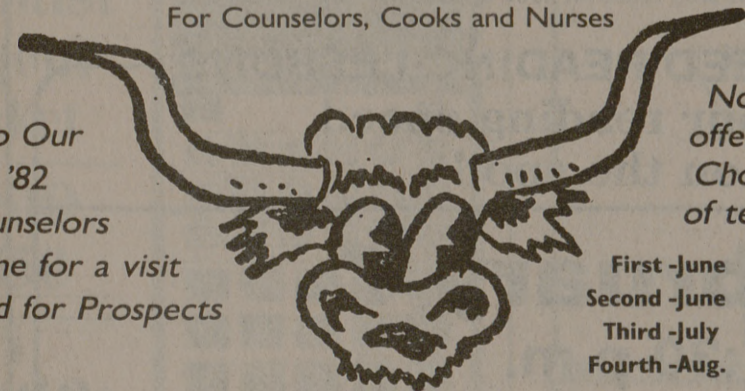
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