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February 22, 1982

A&M prof probes mega-cold

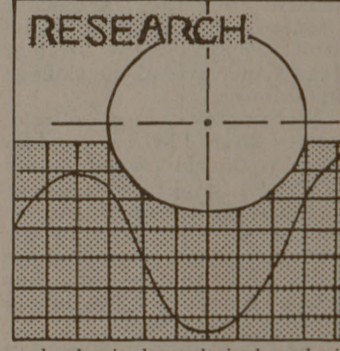
by Cheryl Burke
Battalion Reporter
Texas A&M physicists are exploring a new frontier — the borderline on absolute zero. A magnetic cooling apparatus now makes it possible to study the behavior and properties of matter at temperatures within seven ten-thousandths of a degree above absolute zero, Dr. Wiley Kirk, assistant professor of physics, says.

This device, which took six years to make, enables researchers to super-cool matter to temperatures at which it undergoes radical changes in properties, Kirk says. Super-cooling is a result of reducing the en-

tropy, or disorder, of matter. Reducing the disorder of the atoms and molecules allows researchers to study fundamental physical properties which would be impossible to study under the chaotic influence of heat, he says.

"This is a frontier area of research," Kirk said. "We are studying the basic nature of matter — expanding the boundaries of our knowledge."

Kirk says that at this point he is not looking for applications for this new knowledge, but the new technology could lead to advances in the microelectronic industry, new power-transmission methods, chemical



and physical analytical techniques, even space travel — in navigation, propulsion and communications.

Only a few other institutions

in the nation have the capabilities to conduct such research, Kirk says.

The magnetic cooling device used to super-cool such matter as helium and metals is a \$300,000 multi-stage apparatus, Kirk says. It cools in several interlinked steps, using liquid helium isotopes, a dilution refrigerator and a magnetic refrigerator to isolate and cool the matter.

Super-cooling produces new characteristics such as superfluidity, superconductivity, and magnetism, Kirk says.

A superfluid is an "ideal fluid," he says. It moves without friction, and therefore has no

resistance to flow. If put in motion in a closed system, it would move forever.

A superconductive material has no resistance to flow of an electrical current, making it ideal for sensitive electronic instrumentation, he says.

Kirk says these new superfluids, superconductors and magnetic systems are used to study the fundamental nature of atomic and molecular structures.

"There is just so much to learn, so much we don't yet about the basics of matter and the structures of matter," he says.

Suspects arrested in credit card case

United Press International
DALLAS — The arrests of three women and one man may crack what police think is a stolen credit card ring. It is suspected that the members of the ring charged some \$9.2 million in goods in 42 states during the past 17 months.

The operation just recently began appearing in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Austin.

During January, 11 bogus cards were used to purchase \$47,000 in VISA Travel Cheques at a foreign currency exchange booth at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport.

Monday, Dallas police confiscated five blank cards and more than \$300,000 in diamonds, rubies, clothing and electronic equipment at a north Dallas apartment.

"We didn't become aware of the scheme until Feb. 3, when we received a call from a travel agency clerk about a counterfeit

credit-card purchase," said W.W. Saunders, a forgery investigator for the Dallas police department.

Grace Ramirez, an agent at Miller Travel Inc. at the World Trade Center, said she had a gut feeling that a woman wearing a pink jacket and red leather pants was giving her a false credit card.

Ramirez said the woman wanted two tickets on the 6:10 p.m. flight to Los Angeles by way of Houston — a fare that costs \$100 more than a direct flight.

"I kept insisting that she could go cheaper by flying direct (from D-FW) and she kept insisting that she wanted to leave from Love Field," said Ramirez.

Ramirez took the woman's credit card and approved the number with VISA. But as soon as the woman left, Ramirez called the phone number the woman listed as her home in

California. The man answered the phone said he did not know the woman.

The woman, identified as Gwendolyn Mae Collins, was arrested at Love Field along with her companion, Catherine. Those arrests led police to the north Dallas area where they arrested Ann Lawson and Charles Burton Jr.

Collins is in the Dallas jail on felony charges of credit card fraud. Sample was in investigation and later received Lawson was questioned on charges of credit card theft and forgery and was released after posting \$5,000 bond.

Burton, who police said has a list of 25 aliases and is in Fort Bend County for a 1982 conviction, was held on charge of felony credit card abuse.

Texas video champion wins national contest

United Press International
DALLAS — World champion Ben Gold has spent most of his adolescence listening to ringing sounds and watching translucent colors flash on a dark blue screen.

Unlike teenagers of another era, who had similar experiences in their dreams or in hallucinations, Gold's trips are real.

At least as real as anything in the world of video games.

During the last four years, the "vidiot" has logged an average of four hours a day on Pac Man, Stargate and Space Invaders. On weekends he spends nearly eight hours a day at local arcades.

The time has paid off. Earlier this month, Gold, 16, zapped

two older competitors in a national video game championship in Hollywood that was held Monday before a live audience on ABC's "That's Incredible."

"I thought I had a chance at it," said the sophomore from Greenhill School, which is in the Dallas area. "I figured I would win it if I played my cards right and everyone else screwed up."

Gold was in luck. His opponent, Todd Walker, San Jose, Calif., "screwed up" and Gold was able to past him in the three-hour competition.

His other rival, Brian Olsen, 19, of Calgary, Canada, balked on a new game thrown into the competition. None of the teens had ever played the three computer games — Millipede, Frogger and Space Invaders.

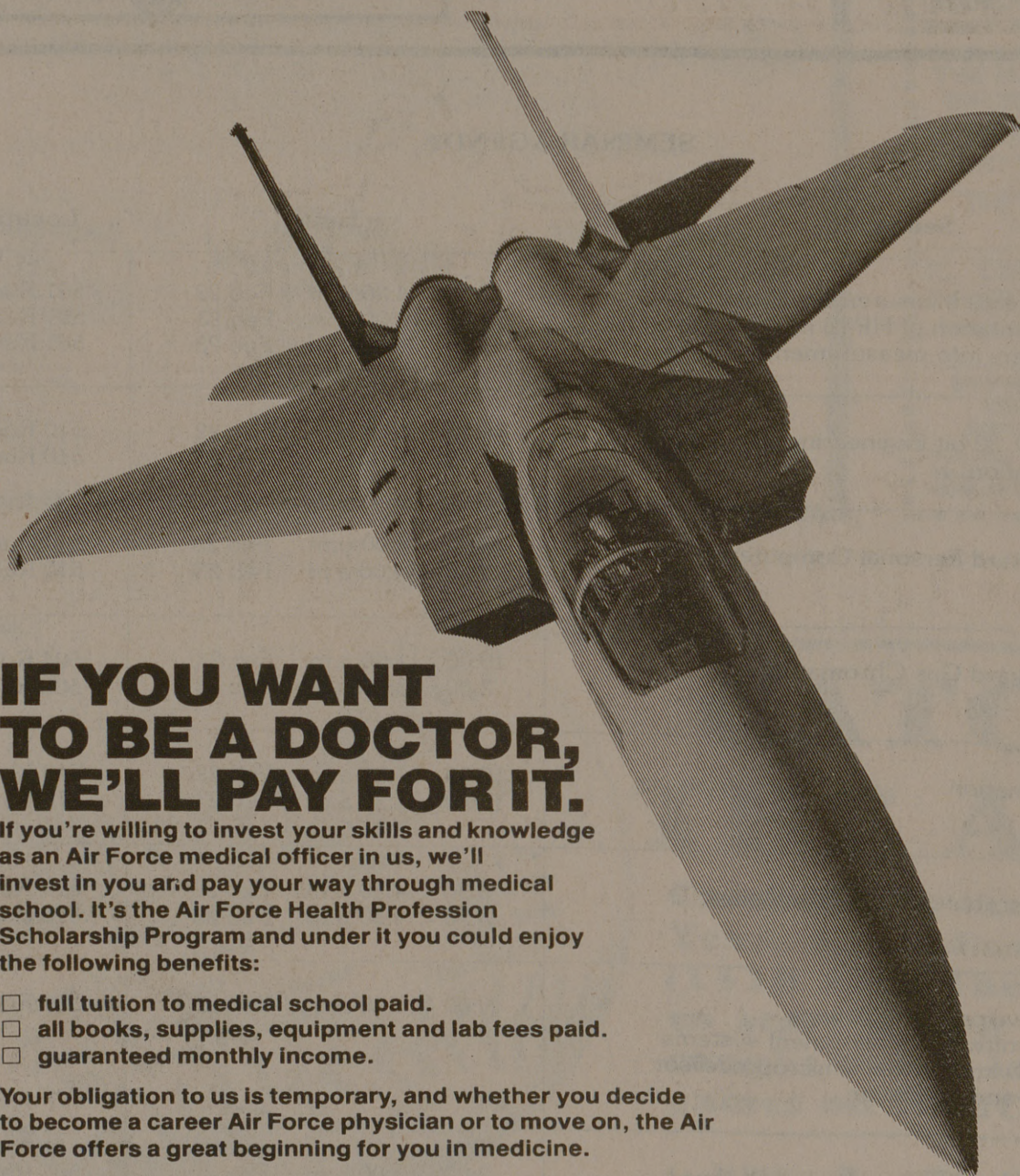
Gold began his career in the computer world with one of the first games on the market in 1972. He progressed to Breakout and Space Invaders.

One night last September, nearly four years and thousands of quarters later, Gold set a world record at a Dallas arcade. That night, on his 16th birthday, he set the record for Star Gate at 4,000 points in 35 hours.

The world record held for his first major competition, Ottumwa, Iowa, which is 90 miles outside Des Moines.

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