

staff photo by David Fisher

Prisoner or a Picasso?

Micheal Raines looks as if he's working behind bars, but he's really not. He was painting the rails Wednesday afternoon on the stairs at the

Agriculture Building. Raines is a painter for Texas A&M's physical plant. The stairs had faded to the point they needed a face lift.

Speaker discusses invention, innovation in companies

by Craig Harris
Battalion Reporter

American business companies need care and consideration to successfully market inventions.

Dr. Donald N. Frey said it takes careful planning — and a little luck — to successfully take a product or process from invention to the marketplace, a process he called innovation.

To have innovation, he said, the company must have a good relationship between management and workers, especially with inventors. The company also needs to have fairly rigid financial control.

"Most successful inventors are very disciplined and work better with a certain amount of

control," he said. "But too much control kills innovation."

Frey said support and encouragement needs to be given at all levels of the company.

"You're going to have failures, but that is the price you pay," he said.

The possibility of an invention being successful in the market is slim, and unsuccessful inventions cost large corporations millions of dollars each year, Frey said. But, he added, a successful product can make back the lost money many times over.

Frey said getting inventors to produce successful products is a personalized matter, and care must be taken to insure the balance between freedom and control.

He said the decisions to stay with an invention idea must come from management, since they could mean the success or failure of the company.

Frey said all types of people are inventive — not just "white-coated lab technicians with science degrees," and innovation needs all levels of workers to be successful.

Frey will speak today at 2:00 p.m. in Room 102 of the Academic and Agency building on "Challenges Facing U.S. Industry in the 1980's." His lectures are sponsored by the College of Business Administration and the University Lectures Committee.

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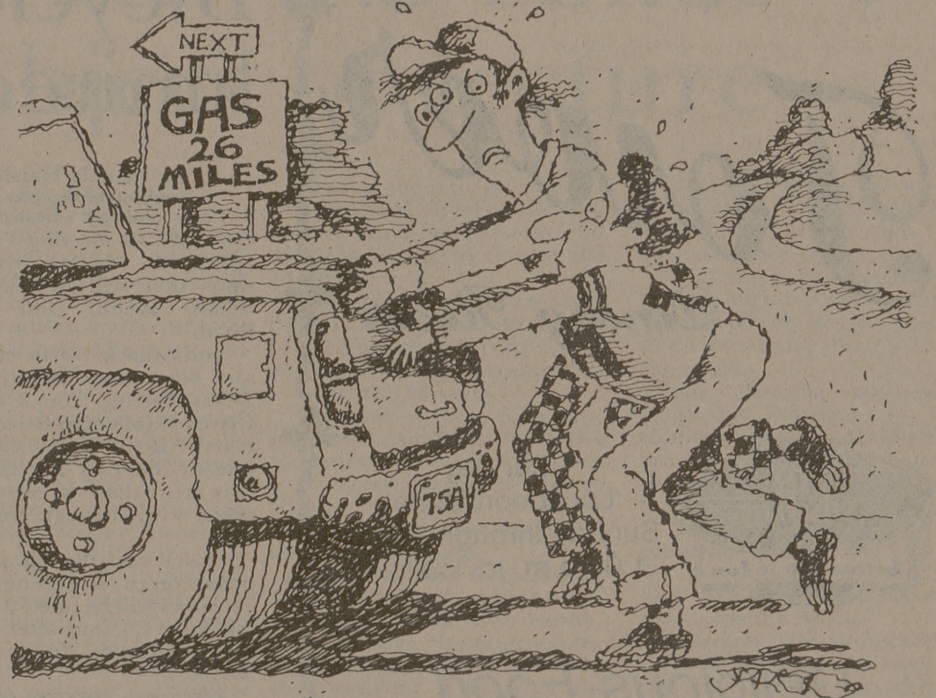
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