

STATE AND LOCAL

Student designs flying eye hospital for needy nations

By BRIAN PEARSON
Reporter

What started as a senior class project may turn into a very beneficial experience for a Texas A&M environmental design student.

For his final project in a design class, Richard LaSalle designed a "flying eye hospital" which could help many underdeveloped countries around the world.

LaSalle's designs equipped a DC-10 jet plane with a teaching facility and eye hospital aboard.

The original plans for the flying non-profit hospital, project ORBIS, was originated by Dr. David Paton, a Houston eye surgeon.

The concept of ORBIS involves flying an airplane around the world and teaching the doctors of underdeveloped countries the latest technologies and tricks of the trade of ophthalmology, LaSalle said.

ORBIS must receive an invitation from the country's government before that country can participate in the program.

Patients are selected by the doctors of underdeveloped countries based on techniques that are applicable to the needs of the host country, he said.

Specifically, the ORBIS doctors use the latest laser and microsurgical

equipment for treating their patients.

The project was able to get off the ground in 1982 after United Airlines donated a DC-8 jet plane to the cause. All the equipment used by ORBIS is donated and all the doctors involved are volunteers.

For his project, LaSalle said he was interested in developing a special facility for ophthalmology. For background material, LaSalle said he called a spokesman at ORBIS to get some general information about ophthalmology. The spokesman encouraged LaSalle to work on a design for a possible ORBIS II project for the future, LaSalle said.

LaSalle said he used the idea for his class project. He designed the eye hospital to fit inside a DC-10 because the Federal Aviation Administration had banned the use of the DC-8 jet plane in the United States. LaSalle's model can be adapted to fit almost any large plane, he said.

LaSalle said he gave the design to ORBIS officials as a gift and expects no compensation if the plan is used.

Like the original design for the DC-8, LaSalle's design includes operating rooms, recovery rooms, classrooms, audiovisual centers, a scrub area and a library.

Mobility was one of the main problems with the original ORBIS



Richard LaSalle with designs for the flying eye hospital.

Photo by FRANK IRWIN

model, LaSalle said. People on the plane could not move from the nose to tail without passing through a sterilized area, he said.

LaSalle said he designed his model with two levels. He put the operating rooms and other sterilized areas on the upper level so people could move around inside the plane

without contaminating these areas, he said.

"We're all very excited with the design," said Gina Demetris, an assistant in the planning department at the ORBIS headquarters in New York City.

LaSalle's design could be used in the ORBIS II project, she said.

She said the ORBIS project is enough for now, but the program is growing so rapidly that a need for a new plan might exist in the future.

The ORBIS jet plane is currently in Turkey and is scheduled to be in China by the end of the summer, Demetris said.

Budget cuts disconnect phone lines

By GIGI SHAMSY
Reporter

Alexander Graham Bell would laugh at the new communication system in the educational psychology department—two coffee cans connected by a string.

The doctoral students on the third and seventh floor of Harrington Tower lost their telephones Feb. 1 because of University budget cuts.

"Stringing the coffee cans along four stairwell walls was our humorous reaction to the situation," Jay Solomon, a graduate student, said.

Students and faculty taking the stairs will find taped string leading to two large coffee cans hanging from the third and seventh floor.

Michael Ash, head of the educational psychology department, said two wall phones on the third and seventh floor have replaced the office phones.

"Since we can't pinpoint the perpetrator of this prank," Ash said, "we've decided to have a lottery to choose which graduate student will be thrown out of the seventh floor window."

Doris Gutcher, departmental secretary, said students and faculty have been good-humored about the prank.

She said two graduate students, Solomon and Pichie Smith, dressed as workmen and came into the department claiming they had direct orders from the Board of Regents to disconnect the new intercom system.

"They handed me a memo from the Board of Regents apologizing for the inconveniences that may have resulted from the removal of the intercoms due to budget cuts," Gutcher said.

Dr. Arthur Blair, assistant to President Vandiver, said each department president was asked to examine the year's remaining college funds and reserve two percent as protection against budget cuts that will be legislated in Austin.

Black lawmakers fear racing bill is for rich

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Legalized horse race wagering could generate millions of dollars for Texas farmers, agriculture officials said Thursday, but black lawmakers complained that racing legislation as now written would just create "a pastime for the wealthy."

With racing bills before the House and Senate, the Texas Department

of Agriculture unveiled a study estimating horse racing could bring farmers up to \$230 million directly within 15 years.

Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower said the TDA study concluded that development of a Texas racing industry would generate \$138 million for agriculture directly when it hits full stride by 1990, with a total economic impact of \$427 million.

Hightower said the study indicates that two areas—a stretch from Brenham to San Antonio, and an area from south of Dallas to the Oklahoma border—would become major centers for horse farms.

While Hightower was releasing his numbers, black lawmakers met on the other end of the Capitol to announce their opposition to the leading horse race bill, and Gov. Mark White again insisted that any

racing bill meet tough conditions or face his veto.

The Legislative Black Caucus, led by Rep. Paul Ragsdale, D-Dallas, criticized the horse racing bill introduced by Rep. Hugo Berlanga, D-Corpus Christi.

Ragsdale complained that, unlike past horse racing legislation, the

1985 bill fails to dedicate part of the state's proceeds to financial aid for families with dependent children.

The governor said any racing bill must include three key elements—a statewide vote on whether to allow racing at all, a county vote before a track could be built and protections against the influence of organized crime. The same goes for dog racing or a state lottery, White said.



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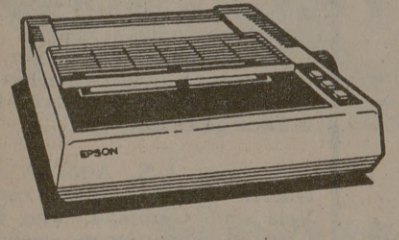
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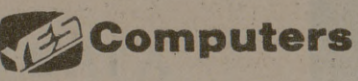


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