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Tutor might have violated System policy

By Sondra Pickard
Senior Staff Writer

An A&M engineering student has been running what is described by former employees as a successful and popular tutoring business in several buildings on campus, despite a System policy that prohibits selling such services on A&M property without permission.

For at least a year now, Bill Varvel, a petroleum engineering student, apparently has been operating a tutoring program geared toward helping freshmen with various subjects—particularly chemistry, math, physics, business analysis, account-

ing, computer science, biology and mechanical engineering.

Varvel told *The Battalion*, in an article published Oct. 13, that a group of professors from the math, physics and engineering departments saw a need for such a tutoring service. He said he started his tutoring program with the assistance of professors and other students. Varvel also was quoted as saying, "We are not looking to take any of the students away from the private tutor market."

However, Charlotte Hill, a physics graduate student and former employee of Varvel's, said that to the best of her knowledge, the tutoring

service is a private enterprise, independent of the University, and not supported by any faculty members she knew of.

In a recent telephone interview, Varvel refused to comment or answer further questions concerning his tutoring business, although he had talked about it several weeks ago.

"I'd like to just drop it," he said. "We've gotten a lot of heat over it for no real reason. I don't care to expound on it and there's nothing to worry about."

In an interview during the week of Oct. 26, Hill said Varvel himself tutors freshman chemistry and had

several tutors working for him who taught other subjects. She said Varvel tutors three chemistry classes, with about 60 to 70 students in each class.

Hill and another former employee of Varvel's, who asked not to be identified, both said that when they worked for Varvel, students were charged \$3 per hour per student, and that Varvel got 60 percent of payment, with the rest going to the tutor.

Both also said Varvel told them he needed the percentage to "pay rent" on the classrooms they used on campus.

When first hired at the beginning

of the semester, Hill said Varvel told her that his business was University-sponsored and that the chemistry department had been the first to ask him to start the tutoring program. Later, she was told, the math and physics departments were included.

"There were inconsistencies in what he was telling me," Hill said, "and that's when I began to get suspicious. But he must be a great teacher because he really draws in people."

Dr. Larry Peck, associate professor of chemistry in charge of the freshman program, said Varvel has never been endorsed by the chemistry department and that, to his

knowledge, no chemistry professors are working with him.

Dr. Thomas Adair, associate head of the physics department, also said Varvel has never had support from his department.

Dr. Robert Chenoweth, assistant dean of the College of Engineering, said Varvel at one time conducted his tutoring service in Zachry Engineering Center, but that he was asked to leave because he was "violating University policy."

Hill said she was tutoring for Varvel in Zachry at the time he was asked to leave. She said she was

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From left, Fred D. Ledley, Thomas H. Murray, Donnie J. Self and J. Robert Nelson.

Photo by Tom Ownbey

Panelists say caution needed in biogenetics

By Bob Grube
Staff Writer

Three panelists gave different viewpoints on the ethics of biogenetics Wednesday night, but each stressed the importance of exercising caution in the development and use of biogenetics and biotechnology.

Speaking at MSC Political Forum's E.L. Miller Lecture Series, Dr. Thomas Murray, professor of medical humanities at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, told an audience of about 200 in Rudder Theater that the oldest worry about biogenetics is that of

creating a "super race."

But he said many of the worries about the creation of a super race would diminish if there was not so much secrecy surrounding the relatively new industry and science of biogenetics.

"We need to think seriously about tampering with human traits on such a grand scale," Murray said. "The ability to find, clone, and produce human genes is a great power and a power that many of us worry whether we can use wisely."

Dr. Robert Nelson, director of the Institute of Religion at the Texas Medical Center, agreed with Murray's concern over the use and devel-

opment of biogenetics.

"It is a concern to us non-religious types that the only babies that live or die will be the perfect babies," Nelson said.

Dr. Fred Ledley, assistant professor of cell biology at the Baylor College of Medicine, spoke enthusiastically of the future of biogenetics.

"Biogenetics can't be viewed clearly if clouded by the science fiction 'Frankenstein monster' perspective," Ledley said. "In biogenetical ethics, there needs to be a set of priorities, and I believe a lot of good can come from it."

The panelists fielded several questions from the audience, and one of

the questions concerned the manufacturing and sale of illegal growth hormone by "street biochemists."

Growth hormone can be synthetically manufactured using biogenetics. Growth hormone is similar to anabolic steroids in that it allows larger-than-normal growth, but its side effects are largely unknown.

Ledley said that while the prospect of someone illegally manufacturing synthetic growth hormone in his garage was indeed feasible, he thought it was not plausible.

Another question from the audience dealt with the possibility of a

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Reagan says arms decision was his alone

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan said Wednesday night the controversial decision to sell arms to Iran was his alone, and said two other American hostages in Lebanon would have been freed if there had not been so much publicity about the shipments.

At a news conference thoroughly dominated by questions surrounding the long-secret Iranian arms shipments, the president said he had made the right decision despite the furor that it provoked. "I don't think a mistake has been made," he said.

At his first news conference in nearly three months, Reagan said Secretary of State George Shultz will stay in his Cabinet post, despite his scarcely disguised opposition to the arms sale. "He has made it plain he would stay as long as I want him, and I want him," the president said.

Defending his arms deal, Reagan said he was not breaking any law in authorizing the arms sale or ordering top aides not to provide Congress with immediate information.

Reagan thus moved to quell a controversy that has not only spawned criticism in Congress but also threatened his own credibility as president.

When a questioner asked whether the president had been forced on the defensive, Reagan bristled. "I don't feel I have anything to defend about," he said.

"The decision for the operation is mine and mine alone," he said.

Reagan, in an opening statement,

promised to provide key members of Congress with all information about what he said were two sales he authorized.

In response to a question, he said there may still be information he cannot divulge in public, and at one point denied any Israeli participation in the arms shipments.

But in an unusual written statement of clarification issued shortly after the news conference ended, Reagan acknowledged something he had denied earlier. "There was a third country involved in our secret project with Iran," he said.

Senior administration officials earlier had identified that country as Israel and said the United States condoned an Israeli shipment of arms to Iran about the time American hostage Benjamin Weir was released and before the U.S. arms sales began. Reagan conceded that the shipments amounted to a waiver of his policy of retaining an arms embargo against Iran, but said the exception was justified by the potential rewards.

Three American hostages were released in Beirut at times that coincided with the arms shipments, Reagan acknowledged, as he had in a televised speech last week. But the president again said he had not been trading arms for hostages.

"I don't see where the kidnappers or hostage holders gained anything," he said. "They let the hostages go . . . As a matter of fact, if there had not been so much publicity, we would have had two more that we were expecting."

The president did not identify the two, but presumably he was referring to Terry Anderson and Thomas Sutherland, being held by a group that is under the influence of the Iranian government.

"We would have had all five of them (hostages) by this last weekend had it not been for the attendant confusion that arose here in reporting it," Reagan said at another point.

Kodak plans withdrawal from S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — Eastman Kodak, citing a weak economy made worse by apartheid, said Wednesday it will withdraw from South Africa and prohibit its subsidiaries from supplying products to the country.

The photographic equipment manufacturer is the seventh American company to announce recently that it is leaving South Africa and the first of them to halt sales of its products.

Kodak employs 466 people at five sales and service facilities in South Africa.

"We have no doubt that the system of apartheid has played a major role in the economy's under-performance," Colby Chandler, chairman and chief executive officer said in a statement.

Atex Inc., a Kodak computer-making subsidiary based in Massachusetts, also announced it will pull out, according to a Johannesburg spokesman.

Three major South African newspaper chains use Atex computer systems: the Argus Group, South African Associated Newspapers, and Nasionale Pers.

Neither the Kodak statement nor company spokesman Henry Kaska in Rochester would explain why the sale of Kodak products will be banned after April 30, 1987.

"We went all the way," he said. "We decided we wouldn't take any halfway measures. . . . The reason for the grace period is to allow our customers to find other supply sources. You can't just tell a hospital that it can't buy anymore X-ray film."

A&M student charged with telephone fraud

A Texas A&M student on Wednesday was arrested by University Police and charged with theft of a service.

Archie Roy Roberts, a 20-year-old sophomore from Houston, was charged in connection with the illegal use of \$1,500 in long-distance services during the months of September and October, said Bob Wiatt, director of security and traffic at A&M.

Roberts was booked at the Brazos County Jail at 2:27 p.m. and discharged later on a personal recognizance bond.

Wiatt said Star-Tel, a long-distance service, is pressing charges against the Cain Hall resident. He added that this is the first arrest of an A&M student for this offense.

In the past, he said, the phone companies normally didn't press charges for this offense but

simply settled the debt with the offender instead.

But now, Wiatt said, the companies are realizing the magnitude of the problem.

Wiatt said the company called University Police and asked them to conduct an investigation to find who was stealing the service.

Wiatt added that the University police would conduct investigations again if the need for others comes up.

A&M bonfire crew 'pushing' to the finish

By Craig Renfro
Staff Writer

It takes 9,000 logs, several tons of bailing wire and 500 gallons of diesel fuel to construct this flaming tower. And at 55 feet, it stands as one of the tallest bonfires in the world.

When finished, it's topped by an outhouse with an Austin city limits sign nailed snugly to its side.

The bonfire stands for Texas A&M's "burning desire to beat the hell outta t.u." This year's bonfire is scheduled to burn at "dark thirty" Tuesday, which translates into 30 minutes after dark.

Tradition has it that if the bonfire still stands after midnight, A&M will win the football game against the University of Texas. If it falls before midnight, tradition states, A&M will lose.

Regardless of the legend, the all-time series record is 63-24, in favor of UT.

Before the bonfire is lighted, many hours of hard, grueling work are put into the construction process. But the true grind is going on right now during Push Week.

The bonfire's centerpole was raised Oct. 30. Since then, log upon log has been added to form

the bonfire's structure. When completed it will have a 45-foot diameter base.

Push began Sunday, and by Tuesday, four of the six levels were near completion. The 24-hour-a-day construction is performed in six-hour shifts, with about 200 people working at each. Work won't stop until the bonfire is completed.

As a 50-foot crane slowly lifts the logs to the top, workers from the four levels tie them with wire to the already formed base.

Blain Reeves, 21, of Houston and Cliff Murray, 22, of Orange, are "centerpole pots" for this year's production. The two are members of Company B-1, the unit responsible for raising the centerpole.

Reeves said the "redpots" are in charge of the actual construction.

"They are the ones who oversee the entire process," Reeves said. "Without them, not a lot would get done."

And without some labor-saving equipment, the job also would take much longer.

Murray said most of the bonfire equipment was donated by A&M alumni and area businesses. In addition to two tractors, there are two cranes, several chainsaws

Elephant Walk '86 slated to begin at noon Monday

One of Texas A&M's more rambunctious traditions will resume at noon Monday when this year's Elephant Walk starts at the Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue.

Traditionally, Elephant Walk involves seniors walking aimlessly around campus in a long chain

and axes, and a repair and storage shed.

At the top of the centerpole rests Company B-1's flag, with its motto, "Like hell we can't," and its shield emblazoned across it. The shield shows a soldier in fatigues, beer in hand.

Workers are in a constant chain of motion. Groups of 10 to 20 people help carry logs closer to the stack. Meanwhile, two tractors skirt the perimeter of Duncan Field, dragging in any stray logs.

Civilian redpot Eric Wittenmyer, 20, of Sugarland, has worked on bonfire each of the past four years. He said he worked his way up the ladder to become a "redpot."

"I just came out here each year

like dying elephants who are no longer of use to A&M.

The Class of '88 will hold a yell practice at the Fish Pond beforehand, and many will stalk the seniors with water "elephant" guns and shaving cream to the bonfire site, where the march will end.

and worked as hard as I could, and they felt I deserved it," Wittenmyer said.

And through his efforts, he has earned a residency in the "Redpot Hotel," which is erected southeast of the bonfire, and houses this year's leaders. Five of the eight "redpots" are in the Corps of Cadets.

The "hotel" is furnished with bunkbeds and a wood-burning stove to provide all the creature comforts of home. The bonfire cookie crew provides refreshments, and a mobile delicatessen rests just north of the bonfire site.

Because the stack crews work in six-hour shifts, the possibility for missed study time is great. But Wittenmyer said bonfire

hasn't interfered with his studies.

"I have my classes in the afternoon, so I sleep in the morning and then go to class and work on the bonfire," he said.

Despite the beliefs of some that the bonfire is strictly a Corps event, Wittenmyer estimated that the work force is split 50-50 between the Corps and civilians.

"A lot of people think that bonfire is strictly the Corps, but without the non-regs it would never get done," Wittenmyer said.

In case of injuries, Emergency Medical Service members, armed with a first-aid kit and oxygen masks, are camped out near the bonfire site.

EMS workers David Pogue and Shelly Boling say there haven't been any major injuries so far, just minor cuts and bruises.

Wittenmyer says bonfire is expected to be finished on time.

"We're just about on time," he says. "But we need to do as much as possible this week, because we don't get a lot done on the weekend."

As the work continues, the strains of a song are heard through the public address speakers. Some students sing while they work, but as always, the work continues.