Page 6/The Battalion/Thursday, March 5, 1987

A&M researchers receive \$60,000 NASA grant

By Debbie Monroe Reporter

NASA is paying two Texas A&M University researchers \$60,000 to tle's) time is going to be spent haul-find a better way to deal with a nasty find a better way to deal with a nasty problem.

Kainthla, two Hydrogen Research space. Center biochemists who work under Dr. John Bockris, received a \$60,000 grant from the Johnson Space Cen- the useless waste into something ter in early February to study the electrochemical processing of solid waste

Hitchens says the space agency considers waste to be an expensive

one of the aims of this is to facilitate a permanently manned space sta-tion," he says. "A lot of its (the shut-

"They could put a lot more valu-Duncan Hitchens and Ramesh able staff and equipment in the same

> The researchers believe that a recycling system can be built to turn valuable. The system would break the material down into hydrogen and carbon dioxide by running an electric current through it.

"Hydrogen is extremely imporproblem. "They're going to spend a lot of money building a fourth shuttle, and tant in a spacecraft because it's burned in devices called fuel cells to produce electricity," Hitchens says.

"Carbon dioxide is pretty poisonous \$562,000 were funded by the Johnto humans, but there are ways of reconverting it to oxygen."

The scientists received their grant Research Center, says the grants althrough the Texas Engineering Ex- low scientists to put their minds to

son Space Center Oran Nicks, director of the Space

"We've got students here learning new skills and working on new things, and I'd like to believe that some of the research we're doing will have an impact on society."

— Oran Nicks, director of the Space Research Center.

periment Station's Space Research work on projects that may have long-Center. In February, nine space-re- term benefits for the American lated research projects totaling space program.

"We've got students here learning new skills and working on new things," he says, "and I'd like to be-lieve that some of the research we're doing will have an impact on socie-

Nicks and his staff at the Space Research Center work to find A&M scientists interested in solving probelms for NASA and commercial space companies. The research being done by Hitchens and Kainthla is part of a larger project which Nicks oversees.

The interdisciplinary research team includes representatives from biology, chemistry, agriculture, soil and crop science, and several engineering disciplines. The gr working to create an open Closed Ecological Life Suppo tem.

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With a working CELSS system the space station or lunar NASA wouldn't have to carry f water and oxygen to space for the cility, nor waste products from station to Earth.

"We haven't seen any space that yo "W sions designed to use bio tems," Nicks says. "They (NASA chemical and physical system shorts well, but plants, or some form ology, may be helpful," about, Hitchens says it's a very diff problem, but an exciting one. jor?" h

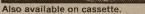
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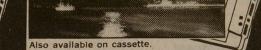
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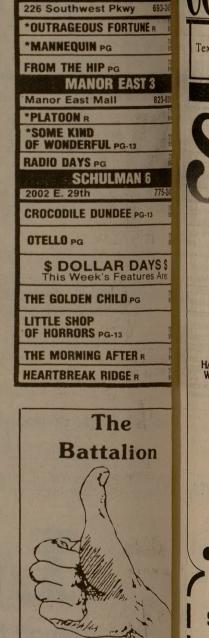






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