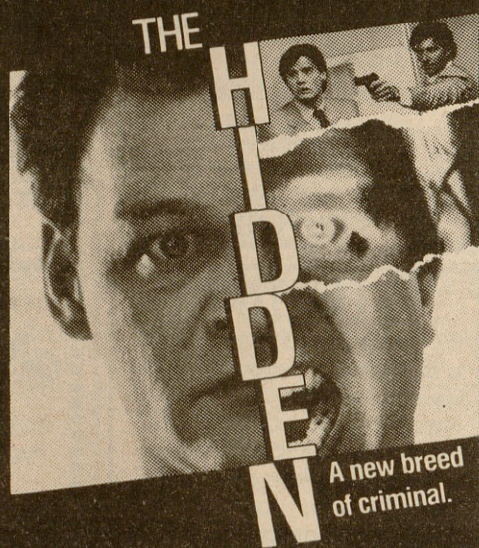


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—Ron Givens, Newsweek on Campus

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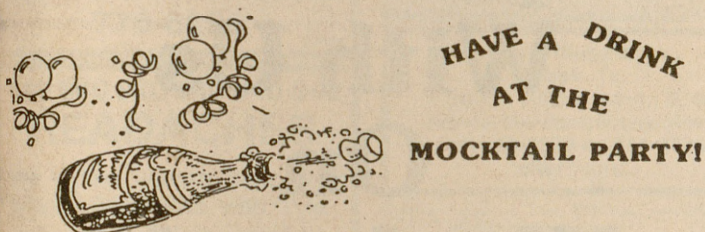


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What's up

Thursday

- ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** will meet at 12:15 p.m. Call 845-5826 for meeting location.
- NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK ACCOUNTANTS:** will meet at 7:30 p.m. in 204 Harrington. The meeting is open to all business and economics majors.
- PHI ETA SIGMA NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY:** is accepting applications from qualified students until Oct. 27 in 216 Pavilion.
- MEXICAN-AMERICAN ENGINEERING SOCIETY:** will have a speaker and have pictures taken for the Aggeland at 7 p.m. in 501 Rudder.
- NAVIGATORS:** Blake Purcell will discuss "Do You Have an Eternal Career Plan?" at 7:45 p.m. in the Corps Quadrangle Lounge B.
- GREAT ISSUES AND POLITICAL FORUM:** will present "Alcohol and the Law" at noon at Rudder Fountain.
- KAPPA SIGMA FRATERNITY:** will host "Thrash For Diabetes Bash" to benefit diabetes at 7 p.m. at the Parthenon in the Woodstone Shopping Center.
- AGGIE PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION:** will take pictures for the Aggeland at 8 p.m. in the MSC main lobby.
- TAMU CYCLING TEAM:** will meet at 7 p.m. in 305A-B Rudder.
- UNIVERSITY ART EXHIBITS:** Dr. Walter Horn will discuss "The Plan of St. Gall: A Master Plan for Monastic Settlements of the Ninth Century A.D." to open the exhibit "The Plan of St. Gall" at 7:30 p.m. in 201 MSC. A reception will follow at 8:30 p.m. in the Rudder Exhibit Hall.
- NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS:** will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 145 MSC.
- COLLEGIATE FFA:** will host Fall Fair Fun Fest at 6 p.m. at Pearce Pavilion.
- YOUTH FUN DAY:** will have an informational meeting for those wanting to be a coach or counselor at 5 p.m. in 501 Rudder.
- ZEN MEDITATION GROUP:** A Zen Priest will speak at 7 p.m. in 301 Rudder.
- PRE-LAW SOCIETY:** will host "Law School: How to Write a Personal Statement" for seniors applying to law school at 7 p.m. in 116 Blocker.
- THE ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES SCIENTISTS:** Stanley Temple, Ronald Chesser and Eric Pianka will discuss "Fragile Communities: Ecological Perspectives in the Americas" at 1 p.m. in Rudder Theater.
- INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERS:** Matt Michel will discuss "The Impact of World Changes on Industrial Engineering" at 7 p.m. in 203 Zachry.
- TEXAS ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY:** Registration for the fall meeting begins at 1 p.m. at the Aggeland Inn.
- ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS:** will meet at 6 p.m. in 145 MSC.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no less than three working days before desired publication date.

A&M helps design system programs to advise farmers

By Deborah A. Haring
Reporter

Artificial intelligence computer programs to help farmers with various aspects of farming are being developed at Texas A&M, says Dr. Robert Coulson, an entomology professor.

The programs are being developed at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station's Knowledge Engineering Laboratory, where Coulson works with the industrial engineering department's Knowledge Based Systems Laboratory and the Texas Engineering Experiment Station's Knowledge Systems Research Laboratory.

Artificial intelligence computer programs mimic human thought processes, Coulson says, and each farming program, called an expert system, deals with a different farm-operation decision.

A farmer has to do three basic things to make a profit, he says. He has to produce a crop, market that crop and take advantage of various farm policies, he says.

Though expert systems help with decisions in these areas, they can be combined to make integrated expert systems, which are more effective.

"Integrated expert systems allow you to effectively and efficiently utilize the available information relative to a particular subject domain," he says. "With an enterprise as complicated as agriculture, there is so much information to choose from that it is difficult for an individual to keep track of everything. So part of what the systems do is serve as archives for information."

The systems use information from a combination of expert opinions gathered from farmers, technical information from research and simulation-modeling technology.

Simulation models are mathematical models and representations that show how a complex biological or ecological system works. They can be used to project what kind of a yield a farmer will have on a certain amount of land with a certain crop, he says.

Farmers are working with people knowledgeable in the area of artificial-intelligence expert systems and domain experts, such as agricultural economists and pest management specialists, in designing the programs.

Involving farmers in the development of the systems is important, Coulson says, because in the past, re-

sults of research done for farmers rarely reached them.

Specialists and farmers team up to identify problems in farming and find available information, then organize it and write computer programs that copy the human decision-making process, he says.

"Since most farmers are growing multiple crops, an important advantage of integrated expert systems is

"With an enterprise as complicated as agriculture, there is so much information to choose from that it is difficult for an individual to keep track of everything. So part of what the systems do is serve as archives for information."

— Robert Coulson,
entomology professor

the ability to find out which blend or mix of crops is the most profitable for the certain amount of acreage you have available to you," he says.

These systems will be available for affordable microcomputers and be simple enough to encourage farmers to try to use them, Coulson says.

"The systems are farm-size independent," he says. "Any size farm, from a small family farm to a large corporate farm, will be able to use the systems."

"A farmer would initialize the model for his specific farm operation. That would include entering data on how big the farm is, what kind of crops he grows and his degree of indebtedness."

The system could then be used to predict factors such as crop yields and losses for that farmer, he says.

Though still in the developmental stages, several programs are almost ready to be delivered. One of these, the "rice-weed adviser," a herbicide recommendation system for weed control, will be finished in early 1988, he says.

Similar systems for both rice and cotton farming, as well as pest management systems, also are being developed, Coulson says.

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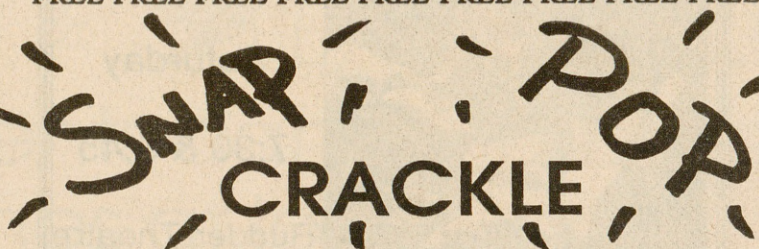
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