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Scientists look for monopoles from Big Bang

By Allison Seale
 Reporter

It's like looking for a needle in a haystack. This is what the teams of scientists searching for magnetic monopoles seem to be finding out. Magnetic monopoles are the peculiar subatomic particles that are theorized to exist in the first instant after the "big bang" opened the universe. Despite the difficulty in finding them, Texas A&M physicist Robert Webb keeps searching anyway.

Hundreds of physicists around the world have been searching for the elusive subatomic particles since their existence was first predicted. Twice scientists had thought they had found one but on both occasions, there was not enough statistical proof to support the finds. "If we find some, it will be really exciting," Webb said. "If don't find some, it also will be somewhat exciting, not perhaps as important as finding some, but it will have an impact on the viability of many of these grand unified theories."

Magnetic monopoles which have evaded detection by scientists since their existence was first suspected. They are predicted by grand uni-

fied theories formulated to tie together and explain the physical forces that existed in the tiniest fractions of the first instant after the "big bang" that opened the universe.

According to such theories, monopoles are cosmic orphans left behind as the universe cooled below the temperature and energy levels at which a super "unified" force was transformed into the three basic forces — strong, weak and electromagnetic — that physicists study.

What makes monopoles different from other particles found in nature is that monopoles have only one charge — either positive or negative, but not both. Webb said the significance of finding a monopole is that if one is found, scientists will be able to gain insight as to what role they play in the grand scheme of things.

Webb and his colleagues began their search for monopoles at the bottom of the Hockley salt mine in 1982 but moved their search to a football-field sized detector in a man-made cave in Italy. Although there still is no proof of their existence, scientists will continue to search through the haystack of subatomic particles until they prove something.

Contract to decide future of LTV Corp.

DALLAS (AP) — The Hummer, a replacement vehicle for the workhorse Jeep that carried U.S. armies through three wars, now carries the fortunes of a division of a defense contractor. The future of LTV Corp.'s AM General Division hinges on winning a new contract to manufacture the multi-purpose vehicles starting in 1990, a company spokesman said Tuesday.

AM General announced plans to discontinue manufacture of medium and heavy trucks and concentrate on a \$1 billion competitive contract for the Hummer. "If we lose the Hummer rebuy, we're a fond memory," company spokesman Craig MacNab said.

AM General is taking a calculated gamble on its ability to win a U.S. Army contract to build 32,300 additional Hummers from 1990 to 1994. A sole-source contract by LTV to build about 60,000 Hummers for the Army ends next year, and the Pentagon has decided to open the next purchase to competition. The multi-purpose vehicle is a replacement for the Army jeep and four other trucks.

Withdrawal from the medium and heavy military truck business will result in layoffs for up to 700 salaried and hourly workers in Indiana and Michigan, MacNab said. This will result in the loss of jobs for nearly one-third of the division's workforce.

AM General will also move its headquarters from South Bend, Ind., home of its military truck plant, to neighboring Mishawaka, where it builds the Hummer. The action apparently settles the uncertainty about including AM General in LTV's Chapter 11 reorganization plans, a spokesman in Dallas said.

The restructuring "resolves the questions we previously raised about the viability of AM General, and we expect the division and its Hummer business to remain a part of the reorganized LTV," spokesman Charles Palmer said.

The layoffs will include as many as 550 workers in South Bend by next February or March and immediate layoffs for about 150 workers at its Livonia, Mich., facility, which worked on medium and heavy truck design and development.

The AM General workforce will be reduced to about 1,600 from about 2,300 as of the end of June. A previous restructuring and cost-cutting plan announced in April had reduced the division's workforce by 400 salaried employees.

AM General president George Maddox, in a prepared statement, blamed the cutbacks on "costly capital investments and limited profit margins from possible future military contracts."

Dallas-based LTV will take an undetermined charge to second-quarter earnings, MacNab said.

What's Up

Thursday

TAMU INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCERS: Will meet at 7:30 p.m. at the Fountain to teach beginning and intermediate dances at a special outdoor session. Singles and couples are welcome. For more information call Ellen at 2415.

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS: Will meet at 6 p.m. in 146 MSC. For information call the Center for Drug Prevention and Education.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS: Will meet at 8:30 p.m. in 146 MSC. For more information call the Center for Drug Prevention and Education at 845-0280.

ATHEISTS, AGNOSTICS AND FREETHINKERS: Will meet at 7 p.m. in Lawrence Sullivan Ross statue in front of the Academic Building, to discuss and life."

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McCombs, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only print the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

Salutes

Faculty/Staff

Donald A. Maxwell, professor and associate head of the Department of Civil Engineering, and coordinator of Engineering Computer Services at Texas A&M, has been appointed chairman of the Texas Automated Information and Telecommunications Council by Gov. Bill Clements. The council has the responsibility to review and certify computer and telecommunications equipment purchases by state agencies. The council review approves the long-range computer and telecommunications plans of all agencies spending in excess of \$1,500 on equipment, analyses and approves procurements larger than \$300,000, and holds public hearings to scrutinize purchases of more than \$1 million. "It's a challenging opportunity and a big responsibility," says Maxwell, who is a research engineer for the Texas Transportation Institute.

Dr. James McNamara of Texas A&M's Educational Psychology Department has been selected as coordinator of one of the nation's four Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation Summer Institutes in Statistics. The one-week workshop here, scheduled Aug. 1-5, is designed to provide secondary school mathematics teachers with new insights into the teaching of statistics. The workshops will be taught by four master teachers selected on the basis of their teaching ability and statistical knowledge. Salutes is a community service provided by The Battalion to list students and staff who have received honors and awards (such as scholarships, grants, etc.). Space is limited and is provided on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee that your submission will run. Submissions may be edited if they contain incomplete or incorrect information. If you have any questions, please call The Battalion at 845-3315.

No suspects found in theft of weapons

ANGLETON (AP) — Brazoria County investigators said Wednesday they have no suspects in the theft of 46 weapons, including more than 30 high-powered rifles, from a locked storage room at a state prison armory.

The armory at the Ramsey rifle range was broken into sometime between Friday night and Monday, said Michael Moore, Texas Department of Corrections director for the southern units. "It's highly embarrassing," Moore said.

While the armory is near the only access road to the three Ramsey state prisons, Moore said traffic on the road on weekend evenings is sparse.

The exact time the weapons were taken is unknown because the building was closed for the weekend, authorities said.

Brazoria County investigators said the missing weapons are estimated \$16,200. The cache includes 33 high-powered semiautomatic rifles, a .308 rifle with scope often used in target cases because of its long accuracy, five shotguns and .357-caliber pistols.

But many weapons were hidden, leading authorities to believe that the thieves may have been scared off and fled with the cache in a few minutes.

Harassment gets man probation

HOUSTON (AP) — A man who telephoned his ex-girlfriend as many as 100 times an hour and rammed the back of her car has been ordered to stay away from the woman and seek psychiatric treatment.

David Eric Herd, 23, was given probation after he pleaded guilty to a retaliation charge.

Between July and September 1987, Herd called the 25-year-old receptionist at home and work continuously despite her repeated rejections. "I love you, I love you," he would say. "Please talk to me." She would hang up on him, but often he called back seconds later. Many of the calls were recorded. "I tried (to break up) to do it gently, but he wouldn't let me," the woman said Tuesday.

Herd, who had been charged twice with misdemeanor harassment, later faced a felony charge in connection with an Aug. 20, 1987 incident.

Then, prosecutor Jim West said, Herd followed the woman and began bumping the back of her car. When she got out, he threw her to the ground and passed by ended the fracas by spraying Herd with the woman's can of chemical deterrent.

Faced with a trial at which tape recordings of hundreds of calls would be played, Herd opted for a guilty to the retaliation charge.

State District Judge Bob Burdette sentenced Herd to undergo psychiatric treatment and have no contact with the woman or her family. Herd received two years of deferred adjudication probation.

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