TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

THE BATTALION

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Engineering students perform energy audits

Audits performed through the Texas A&M Industrial Assessment Center have saved industrial plants $4 million annually.

By Wes Swift
THE BATTALION

Industrial plants are slashing energy costs and Texas A&M engineering students are gaining experience through the Texas A&M Industrial Assessment Center.

The 9-year-old center provides free energy efficiency and waste management audits to small manufacturing plants within 150 miles of College Station. Teams of three to eight engineering students and a faculty member examine each plant and tell plant supervisors how to save money on energy and waste disposal.

The center is part of an energy assessment program by the Department of Energy that has helped manufacturers save $547 million since 1978.

Dr. Warren Heffington, director of the center, said the audits benefit the industrial plants and the audit teams' students.

"The plant [personnel] is all for it because they're receiving a benefit at no cost, that they otherwise couldn't afford," Heffington said. "The students in the program learn leadership, teamwork and how to write technical reports."

The teams begin the audit by examining a plant's utility bills of the previous year and consulting plant supervisors about major power uses and hidden energy costs. Team members then tour the plant and gather data on the equipment and facilities.

The team meets again with plant leaders to discuss its findings, then returns to College Station and begins compiling the report.

The on-site audit takes a day, and the report is finished within a week and a half.

Heffington said the most common suggestions the teams make to plant administrators is to use energy efficient equipment and lubricants, reschedule machine operations and recycle waste products.

Plants that are audited have under 500 employees and under $75 million in gross sales. Many of these plants cannot afford audits by professional consulting firms.

Heffington said auditing smaller plants allows students to learn more.

"Students understand the smaller plants better," Heffington said. "There are some large plants where, at the end of the day, even I can't tell what's going on."

Heffington said that by auditing only smaller plants, the center does not compete with professional consulting firms.

The program is paying big dividends for the plants. The Industrial Assessment Center in College Station and its counterpart at Texas A&M-Kingsville, have saved manufacturers an estimated $4 million annually.

But the rewards do not just go to the plants. Earlier this year the Department of Energy commended the College Station center for its work.

Joe Wieck, senior mechanical

See AUDITS, Page 6

APOLLO 13

Former students experienced flight firsthand

Three A&M graduates who worked on Apollo 13 described the events during the crisis.

By Javier Hinojosa
THE BATTALION

Apollo 13 has people rediscovering the event, but three Texas A&M graduates experienced the excitement firsthand.

Dr. Aaron Cohen, class of '52, was the project manager of Apollo 13's command and service module, the cone-shape section that returned the astronauts to Earth.

Cohen, who came to A&M as a mechanical engineering professor in 1993 after working with NASA for 31 years, was not in the control center when one of the oxygen tanks on the Apollo 13 spacecraft exploded, damaging a second tank and crippling the command module.

"Just as I arrived at home and walked through the door, the phone rang and someone said, 'Aaron you better get back to the control center, we have a problem,'" Cohen said.

"When I first heard of the explosion, I was shocked. What happened was that there was such a catastrophe on board the spacecraft, that no one believed it was happening."

Cohen said the command module was rapidly losing electrical power and the oxygen supply.

Before each mission, the astronauts went through simulations of potential crisis, so the astronauts could learn how to react and fix things while in space.

The astronauts on Apollo 13 never trained for an oxygen tank explosion, and it appeared that everything possible was going wrong all at once.

Cohen's job was to figure out what the status of the command module was. Others were responsible for figuring how the astronauts would survive.

"We quickly found that we didn't have much of the command module left," Cohen said. "We did know that if we were to save the astronauts, they had to come back in the command module."

The control center staff had to find a way to conserve the command module power supply so the astronauts would have enough power to re-enter the Earth's atmosphere. They worked on the problem for the following three and a half days.

Gerry Griffin, class of '56 and the flight director during the Apollo 13 crisis, recently retired after working with NASA for 25 years.

Griffin said one of the biggest hurdles in Apollo 13's safe return was the quick transfer of the command module's course alignment to the lunar module so they would be able to safely navigate themselves back to Earth.

"It was too important of a calculation to make in haste because if the angle was off more than half a degree, it would have ended in catastrophe," Griffin said.

Jim Lovell, an astronaut on the Apollo 13 mission, had to maneuver the spacecraft to an entry corridor into the earth's atmosphere that was two degrees wide.

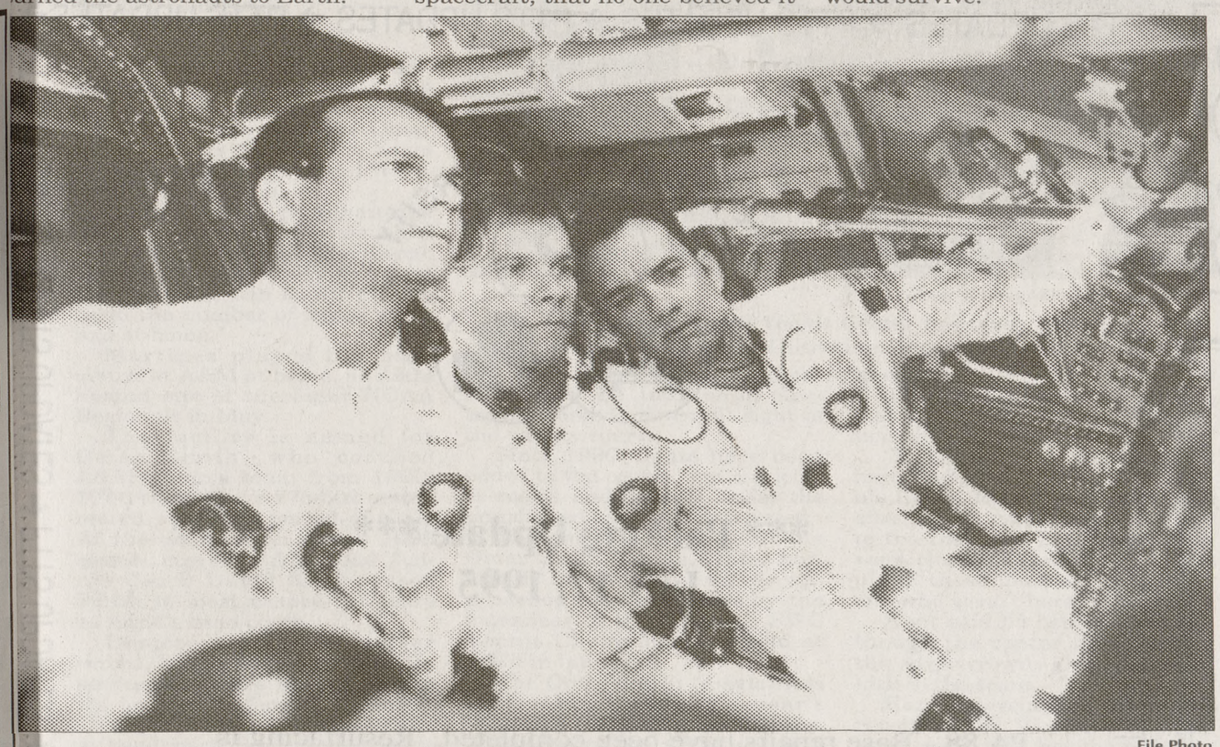
If the entry angle was too shallow, the spacecraft would have skipped out into space. Anything too steep would have resulted in the spacecraft burning up during re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

Henry Pohl, class of '56 and chief of the auxiliary propulsion system on Apollo 13, recalled how tired everybody was.

"The first 24 hours were busy for all of us," Pohl said. "I personally did not have a chance to go to sleep until 2:30 a.m. the next morning, and even then I could not go to sleep. I must have worked 40 hours straight."

Griffin said seeing the capsule splash down into the sea marked the end of a long ordeal.

See APOLLO, Page 6



File Photo

Bill Paxton, Kevin Bacon and **Tom Hanks** star as the crew of an ill-fated lunar mission in "APOLLO 13."

Week of Prayer kicks off today

There will be four open prayer services throughout the week in the All Faiths Chapel.

By Tara Wilkinson
THE BATTALION

Guy Wim, senior sociology major and member of A&M's Methodist Student Center, is part of the team leading Tuesday night prayer services.

Members of several Christian denominations and organizations are uniting this week in the Texas A&M Campuswide Week of Prayer.

The event is organized by members of the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship's Graduate Chapter and will consist of prayer services held Monday through Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the All Faiths Chapel.

Tina Awokuse, Week of Prayer coordinator, said that although the event is specifically Christian, everyone is welcome to attend the meetings.

"The Week of Prayer is open to anyone who wants to see the power of prayer," she said.

Each prayer service will have a different focus and will be led by members of a different Christian organization. Participants will pray Monday for faculty, Tuesday for administrators, Wednesday for students and Thursday for campus revival and vision.

Awokuse said the purpose of the week is to promote unity among members of different Christian denominations and a greater vision for ministry at A&M.

"It's good for us to come together to see what God is doing in individual groups," Awokuse said. "It helps us better understand how God is at work on the whole campus."

evening will include a mix of music and prayer.

Wim said he is confident that A&M voices united in prayer will have a powerful effect.

"We want to come together as a group of Christians, lift up our prayers collectively and invite God to work on our campus," he said.

Father Mike Sis of St. Mary's Catholic Church, co-leader of tonight's service, said prayer will fall into three categories: rejoicing, repentance and requesting.

The week is unique, Sis said, because Christians with different theological viewpoints can find common ground.

"It is about respecting denominational differences while seeking points of unity," Sis said.

"There may be non-Christians that come, and they are surely welcome," he said. "We're not approaching it as a recruiting tool, we simply are approaching it as a chance to

See PRAYER, Page 6

Aggie moms nationwide work together to ease students' burdens

The Federation of Texas A&M Mothers' Clubs has provided emotional and financial support to Aggies since 1928.

By Michael Simmons
THE BATTALION

Students may leave home to attend Texas A&M, but the A&M Mothers' Clubs make sure the feeling of home never leaves students. The 103 clubs across the United States provide support for A&M students and organizations.

A&M Mothers' clubs are a familiar sight on the A&M campus, whether they are distributing care packages during finals or selling crafts at their annual Parents' Weekend craft fair.

Peggy Erikson, president of the Federation of Texas A&M Mothers' Clubs, said the clubs not only encourage students, but members are able to support and confide in each other.

"Aggie Mothers' Clubs provide a warm and comfortable group," Erikson said, "which enable Aggie moms to stay connected to the University. The clubs are very unselfish and a good source of support."

Membership in the A&M Mothers' Clubs is open to any mother of a current or former A&M student. Membership fees vary for each club, but the federation requires a membership of $1 per member. The money is used for the federation's general operating cost and newsletter.

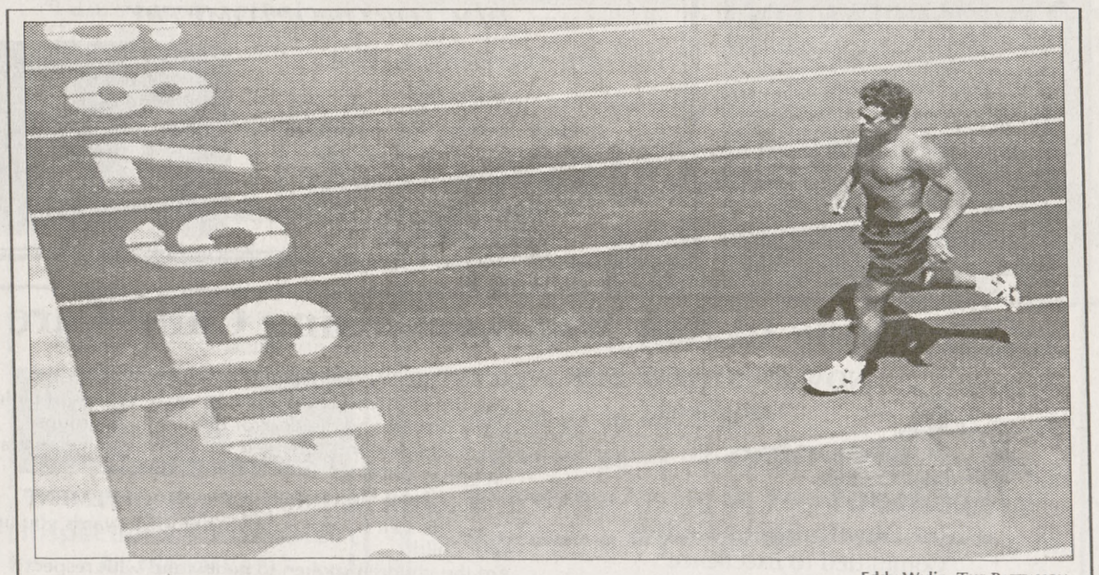
Erickson said the federation enables the clubs to stay abreast on meetings and events that concern its members.

"The role of the federation is to serve as an umbrella over the A&M Mothers' clubs," she said. "We act as an information broker for the clubs and organize the three major meetings that are held on the A&M campus each school year."

The federation holds its largest meeting during Parents' Weekend, as well as meetings before the start of the fall and spring semesters.

Susie Powell, president-elect of the federation, said

See MOMS, Page 6



Eddy Wylie, THE BATTALION

RUNNING DOWN A DREAM ...

Jeff Darby, a senior agricultural economics major, runs laps at the Anderson Track and Field Complex Sunday. Jeff runs 35 miles a week as a part of his off-season triathlon training.