

March 2005



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**Dr. Calvin Parnell, Jr.,
Regents Professor and
Holder of Endowed Chair
in Cotton Engineering,
Ginning, and Mechaniza-
tion**

Biological and Agricultural Engineering News

Dr. Calvin B. Parnell, Jr. named Inaugural Holder of Endowed Chair in Cotton Engineering, Ginning and Mechanization

The Endowed Chair in Cotton Engineering, Ginning and Mechanization was established through the generous financial support of friends in the cotton industry. Organizations represented on the Advisory Committee to the Chair include: John Deere, Farmer's Cooperative of El Campo, The Cotton Foundation, Case IH, Lummus/Beltwide Industries, Farmer's Cooperative Compress, Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council, Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, and the Texas Cotton Ginners Association. A complete list of donors is on page 4.

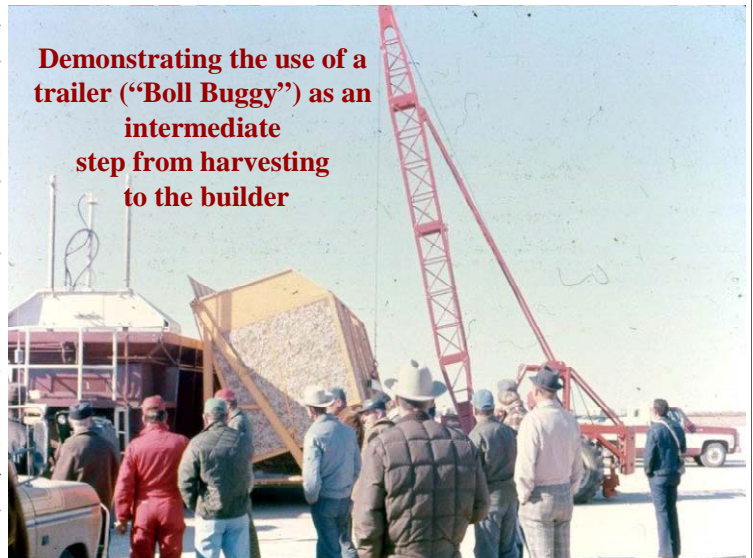
As the inaugural holder of the Endowed Chair in Cotton Engineering, Ginning and Mechanization, Dr. Parnell will provide leadership in areas of teaching, research, and technology transfer. The focus of his teaching and mentoring of students will be to maintain the flow of graduates into leadership positions in this industry. His research will focus on current problems affecting the cotton industry.

Dr. Parnell joined the Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department in January 1974 as an Extension Cotton Ginning and Mechanization Specialist. Prior to coming to Texas A&M University, he was a research engineer with the USDA Cotton Ginning Research Laboratory. In 1978, he moved from the Extension position to Associate Profes-

sor with responsibilities for teaching and conducting research. In the past 26 years, he has progressed to his current rank of Regents Professor. Dr. Parnell has over 34 years experience working with the cotton industry. He has over 20 former students in leadership roles in this industry and over 116 publications. In 2002, he was appointed Director of the Center for Agricultural Air Quality Engineering and Science (CAAQES).

A registered professional engineer in Texas, Dr. Parnell is a Fellow of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers and member of the National Society of Professional Engineers and the Air and Waste Management Association. He has served on the Texas Air Control Board, the National Academies Panel on Air Emissions, and the Agricultural Air Quality Task Force. In addition, he serves on several National Cotton Council and National Cotton Ginners' committees.

Demonstrating the use of a trailer ("Boll Buggy") as an intermediate step from harvesting to the builder

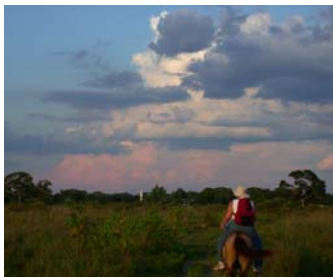




**Gerald L. Riskowski,
Professor and Department Head**



Some of Dr. and Mrs. Searcy's leisure activities in Brazil. Above: Dr. Searcy in front of waterfall in Costa Rica Park. Below: Mrs. Searcy against the evening sky.



Howdy From the Department Head

The Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department sends greetings to all of our former students and many friends. We have much good news that we wish to share with our friends.

The key theme for this newsletter is cotton. Our department has a long and proud history of service to the cotton industry. The cotton module builder was named a historic ASAE landmark in 2002, honoring the work of Lambert Wilkes and the others that helped keep the industry competitive.

This past fall, Dr. Calvin Parnell, Jr. was named as the inaugural

holder of the Endowed Chair in Cotton Engineering, Ginning, and Mechanization. The Endowed Chair was established through the generous contributions of many of this department's friends in the cotton industry and we greatly appreciate their support.

We are also pleased to announce that Dr. Alex Thomasson has joined our faculty in the area of cotton engineering. Dr. Thomasson is a native Texan who was most recently at Mississippi State University and worked with the USDA ARS Ginning Lab in Stoneville, Mississippi for eight

years. We are also conducting searches for three other positions and hope to have news regarding new faculty to share with you in the near future.

We are also glad to welcome Dr. Steve Searcy back from his faculty development leave in Brazil where he worked with the cotton industry there.

I want to thank you for your continued interest in the success of our Department. I hope that you find this newsletter informative and interesting.

Dr. Searcy Returns from Brazil

Dr. Steve Searcy, Professor and Associate Department Head, recently spent five months in Brazil on a faculty development leave to gain some new perspectives and ideas to bring to his research and teaching programs at Texas A&M University. He had a particular interest in the agricultural industry in Latin America. Fortunately, John Deere and Tim Deutsch, Division Engineer for Cotton Products, had two projects in Brazil that required some additional assistance.

During his time in Brazil, Dr. Searcy worked to determine the source of excess bark in harvested cotton lint. He worked primarily with very large farms, or *fazendas* as they are called in Brazil, in the western state of Mato Grosso. He concluded that taller plants

caused more scarring and bark removal during picking. These findings were recently presented at the 2005 Beltwide Cotton Conferences. The second project for Dr. Searcy involved estimating the potential market for Deere's new cotton picker row units capable of harvesting cotton at ultra-narrow row spacing.

Nancy Searcy accompanied Steve to Brazil. She spent most of her time at the beginning of their stay quilting, but quickly made friends and enjoyed social outings. They lived in the city of Uberlandia, in the eastern state of Minas Gerais. Dr. and Mrs. Searcy had the opportunity to travel to various locations in Brazil, including the Pantanal region of western Brazil. This area is known for its diverse wildlife, and is a wetland area

similar to the Everglades of Florida. They saw caimans, termite mounds taller than men, piranha, fire ant trees, a variety of birds and many other interesting animals. They even saw several capybara, the largest rodent in the world.

Steve and Nancy thoroughly enjoyed their time in Brazil, where they found the people to be very friendly and open. Dr. Searcy gained more knowledge about the agricultural industry of Brazil and the US's competitive position relative to Brazil. His experiences reinforced the wisdom of our department's emphasis on addressing the engineering needs of the cotton industry.

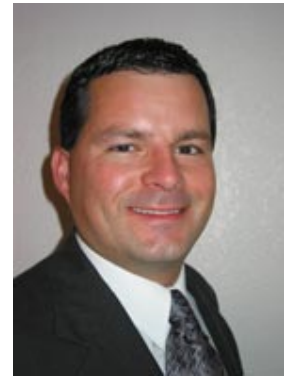
Former Student News

Courtney Hermes Diezi '96 is the proud mother of Cate (4) and Brett (1). She is still working in the drilling industry doing consulting work, coordinating rig inspections, and marketing for WEST Engineering Services, a small company west of Houston.

A former undergraduate (1998) and graduate (2000) student was named to the National Engineers Week New Faces of Engineering. Carlos Garza, P.E., P.G., works for

Melden & Hunt, Inc., in Edinburg, Texas. He began his career with the Agricultural Research Services Application Research Team of the USDA. He joined Malcom Pirnie in Houston, Texas, after his time at the USDA. Garza has assisted with the expansion and remediation of various airports in a post-9/11 context. Garza's work at Melden & Hunt, Inc. involves the design of irrigation and sewer systems, water treatment sludge handling, ele-

vated storage tank design, and hydraulic analysis of pipeline systems. His continued work on environmental site assessment and environmental compliance issues includes extensive contact with regulatory agencies. Garza was nominated by the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE).



Carlos Garza '98
named to the National
Engineers Week New
Faces of Engineering

Students Take Top Awards at Design Competition

The Consortium of Institutes for Decentralized Wastewater Treatment sponsored the Student Design Competition for Decentralized Wastewater Treatment. The competition was held in conjunction with the National Onsite Wastewater Treatment Recycling Association Meeting held in Albuquerque on November 9, 2004. Two teams of department students presented the results of

their projects at the meeting. Emily Sabato, Donna Chudej, Brandi Hansen, and Philip Taucer received 2nd place in the competition. The other team comprised of Andrea Froboese, Lisa Grimm, and Matthew Piazza were awarded 1st place.

These presentations were prepared as Senior Design projects. All of the students have now graduated.

Andrea Froboese works for URS in Austin. Lisa Grimm is employed by Pape Dawson in San Antonio. Matt Piazza is working with Lockwood, Newnam and Andrews in Houston. Philip Taucer is attending graduate school with Dr. Munster right here in College Station.

Congratulations again for your outstanding efforts!

Other News from Around the Department

Congratulations to Dr. Ann Kenimer for winning the 2004 Vice Chancellor's Award in Excellence for Undergraduate Teaching! This honor is well deserved in recognition for Dr. Kenimer's many years of dedication to providing the highest quality education to the students of the department. She received the award on January 12, 2005 during the keynote general session of the Agriculture Program Conference.

Dr. Kenimer joined the Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department in 1993 and is currently an associate professor. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1990. Dr. Kenimer's research activities focus on description and abatement of agricultural nonpoint source pollution. She also teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on engineering design, water quality engineering, and environmental

engineering technology.

We would also like to announce the promotion of Ms. Jeana Goodson, the Advisor from the Academic Programs Office for the department. Unfortunately, this promotion means that she left our department to join the Industrial Engineering Department in early February. We thank Jeana for her many years of dedicated service to our department. She will be sorely missed.



Dr. Ann Kenimer wins
the 2004 Vice Chancellor's
Award for Excellence in Undergraduate
Teaching

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United Technologies Carrier
United Technologies, Incorporated
Yellowhouse Gin Company, Incorporated

If you are interested in donating to our department or have questions about any specific issues regarding our development efforts, please contact Dr. Gary Riskowski (979-845-3931, riskowski@tamu.edu) or Dr. Elena Castell (979-862-7645, ecastell@tamu.edu).

Congratulations To Fall 2004 Graduates

Congratulations to our December 2004 graduates. We wish you the best of luck in all of your endeavors after leaving us here in Aggieland:

Paul Hughes Barker, Jr., AGSM

Paul S. Dossett, AGEN—Alan Plummer Associates, Inc. in Fort Worth, Texas

Michael Wayne Fehlis, Jr., AGSM—HEB Grocery in Bryan, Texas

Shain George, BSEN— Jones, Hill, McFarland & Ellis in Plano, Texas

Eric Bernard Gerberman, AGSM

John Thomas Hickerson, Jr., AGSM

John Ryan Holloway, AGSM

Carlton Cooper Holm, AGSM—Centex Homes in Austin, Texas

Leenett Jimenez, BSEN

Sean Garrison Lowey, AGSM—RoyceBuilders.com

Christopher Allen Mack, AGEN

Damon Prentice Miller, AGSM

Will Adam Miller, AGSM—Pursuing Masters of Agriculture at Texas A&M with Dr. Shaw

Lisa Porta, BSEN—Graduate school after potential internship in Los Angeles, California

Andres Sebastian Ortega Andrade, AGEN—Samuel Jackson, Inc. in Lubbock, Texas

Julia Marie Russell, BSEN—TCEQ in Austin, Texas

Bryan Jeffrey Smith, AGSM

Byron Jordan Smith, AGSM

Shawn Brandon Swanberg, AGSM

Mark Lee Sweeney, AGSM

Andrew Douglas Thompson, AGSM

James Staton Watson, AGSM

If you have an update on your employment, please contact Monica Cortez at

mo_cortez@tamu.edu

Welcome Dr. Alex Thomasson

Dr. Alex Thomasson joined the Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department in January 2005. He comes to us from Mississippi State University where he has spent the past 7.5 years as a faculty member working mainly in precision engineering, but also in biomass gasification. Prior to his time as a faculty member, Alex was a research engineer with the USDA-ARS Cotton Ginning Lab in Stoneville, Mississippi for 8 years. As a professor at Texas A&M, his

research will involve all engineering aspects of cotton production and processing.

Dr. Thomasson has been recognized with the 2002 Researcher of the Year Award from the Division of Agriculture at Mississippi State University. He also received an award in 2003 for the research publication with the most impact on Mississippi agriculture. He holds a patent on an optical-reflectance-based cotton yield monitor.

Dr. Thomasson earned his Ph.D. at the University of Kentucky. He grew up in the Houston area, and is a lifelong Astros fan. He is also a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve. His wife, Tanya, is also from Houston. They have four children ranging in age from 8 to 17. Their oldest son will be attending college (perhaps even at Texas A&M) in the fall. Dr. Thomasson considers one of his most interesting experiences to have been eating fried scorpions in Beijing, China, in 2002.





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Dr. Searcy Picking in Tall Cotton



Dr. Searcy hard at work in the cotton fields of a *fazenda* during his visit to Brazil

Mark Your Calendar

**Parents Weekend and Student
Awards Banquet
Pebble Creek Country Club**

April 9, 2005

**ASAE Annual International Meeting
Tampa, Florida**

July 17-20, 2005

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<http://baen.tamu.edu/news> to receive your own copy or to see back issues*