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Physica

The Newsletter of UTEP's Department of Physics

Volume II December 2003

Edward J. Sommer Jr. receives the College of Science Gold Nugget Award

Each year, UTEP recognizes an exceptional graduate from each of its six colleges. These Gold Nugget Award recipients exemplify the quality of the university.

The next time you buy new polyester carpeting made from recycled plastic Coke bottles, you can thank Edward J. Sommer Jr, who graduated with highest honors from Texas Western College (now UTEP) in 1965, having earned a bachelor's degree in science.

The holder of more than 20 patents, Sommer is responsible for the high-speed technology that sorts soda bottles from other types of plastic. An El Paso native, Sommer is president and CEO of National Recovery Technologies Inc., in Nashville, Tenn. He has developed cutting-edge sorting solutions for the recycling industry including sophisticated infrared, X-ray and color analysis sorting technology.

His bent for high tech achievements began at UTEP. As a freshman, Sommer worked at Schellenger Laboratories, analyzing atmospheric investigations. He also worked on one of the first computerized diagnostic programs, predicting orthopedic patients' responses to a medical questionnaire.

"UTEP was a fabulous place," Sommer says. After graduating, Sommer pursued both masters and doctoral degrees in plasma physics from Vanderbilt University.

With more than $6 million in research and development grants to build NRT's line of real time on-line inspection technologies. Sommer is a modern day Midas, who turns scrap plastic into gold. He was awarded the U.S. Small Business Administration and National Science Foundation's first Tippett's Award for Excellence.

Departmental News

- **Clarence Cooper** will retire at the end of this term. **Congratulations for him! (and condolences for the department)**
- **Eric Hagedorn** joined our faculty this last fall as Associate Professor. He specializes in physics education.
- **Mila Suskavcevik** joined our faculty, this time on a tenure track as an Assistant Professor.
- **Francisco Solis** left the faculty for family reasons. He is now at Arizona State University**. Good luck!**

Remember when?

Rufus Bruce and John Brient danced at the steps of the physical science building to celebrate the end of the semester.

Do you know when was it?

Congratulations to our new MS graduates.

- **Arceo, Roberto**
- **Escamilla, Jesus**
- **Gonzalez-Huizar, Hector**
- **Krastev, Plamen**
- **Lugo-Solis, Alejandro**
- **Ochoa, Hector**

And do not forget our new BS graduates!

- **Borunda Mario**
- **Figueroa Ramon**
- **Mammei, Juliette**
- **Mammei, Russell**
- **Martinez, Aramis**
- **Olgin, John**
- **Rodriguez. Juan**

Who is this guy?

Give it a try, send us your answer!!!

Physica

Send news, letters, etc. to: Dr. Jorge A. López, Physics Department, University of Texas at El Paso, 500 W. University Ave., El Paso, TX 79968, (915) 747-5715, jorgelopez@utep.edu,

Your Support is Welcome!

You can contribute to our success!
Please send your donation to: The Physics Department, UTEP, El Paso, TX 79968, USA

Name: _____ **Amount: $20__ $50__ $100__ Other $_____**
Address: _____

Please use this contribution for:

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- Let the Chair decide how to use this donation_____

You can also contribute during UTEP's annual phone campaign organized by the development office.