Fair to increase public's awareness of opportunities in space industry

By Betty T. Hao

Spacefair '85, a biennial conference to stimulate space enthusiasm and educate the general public, will take place April 12-15 at the Student Center, according to Peter H. Diamandis.

The conference's theme is "Career from Space." Its purpose is to "draw together pre-space groups to boost public awareness of the potential that space offers," Diamandis said.

Several corporations are sponsoring Spacefair '85. All lectures, films and exhibits are free to students.

"In today's competitive world economy, space is a new and rapidly growing industry with a relatively small pool of talent to draw from," Diamandis said.

"There are a multitude of existing and rapidly emerging professional and technical fields which are part of our burgeoning space industry, and now is the time to create a better understanding of space career opportunities," he continued.

Duo cracks code, but loses tens of thousands of dollars in cash award

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Each candidate was given a 16-page puzzle, which contained terms whose first letters matched the first letters of words that were wanted. The puzzle was read from left to right and from top to bottom, and a sequence of incomprehensible English was formed.

"Each candidate key was used to decipher the code. The program listed the possible solutions to determine whether one of them resembled a dish," said Baldwin.

This brute force approach did not solve the puzzle. Holland created his key by choosing the first letters of each word in the text he had chosen. He skipped two words, which was enough to confuse the team. Baldwin and Sherman's relatively unsophisticated technique worked.

The keys created were correct up to a point, but the rest of the keys were wrong and caused candidates to be unrecognizable in English.

Baldwin and Sherman found a way to detect candidate keys that were partially correct to handle this problem. Once they had found fragmentary information for a key, they were able to partially decipher the message.

Using a sophisticated dictionary program that helped them reconstruct partially decoded words, the team was able to gather more information about the entire key, and eventually piece it together.

The two cryptographers were not dejected about missing out on the prize money. Their primary goal, completing a sequence of incomprehensible numbers, had been accomplished.

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