

Dragon series results of hard work



Anne McCaffrey

"Don't talk about it—write it" is Anne McCaffrey's advice to aspiring writers. McCaffrey, guest of honor at Cepheid Variable's AggieCon VII, has published 14 books including ten science fiction. Her best known works are the "Dragonriders of Pern" series, which won both the Hugo and Nebula awards. "The Ship Who Sang" and "Decision at Doona."

In an interview Wednesday, McCaffrey talked about her career as a writer and the craft of writing.

"I am usually at the typewriter by 9 or 9:30 every morning," McCaffrey said, "and I'll stick with it until something dries up or I can't keep it moving, so I'll quit about lunch time. If something is moving well, though, I can't quit—I'll keep on working until it's time for dinner."

When working on rewrites or final copy, she will frequently spend 10 hours a day at the typewriter. "I cannot work from outlines—I'm a storyteller," McCaffrey said. "I start from a situation and a basic conflict between the major characters

and very often the story takes off on its own. "Very often I have to rewrite portions of the initial story when I find out where the story's going in order to emphasize directions that I hadn't known were going to be useful to me."

McCaffrey usually has about four uncompleted works in progress and will take anywhere from 3 1/2 weeks to a year to complete a novel.

McCaffrey said that writers' conferences have helped her greatly. "It takes a lot to sit and listen to 25 professionals rip your stuff apart. Not everyone can take it but if you can, you can learn a lot."

Observation, McCaffrey believes, is an author's most important ability. Pulling a large notebook out of her

purse, she said, "A writer is never not working. I keep with me a notebook in which I jot down phrases, characteristics, names of towns and places that might be good names for heroes or planets. I never stop working; I never know when something will prove useful."

The author graduated with honors from Radcliff with a degree in Slavonic languages. "We were very friendly with Russia in 1947," she said, "and I thought knowing Slavonic languages would help me get a job in the foreign service but

like many college students, my plans underwent a severe change."

McCaffrey lives in Ireland because her income as a writer is tax-exempt. She explains with a laugh that she pays no American taxes since "I carefully keep my income under \$25,000 a year."

McCaffrey will speak at 2 p.m. in the Rudder Theater on "The Whys and Wherefores of the Dragon Series." Tickets that are available in the box office of the Rudder Tower will also admit purchasers to other AggieCon events.

Tim Sager

Book shows Nixon suicidal in last days

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A new book reportedly paints a picture of former President Richard M. Nixon drinking too much, weeping and threatening suicide during his last days in the White House.

The former president's suicide talk so disturbed his aides, according to reports on the book, that they removed all medication from his medicine chest.

The book is "The Final Days," by Watergate reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein of The Washington Post. Time Magazine and the New York Daily News say it has been closely guarded prior to its publication next month by Simon and Schuster and serialization of excerpts beginning Monday in Newsweek.

According to the report in Time, as amplified by columnist Liz Smith of the Daily News, the book relates that in the days before his resignation Nixon spent much of his time drinking in a small office in the Executive Office Building, either alone or with Press Secretary Ron Ziegler.

The News says that Nixon's son-in-law, David Eisenhower, expressed concern for Nixon's mental condition, reporting to an aide that he had seen the president, intoxicated, talking to the portraits of former presidents.

Time says that as the end neared, Nixon asked Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to kneel and pray with him, saying:

"You are not a very orthodox Jew and I am not an orthodox Quaker, but we need to pray."

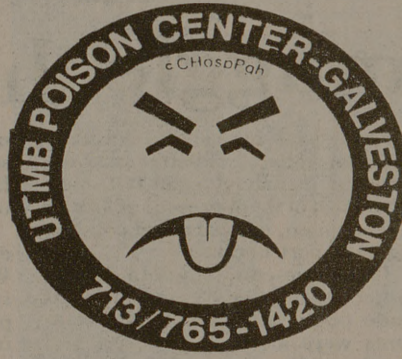
The News says that after the prayer Nixon began crying, screaming and beating his fists on the floor.

Even Ziegler was one of the former president's few confidantes in the final days, Time says, the press secretary sometimes became the object of Nixon's temper and that Nixon was heard on one oc-

casional screaming at Ziegler, "Get out! Get out!"

When Nixon summoned his family, wife, daughters and sons-in-law, for a final White House photograph, says Time, White House photographer Ollie Atkins had to shoot for some time to get a picture which did not show tears on any of their faces.

Woodward and Bernstein's investigative reporting about the Watergate burglary and cover-up won a Pulitzer Prize for The Washington Post.



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World oceans have become man's dump

A Texas A&M University geographer says the relationship between man and the ocean is sour-

Dr. William M. Sackett asserts that oceans have become a dumping ground for man's garbage and chemical waste.

Man has always used the ocean as a giant garbage can, but "because of his small numbers he had little influence until about 1900 when industrial activities began to grow," Sackett said.

Sackett researched some of these effects as part of a 1975 National Science Foundation funded study on the circulation of the Gulf and the physical and biological effects of various man-derived chemical contaminants.

The principal sources of pollution in the Gulf are the rivers that empty into it (primarily, the Mississippi), offshore petroleum production operations and offshore dumping of industrial wastes.

The Gulf, his calculations indicate, contain critical levels of DDT, which, according to experts, is responsible for the sudden disappearance of the Brown Pelican, a symbol of the Gulf coast region.

DDT is magnified as it passes through the food chain from phytoplankton, to minnows to large fish reaching a concentration in the marine birds of 25 parts per million. A dual pollution problem accompanies offshore petroleum production, Sackett warns.

High molecular weight compounds are the most visible, seen in the form of tar on beaches, floating on the water surface and coating and killing birds and other marine organisms," he said.

Other compounds also present in spilled petroleum have major, long term sub-lethal effects on ecosystems.

In the vicinity of industrial and sewage discharges, Sackett explained heavy metals may be a problem. In an inland or near shore water, heavy metal contamination usually remains where it is dumped, affecting nearby animal populations.

Most of the pollutant-loaded runoff and industrial waste is carried to the western Gulf of Mexico, and that is where marine life is in the greatest danger of being damaged by man's activities," Sackett added.

A late summer westward current, plus near shore currents which generally move westward, serves to isolate the western Gulf from the eastern part, which is continually flushed by the main Yucatan current.

"In this way pollution tends to be carried to the western Gulf off Texas," Sackett explains.

Determination of the long-term effects of present levels of heavy metals and synthetic organic and petroleum compounds on marine life in the Gulf of Mexico will require further investigation of the characteristics of the contaminants and of the affected portions of the environment, Sackett concludes.

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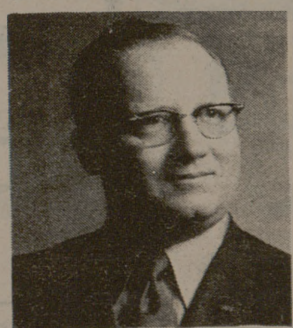
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| 5,000.00 | 141.55 | 9.99% | |
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| 6,500.00 | 184.01 | 9.99% | |
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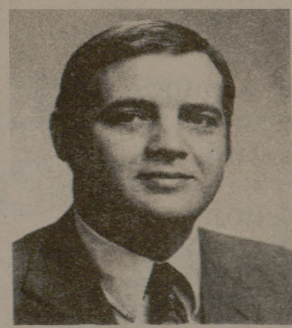
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| 5,000.00 | 161.39 | 10.04% | |
| 5,500.00 | 177.53 | 10.04% | |
| 6,000.00 | 193.67 | 10.04% | |
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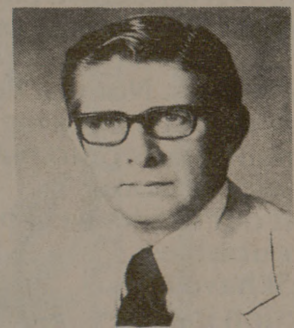
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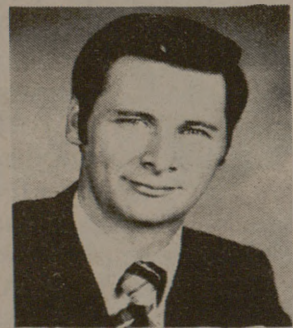
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