

No green men at A&M

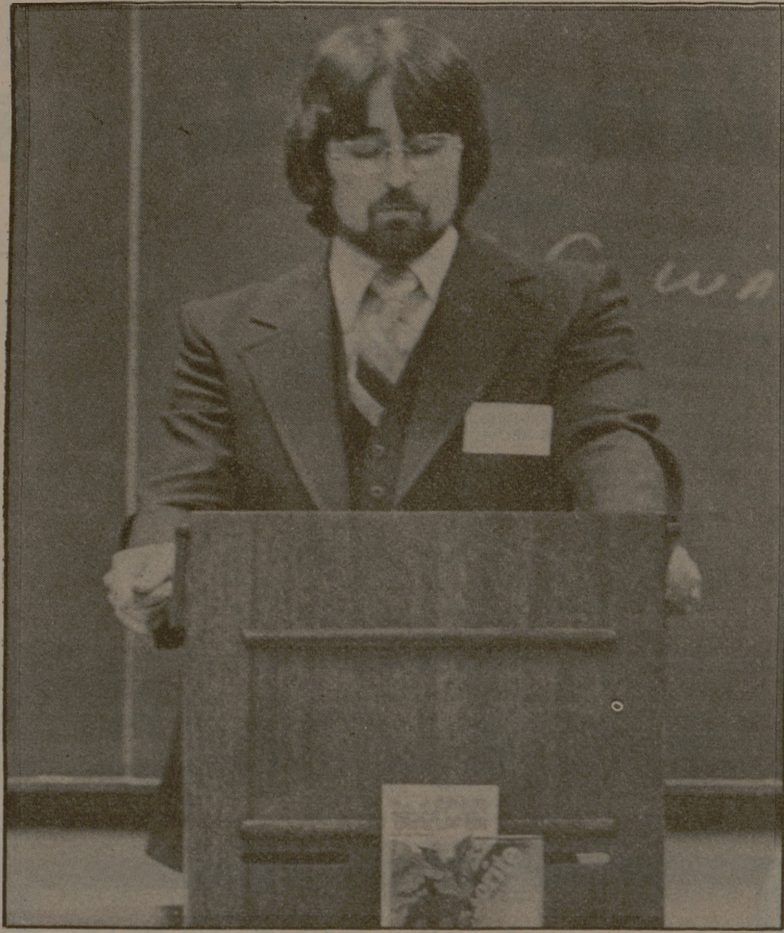
Sci-fi writer talks of craft

By KEITH TAYLOR
Battalion Reporter

No little green men or flying saucers with flashing lights heralded his arrival, but the science fiction writer from Arlington still managed to please his audience with a reading of one of his short stories. George Proctor was on the Texas A&M University campus Monday night to talk to Cepheid Variable, the science fiction club here. Proctor centered most of his talk around the reading of the story, "The Night Breeze on Watermelon Mountain." The story is about a prophet looking for a rip in the universe through which humanity was passing; meanwhile, his female robot was always losing parts of her anatomy. The writer said he has sent the story to many magazines, including Analog and Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine. Proctor said the

editors usually liked the story, but they could not fit it into their magazines' format. He also explained how he comes up with story ideas. He said he loves to play word games and he gets many ideas by building stories around common idioms and cliches. He gave such examples as "not a soul in town," "a killing in the market" and "he's the kiss of death." One phrase, "he is shot to hell," started Proctor on an epic novel. Proctor also creates science fiction artwork and has sold two cover paintings to Heavy Metal, a science fiction magazine. He said he has had no formal training in art, but he began drawing comic book characters in elementary school, teaching himself. "I do not consider myself an artist," he said. "It is a hobby." He said he felt incompetent around

other artists, and he has just learned what a T-square and triangle are. He said his artwork is what motivates him to finish his stories. "It is one of my incentives to get through my pages for the day, so when I get through, I can play with my colors," he said. Proctor is a 1969 graduate of Texas Tech University with degrees in journalism and political science. He worked for the Dallas Morning News for five years, but decided that he would rather write fiction and left the newspaper. He said he started writing science fiction during his last year of college and received two rejection slips for his stories. Proctor sold his first story in 1972. He has written one book, "The Esper Transfer," and co-authored an anthology "The Lone Star Universe." He has also sold 10 novelettes using pen names.



George Proctor, science fiction writer, reads one of his stories.

Evacuation 'impossibility' for Gulf during hurricane

Total evacuation of Texas Gulf Coast islands during a major hurricane is impossible, concludes a transportation report prepared by Texas A&M University. Four-foot tides could cut off residents of Galveston, South Padre and Mustang Islands as well as Bolivar Peninsula as soon as 36 hours in advance of the hurricane's landfall, Texas Transportation Institute researcher Thomas Urbanik says. Under the best of conditions almost 13 hours would be required to evacuate Galveston Island alone, the Texas A&M University study predicts. Also the study estimates it would take two hours for Bolivar and over three for Mustang Island to be evacuated. The figures did not account for thousands of tourists that visit the barrier islands during the June 1 to Oct. 15 hurricane season, Urbanik adds. The findings were presented last Friday to the Texas Coastal and Marine Council meeting on the Texas A&M campus.

TCMC chairman and state Sen A.R. "Babe" Schwartz of Galveston said of the report, "If that don't scare the hell outta you, you don't live on the coast." Although Schwartz and Urbanik admitted that tourists would be likely to stay away from recreation areas during an impending storm, the report did conclude that vehicle accidents could be expected when trying to evacuate the estimated 74,000 permanent residents from the areas in question. A normal rate of accidents, not taking into account higher incidence of wrecks during rainy weather, would reduce the evacuation road capacities by 51 percent, thereby doubling the best estimated time in which evacuation could be expected. Urbanik also told members of the TCMC that only about a third to two-thirds of the citizens in an urban area could be expected to leave when warned. The percentage might rise to 100 percent in smaller rural communities along the coast, he said.

However, major escape routes such as Interstate 45 which runs from Galveston to Houston might be flooded by rains well in advance of the threatening four-foot tides. "If the four-foot tides occur 36 hours or more prior to a storm," said Urbanik, "total evacuation of the barrier islands is not possible, given existing roadway conditions, storms and forecasting techniques." "We will have to make the (Texas) highway department give us some definite measurements under specific weather conditions," suggested Schwartz, who recalled sitting out a past hurricane in his hometown of Galveston and not being able to learn anything about open roads from highway department sources. Urbanik said the elevated causeway from Galveston to the mainland may give residents a false sense of security, but it's the access roads to the causeway which would go under water with four-foot tides preceding a major storm. TCMC took no action on the report since the body lacked a quorum.

SALT talks continue

MOSCOW — Secretary of State Cyrus Vance met with Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev on Monday, after reporting some progress toward resolving outstanding issues for a strategic arms pact between the two superpowers. Gromyko, earlier in the day, indicated that he expected the Vance-Brezhnev meeting to be an important one. U.S. diplomats expected that Vance and the Soviet leaders would go over the arms talks which have been held during the past two days in a further effort to narrow differences and prepare the way for a Soviet-American summit conference. Before attending a luncheon Monday with Gromyko, Vance said: "We are closer to agreement today than we were at the end of the (SALT) talks in Washington. These talks have been very useful and very constructive. The problems remain. As I said before, it's brick by brick." Gromyko smiled and added, "Yes, it's jump by jump." Gromyko also confirmed that Vance would be meeting Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev "later in the day." Both Gromyko and Vance hedged when they were asked whether an agreement could come out of the current round of SALT talks. Vance said he would return to Washington Tuesday even if an agreement is not reached.

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