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Dr. John Lenihan, a Texas A&M University history professor, explains that the science fiction films of the 1950s were mirrors of the time, the cold war. Battalion photo colin Crombie

50s flicks scary, but reflect times

By CATHY TERRELL
Battalion Reporter

There's more to science fiction films of the 1950s than watching giant creatures wreaking havoc over a city, a Texas A&M University history professor said Tuesday night.

Dr. John Lenihan in a speech sponsored by Cepheid Variable said that although the films are primarily entertainment, they reflect the views of an anxiety-ridden decade.

"In the 1950s disaster seemed imminent," Lenihan said. "The danger of nuclear war, invasion of the country and communist subversion was always there."

Therefore, science fiction films of this time concentrated on nuclear peril and alien invaders.

"These alien invaders were given the qualities that we associate with the communists, such as lack of human emotion, no ethical morals and the use of subversive activities, like taking over of minds," Lenihan said.

The character of the decade produced three basic types of films, Lenihan said.

The predominant theme was that the United States was under the threat of an alien force and that the country must be strong and ready for the coming struggle.

Movies such as "The Invasion of the Body Snatchers" and "Invaders from Mars" dealt with this theme, the professor said. The

movies have some creature — eventually destroyed by teamwork of the military and the country's best scientists.

The end of the movies, however, always leaves some doubt about whether more creatures, or communist threats, are waiting to be discovered.

Another type of movie, including "It Came from Outer Space" and "The Day the Earth Stood Still," gave the message that America was too hostile and intolerant of others.

The human-like creature in "The Day the Earth Stood Still" tells Earth that if it does not stop exploding bombs and threatening war, it will be destroyed.

Religion was the answer in the third type of films, Lenihan said. One example was "The War of the Worlds," in which people flocked to churches and pray to stop the alien invasion.

Lenihan criticized today's science fiction films.

"Star Wars" is obviously campy, putting the audience on "There's not too much message in 'Star Wars.'"

Lenihan researches science fiction films the way some people cure insomnia — by watching them on the Late, late show.

Lenihan viewed more than 500 western films doing research for his doctorate. A book form of his doctorate research of western movies will be out in the fall.

Discussion, but no decision on CS housing grant guides

By KEVIN HIGGINBOTHAM
Battalion Reporter

The College Station City Council discussed various methods of distributing Rehabilitation Grant money in a shirtsleeve session Wednesday but made no decision.

The city has budgeted \$50,000 for the housing rehabilitation project. The money is surplus street repair funds received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1977.

City Planner Jim Callaway suggested the money be distributed along the same lines as HUD's Section eight housing grants. To operate under Section 8 of the HUD code, grants for house repairs would be distributed according to the applicant's annual income and the condition of the building to be repaired.

Callaway said that applications for the grants would be reviewed on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The grants, which could range up to \$5,000 each, are to be used to repair homes to meet HUD standards.

If the homes are not brought up to standards, however, the city can't claim the money from HUD, Callaway said.

Mayor Lorence Bravenec said that the city should determine whether a renovation would meet HUD requirements before a grant is provided.

"The only reason the city is putting money into this is to get Brownie points with HUD, otherwise we'd use the money to pave streets," said Councilman Cary Halter, who suggested that one criterion for the housing project be the number of people that could be assisted.

"But we aren't going to use the money to pave streets," said Bravenec. "We're going to use it to rehabilitate homes. Do you mean 50 \$1,000 grants would be better than 10 \$5,000?"

Halter stressed that since the criteria for success of the project will be HUD's and not the city's or the citizen's, consideration should be given to meeting HUD's wishes.

Bravenec suggested that the initial screening of applicants be done by Callaway and then a list be given to the committee for further consideration.

The council will look into the matter further during Thursday's regular meeting.

The council also looked over five possibilities for the new city logo.

The logo would be put on city cars and other city property, and would become an identifying symbol for College Station.

Although no decision was made, the council obviously enjoyed passing suggestions among themselves as to how a city seal should look.

Bravenec made the comment that one of the five choices looked like a platter to cook a turkey on.

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Chinese pay millions for Bell helicopters

United Press International
FORT WORTH — Bell Helicopter Textron has sold nine commercial helicopters to the People's Republic of China for \$12 million in one of the few sales of American-built aircraft to the nation.

James F. Atkins, Bell president, Tuesday announced the sale of the Model 212 helicopters, capping five years of off-and-on negotiations. The sale is the first by a U.S. helicopter manufacturer, he said.

The Boeing Co. made the first aircraft sale to the People's Republic in 1972 when it sold 10 707 jet airliners for a reported \$125 million. In

1978, Boeing sold three 747SPs and options on two more for a reported \$156 million.

The sale of the 15-place, twin engine helicopters was announced to coincide with the visit of Han Hsu, a Chinese official expected to be named assistant minister of foreign affairs for the Americas and Oceania on his return to Peking.

The Chinese will use the helicopters to survey mineral deposits and to support offshore petroleum drilling, Bell officials said. They are scheduled for delivery between September and December of this year.

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