

campus

Birds' future questioned

By MARJORIE McLAUGHLIN
Battalion Reporter

Birds of prey are facing an uncertain future because of man's misunderstanding of their role in nature, said bird authority John Karger Tuesday. Karger's presentation was sponsored by the Wildlife Biology Association.

Karger, who specializes in bird rehabilitation, said most people consider birds of prey as chicken and sheep killers that should be exterminated, despite the work that they do as scavengers.

"The hawk is here to clean up the world," Karger said. "It gets damned for doing its job."

One of Karger's "patients," a red-

tailed hawk, attended the speech perched on an assistant's arm. The hawk, missing an eye and three toes, was injured in a shooting incident.

Karger also brought a black vulture, which hopped out into the audience.

"Vultures are good targets to shoot at," Karger said, "but they are the garbage men of the earth. You wouldn't shoot your garbage man would you?"

At least 80 percent of all young birds of prey are killed, 40 percent of them by man, said Karger. In the wild, the birds rarely live five years.

Karger, who has worked with birds since he was nine, treats 85-125 injured birds a year, spending two to

three hours daily with each of them. He receives the birds from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and from individuals who find them.

Working with veterinarians who treat the birds, Karger's job is rehabilitation. Different techniques are used for the various birds that he works with, he said.

Less severely injured birds are placed into a large wooden box with slatted sides, allowing some flight. The birds are fed through a small window and do not have contact with humans. As soon as they are healed, they are released.

"We don't release a bird until we are sure that it can provide for itself and won't come back to man," Karger said.

Birds requiring a longer recovery time are trained to perch on Karger's arm, to accept food and, eventually, to fly again.

When the bird is fully healed, its contact time with men is shortened until it is ready to go back to the wild.

Karger finances his work by giving speeches about problems birds and other wildlife face in today's world.

He is presently working at the Texas Renaissance Festival in Magnolia, giving falconry demonstrations and speeches about the fate of the birds he said he loves.

"It is like we're living on a big wheel with each spoke being a part of life," he said. "If we continue to knock out the spokes, how long before the wheel collapses?"

Weird' mime troupe delights all

By KATHLEEN McELROY
Battalion Reporter

If anyone in the audience of the Mummenschanz performance in Rudder Auditorium Wednesday night expected the usual mime routines of man-waiting-for-a-bus, or boy-meets-girl, he might have been disappointed.

But probably that person would have been laughing too hard throughout the show to notice the

platform with a ramp on either side. At first most people in the near-capacity crowd were trying to decide what that "thing" was, but soon they gave up and just enjoyed its rolling and jumping struggle to the top of the platform.

The sequence of the gray clump was like most of the other scenes in the performance. It was short — three to five minutes — and alternately funny and sad. Though the object looked totally inanimate, it expressed feelings of excitement, disappointment and even tiredness by just rolling around the set.

The funniest scene of the first act, and in fact the whole show, involved a game of catch with the audience and someone (or something) dressed like a collapsible straw with a big balloon ball. The "thing" played catch by tossing the ball into the crowd. It cheered a good throw and ridiculed bad throws.

Mummenschanz will probably be one of the few OPAS performers to give a "halftime show." Two troupers performed in the auditorium while the third clowned with the audience in the lobby.

Dressed in black, as they were through the show, they had boxes for heads. Throughout, emotions flowed from them to the crowd. (It's funny to see a box salute to a cadet or to watch a female box cover itself in masking tape.)

The second act has even more fantasy concepts than the first, and is geared more for adults. It contains the well known toilet tissue sequence — a case of male tissue (yellow in color) falling in love with

female tissue (pink). The tissue is used for hair for the female, tears for the male, and flowers for both.

Mummenschanz has performed more than 1,000 times on Broadway and has made several television appearances — and after seeing it, it's easy to see why. It is a talented group that expresses deep emotions with weird props, or no props at all.

But to truly appreciate the beauty of Mummenschanz you have to see it in person.

Review

difference. Everyone — the old, the young, and the college student — seemed to enjoy the show even if he didn't understand it.

Mummenschanz, which in German means "games of chance," is indeed a mime group. But the three-member group doesn't act out everyday situations — they turn completely unrealistic things and concepts into man's emotions. For instance, the first act of the show mines the evolution of man, and such an attempt is no small feat.

The act started with a gray clump sitting on the modest set, a small

New drug is tested for glaucoma victims

Medical researchers have launched human testing of a new drug for glaucoma, an ailment that has partially or totally blinded over 250,000 Americans.

DMC, or demethylated carbachol, may improve treatment for millions of glaucoma victims by reducing or eliminating side effects, said Dr. George C.Y. Chiou, head of pharmacology in the Texas A&M University College of Medicine.

Eye irritation and pupil contraction are side effects of treatment with pilocarpine, presently the most widely used drug for fighting glaucoma, said Chiou.

Chiou and Dr. Thom Zimmerman of Louisiana State University's Eye Center are testing DMC on 10 volunteers there as part of the long-term, cooperative study.

A report on the months-long study will be prepared for the Food and Drug Administration, which will decide if the drug warrants further testing in hospitals. If successful at that stage, DMC could be approved for commercial marketing.

Chiou said another phase of the Texas A&M-LSU study will be to explore a combined dosage of DMC and timolol, a glaucoma drug already on the market.

It could be that a combined dosage of the two — which work in a different way — could reduce side effects even more because of the smaller amount of each drug used.

Glaucoma is primarily a disease of persons over age 40, the Texas A&M medical researcher noted, but

people can develop the ailment as young as age 20. It is caused by a buildup of pressure in the chambers of the eye. Untreated, the pressure deadens the optic nerve head and causes blindness.

About 178,000 new cases of glaucoma are reported in the United States yearly and disease has already blinded 56,000 Americans and impaired the vision of 200,000 more.

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