

Today's Almanac

United Press International
Today is Monday, Oct. 5, the 278th day of 1981 with 87 to follow.
The moon is approaching its first quarter.
The morning star is Mars.
The evening stars are Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn.

On this date in history:
In 1960, an Eastern Air Lines Electra crashed into Boston Harbor, killing 61 people.
In 1965, Pope Paul made a 14-hour visit to New York to plead for world peace before the United Nations.

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This Hereford cow cools off Sunday afternoon in a farm pond on Bird Pond Road, south of College Station. High temperatures have been in the 90s during the past several days.

Staff photo by Becky Swanson



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Gromets wage war weekly

War games an escape

By ELAINE ENGSTROM
Battalion Reporter

Every weekend in the deep, dark recesses of the Memorial Student Center, the world stops for 33 hours.

Battles are won and wars are lost. Ships sink and planes are shot down. Powerful beings make unending journeys through worlds unknown to mere mortals.

The Gromets, Texas A&M University's 100-member war gaming group, is a sub-committee of the MSC Recreation Committee. "Gromets" stands for Game Replication of Motivational Economic Tactical Situations. The \$10 yearly dues gives members access to the group's extensive collection of board games, books and hobby magazines, as well as a 20 percent discount on mail order games.

The Gromets have several rooms reserved in the MSC where they play war games and role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons. During the fall semester, weekend gaming hours are shortened so members can attend yell practice and the football game.

Usual gaming hours are: Friday, 6 p.m. to 2 a.m.; Saturday, noon to 2 a.m. and Sunday, noon to 11 p.m.

The group is eight years old but membership has increased 50 percent since last year due to better organization, an expanded library and an increased awareness of the group's existence on campus, said Gromets Chairman Don Gilman.

The Gromets will be working with the MSC Free University to establish a Dungeons and Dragons workshop as a fall short course or a full course in the spring.

"We're experimenting with new ideas," said Ann Barrier, chairman of MSC Free University. "It should be a good class."

The Gromets also plan to play war games "by mail" with Annapolis, West Point and the Air Force Academy. "We'd also like to challenge the University of Texas group to a tournament," Gilman said.

The eighth annual Warcon, the annual wargaming convention at Texas A&M, is scheduled for Feb. 5, 6 and 7. People come from all over Texas and the adjacent states to be in tournaments and to buy and sell war games.

Nick Schuessler, editor and publisher of "The Journal of World War II Wargaming," said approximately 100,000 war gamers live in the United States and others live in Canada, Britain, Australia and Germany.

The Austin-based journal publishes book and game reviews, articles about conventions and editorial opinions on the art of World War II war gaming.

Schuessler, 35, has a master's degree in English and has worked for the Texas Education Agency as a hobby. The journal's circulation of approximately 1,000 copies from as far away as Hawaii and the Virgin Islands. The issue published in March is now a collector's item.

Schuessler has been a wargamer for 20 years and says wargaming serves a useful purpose. "It's an undercurrent of aggression in America's youth and war games provide a better release," he said. "No one gets killed in a wargame. Over the centuries appearance changed but the flict of two forces is still there. The stigma of today's war games is their explicitness, not the conflict involved."


Gilman says war games provide an opportunity to look at the world and discover why things happen in a particular way. "The games require problem solving and management skills," he said. "If playing war games gives you an appetite for war, then watching television would give you an appetite for sex and violence."

The next Gromets meeting will be tonight at 7:30 pm in 330 MSC and is open to anyone interested in becoming a member of the committee.

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