

Aggie toymaker envisioned first board game in a dream

By LYNN RAE POVEC
Reporter

Jack Slimp conceived Leverage in a dream on a Saturday afternoon in December of 1975. Two days later, the Aggie had completed a working model of the board game. By the end of 1983, the Milton Bradley Co., which bought the game from him, had sold all 5,000 that it produced that year.

"I laid down one Saturday afternoon for a nap, which I rarely do, and dreamed the game," Slimp said in a telephone interview Friday.

Slimp, a 1965 graduate of Texas A&M, is founder, owner, and president of the Star Game Co., Manassas, Va. He said his vision was so powerful that he worked for most of the next 48 hours building a prototype of board, pennies and nails.

"I pictured it fairly clearly," Slimp said, "but when I started to make a prototype of it, I thought I should make it bigger. By the time the whole thing was over, I had consolidated it back down to its original size."

Leverage is a combination of checkers and Chinese checkers. The board is mounted on a base and balanced so that it is either level, or fully inclined toward one player or the



"Leverage", a game designed by an Aggie, is currently being marketed by Milton Bradley. It is a combination of checkers and Chinese checkers.

Photo by JOHN MAKELY

here's no in-between," Slimp said. "It's always a way down, or it's at a level."

Points in Leverage are won by moving the board toward the center. To return the board to equilibrium, point pieces are moved and awarded to the successful player.

Each player has a choice of two strategies when playing Leverage. The game is designed so that it can be won equally well using either strategy," Slimp

explained. The approach a player may use is to let a large number of combat forces be captured. The other tactic a player may use is to win the game at this point player would then have to move into the opposite zone while he was still in points.

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game-players who could see the depth involved.

Slimp said he was disappointed in the nationally-televised commercial for Leverage because he thought it missed the sophisticated player.

"The TV commercial has a little heavier thrust towards a younger market," he said.

Last year was the first year that Milton Bradley had Leverage on the market.

"My company," Slimp said, "actually went into production of the game before we sold it to Milton Bradley. It takes a lot of promotional dollars to market a game like this."

Slimp said he had a choice of bringing in more investor dollars or selling to a big firm such as Milton Bradley. He also said a couple of millionaires were interested in providing venture capital, but "they were also interested in too big a cut."

Slimp said he went into the

toy and game industry full force in January of 1979 when he launched his company. Before that he had worked as program/budget analyst for the U.S. Department of Defense.

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Rains to speak at Muster

By TAMMY KIRK
Reporter

This year's Texas A&M Muster speaker will be Jack M. Rains of Houston, president and chief operating officer of 3D/International.

Muster is observed each April 21 when students and former students of Texas A&M come together to honor comrades who have died in the last year. It includes the traditional roll call of the deceased when friends answer "here."

The speaker for the campus Muster, the largest of the musters held worldwide, is chosen by a special committee.

"Jack Rains is what we were looking for in a speaker," said committee member Matt Holley. "He's a dynamic person and highly recommended by

the faculty who critiqued our top ten choices."

Rains was chosen mainly for his motivational speaking ability, says Renee Ramsey, committee chairman. Ramsey says she feels Rains will be able to reach the students and relate to them with his enthusiasm and still project the Aggie tradition of Muster.

Rains, Class of '60, graduated with a bachelor of business administration degree from A&M. Although in the Corps of Cadets for four years, Rains did not take an ROTC contract his senior year, but he did join the United States Coast Guard three months after graduation.

He then enrolled in the University of Houston College of Law where he received his doctorate in jurisprudence in 1967.

Rains is a member of the American and Houston Bar Associations as well as the State Bar of Texas. He was chairman and director of the Houston Chamber of Commerce from 1981-1982.

Rains has been a speaker at Texas A&M before. He spoke to the Senior Class at its Senior Banquet in 1980, and to the Texas A&M Commission on the Visual Arts in 1981. Rains was vice president and director of the Association of Former Students from 1975-1978.

3D/International, the firm Rains heads, deals with management in architecture, engineering and graphic design. Field offices are located in Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

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