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## Dance Arts Society

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# Adults perform plays that hook children's interest, 'magninations'

Parents, youngsters alike entertained by "Animal Tales"

By Mark Gee  
Reporter

"Fish in the sea, come listen to me. My wife begs a wish from the magic fish," the fisherman says.

The fisherman casts his imaginary hook to the children gathered in front of the stage and catches more than a magic fish — he also reels in the children's attention.

The fisherman is Dennis Busch, assistant manager of the Texas A&M University Center Complex. Busch is one of five actors in "Animal Tales," a 45-minute production of eight short plays written and directed by David and Judy Williams for 'magination Station.

'magination Station is a non-profit children's theater that features adults performing plays aimed at children in the Bryan-College Station area.

'magination Station gave its first performance of "Animal Tales" Saturday at the former Gallenkamp Shoe Store in Manor East Mall. Culpepper Properties gave the children's theater group temporary use of the mall space.

"Animal Tales" will be performed again at the mall at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. on Saturday and on May 2.

The magic fish, played by Pam Wiley, a skin-care teacher for Mary Kay Cosmetics, makes a big entrance as she plops onto a beanbag on stage, blowing soap bubbles through a ring and fanning them with her tail.

The bubbles makes Heather Wichkoski, 3, get up from her mother's lap and laugh as she chews pink bubblegum.

The young audience's experience of being in the fisherman's world is

enhanced by the dyed blankets draped behind the stage and along the walls.

"What do you want?" the magic fish asks.

"My wife wants a house like Miss Ellie and J.R.'s," the fisherman says.

"You mean Southfork," the magic fish says.

The children gathered in front of the stage laugh along with their par-

was greedy and she got nothing."

Heather, dressed in pink sandals, purple shorts and a polka-dot shirt, wrinkles her brow and nods in agreement with her mother.

The Williamses use lessons, such as the downfall of greedy people, as the basis of their plays in "Animal Tales."

"These are original plays based on the improvisation of folk tales, fairy-

fore moving to Southfork and White House.

David explained that the fisherman's wife ask for everything, so the children would know the asking for too much.

David and Judy wrote "Animal Tales" by giving a general idea and plot, such as greed in "The Magic Fish," to the actors, and letting the actors and musicians improvise and play with very little direction.

David and Elizabeth Westerman music is an important part of the play. Elizabeth plays the synthesizer and David plays the classical guitar.

"The sounds we make give presence to the characters," Elizabeth says. "When the character is sad we play a happy song. When the character is moving, we play music that moves with them."

The Westermans play more than 40 different sounds during the production.

"The difficult thing is to make Elizabeth says.

The Westermans play an original and happy tune for the fisherman but when the wife enters the vacuuming, Elizabeth turns on a vacuum cleaner and plays a song to notes.

Parents are an important part of the overall play experience for the child, David says. Adults can read the characters and help children understand the message of the play.

Adults get in for half price accompanied by a child. Child and regular-price adult tickets are \$3.



ents, who are seated behind them in folding chairs.

"OK, but, if you ask for too much, I'll take everything that I've given you away," the magic fish says.

"Gosh, thanks, fish," the fisherman says.

The fisherman skips home to the "Dallas" theme song to find his wife, who is played by Carol Slough, a customer-service manager at Lamar Savings.

"This is nice," says his wife, with intensity in her eyes. "But why settle for big when you can have bigger? I want to live like Ron and Nancy. Go back to the magic fish and ask for the White House!" the wife demands.

The magic fish gives the fisherman the White House, but his wife still is not satisfied. She asks for "everything" and the magic fish takes all the gifts away.

Heather Wichkoski's mother leans over and tells her, "Now see, the wife

tales and fables," David says.

"The basic idea I was trying to get across was, 'Don't ask for so much, Emily.'" David was referring to his 4-year-old daughter. He got the idea for "The Magic Fish" from a nursery book he bought for her.

David and Judy met at the Alley Theater in Houston in 1980. David was acting and Judy was a stage manager.

David is a graphic designer for Educational Information Services at A&M. Judy takes care of their children, Emily and Luke. Both David and Judy have bachelor of arts degrees in theater arts.

The Williamses use contemporary language and situations children can understand.

In the original folk tale, the fisherman and his wife lived in a shack, then a castle. And finally, she asked for the sun, stars and moon.

The couple in the Williams' play lived in an efficiency apartment be-

## Texas dairymen face losses from Mexican ban on milk

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Sales of U.S. milk in Mexican border towns have slowed to a trickle and South Texas dairymen say they could face losses of \$5 million annually because of a recent ban on selling imported milk.

Joe Martinez, general manager of Golden Jersey Creamery in Edinburg, said Rio Grande Valley dairies are losing \$300,000 to \$400,000 each month due to a recent prohibition by the Mexican government.

Raymundo Rodriguez Jr., general manager of Borden Milk in Laredo, said the ban of milk sales was costing his company between \$20,000 and \$30,000 each week.

"We are not prevented from exporting milk across the border, but the store owners or operators are told not to sell U.S. milk because it is unfit for human consumption and, if they sell it, their stock of milk will be confiscated," Rodriguez said.

"If the Mexican government wants lab studies of our product, we can do it," he said.

Mexican Secretary of Health Guillermo Soberon Acevedo said the ban was initiated because milk produced in the United States is hazardous to the health of Mexicans, according to Mexican press reports.

U.S. Embassy officials in Mexico City claim the ban is linked to a move last month by the Mexican secretary of commerce to limit the import of U.S. milk and eggs in an attempt to spur the purchase of Mexican dairy products, according to a report in the *San Antonio Express-News*.

Milk from the United States may

*"Our milk is 10,000 times better in freshness and quality. There is no way you can get me to drink milk in Mexico, but we haven't sold any milk there in four weeks."*

— Joe Martinez, general manager of Golden Jersey Creamery

be imported, but not sold.

Martinez said, "Our milk is 10,000 times better in freshness and quality. There is no way you can get me to drink milk in Mexico, but we haven't sold any milk there in four weeks."

Texas health officials told the newspaper they were stunned by charges of subquality U.S. milk and by the ban.

"We have had no communication with the Mexican states or Mexico City," James Littlefield, assistant director of the Texas Health Department's milk and dairy products division, said.

"You would think the Mexican officials would go through the health departments or the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)," he said. "There is no reason to suggest that U.S. milk quality has been compromised."

"It is safe," Mexican border businessmen called the milk ban "stupid" and claimed the prohibition has hurt their business.

Mexican Chamber of Commerce leaders along the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border have called for a meeting Friday in Matamoros to protest the federal milk ban.

Nuevo Laredo Chamber of Commerce President Enrique Bulas said, "People who aren't able to buy U.S. milk in Nuevo Laredo go to the U.S. side to buy the milk and then end up buying their other groceries there, too."

"We are losing business because of this stupid ruling by the secretary of health."

"I have confidence in the U.S. government and its health department."

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