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## A&M actors show misunderstandings between cultures

By Staci Finch  
*Reviewer*

When different cultures come into contact for the first time, misunderstandings inevitably arise. Such was the case in "The Wind Dancers," the latest Aggie Players production, which opened Friday in Rudder Forum.

The play tells the story of Sir Frances Drake's encounter with the Olamentko Indians of California in the summer of 1579. As the play opens, the Indian widow Kulupis (Emma Charlotte Reading), is mourning the death of her husband. The Indian death rituals are explained by the old Indian man, Petanyah (Casey Malarcher). The Indians believe their deceased go to the Island of the Dead, which lies across the water. So when Sir Frances Drake's ship arrives, the Indians believe all aboard are dead.

Misunderstanding follows misunderstanding as the Indians try to convince the "dead" to leave by giving them gifts. Drake and his crew believe the Indians are paying homage to them and claim themselves rulers of the land.

Martell Stroup was convincing as Drake. He portrayed a man who had compassion for different cultures, but who also could execute a member of his own crew. Stroup showed these extremes of behavior in a believable way, so the character didn't seem like two different people.

Reland Garrett, who played Drake's captured Cimaroon mistress, was not as believable. Garrett tried too hard to be cynical, and consequently, her character never seemed to develop.

The romance between the two characters also lacked depth. Although the characters may not have liked each other, Drake showed no evidence of the sexual attraction to

justify his capture of Maria in the first place. Whenever the two actors made physical contact, it was awkward and stilted, as if their characters had just met, not as if they shared the same bed.

But the romance between the sailor Dennis Martyn (Billy Griffin) and the Indian girl Peleet (Lanell Pena) was delightful. Griffin was believable as his sexual attraction to Peleet evolved into love. Pena was an excellent flirt, and the audience empathized with both of them as they tried to bridge their cultural gap. Many of the characters seemed to act on only one level. Consequently, the plot didn't build in intensity, but only in volume. Many of the characters tried to show their feelings with grand gestures and overemphasized lines, and didn't trust the audience to understand subtlety.

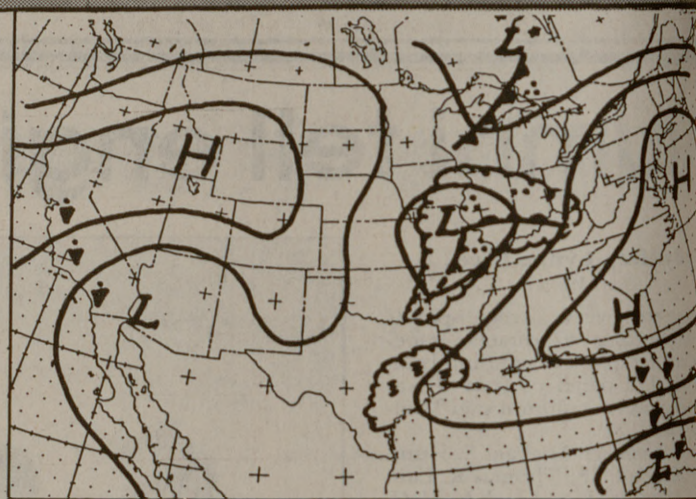
There were exceptions, however. Kathy Drum was wonderful as Samki, the little Indian boy. Drum didn't have much to say, but she didn't need lines to develop her character. Drum never lost focus, and always reacted to the characters around her.

Another exception was Casey Malarcher, who played Petanyah. Portraying age is always hard for the young, but Malarcher had no problem. He wisely chose not to play a "typical" old man with a quaky voice and shaky walk, (which often detracts from what the character has to say), but merely let his make-up speak for itself. His narration tied the action together, and never was boring.

Overall, the play was entertaining and skillfully used humor to remind the audience that misunderstandings between cultures occur when people really don't try to understand each other, and that misunderstandings can lead to exploitation of people who are really the same as everyone else.

The play will continue its run through Saturday.

## Weather Watch



Key:  
 ⚡ - Lightning    E - Fog    ⚡ - Thunderstorm  
 ☁ - Rain    ❄ - Snow    ☂ - Drizzle  
 ⚪ - Ice Pellets    ☔ - Rain Shower    ❄ - Freezing Rain

Sunset Today: 5:36 p.m.

Sunrise Wednesday: 6:37 a.m.

**Map Discussion:** Weak low pressure dominates the central plains with light showers associated with the cold and warm fronts. A vigorous upper-level low pressure area off the West Coast is producing showers over California. High pressure and fair weather dominates the East Coast. Morning fog is patchy along the Texas gulf coast. Showers associated with a tropical depression are widespread over the eastern Gulf of Mexico and Florida.

### Forecast:

**Today:** Hazy and warm with a high temperature near 81 degrees. Morning fog will burn off to mostly sunny skies with variable clouds. Winds will be light and southerly.

**Tonight:** Patchy late-night fog and clouds will appear, with a low temperature near 54 degrees and winds nearly calm.

**Wednesday:** Little change with mostly sunny skies, a high temperature near 82 degrees and winds increasing out of the south and southwest at 10 to 15 mph.

**Weather Fact:** Isopycnic — a line connecting areas of constant air density, it often also is used in oceanography to depict regions of constant water density.

Prepared by: Charlie Brenton  
 Staff Meteorologist  
 A&M Department of Meteorology

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## Political scientist says age, education of Texans play part in voting apathy

By Dana Pipes  
*Reporter*

State demographics, population mix and education levels of voters contribute to low turnout in Texas elections, a Texas A&M political scientist says.

Of the about 50,800 registered voters in Brazos County, Dr. James Dyer says only about 20 percent, or 10,060, are predicted to vote in today's election. The ballot includes the controversial measure that would legalize pari-mutuel betting in Texas.

A major factor contributing to this

voter apathy is the wide range of voter groups in Texas, he says.

"Texas has high numbers of demographic groups that tend not to vote," Dyer says.

Overall, Texas is a young state where many people don't vote because of age factors, he says. As the state ages, more people who previously weren't involved in the voting process most likely will become voters, which will increase voting percentages, Dyer says.

Education levels also have an effect on voter turnout.

"Generally, people with less education vote less," he says.

Dyer says on the average, individual interests in issues determine the percentages of voters who will turn out.

"Elections tend to be dominated by people who feel strongly about particular issues," he says. People who are pleased with the political system or who are critical of it are apathetic about voting, Dyer says. Because there are no real incentives, voters tend to vote out of a sense of duty.

Because of the high number of elections in Texas, voters tend to lose interest in the issues concerned.

"A reduction of the number of

elections might increase voter participation," Dyer says.

Another factor contributing to past voter apathy in Texas was the Democratic party's domination of the political system, he said. For many years, the state elections were decided in the Democratic primary, which made the general election appear less significant.

The current trend of competition between the Democratic and Republican parties in Texas gradually has added significance to state elections.

"The competition between the two parties possibly may increase interest in the election system," he says.

## Town recovers from leak of hydrofluoric acid

TEXAS CITY (AP) — Residents returning to their homes Monday washed down porches and yards to remove the residue of the weekend's hydrofluoric acid leak.

Forty-two people remained hospitalized for treatment of respiratory problems stemming from the industrial accident Friday that released a toxic cloud and forced the evacuation of about 3,000 people.

Sunday night, people living near the Marathon Petroleum Co. plant were allowed to go home, returning to neighborhoods that were turned an autumn brown by the toxic acid.

Many residents hosed down their porches and yards to get rid of fluoride residue from the leak. Residents also were warned to wash their cars, throw out exposed food and clean eating utensils.

"Everything was green but now it's autumn all in one day and that's too fast," David Olivo said Sunday after he returned to his home a few blocks from the plant.

Maria Gutierrez said, "My leaves are all brown. This place looks deserted." Despite assurances from city and Marathon officials, Gutierrez, a convenience store clerk, said she feared for the safety of herself and her 2-year-old son.

"The smell is too strong," she said.

The toxic acid spilled after a crane accidentally dropped its load, rupturing pipes leading into a hydrofluoric acid storage tank. When the acid came into contact with air, it vaporized, sending a toxic cloud skyward, Marathon spokesman Bill Ryder said.

At AMI-Danforth Hospital, 40

patients remained hospitalized Monday with respiratory problems, hospital spokesman Beverly Boase said. Since Friday evening, the hospital has treated 600 people and admitted 133, she said.

At Mainland Center Hospital, 171 people were treated and two remain hospitalized, hospital spokesman Pat Kirk said Monday.

Marathon has agreed to pay hospital costs for people who sought treatment by 12:01 a.m. Monday. Those treated after that time can file claims with the company, he said.

Progress of the cleanup operation was slow because of the delicate nature of the task and numerous safety precautions, Ryder said. He said pipes draining the chemical needed to remain chilled, posing a tricky problem.

Emergency crews emptied the ruptured tank at 9:40 p.m. Sunday.

Mayor Emmett Lowry said, "I think they should have brought in a bigger pump from the beginning to pump that darned stuff out of there quicker. We're glad it's over and we're ready to go on now."

Pumping began at 1:15 p.m. Sunday but was complicated by the daytime temperatures. Hydrofluoric acid — used to make a gasoline octane enhancer used to etch glass and clean metals — vaporizes when the temperature hits 67 degrees, a company spokesman said.

Texas City was the site of the nation's worst industrial disaster when the docked freighter SS Grandcamp, filled with ammonium nitrate fertilizer, exploded in April 1947, killing 576 people and injuring 5,000.

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