

## NOVA prepares for spring show

By Melinda Eddleman  
Reporter

Not everyone has the imagination or mental endurance for games like Dungeons and Dragons or Star Fleet Battles. But for 60 players who did, MSC NOVA's mini-wargaming convention, NOVACON IV, was a gamer's heaven.

The event, held at the MSC Saturday and Sunday, was part of the preparation for NOVA's big convention, WARCON XV, which is scheduled for the spring.

Mike Becnel, NOVA chairman and junior animal science major, said that NOVACON is designed to prepare the club officers for WARCON by letting them learn from any mistakes that occur during the mini-convention.

"(The convention is held) to make sure we don't mess up our big fling," he said.

The convention provided gamers with the opportunity to participate in tournaments or play in the open gaming room. Saturday tournament players participated in games such as Car Wars, Star Fleet Battles and Dungeons and Dragons. Final rounds in the games were held Sunday.

Free passes to WARCON and packages of miniatures were given as prizes to the winners.

Two classes of games were played at the convention, board games and role-playing games. Becnel described board games as being strategically designed, with the players using boards and game pieces. He said role-playing games require players to use their imagination more because they create their own characters from a list of basic criteria.

"People who have a good imagination will imagine (the character) is actually them out there playing," he said. "It enhances how good the game is for them." He said Dungeons and Dragons is the most popular game at both NOVACON and WARCON.

NOVACON presented continuous video showings and movies. The

films followed a "Vietnam" theme, and included "Platoon," "Good Morning Vietnam," and "Hamburger Hill."

NOVACON participants also were able to buy games, miniatures, comic books, videos and jewelry in the Dealers' Room. The Dealers' Room gives merchants the opportunity to sell their merchandise to a large group while giving convention participants a chance to buy merchandise from more than one dealer at one time.

Mike Schiller, a junior business analysis major and officer of the Dealers' Room, said that 22 local and out-of-town merchants rented space at the convention, which was more than at previous NOVACONS.

Darrel Dearing, NOVACON director and junior physics major, said that having guest speakers made this year's NOVACON different from last year's. Lea Hernandez and Ben Dunn, comic book industry representatives, spoke to the convention participants, gave demonstrations and promoted their line of work.

Hernandez is a free-lance artist who specializes in the lettering of comic books translated from Japanese for Viz Communications, an American division of Shogakukan, a Japanese publishing company that publishes half of Japan's publications. Her job is to change Japanese sound effects and dialogue to English and to redraw any areas that have been changed in the process, she said.

Ben Dunn is a comic book writer and artist whose books include "Ninja High School" and "Tiger-X." He said past comic books consisted of heavy-handed parody and satirical humor, but when he created "Ninja High School," he wanted to introduce genuinely humorous characters and storylines.

He said that everything he has learned is self-taught. "School is there to help get you over the basic points," he said. "But, in order to really establish your own technique, you have to learn it yourself."

## A&M scientists investigate new eye-tracking technique

By Stephanie Richard  
Reporter

Texas A&M scientists are researching eye-tracking, a technique that may revolutionize wheelchair operation, video games and flying jets, the chairman of A&M's Human Performance Laboratory says.

Eye-tracking electronically controls eye movement in the socket with the help of a microcomputer, Dr. Charles Shea says.

Shea says that computers interpret the information given by the controller and perform the desired tasks. Eye-tracking

finds out where the eyes are looking at any one time, he says.

Shea's research is focused on helping the handicapped.

"For those who want to use a computer and are not able to use their hands or a mouse, there is a way to look at a screen and make things happen," he says.

Bernard Zee, electrical engineering graduate student and assistant to Shea, says that handicapped or disabled persons would be able to become more independent through the use of eye-tracking.

Shea says that possible advances for

the handicapped through eye-tracking include dialing telephones, turning appliances on and off, or accessing the pages of a text on the computer terminal. Hospital patients who have had a stroke or spinal injuries also would be able to signal distress with their eye movements, he says.

"The advantage of the system is that it is very fast," Shea says. "Our eyes are compatible with our thoughts. It's an automatic process to look toward the things we think about—no new learning is involved."

Shea says that eye-tracking is not necessarily only for the handicapped. The system also could allow a non-handicapped person to have his hands free to do something else while working on a computer. For example, he says, a surgeon may be able to look at reference materials while operating.

Zee says a wide range of options in using eye-tracking is available.

"The computers can be hooked up to various external devices and can be activated by a signal the computer can generate," Zee says.

Shea says the disadvantages of the system are obvious.

"You must be relatively still or the system won't work," he says. "It is a problem for some applications because you must keep control over your eyes."

Shea also is working in conjunction with the psychology and bioengineering departments.

Funding for eye-tracking is provided by the Texas Advance Technologies Program. The organization tries to use current technology in new environments.

Zee says the possibilities for eye-tracking are nearly endless.

"It all depends on whether someone is willing to invest in it," he says. "The technology is here now."

The researchers do not have a working prototype yet.

## Group offers service, fellowship to Aggies

By Rose Ann McFadden  
Reporter

Four years ago, six male Texas A&M students created the Aggie Men's Club as an alternative to joining fraternities. Eric Thode, a member and former president of the club, said.

"The Greek system wasn't for them," Thode, a graduate student studying public administration, said. "They wanted to emphasize service and Christianity."

Today, about 100 students are members of the club.

Charles Plum, former faculty adviser for AMC, said that the club still emphasize the values it held four years ago.

"They are very service-oriented," Plum said. "AMC gives many students the opportunity to follow the values their parents taught them."

Thode said AMC volunteers time to the Bryan Boy's Club, the Special Olympics and a local nursing home. They also clean a stretch of Highway 6 four times a year, and they painted the Grove last year.

AMC also has a basketball-a-thon every year, which raises about \$2000 for various charities, Thode said.

Emphasizing Christianity, AMC orga-

nizes two Bible studies each week. One is for members of AMC and their male friends, but the other is open to AMC members and any AMC Sweethearts.

Thode said about 20 people attend the Bible studies, although the co-ed group had 60 members last spring semester.

AMC is not all service and study, however. The group sponsors mixers with sororities, date parties, a fall formal and a spring dance, Thode said.

The group's commitment to Christian values is not forgotten during social functions, he said.

Plum said he is impressed by AMC's ability to have successful parties without alcohol.

No alcohol is served at AMC functions.

AMC's rule about alcohol is appreciated by the sororities they socialize with, Thode said.

"They don't have to worry about some drunk hanging all over them," he said. "It's never going to happen."

AMC takes new members every fall semester, Thode said. He said AMC limits its membership to 100, so only 30 new members are chosen each year from a growing number of applicants.

## Local Brief

### Prize money offered for paper on guns

By Sissie Allensworth  
Reporter

The Sanders-Metzger Gun Collection Committee is offering \$300 to the author of the best research paper submitted to the 7th Annual Sanders Research Paper Contest.

The contest theme is "The Role of Firearms in American History." The competition is open to students enrolled at Texas A&M during the 1988-89 school year.

Prizes will be awarded to the authors of the three best papers. The second-place winner will receive \$200, and \$150 will be given to the third-place winner.

The prize money has been donated by Dr. Sam Houston Sanders of the Texas Gun Collectors Association, a

principal donor to the gun collection.

Dr. Jim Earle, civil engineering professor and chairman of the gun collection committee, said he hopes the contest will direct more attention to the collection.

"We have some very rare guns that don't exist anywhere else," Earle said.

He said the collection, which is housed on the third floor of the MSC, is worth \$2 million to \$3 million.

The entries, which are to be no longer than 12 pages, may feature the guns of soldiers, hunters, cattlemen, settlers, lawmen, outlaws or Indians, but they should present material investigating the history of firearms from 1800-1900.

Papers should be submitted to 103 Rudder Tower by April 5, 1989.

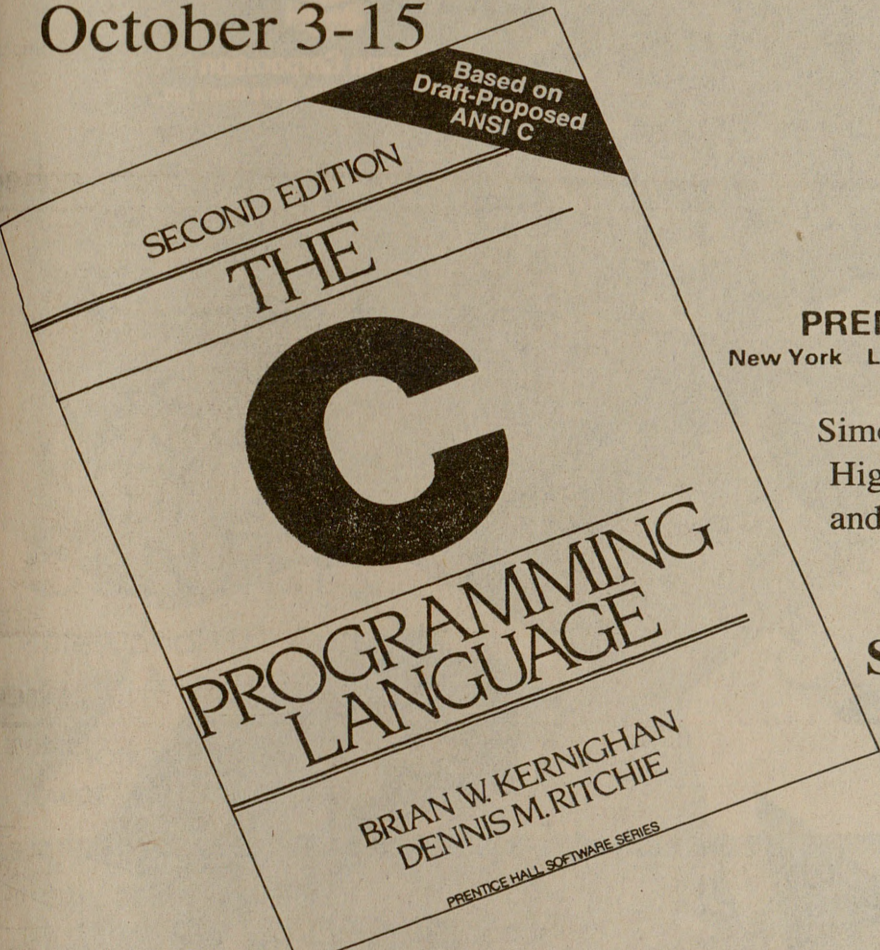
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"He wants to disarm the people in his state except for the military and the police."  
George Bush, Longview, Texas, Aug. 26

## This statement is a lie.

It's the latest in a series of Republican lies.  
We think you should know the facts.

**FACT:** Governor Michael Dukakis and Senator Lloyd Bentsen strongly support a citizen's right to keep and bear arms. They believe law-abiding Americans should be able to use firearms for protecting their homes and businesses, hunting and target shooting, and collecting. Our Government must respect those rights.

**FACT:** Governor Dukakis believes that our nation's gun laws should help law enforcement officials fight crime and keep guns out of the hands of criminals. He will not interfere with private ownership of weapons by responsible citizens.

**FACT:** The Dukakis/Bentsen ticket has been endorsed by the International Union of Police Associations, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the Southern States Police Benevolent Associations and the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas, among other groups.

**FACT:** Like President Reagan and the nation's major law enforcement groups, Governor Dukakis supports legislation requiring people who want to buy guns to wait seven days—so that police can determine whether the person has a criminal record or is mentally dangerous. **Despite overwhelming police support for this bill, George Bush opposes it.**

**FACT:** The number of Massachusetts gun owners has tripled since Mike Dukakis became Governor, and grown by almost 50 percent in the last five years. There are 1.7 million handguns, shotguns and rifles in a state with 4.3 million people over age 18.

**FACT:** In 1968, then-Congressman George Bush voted for Federal gun control. After the bill passed, Bush said he thought "much more" needed to be done to curb purchases of firearms.

**FACT:** George Bush supported deep cuts in aid to state and local police and personally blocked a law that would have banned plastic guns used by terrorists and drug dealers.

**FACT:** Mike Dukakis is tough on crime. Under his leadership, crime has dropped 13 percent in the past five years—while it has continued to climb in the rest of the nation. The homicide rate is the lowest of any industrial state, about half the national average.

"The Republican charges on gun control are an insult to Texans' intelligence. Look at the facts before you vote on November 8th."  
— Gib Lewis, Speaker, Texas House

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