

Wednesday, April 25, 1990

Scientist enjoys paranormal topics

By PAM MOOMAN
Of The Battalion Staff

Science is not just dry calculations — it's fun, too.

Dr. Tom Adair, a professor in Texas A&M's physics department, talked about "UFOs, Horoscopes and Other Nonsense." Scientists can have fun disproving claims of paranormal phenomena, Adair told members of Students for the Exploration and Development of Space Tuesday night.

"It's a shame, (though)," he said. "It's a lot more fun believing them than not believing them."

Adair said Albert Einstein's Special Relativity formulas state that length, mass and passage of time depend on the speed of an object. In other words, they are relative to how fast the object is traveling.

"(These are) all things you must surely find difficult to believe," Adair said. "I believe these things because I can test the concepts of Einstein in the laboratory."

However, many people believe in things that cannot be tested as easily, and Adair warned against this.

"Ask the right questions," he said. He said his purpose in this talk was to get people to consider

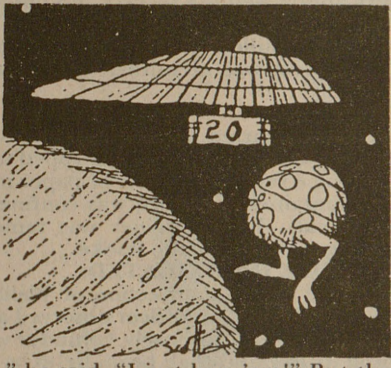
both sides and not just accept one view as the answer.

The Bermuda Triangle is a popular subject in the realm of the supernatural, Adair said.

"They've got some great stories," he said. "I just love 'em!" But the sensationalistic books only give half of the truth, he said.

"The rest of the story, as Paul Harvey would say, is this," he said. "They stretch the Bermuda Triangle quite a bit."

A favorite story for those who believe in the powers of the Bermuda Triangle, Adair said, is about five U.S. Navy pilots who disappeared in the late 1940s. But it was not made public that one pilot was an instructor and four pilots were students, who were following the instructor. The instructor got confused, flew north and then



turned east, thinking he was over the Florida peninsula. The pilots ran out of gas somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean.

"If you'll look at a globe, the Atlantic Ocean is very big out there," Adair said. There is no doubt that the pilots went down somewhere over it, he added.

Being a pilot himself, Adair knows firsthand that it is easy to get confused sometimes. Pilots have to sit down and think about what they are doing and where they are, he said.

"And that's over Texas, and no one claims it's mysterious," he said.

Horoscopes are also popular among some.

"We have the president of the United States controlled by some weird woman in California through his wife," Adair said. But he added that Nancy Reagan is not having too much influence on the rest of the country as true belief in horoscopes is not too common among the general population.

UFOs are another common paranormal phenomenon.

"There are many, many cases of people seeing UFOs," Adair said. "I believe in UFOs." He added smiling, "There are lots of objects up there people can't identify."

Most of these objects are atmospheric things,

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Symposium will examine group conflicts

By SUZANNE CALDERON
Of The Battalion Staff

The 1990 Symposium On Group Dynamics — Conflict Within and Among Groups, sponsored by Texas A&M's Department of Psychology on April 26 and 27 at the College Station Hilton, will examine all facets of group conflicts.

Topics ranging from conflicts in dating relationships to large-scale political controversies will be addressed during the symposium by leading political scientists and social and political psychologists.

The purpose of the symposium is to look at conflict broadly defined, said Dr. Jeff Simpson, assistant professor of psychology and symposium coordinator.

Among the speakers will be Jan-

usz Reykowski, a lead negotiator for the Communist Party in Poland and David Sears, a leading political psychologist from University of California-Los Angeles.

Reykowski will present 'Resolving of a Large Scale Political Conflict: The Case of the Round Table Negotiations in Poland', and Sears will present 'Language Conflict as Symbolic Politics: The Role of Symbolic Meaning.'

The conference is free for A&M faculty and students.

Schedule for 1990 Symposium On Group Dynamics:

THURSDAY, APRIL 26

- 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. — Introduction, Stephen Worchel, Texas A&M University
- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. — Dean G. Pruitt, SUNY-Buffalo, Long-Run

Success in Third Party Intervention.

- 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. — Myron Rothbart, University of Oregon, Intergroup Perception and Social Conflict.
- 11:30 - 12:30 — James M. Jones, University of Delaware and American Psychological Association, Individual vs. Group Identification as a Factor in Intergroup Racial Conflict.
- 2:00 - 3:00 — Cecilia L. Ridgeway, University of Iowa, Legitimacy, Status and Dominance Behavior in Task Groups.
- 3:00 - 4:00 — Gary P. Latham, University of Washington, Sensitizing the Individual to the Group and the Group to the Individual.

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. — Herbert Kelman, Harvard University, Forming Coalitions Across International

Conflict Lines: The Interplay of Conflicts Within and Between the Israeli and Palestinian Communities.

- 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. — David O. Sears, University of California-Los Angeles, Language Conflict as Symbolic Politics: The Role of Symbolic Meaning.
- 11:30 - 12:30 — Janusz Reykowski, Polish Academy of Science, Resolving of a Large Scale Political Conflict: The Case of the Round Table Negotiations in Poland.
- 2:00 - 3:00 — Caryl E. Rusbul, University of North Carolina, Reactions to Conflict in Close Relationships: Exit, Voice, Loyalty and Neglect.
- 3:00 - 4:00 — Donald H. Baucom, University of North Carolina, Marital Distress: A Cognitive/Behavioral Formulation.

Green Thumb



Photo by Eric H. Roalson

Horticulture graduate student Kim Poff checks the stalk elongation on the plant Vinca Major Tuesday afternoon in a horticulture lab on the west side of campus. These plants have been treated with the growth hormone known as G.A. Poff hopes to have her thesis finished by November.

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