

Thursday, September 6, 1990

Cepheids' sci-fi, fantasy program offers experiences out of this world

By Joe Ferguson
 Of The Battalion Staff

When Dorothy named Toto, Toto was a bit confused.

Toto soon figured out he had acquired his delta name, or nickname, from a club officer with a Wizard of Oz fetish.

The above is the story of MSC Cepheid Variable's public relations officer Royce Moyer and his first encounter with Cepheid Variable, Texas A&M's science fiction, fantasy and horror programming committee.

Moyer said the organization, a MSC program for nearly 25 years, provides students with a chance to be involved in programming that offers something out of the ordinary.

The organization, with about 80 members, represents a variety of interests, including science fiction, fantasy and horror films, TV, books, writing, art and video.

The Cepheids' first project is a showing of the science fiction/rock and roll classic "Heavy Metal" at 7:30 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. Thursday.

To attract new members, freshmen with paid fee slips will be admitted free.

A writer's workshop is planned for later this semester.

Moyer said last year's workshop included six professional authors who helped writers with style and gave tips on how to become published.

The Cepheids will present Comi-Con, the University's first comic book convention, in October. Moyer said the convention will include the world premiere of the Simpson's video game.

AggieCon XXII will be in March. Moyer said the four-day event is the largest science fiction/fantasy convention in the Southwest.

This year's events include an art



show and auction, masquerade ball, Lazer Tag, autograph session and scavenger hunt.

Guests include Marv Wolfman, Richard Pini, Lillian Stewart Carl and Joe R. Lansdale.

Cepheids meet on alternate Tuesdays throughout the semester.

The first meeting will be at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday in 301 Rudder.

Moyer said meetings are followed by Delta Raids in which Cepheids "descend en masse upon a restaurant, movie or club and have a good time."

War risk insurance rates for oil companies skyrocket as tensions in Persian Gulf increase

HOUSTON (AP) — Some Texas drilling companies have shut down their Middle East operations because the price of war risk insurance has soared as much as tenfold, company officials say.

"We moved our rig because we just couldn't take the increase in rates," said Marshall Ballard, president of Penrod Drilling Corp. of Dallas.

Penrod's jack-up rig is sitting idle in the United Arab Emirates; it was due to start a drilling job in the Persian Gulf in October, Ballard said.

The energy companies operating in the Middle East are required by their lenders or customers to carry war risk insurance, which covers equipment and people working in the world's political hot spots.

Rates vary according to location and size of a rig, but experts say insurance costs have increased as much as tenfold since Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2, with some insurance above \$70,000 a week.

"The margins at these drilling companies are already thin," said David Kent, president of Oecandril Data Services, a Houston-based consultant to the offshore drilling industry. "There's just no room for additional operating costs."

Kent said 47 offshore drilling rigs are located in the Middle East, with 34 of them under contract.

Wayne Hillin, senior vice president of Reading & Bates in Houston, said his company is reviewing its coverage to decide whether to move its offshore rig in Dubai out of the country.

"We're negotiating how much more we're going to pay," Hillin said. "There is a continuing dialogue be-

"We're negotiating how much more we're going to pay. There is a continuing dialogue between the company and its underwriters"

— Wayne Hillin, Sr. V. P., Reading & Bates

tween the company and its underwriters."

Insurance industry officials defend the higher rates, arguing that increased tensions warrant increased premiums.

"When ships navigate in an area that is prone to hostilities, rates go up," said David Larner, chief press officer for Lloyd's of London, the British insurance giant. "These are dangerous areas."

Chance arises to learn about foreign culture Indian society forms at A&M

By JULIE HEDDERMAN
 Of The Battalion Staff

Texas A&M students interested in foreign cultures have the opportunity to learn about Indian culture and classical music.

The Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Among Youth, or SPIC-MACAY, just formed at A&M.

Ranjit Jakkli, SPIC-MACAY president, said the group arranges concerts by popular Indian artists so students can learn about and appreciate Indian classical music.

Although new to the University, Jakkli said SPIC-MACAY is not a new organization.

It was formed 13 years ago by Kiren Seth at the India Institute of Technology in Delhi to bring Indian culture and classical music to youth.

There are 100 chapters of the organization in India.

SPIC-MACAY sponsors the following types of events:

- Lectures/demonstrations — various artists demonstrate an art form and explain it to the audience.

• Fests — similar to a festival and usually draw large crowds.

• Baithak — smaller than a fest, with only 50 to 60 people attending. Audiences are encouraged to ask questions.

"It is important for the audience to take part so the artist can see appreciation," Jakkli said.

This is one of the first years for the organization to be in the United States. Four U.S. chapters are at Stanford University, the University of Florida, the University of Virginia and Texas A&M.

The A&M chapter is five weeks old and has 20 members.

Jyothi Shankar, who was a member of a chapter in India, is one of the club's founders. She said she joined because of her interest in Indian classical music.

"We hope more and more people will become enthusiastic about it," Shankar said.

Membership is free, and Jakkli expects more students to join.

All members are Indian students, but Jakkli said participation would be a valuable opportunity for U.S. students as well.

He said A&M's music programs and the Arts Council of Brazos Valley assisted SPIC-MACAY with funding.

Funds from other organizations also are needed because there is no membership fee.

SPIC-MACAY's inaugural event will be Friday's lecture/demonstration by Rajiv Taranath in 206 MSC.

Taranath, who also is an English professor in India, plays a sarod, a stringed instrument similar to a guitar.

He will be accompanied by Ravi Gutala on a percussion instrument called a tabla. Taranath also will perform during a brown bag concert Wednesday.

Future programs will include an Indian classical dance by Sonal Mansingh. She will perform an old form of Indian dance called an Odissi.

Jakkli said most Indian artists are aware of SPIC-MACAY and will perform for a reduced fee or for free.

The organization's meetings are Friday nights at 6.

For more information, call Jakkli at 846-1543.

Gas prices 'a bargain' says U.S. Rep. Stenholm

ABILENE (AP) — U.S. Rep. Charles Stenholm says Americans don't know how good we have it when it comes to the price of gasoline.

The Stanford Democrat says compared to European prices for gas, people in the United States are getting a bargain. That's even though prices in Texas and across the country have risen since Iraq invaded Kuwait early last month.

Stenholm told reporters Tuesday his comments are not politically popular.

"Gasoline prices at current levels are not high, folks," Stenholm said.

"When you consider that we're now going to spend \$2.5 billion, and we've put our young men and women at risk in order to preserve what some people say is too high gasoline prices... If that's why we're in the Mideast, we have made a tragic mistake," he said.

He says Congress must address the nation's energy policy and abandon what Stenholm calls the "ridiculous" free-market oriented policy of the past decade.

Stenholm favors import fees, or price supports for the domestic industry that will make it profitable for companies to produce oil, and to develop alternative energy sources.

Clarification

A word edited from a sentence in Wednesday's Act Now changed the meaning of the message being conveyed.

The sentence should have read: The Texas A&M University Police want students to know it is naive to think the on-campus community is a totally safe environment.

UPD Crime Prevention Specialist Betty LeMay said by editing the word "totally," it was implied that campus was completely unsafe.

LeMay said she doesn't want students to be scared or think crime is on the rampage at A&M.

"We just want to raise their level of awareness and let them know crime can occur anywhere."

The Battalion regrets the error.

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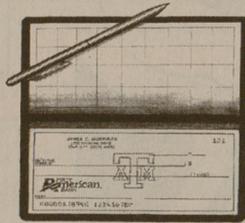
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