

Professor's imagination draws from experience in latest book, 'Home Truth'

By Dawn Hellums
The Battalion

Although the title "Home Truth" is somewhat unfamiliar to most people today, author Janis Stout said the phrase reflects the storyline of her latest book and also some of her own experiences and challenges she has faced throughout her life.

"Only someone very close to you would tell you a 'home truth' - it may be something very unpleasant but something you need to know," said Stout, who is the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and an English professor at A&M.

"Home Truth" is about a woman, Meg, who attempts to care for her handicapped sister while still trying to manage her own life. Stout has a handicapped son, and said that although the behavior of the handicapped sister often reflects back on her own memories, the characters do not resemble those in her family.

"I don't think I'm like Meg (the main character) - but the sense of her needing to handle many responsibilities at one time is definitely something I have experienced," said Stout, who has worked at A&M for four and half years. Stout added that she,

along with most fiction writers, combine memories of their own experiences with things they imagine.

"Experience gives us a basis of which our imagination can work," Stout said.

Out of the three novels she has had published, Stout said writing "Home Truth" was the most difficult for her emotionally.

"It was often an emotional strain for me because I had to dig up some of those difficult memories and issues; I had to take a lot of breaks from it," Stout said.

Stout has received a good response from people who have read her new book, but she said she was a little shocked her family liked it so well.

"I was afraid they would think it was too harsh, but my son read it and really liked it," Stout said.

Stout began writing "Home Truth" in 1985 and completed it when she first came to A&M in 1987. After dealing with a few larger publishers, Stout discovered Soho Press out of New York. They notified her last fall that they wanted to publish her book.

"I'm very happy with the outcome of the book," Stout said. "I think the publisher did a great job on the design of the book and that's very important."

An advance shipment of "Home Truth" is available in the MSC Bookstore, but the original date for release in other book stores is in May. Stout will hold a book signing tomorrow from 4-6 pm in the faculty club, and one on Friday afternoon in the MSC Bookstore.

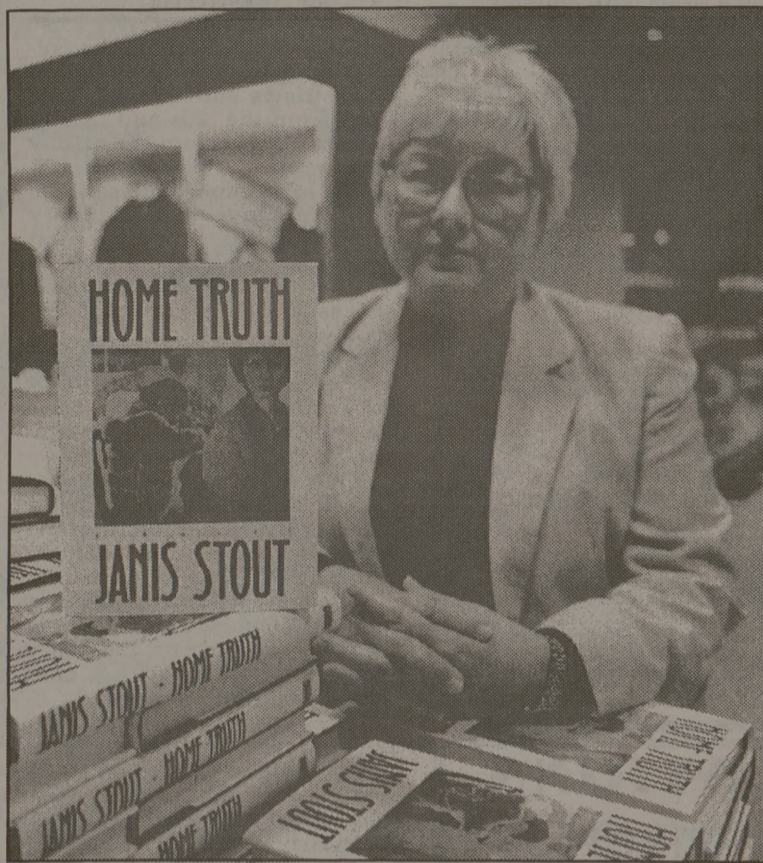
Although she hasn't had the chance to read the finished product, Stout said when she received the proofs to revise her book one last time, she was a little surprised by what she read.

"I didn't really remember everything that was in it," Stout said. "I cried in the sad parts so it had a fresh impact on me."

Stout started writing fiction in 1973 after she finished her P.H.D. at Rice University. She published her first book "A Family Likeness" in 1982. This novel was about a young girl who moved from a small farm in East Texas to a big city. Although this did not happen to her personally, it did happen to her mother.

Her second novel "18 Holes" was published in 1985. It was about a group of older people who meet once a year to play 18 holes of golf. Stout said she first wrote it as a short-story but decided it would be better as a book.

"My idea, 18 holes of golf in



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Associate Dean of Liberal Arts and English professor Janis Stout presents her latest fiction novel "Home Truth".

18 chapters first started out as a joke," Stout said. "But it turned out to be a real fun book to

write." Stout is currently working on her next novel.

In Advance

Local bands play Earth Day show

Three local bands will perform an Earth Day benefit concert tomorrow night at the Stafford Opera House in downtown Bryan.

The show features the Christopher Commission, with their brand of modern, mystical rock centered around Shawn Manning's ethereal vocals (the tunes, all original, have been said to sound a lot like hard-driving Cocteau Twins). Also playing will be Fleshpot, which sports former members of Blood Oranges, and mixes up their own esoteric rock reminiscent of Sonic Youth and the Pixies. Finally, Gone By Dawn rounds out the bill with their collection of new rock numbers.

The show kicks off at 9 p.m. If you get there early, cover is only \$2; after 9 p.m., the show will cost you \$3. The proceeds from the show will go to TEAC to cover the cost of their special Earth Day activities.

'Sleepwalkers' sends viewers off to dreamland of better movies

By Chris Eklof
The Battalion

"Stephen King's Sleepwalkers" Starring Brian Krause, Madchen Amick and Alice Krige
Directed by Mick Garris
Rated R
Now playing at Cinema III

The master of modern horror's creative well has apparently run dry. "Stephen King's Sleepwalkers" marks the first time that King has written an original screenplay. Unfortunately, King uses nothing but tired horror movie cliches and themes to fill the hour and a half of movie time.

Does any of this sound familiar? A young man (actually a monster) needs to find a virgin (what else?) to feed to his mother to keep her alive.

After watching the movie, it is still hard to tell exactly what a sleepwalker is. Sleepwalkers are apparently shapeshifters that can transform their appearance into different humanoid forms. They can also make themselves and surrounding objects invisible and can change the appearance of sur-

rounding objects. They are not werewolves or vampires, they are simply "sleepwalkers." They sound like bad asses, but they have a weakness like all other movie monsters.

The main sleepwalker in the movie, Charles (Brian Krause), and his mother (Alice Krige) have an extremely close relationship. Too close, in fact. Charles feeds his mother life energy through sexual intercourse. The audience is subjected to watching Charles and his mom go at it hot and heavy twice in the movie. Their intense incestuous rendezvous were too much to take.

Madchen Amick, formerly of "Twin Peaks," plays the unfortunate chosen one, Tanya. Tanya is the lovely virgin that Charles wants to suck the life energy (or virginity, it is not really apparent which one) out of. Conveniently for Charles, Tanya has a strange fascination with death, cemeteries and headstones, so its not too dif-

icult to get her out into a weird place alone. Tanya apparently got this weird fascination from her mother who is intrigued with death as well.

King stretches coincidences like that pretty far in his screenplay. Everything just happens to fall into place. We are supposed to believe that Tanya, a virgin, suddenly wants to jump into bed with the new kid in town.

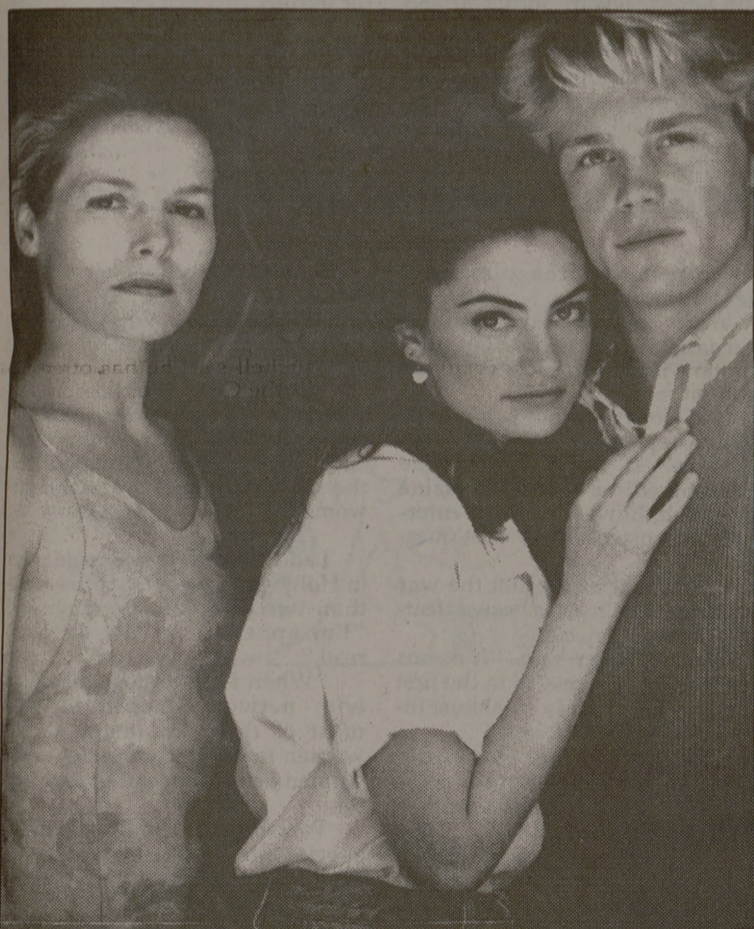
Many important pieces of the movie go unexplained. Not only don't we ever find out what a sleepwalker is, we also never find out exactly what the sleepwalkers suck out of their victims. All we know is that they suck a bunch of pink and purple light out of their victim's mouths. It might be their virtue or it might be their life energy. Does this kill the victim or does it leave them craving a post-sex cigarette? The movie never takes the time to answer these questions.

More times than not the parts of the movie that were supposed to be horrifying and shocking sent a ripple of laughter through the theater. This was not the typical nervous laughter that you hear in a horror movie after people are frightened; this was laughter directed straight at the movie and its stupidity.

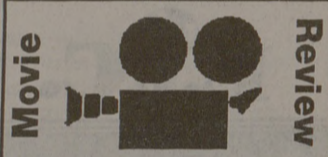
The special effects were not exactly top-notch either. Most memorable was a severed hand that looked like it came straight out of a fun shop showroom. It was obviously plastic and did not look the least bit realistic. Also, a single bullet has the ability to send a police car up in flames twice in the movie.

King makes a cameo appearance as the caretaker of an old cemetery. His brief time on screen easily outshines his work behind the camera as the writer.

The story behind "Steven King's Sleepwalkers" can be found in just about any Saturday afternoon B-movie horror festival. The movie's lack of originality is surprising coming from the man who has brought so many classic horror tales into the modern literary world.



Alice Krige (left), Madchen Amick and Brian Krause star in King's latest, a surprisingly disappointing horror movie cliché.



SPRING ALLERGY STUDY

Individuals 18 and older with spring allergy symptoms to participate in a two-week long research study (4 visits) with a medication in nasal spray form. \$100 incentive for those who complete the study.

IMPETIGO STUDY

Individuals of any age with symptoms of impetigo (bacterial infection of the skin) to participate in an investigational drug research study using a cream with drug in it. \$150 for those chosen and completing the study.

TENSION HEADACHE?

Individuals with moderate to severe Tension Headaches wanted to participate in a 4-hour headache relief research study with an investigational medication in tablet form. Flexible hours. \$75 incentive for individuals who are chosen and complete the study. Daily, till 6:30 776-0400.

SKIN INFECTION STUDY

Individuals age 13 and older wanted to participate in a research study for bacterial skin infections such as: infected wounds, infected burns, boils, infected hair follicles, impetigo, infected ingrown toenails and others. Investigational oral antibiotic in capsule form. \$100 incentive for those chosen who complete the study.

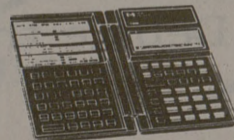
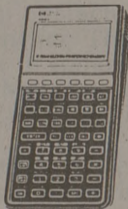
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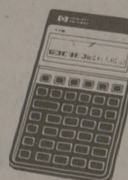
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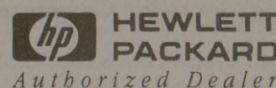


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