

'Rumors' brings best of Simon to Rudder Forum

By **Anas Ben-Musa**
THE BATTALION

"Rumors" by Neil Simon
Starring Anne Black, Cody Bland, Nellwyn Haley and Steve Mize
Directed by Robert Wenck
Playing at Rudder Forum — today through Saturday
Call Rudder Box Office at 845-1234 for ticket information

When you walk into Rudder Forum, the set engulfs your senses. Director and set designer Robert Wenck creates a not lavish, but contemporary Manhattan set that is very appropriate for MSC Dinner Theatre & Aggie Player's production of Neil Simon's farce, "Rumors."

Farce can only begin to describe this wonderful play, but this should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Simon's work. He has continually written plays that humor audiences from every walk of life — plays

like the "Odd Couple," "Biloxi Blues," and "Brighton Beach Memoirs."

With "Rumors," Simon uses his witty, clever humor to create a light-hearted play about a New York lieutenant governor named Charlie who tries to shoot himself just before his friends and colleagues arrive for his 10th wedding anniversary. His good friend and lawyer, Ken Gorman (played by Cody Bland), finds Charlie bleeding with a hole in his ear. Ken and his wife Chris (played by Anne Black) don't want the incident to be known, fearing the scandalous story and the ruination of many careers.

Yet, that's when the fun begins.

Chris and Ken try their best to cover up the situation, but difficulties arise when more guests arrive and inquire about

Charlie and his wife, who left in a rush.

Like the television show "Seinfeld," the play uses one situation event and blows it out of proportion.

In each scene the audience learns more about the characters, and with strong performances by Bland and Black, "Rumors" becomes an intriguing play.

It was refreshing to see Black — the Executive Director of MSC OPAS — perform. As Chris, Black was a nervous, sarcastic wreck who only wanted to go home. Black played the role beautifully.

As her onstage husband Ken, Bland did just as well. In the middle of Act I, Ken accidentally drops the gun Charlie used. The gun goes off and Ken becomes deaf. Through the rest of the play, Ken becomes confused

with what everyone is saying. When someone asks him how his ears are, he responds by saying, "Yes, I'll have a beer, thank you."

But Black and Bland were not the only ones who kept the audience laughing. Nellwyn Haley and Steve Mize as Charlie's good friends Claire and Lenny Ganz were remarkable. They bickered, they yelled, they worried — they were hilarious.

Haley had some of the most vicious one-liners, and Mize's energetic, pompous portrayal added enormous strength to the production. In fact, all the actors fit well with their characters.

Neil Simon's "Rumors" offers a wealth of well-performed characters, and once again, MSC Dinner Theatre & Aggie Players have put on a great summer show for everyone to enjoy.



Bart Mitchell/THE BATTALION

Aggie Players in Neil Simon's 'Rumors' debate which one of them will impersonate their friend, an incapacitated New York lieutenant governor.

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

A&M's once and future mascots take the summer the way most wish they could

By **Jeremy Keddie**
THE BATTALION

Reveille VI is spending her summer the way most of us wish we could — traveling and sleeping. Reveille VI's handler, Mascot Corporal Mark Boynton, said the two have been traveling to Aggie Mother's Clubs and Alumni Clubs across the state. The current mascot and Boynton left Texas A&M May 14, and won't return to A&M until August.

"When we travel she enjoys sleeping in the back seat," Boynton said, "or else she just hangs her head outside the window."

Boynton, a Dallas resident, is a member of E-2, the Corp of Cadets unit which is responsible for the care of the mascot. Boynton said the ten month old collie is healthy and makes regular visits to the veterinarian, which is paid for by the Reveille Fund.

"I can either estimate how much it will cost and ask for the money ahead of time, or I can be reimbursed later," Boynton said.

Reveille VI is 50 pounds and will be full grown when she reaches 55 pounds.

But when Reveille VI is not on the road, Boynton said he has been training her and getting her in shape.

"We're mostly working on obedience," Boynton said, "and we go running when it is cool outside."

Myra Boynton, Mark's mother, said it's interesting to see other people's reaction when



THE BATTALION file photo

they see Reveille VI exercising in the neighborhood.

"I'll be walking with her down the street," Myra Boynton said, "and they'll look as if they are saying... Is that? No...that couldn't be."

However, with temperatures in the 90s in Dallas, Reveille spends most of her time indoors.

"She's usually up around 6:30 a.m. and she runs around the house barking," Myra Boynton said.

But even with all the commotion, Boynton's mother said she enjoys having the mascot around.

"She's basically a big house guest for the summer," said Boynton's mother.

While Reveille VI is spending her summer in Dallas and traveling, retired Reveille V is spending her summer close to home. Doctor of Veterinary

Medicine, Joe West, Class of '53, said he is honored with the responsibility of caring for Reveille VI in her retirement.

"She has meshed in beautifully with our family," said West.

West is a resident of the Bryan-College Station area and is continually involved with the Texas A&M Community, and works as a clinical pathologist with the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.

Reveille V traveled to her new home three months ago and West said he was advised by Dr. Lee Phillips, the keeper of the late Reveille IV through her retirement, that there would be a transition period.

"She didn't eat for a while," West said, "but she is a well socialized dog and the period was brief."

West said V and VI are good friends and each has access to

the other since V's retirement.

"The two saw each other during the E-2 Company picnic, as well as during other functions," said West.

Reveille V was retired during the Texas A&M-University of Texas football game last Thanksgiving. She had previously received surgery last fall for a stomach ailment, which resulted in a twisted stomach, but West said that she appears healthy this summer. She receives her medical attention at A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine, and occasionally spends time walking in Research Park. However, Reveille V was retired because she would be too busy to enjoy herself at her age.

So while one travels and the other rests during the summer, many would say it's not too bad to have a dog's life — too bad those dog days are gone.

Sculptor adds perspective to highway scenery

By **Jennifer Gressett**
THE BATTALION



Bart Mitchell/THE BATTALION

The sculptures of Dr. Joe Smith may be seen driving through Caldwell on Highway 21 or at A&M's Medical Sciences Library.

Dr. Joe C. Smith stands in the middle of a pile of scrap iron, chains, logs, concrete and the remains of crushed 18-wheel tank truck. Miniature sculptures line the walls of his shop — it's not a "studio" he said — waiting to become his next work.

By driving through Caldwell on Highway 21, drivers may see "that crazy-looking bird" typical of the retired physician's artwork.

The sculpture has two stubborn wings and an attitude that's not right for flight. Standing atop one human foot, he's smiling like he's got the world by the tail.

"(The sculpture) is characteristic of humanity in general," Smith said. "He seems to be saying 'I've got it made,' in spite of the handicaps that everyone else can see."

This is just one of the messages Smith reflects in his works. Other themes include evolution, humanity, religion and technology, though he said he never begins a project with a theme in mind.

"If you want to do art, just do it. If it is a true expression of your own ...that is all that matters"

— Dr. Joe C. Smith

"Most (artists) work from a

preconceived idea," Smith said. "But I like to start with nothing in mind, using my own development of design to answer my emotional needs."

What he gets is a high degree of spontaneity.

"If you know exactly what to expect from your artwork, it gets mundane," he explained.

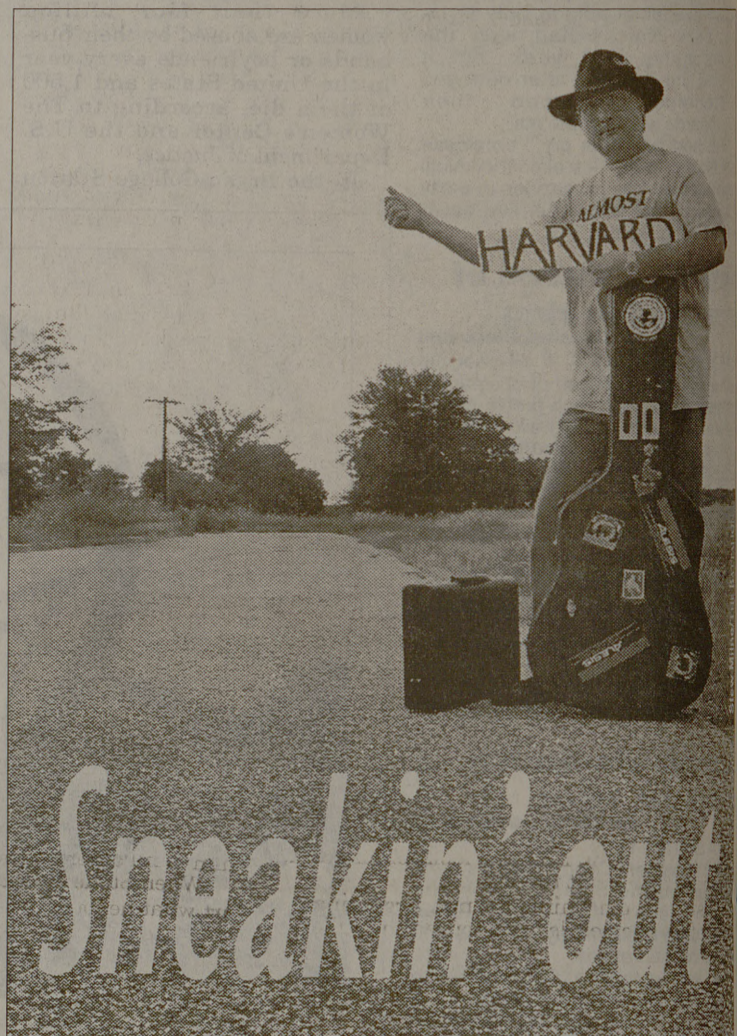
It was after 35 years of work with Baylor Medical School and Texas A&M Medical School that Smith decided to indulge in his passion for art, which he said became a therapy more than anything else.

As a U.S. Marine, Smith was stationed in China during World War II, where he was given a camera from the Japanese delegation in appreciation of his work. He began to experiment with photography, altering photos with techniques such as hand tinting.

His first step toward art was a return to the darkroom, which eventually led to his desire to paint. Though he never took a single art lesson, Smith attributes his knowledge to reading an abundance of art history.

It wasn't until a friend with a

Please see **Sculptor/** Page 3



Chris S. Cobb

THE BATTALION

Biology professor by day — 'Sneaky Pete' by night, A&M's Rizzo heads for Harvard on sabbatical

Chris S. Cobb
THE BATTALION

Peeking out from under his black fedora, the man onstage says, "It's time to pause for a good cause. I'll be back in a few."

With that, he takes off his guitar and walks offstage amongst a shower of "boos." The crowd does not want him to stop.

The performer is "Sneaky" Pete, the place is the Northgate Cafe, and it's any Wednesday evening. He is just one man and his guitar playing classic rock from the '50s, '60s, and '70s, original tunes and party/novelty songs. The last of which are the kind heard on the syndicated Dr. Demento radio show, which specializes in these kind of songs.

But, this is only one side of the man called Sneaky. To his colleagues and students, he is known as Dr. Peter Rizzo, associate professor of cellular biology.

"People who know me as a professor can't believe I have another persona that performs Wednesday evenings," Rizzo says. "And those that come see me perform can't believe that I am a serious professor who teaches a serious class. I try to keep the personas separate."

Rizzo has kept the personas separate now for almost 10 years. This fall marks the 10th anniversary of Sneaky performing. But, he will not be around in the fall to help celebrate the occasion.

It all started when the owner of the Sunset Grill, now Freebird's World Burrito, called Rizzo, who was at the time playing with his band Sneaky Pete and the Neon Madmen.

The owner wanted Sneaky, as he is called by his loyal fans, to distract and entertain the Texas A&M Rugby team, who were becoming too rowdy. The Sunset Grill was the team's hangout on

Wednesdays after practice. He soon became popular with more than just the rugby team. Thus, the beginnings of Wednesday Night Live.

"I've kept performing on Wednesdays because that's what it started and it kind of became a tradition," Rizzo says with a laugh. "And around A&M, you don't mess with tradition."

Sneaky Pete is now back on stage after taking his short intermission and performs one of his originals "Booger On My Beer Mug," one of two tunes to reach Dr. Demento's Funny Five. The crowd sings along, especially with the chorus. The other tune is called "Barbecue Barney," referring to the purple dinosaur.

Sneaky Pete will be gone this fall because Rizzo will be taking a sabbatical to Harvard University. A sabbatical is a short absence, usually a year or less, where a professor does research at another university

but is still paid a full or partial salary. Rizzo's area of expertise is studying dinoflagellate, primitive single-cell algae. The sabbatical will involve studying dinoflagellate and will focus on cell cycle and molecular biology.

Rizzo has thought about a sabbatical for close to 10 years and received an invitation from Harvard three years ago. He has just now found the time to take it.

"I'm really excited about going to Harvard because I will be researching new techniques to develop and study dinoflagellate," he said, taking a drink of water from a wine glass. "But, I will miss performing on Wednesdays."

For those who are concerned about Sneaky performing after the fall semester, he has already made arrangements to grace the Northgate Cafe stage in the spring. He plans to leave for Harvard around September 1. Until then, he'll keep tearing it up on Wednesday nights.

Sneaky Pete performs every Wednesday night at the Northgate Cafe and will perform this Friday at 9 p.m., celebrating after finals

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