

## A CLOSER LOOK AT CULTS

National expert warns A&M students of the signs and effects of satanic cults

By Tara Wilkinson  
THE BATTALION

Students might want to be aware of pentagrams, anarchy signs, goat heads, yin and yang symbols, upside-down crosses, 666, swastikas and logos of heavy metal bands.

Ronald Loomis, a nationally recognized authority on cults, told A&M students and College Station residents last night that members of satanic cults often mark their belongings and their bodies with these symbols, even though many of the symbols originated as expressions of unrelated belief systems.

Loomis said the creed of most satanic cults, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole law," is a dangerous philosophy that leads many cult members into criminal activity.

"If you are a Satanist, you are free to do whatever you want that causes you pleasure, even if it causes others pain, or even causes their deaths," he said.

Satanists reverse Judeo-Christian ethics, hailing Satan as the ruler of the Earth and future ruler of the universe. Most satanic groups participate in rituals involving the sacrifice of animals and humans, believing that control of the "life force" makes them powerful.

Loomis, former president of the Cult Awareness Network (CAN), a national non-profit educational organization, described Satanism and six other cult types during a lecture sponsored by the MSC Great Issues Committee.

Satanic cult activity must be seen as part of a larger picture. Not all cults are satanic, or even religious in nature, Loomis said.

Political, business, mass therapy, new age, and paramilitary white supremacist groups are also classified as cults.

Loomis said mind control and manipulation of its members are the the defining

characteristics of all cults.

CAN members focus on the unethical and illegal practices of cults, avoiding criticism of religious beliefs.

Loomis said the fight against cults is not against particular religious beliefs, but a fight against human oppression.

The typical cult member, Loomis said, is a loner who feels powerless and alienated from mainstream society and family members.

People, particularly adolescents, initially join cults as an act of rebellion, out of curiosity, or to feel part of a group, Loomis said.

He said people are slowly sucked into cult activity, begin to avoid family and friends, lose their senses of humor, exhibit changes in sleeping patterns, abuse alcohol and drugs, keep secrets, and perform poorly at work or school.

Shane Wells, a junior philosophy major, said the warning signs offered by Loomis were a bit too general to be helpful.

"The possible signs included just about everyone I know," Wells said.

Nevertheless, the necessity of detecting cult influence in the lives of loved ones was driven home by a video Loomis showed of an interview between Geraldo Rivera and a Pete Roland, convicted murderer and Satanist.

Roland, who began dabbling in satanic activity in high school, participated with three other high school friends in the brutal beating and murder of one of his class mates.

Roland said power, which attracted him to Satanism in the first place, became an obsession.

"Sometimes I didn't feel like the master of my own body," Roland said. "Sometimes it was like something else took over."

He described that "something else" as violence, Satan, lust and greed.

When asked how he chose his murder victim, Roland said it was "just because he was a human" who "could be deceived easily."

To keep from students hearing such testimonies



and panicking, Loomis said only a tiny minority of A&M students might be involved in Satanism and he has not heard any reports of satanic activity.

"There are people who may have assumed that since this program was sponsored by a campus group, there must be satanic activity on this campus," Loomis said, "but I don't have any information that it is going on here."

Adam Richards, a senior wildlife ecology major, said given the amount of time Loomis had to work with, his presentation did an adequate job of providing a general background about cults.

"He seemed fairly well informed," Richards said. "As far as generally informing the public, he did a pretty good job."

If you are a Satanist, you are free to do whatever you want, even if it causes others pain.

— Ronald Loomis  
cult authority



## Visual Arts Committee

Students help exposure art on campus

By Amy Uptmor  
THE BATTALION

A committee of A&M students are making sure Aggies are exposed to art.

The Visual Arts Committee is a group of students dedicated to finding new artists and bringing their work to the committee's Visual Arts Gallery on the second floor of the MSC.

Libe Goad, public relations director for the Visual Arts committee and a senior journalism and English major, said all meetings are open to the student body so it can see what the committee does.

"A lot of people come to our meetings thinking we're artists and leave disappointed because we just maintain the galleries," Goad said.

Amy Day, adviser for the Visual Arts committee, said committee members have a lot of responsibility

since they actually maintain the gallery.

Students are responsible for finding artists, contracting them and creatively setting up the gallery exhibits, which often involves painting the walls to suit the mood of the exhibit.

"It becomes a lot of work since there are a lot of details to take care of," Day said. "Anything that's not taken care of for one exhibit just means more work for the next exhibit."

Day said committee members gain a better understanding of contemporary art and its makers. One way the committee does this is by traveling to see what artists' styles are like. Day said this gets rid of a lot of the preconceptions of art.

"A lot of people have a fear of the arts," she said, "and when they get to meet the artists and learn how normal they are, it de-mystifies a lot of their misconceptions about how weird all artists are."

The students on the committee also take cultural trips to increase their own exposure to art. The committee will travel to Houston Nov. 4 to find potential artists to

bring to A&M.

The committee sponsors Art Fest every year, which is a chance for students to submit their artwork for cash prizes.

Goad said these activities promote art on a campus where it is scarce.

"It's a nice thing to have, especially at A&M since it's not a big art school," she said.

Day said the 150 to 300 entries Art Fest has is amazing since A&M does not have an art school.

"The entries are always amazing to see, on a campus without an art school, just how many artists there are," Day said. "They seek us out."

"There are artists here — they're just studying under different curriculum," she said. "Some are business majors who happen to be artists."

Day said the committee occasionally sponsors art exhibits by students who show extraordinary skill but they are exceptions to the gallery's usual atmosphere.

"Since this is the only art gallery of its kind on campus, we try to keep professional exhibits in the gallery," she said.

The committee currently has an exhibit of modern sculptures by Richard Neidhardt, a professor emeritus from Austin College in Sherman. The exhibit consists of 23 sculptures of wood and bronze.

Kathy Aceves, chair of the Visual Arts Committee and a junior marketing major, said the artist's sculptures are of "very simple images of life people don't think about."

"He uses art as a metaphor for certain things to show how art is a part of life," Aceves said.

The exhibit will run through Nov. 30. Aceves said the committee hopes to offer a free art workshop after the exhibit closes so that students will have the opportunity to learn a craft from an artist, such as painting or jewelry making.

"It would be right before finals," she said, "and would just be a good chance for students to interact with an artist."

### Something wicked this way comes

By Amy Protas  
THE BATTALION

Gimps running through the woods, an 1800's "haunted mansion" — the time to be scared is closely approaching. With the coming of Halloween, groups are sponsoring haunted houses in the Bryan-College Station area.

Kappa Sigma is taking a different spin on the tradition-

al haunted house by offering haunted woods.

James Webb, a Kappa Sigma member and a junior psychology major, said the fraternity is transforming two acres of woods surrounding its fraternity house into an area of fright.

"The woods lining our house are scary enough during the day," Webb said. "The unique thing is that it's the only outdoor haunted house. It's a lot more frightening than a house would be."

Webb said people will get to witness gruesome acts in the woods.

The money raised from the haunted woods will go to the Brazos Valley Church Pantry.

The Zeta Psi will turn their abode into a haunted mansion to raise money for the March of Dimes and the Brazos Food Pantry.

James Blue, a Zeta Psi member and a senior history and English major, said the antiquity of the mansion, which was built in 1876, is its main appeal.

"This house is naturally scary because it's from a different era," Blue said. "The antiquity alone will make people feel out of place — like someone should at a haunted house."

Blue said the fact that the mansion once belonged to the mayor of Bryan adds to the mystique.

Another variation of the haunted house will be Sigma Phi Epsilon's haunted building. The 5,000 square-foot-building will have rooms featuring black lights and evil clowns.

Jeff Montgomery, a Sigma Phi Epsilon member and a senior accounting major, said the building is truly a maze.

"It's hard for me to describe in words how unique our haunted house is," Montgomery said. "Ours is bigger than any of the other houses in this area. The whole idea behind this is that when you have so many rooms, you can do so much with it."

The money raised will go to Scotty's House, a child advocacy charity for physically and sexually abused children.

The residents of Hotard Hall will transform their entire dorm into Hotard From Hell, a tradition that has been around for over 10 years. Each floor has its own maze or theme.

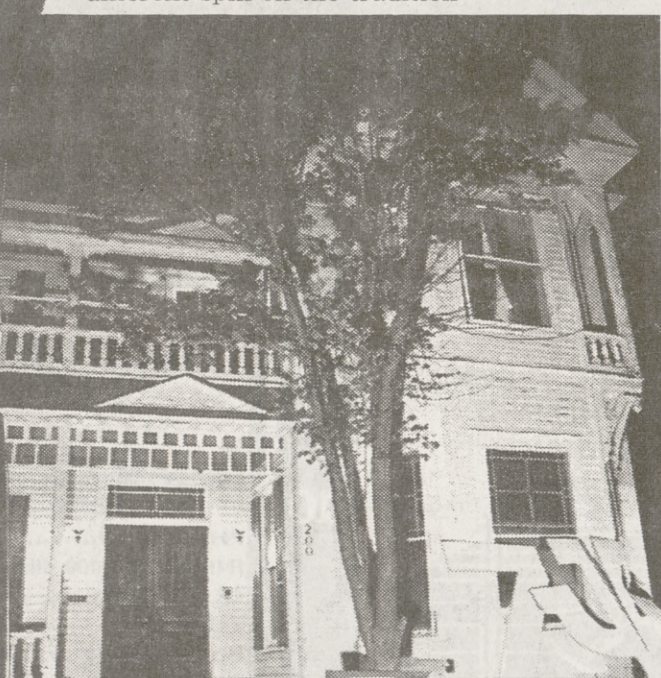
Chris Oxner, Hotard president and a junior biology major, said being on campus is a large advantage.

"Hotard From Hell is kind of a pride thing," Oxner said. "The fact that it's a tradition is important. People can walk here because we are on Northside."

The money raised from Hotard From Hell will go to a local charity the dorm will choose later.

Blue said the reason haunted houses are popular with college students is because it gives them an excuse to participate in a holiday that is traditionally enjoyed by children.

"We want to give college students something to do," he said. "You stop trick-or-treating at a certain age. Everyone wants to be scared and go to a haunted house."



Robyn Calloway, THE BATTALION

The Zeta Psi fraternity opens their "haunted mansion" during the Halloween season.