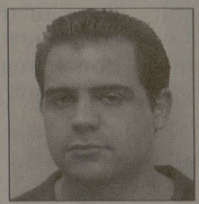


Toy Story

ction figures, Tickle Me Elmo define true meaning of Christmas

Lo, ho, ho. No, it isn't an advertisement street corner in part of town. It is that holly jolly me of year, istmas, and e is one word onymous with most cherished holidays — toys. hey are what istmas is all ut — not giving, not the big J.C.'s b-not being with family and friends. Maybe it all started when it was an ant-pagan holiday focused on obtaining l-to-find beanie babies and special ion Tamagotchis.



TRAVIS IRBY
columnist

ake no mistake about it. Christmas is about the acquisition of as many toys possible, whether young or old. Most people started with the simple E blocks, dolls, soldiers, etc. As they v up, more expensive and complicated like cars, stereos and computers be- the norm.

in all of us.

They did it last year with Tickle Me Elmo, a laughing piece of carpet. Now the puppet masters of Sesame Street have pulled the strings of America's youth, with their newest creation, Sleep and Snore Ernie.

Part of one of the most sexually ambiguous duos aimed at children since Batman and Robin, Ernie sings "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

Next year Sesame Street is considering licensing a Bert doll that sings show tunes and wears floral prints.

Speaking of Batman and Robin, the dynamic duo is looking to recoup some of the money lost on the last Batman movie by engaging in a lascivious use of licensing.

There are dolls, action figures and just about any other toy with the Batman likeness imaginable.

The action figure line has some troubling aspects. There are a zillion variations of the Dark Knight, including the Paisley Knight, the Reflective-at-Night Knight and the Prozac Knight.

The last Batman figure seems rather appropriate considering the character is based on Bruce Wayne's dementia.

He isn't the only super hero suffering from a plasticized personality disorder.

Spiderman, Superman and even Wolverine go through as many costume changes and mood swings as a bunch of supermodels on a diet of barbiturate-laced coffee.

Even the grand dame of the plastic proletariat, Barbie is going through some changes. After decades of the same bulimia-induced look, the public will soon see a more realistic Barbie.

The changes will be more than a different outfit and hair color — Barbie will sport a smaller bustline, a wider waist and generally look more like a live female.

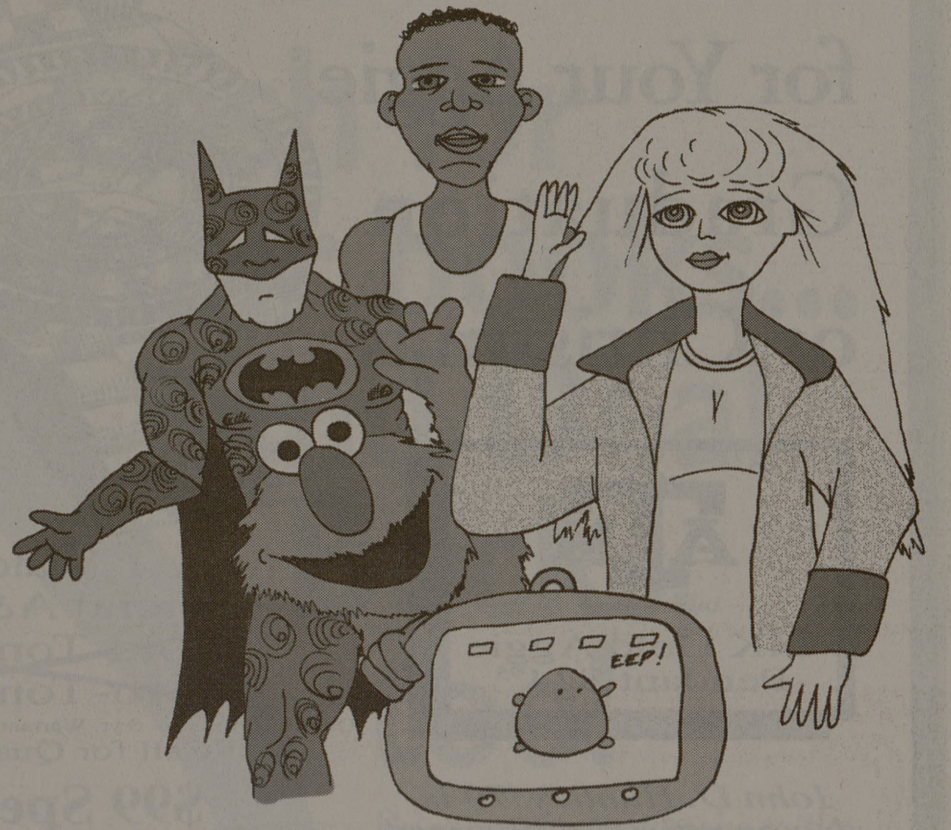
If this is a success, expect future additions like Wide Load Barbie, Bitter-Manic Depressive Barbie and Receding Hairline-Expanding waistline Ken. After all, the whole line is trying to be realistic.

Toy connoisseurs who want to step into the squared circle, might try the new wrestling figures from the WWF and WCW.

The WCW figures are eight-inch pieces of heavily-muscled plastic with a special motor that vibrates the toy.

Instead of a toy for kids, this product seems more appropriate as a tool for couples with intimacy problems.

Probably the most shrewdly marketed toy this season is the Talking Little Penny Doll. The lovable little puppet from those



Nike commercials comes at shoppers with his favorite phrases. Unfortunately, "Take your top off, Tyra," isn't one of them.

Besides the conventional toys, like the ones mentioned above, there are video game like Tomb Raider 2.

This figure to be one of the more popular video games this season, as it features an unbelievably proportioned heroine named Lara Croft.

If there ever was a video game aimed

at those saddled with hormones rather than dates, this is it. Maybe Lara should talk to Barbie.

Well, not all toys are high-tech or tied in with a multimillion-dollar property.

There are still Lincoln Logs and Legos for those who yearn for the simpler pleasures. Of course now they cost an arm and a leg.

Travis Irby is a senior journalism major.

Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History serves young and old

By RHONDA REINHART
Staff writer

The Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History is a hidden wonder in the Bryan-College Station community.

tucked away in a building extension of the Brazos center on Briarcrest Drive, the museum offers a wide variety of programs to children and adults.

Richard Huey, curator of education for the museum, said the museum provides a good way for people to expand their cultural and historical knowledge.

"We are a great unknown in this community," he

said. "People don't know we're here, and we've got so much to offer to the general public."

"Most of our activities are geared toward children, but we are moving toward families and adults."

TOM LYNCH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BRAZOS VALLEY NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History opened in the Spring of 1962. It was located on the third

floor of the county courthouse and was originally called the Junior Museum because its programs were established for children. But Tom Lynch, executive director of the museum, said the museum's programs have expanded to include all ages.

"Most of our activities are geared toward children," Lynch said, "but we are moving toward families and adults."

For the children, the museum provides everything from science and natural history classes to birthday parties with educational themes.

One group the museum works with is Los Hermanos, a group of school-age boys in Bryan who are having family, school or social problems. The museum

provides the students with activities that are not available to them at school.

Recently, the museum did a program on backyard astronomy for the group. The students came to the museum and were able to get hands-on experience.

Huey said the programs the museum provides for the students offer visual aids average school teachers do not have access to.

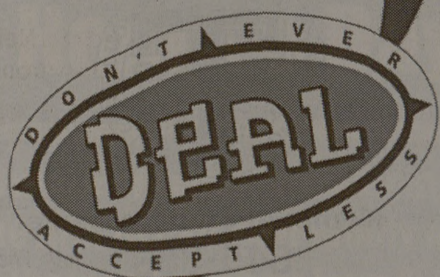
"It's a broadening experience," he said. "It is a very definite expansion on what the teacher can provide. It helps fill out what the teachers have been talking about."

PLEASE SEE MUSEUM ON PAGE 4.

Cash for
your books...
and free
stuff, too!

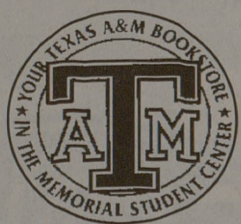
Store Hours:

Mon. - Thurs.: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Fri.: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sat.: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.



of the
SEASON!

Sell us your books for cash and free stuff! While supplies last, we have some great free gifts from friends at JanSport, Arizona, Sprint, Benetton Fragrances and... well, check it out!



Memorial Student Center
845-8681



Amarillo College
Dec. 19, 1997 - Jan. 8, 1998
9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(Classes do not meet Dec. 24-28 and Jan. 1)

- CIS 3023 (COSC 1306) Computer Concepts
- CRR 4603 Dictation and Transcription Skills Review IV
- ENGL 3053 (ENGL 1302) Freshman Composition II
- GOVT 4343 (GOVT 2306) Government of Texas and the U. S.
- HIST 3383 (HIST 1302) History of the U. S. II
- MATH 0033 Basic Algebra I
- MATH 3113 (MATH 1332) College Mathematics
- NURS 3031 Current Assessment Techniques for the Nurse
- NURS 4121 Basic Cardiac Dysrhythmia Recognition
- PHYED 3191 Skiing I
- PHYED 3201 Skiing II
- SPCOM 3103 (SPCH 1318) .. Interpersonal Communication
- SPCOM 3203 (SPCH 1315) .. Public Speaking
- SPCOM 3303 (SPCH 1312) .. Business and Professional Speaking

Register Nov. 10 through Dec. 18.

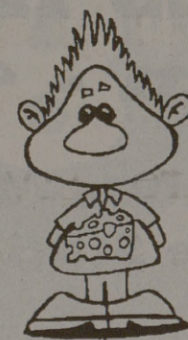
For more information, call the Amarillo College Registrar's Office at 371-5030.

Amarillo College is an equal opportunity community college.

MSC TOWNHALL PRESENTS

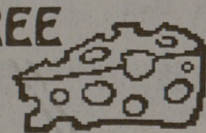
COFFEEHOUSE

DATE: Friday, Dec. 12
TIME: 8:00 p.m.
(open mic 7:00)
PLACE: Rumours Deli
WHY: FREE CHEESE!!!



FEATURING:
LIVE MUSIC
2 POETS, LIP SYNC,
BARBERSHOP SEXTET
FREE FOOD &
DRINKS

FREE



Persons with disabilities please call 845-1515 to inform us of your special needs. We request notification three (3) working days prior to the event to enable us to assist you to the best of our abilities.