

Planetarium show investigates existence and other mysteries

Assume life exists on other planets and consider it would take 20 years for a television signal to reach those planets.

Our first contact with aliens could be Ricky Ricardo yelling, "Luuuuuucy!"

That's one scenario pictured by author and producer Rick McGarvey in "The Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence," the Lane Education Service District's newest planetarium show.

The scene is indicative of what is both good and bad about the show.

McGarvey, a physics department graduate student, has been given a difficult task: presenting scientific material in a style that will appeal to each age level without condemning the rest of the audience to a state of slumber. The high backs and cushioned seats of the planetarium's easy chairs don't help matters. One woman sitting behind me very vocally lost the struggle.

In attempting to appeal to the younger crowd, McGarvey occasionally lapses into situations which detract from the more sombre scientific message of the show.

Cartoon drawings, along with a mock board meeting on another planet and the appearance of Yoda, the muppet from *The Empire Strike Backs*, delighted the children but seemed out of place among the well-chosen slides and narration of the show.

But the "gimmicks" are a small part of the show and McGarvey redeems himself in his choice of subject matter, slides and music.

The show begins with an in-

vestigation of what constitutes life and the forms it might take on other planets. Slides point out that life not coded by DNA may be radically different from what we know on earth, but these other forms of life could be much more highly ordered.

NASA ships have been using computer space probes for 15 years to detect some sign of life in outer space. In addition, since 1960 there have been 10 attempts to communicate with other planets using radio waves.

Few signals have actually been sent out from earth — most efforts have centered on detecting signals from other planets. Television transmissions should be strong enough to be received on other planets — but, as pointed out, they would take approximately 20 years to reach their destination.

At this point the show shifts to an interesting, if somewhat irrelevant, segment on attempts to communicate with whales on earth. Scientists seem to feel the big guys are attempting to talk to us, if we could just figure out what they're saying. This is finally tied into the rest of the show by a rather tenuous analogy: if we can't talk to other intelligent life on earth, what are the odds for communicating with life in outer space?

The action shifts from whales to more familiar territory.

To appease those who still follow the "In Search of Ancient Astronauts" line of speculation, the show delves into the ruins and mysteries of the pyramids, Easter Island, the Mayans and the Incas. But other cultures had technical skill too, the show points out, and these "mysteries" were the work of human hands, not aliens.

UFOs are dismissed as modern man's equivalent of the ancient myths told about men and their flying machines. It is more likely that UFOs are the result of known irrational life on this planet than unknown rational life on others, says Richard Feynman, a Nobel laureate in physics.

And what is the object of intense efforts to contact aliens from other planets? Aside from the thrill of boldly going where no man has gone before, the show asserts the objectives of "intergalactic trade, language and cultural exchange."

Narrator of the show is Dave Shakes, a University telecommunications major. Music is by Edgar Froese, the Beatles, and Morton Subotnick, among others. "Icarus," by Paul Winters — the opening and closing music — is especially effective.

Alien-buffs and others should enjoy the show — there is basically something for everybody. And if you haven't been to a planetarium for a few years, sit back, relax, and just watch the stars come out.

The show will be presented at 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays through March. The planetarium is located in the southwest corner of the Autzen Stadium parking lot.

Admission is \$2 for adults, and \$.75 for children and students. The show price also includes admission to the Science Center — go early, you'll want to play around in there awhile first. Children under 6 are admitted to the Science Center free, but are not admitted to the planetarium.

By Ann Portal

McCutcheon to hold concert, dance, workshop

The EMU Cultural Forum presents an evening of old-time mountain music and dance Friday at 8 p.m. John McCutcheon comes to Eugene to play, call a Southern Appalachian style square dance and conduct a workshop on traditional dance.

A native of Wisconsin, McCutcheon is probably best known for his role in popularizing the hammered dulcimer. He also plays fiddle and banjo.

The concert and square dance will be held in the EMU Ballroom on campus. Admission is \$2. The workshop will be held from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Friday afternoon in Gerlinger 220.

For further information contact the EMU Cultural Forum at 686-4373.



John McCutcheon

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Recycle this paper

Greetings from the weary workers of the night upstairs in the EMU. Kirk and I have just about tied-up the Thursday Revue section — hurrah. A long night for sure and then the machines have to screw-up. All in a day's work. Gaib had to show up at 12:30 a.m. just to prove he's a crazy journalism student striving to conquer the tabloid. To get through the general business of the staffbox: THURSDAY, a week prior to publication is the deadline for all calendar information and stories and photos. Sounds so threatening. Please get your stuff in on time so Kirk and I can get a decent night's rest. All my thanks go to the writers who struggled — like the rest of us — with the infamous flu and a number of spectacular excuses... and of course to Kirk who provided the needed addictive sweet soda laced with caffeine. Next week we visit breakfast hotspots. Wheel Toodles, Erzi.

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