

Tuesday, April 30, 1991

The Battalion

More time in the sun increases cancer rates

Editor's note: The Battalion will run weekly column on better health habits provided by the education department of the A.P. Beutel Health Center.

By Marcelo Villarreal
Special to The Battalion

The cost of a bronzed body is expensive because of the increasing prevalence of skin cancer.

Several factors have contributed to an increase in skin cancer, such as increased leisure time for outdoor activities, skimpy summertime attire, sunbathing binges and ozone depletion.

More than 600,000 new cases of skin cancer are reported every year in the United States. This is due to increasing exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation.

Ultraviolet rays can damage the DNA of a cell, disrupting and altering cell reproduction. This damage can result in skin cancer.

People who sunburn easily and have fair skin are most prone to develop skin cancer.

Although less common, people with dark skin can develop skin cancer.

The three major types of skin cancer are basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma. All of these cancers, if detected early, have at least a 90 percent cure rate.

What can you do to prevent sun damage? Obviously, staying indoors is the best protection against the sun.

The hours between 10 a.m.

and 3 p.m. are the worst times to be outside. If you are outside, use maximum protection sunscreens and wear a hat to reduce the risk of skin damage from sunlight.

A sunscreen with a skin protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 is recommended, with fair-skinned people needing a higher number. Products such as baby oil, cooking oil and butter do not offer any skin protection.

Tanning oils and accelerators that do not state an SPF number might not provide protection against the sun's rays. When sunbathing, remember to apply a liberal amount of sunscreen to your skin.

What about indoor tanning? Just like the sun's rays, indoor tanning lamps give off ultraviolet radiation. Both indoor tanning and sunbathing can cause premature aging of the skin, wrinkles and an increase in the risk of skin cancer.

If you want a tan, you can try a self-tanning lotion, or bronzer, which contains dihydroxyacetone (DHA).

This compound darkens the outermost layer of the skin. This "tan" takes a few hours to develop and the color will eventually fade as the dead skin sloughs off.

Only time will tell if the skin cancer rate in the United States will decrease with the increased publicity of the sun cancer link.

The problem will be perpetuated if the perception equating a suntan with a "healthy" look remains. People should concentrate on being physically "toned" and not "tanned."



SCOTT D. WEAVER/The Battalion

Rounding the curve

Christine Stevenson, a freshman psychology major from Houston, "powerwalks" around the track at Kyle Field early Monday afternoon. She was one of many students to get out and enjoy the good weather.

Redistricting plan favors Republicans

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Republican Party on Monday unveiled its proposed state House district map that could send many Democrats off the political charts.

"We believe this meets the test of fairness," state GOP Chairman Fred Meyer told the House Redistricting Committee.

Ed Martin, executive director of the state Democratic Party, responded: "The only people that the plan treats fairly is the Republican Party of Texas."

The Republican plan would redraw current district boundaries in a way that could force 26 incumbent House members to face one another in the 1992 elections. Of those, 23 are Democrats.

Redistricting Committee Chairman Tom Uher, D-Bay City, noted that since only three Republican incumbents could be affected by the plan, the pairings do not reflect the Democrat-Republican ratio in the House. There are 93 Democrats and 57 Republicans.

Meyer said party affiliation had nothing to do with how the

Republican plan was drawn up. However, he said, more GOP districts should be created because most of the high-growth areas in the state over the past 10 years have been in Republican districts.

"There are just too many Republicans," Meyer said. "You can't bury them; you've got to put them someplace when you redraw those lines."

The Legislature approves new districts after each census to adjust for population changes.

Meyer said the GOP plan would create six more minority districts, but Martin said the proposed districts are devised in a way that would hurt the voting strength of blacks and Hispanics.

"For all the rhetoric about fair redistricting, it turns out the Republican plan shortchanges minorities, shortchanges rural Texans," Martin said. "I'm absolutely flabbergasted."

Uher said he hoped the committee would send a redistricting plan to the House within the next two weeks.

In Advance

Annual ceremony to award faculty, staff

The Annual Faculty Meeting and Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Awards Ceremony will be from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Wednesday in Rudder Theater.

University President William H. Mobley and Provost E. Dean Gage will speak during the ceremony, and 22 awards will be presented in the areas of teaching, research, student relations, continuing education, staff and administration.

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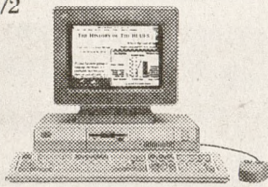
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To celebrate the unity and diversity of the university community, and to show that all people are welcome here at Texas A&M

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IN FRONT OF THE ACADEMIC BUILDING

We have invited members from many different groups, including the Black Student Union, Corps of Cadets, Gay and Lesbian Student Services, Medicine Tribe, National Organization of Women, Student Committee against Racism and Apartheid, and International Students Association, to attend this rally. You're invited too.

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