

The Battalion

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The Battalion news department is managed by students at Texas A&M University and is a division of Student Publications, a unit of the Department of Journalism.

Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Texas A&M student body, administrators, faculty or the A&M Board of Regents.

Comments, questions or complaints about any of the editorial content of the newspaper should be directed to the managing editor at 845-3313.

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BATTIPS

The Battalion encourages its readers to contribute story ideas and suggestions by calling BATTIPS, The Battalion's phone line designed to improve communication between the newspaper and its readers.

The BATTIPS number is 845-3315.

Ideas can include news stories, feature ideas and personality profiles of interesting people. Readers also are encouraged to offer any other suggestions that could improve the newspaper.

Summer heat leads to high bills

Simple tips save money, keep you cool

By Melinda Cox
The Battalion

Rising summertime temperatures means rising energy bills, but a few simple methods can help keep you cool and your energy bill down.

Rhonda Snider, the energy editor for the Texas Energy Extension Service at Texas A&M, said the most common culprit during these hot months is students' needs for cool air.

"The biggest energy consumer in the summer is the air conditioner," Snider said. "The air conditioner is 50 to 60 percent of the cost for the summer electricity bill."

Snider said the way to reduce a high summer energy bill is to do anything possible to cut down on the use of the air conditioner. She said there are several simple and easy ways to accomplish a cheaper summer utilities bill.

"Setting the thermostat between 78 and 80 degrees when you are home, and 80 to 85 degrees when you are gone for several hours will help reduce the cost of your electricity bill," Snider said.

If students are gone from the house for more than four hours, turning the air conditioner off is a good idea, Snider said.

Fans are also good way to cut down the use of an air conditioner, she said.

Fans will not lower the temperature of the room, but they do circulate air which helps a person feel cooler.

"Running an air conditioner for a day costs \$5 or \$6 a day, but it only costs around 10 cents a day to operate a fan," Snider said. "People can use ceiling or circulating fans."

She said another way to keep a house or apartment cool in the summer is shading.

Windows can be shaded from the outside with awnings, solar screens, shades or vegetation. A tree can also provide shade and keep the sun from getting through a window.

Snider said curtains are effective for keeping some of the sun out but only so much heat is reflected. Taping aluminum foil to the inside of the window pane helps reflect the sun's heat.

Snider said it is best to do baking, ironing and other heat-producing jobs in the morning



SCOTT D. WEAVER/The Battalion

Escaping the heat during summer months requires students to get creative with their attempts to keep cool.

so the air conditioner does not have to work as hard to cool the room.

Even the type of lighting used can play a part in the cooling of your home, she said.

"Fluorescent lights don't put off as much heat as incandescent lights," Snider said. "They also use less power and last eight to 10 times longer."

For more information on

ways to cool the house and save money this summer, ask for the free publications "Natural Cooling," "Shading" and "Save Energy in the Summer" from the Texas Energy Extension Service at 1-800-643-SAVE.

Subcommittee to review psychiatric apprehension laws

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A state Senate subcommittee is planning a hearing here to examine possible abuses of the Texas emergency apprehension law governing psychiatric patients, officials said.

State Sen. Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, said

allegations that mental health laws are being violated for profit in Bexar County indicates such abuses may be widespread.

The Senate Health Services Subcommittee, which Zaffirini chairs, has scheduled

the hearing for Wednesday.

"I suspect that thus far we have seen just the tip of the iceberg," Zaffirini told the San Antonio Express-News. "What we have seen so far is downright frightening."

Brothers found guilty in videotaped murder

TYLER (AP) — A federal jury Monday found two South Texas brothers guilty of killing an East Texas lawman in an attack partially captured by a video camera on the dash of the officer's car.

The jury deliberated about two hours before returning the guilty verdict for Baldemar S. Villar-

real, 29, and Reynaldo Sambrano Villarreal, 24, both of Edinburg.

The two were convicted of murdering Nacogdoches County Constable Darrell Lunsford. Sentencing is scheduled for July 8.

The brothers could be executed under a federal law that

provides the death penalty for killing a law enforcement officer while committing a drug offense.

Federal officials said the brothers' trial was the first in the nation under the 1988 law. Prosecutors said the Villarreal and a

third occupant in the car were transporting marijuana from Houston to Chicago when they were pulled over.

U.S. Attorney Bob Worthan said Monday he could not comment on the case because a gag order had been issued by U.S. District Judge Robert Parker.

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