herry Hostetter and Sgt. Betty emay, a UPD officer, tie a yelribbon around the memorial ee on West Campus.

PRIMED FOR UT The Baseball Team blows by UTSA. SPORTS, PAGE 9 Hayman: Four years at Aggieland teach lessons about A&M and about life. **OPINION, PAGE 13**

A&M students are working to save the Attwater prairie chickens.

AGGIELIFE, PAGE 3



TTALION

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Wednesday • April 24, 1996

Radioactive sparks fly in Russia

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Fire and through deserted villages decade after a reactor exploded, killing at least 30 people out-right. Another 5 million people ound the Chernobyl nuclear ant Tuesday, sending windwere exposed to radioactive fallout, mostly in Ukraine, Belarus hipped radioactive particles ward 10 years to the week er the world's worst nuclear No injuries were reported in

the fire, which burned several acres before being put out after about 7 1/2 hours. It was not clear how much damage was done to the villages, officially off limits since the plant disaster.

Firefighters said the blaze was probably started by a cigarette dropped by one of the fami-Plant officials said the fire osed no danger to the Cherboly plant, still in operation a miles northwest of the plant. lies visiting graves near the village of Tovsty Lis, about six Old women sobbed and tried to shield grandchildren from the smoke as flames engulfed homes they were forced to abandon to radioactive contamination from the April 26, 1986, disaster.

The fire spread quickly through five villages in the 18mile exclusion zone around the plant, carried by strong winds blowing toward Kiev and its 2.6 million residents. It burned pines and buildings in one of the areas most heavily contaminated with radioactive cesium.

The West has long pushed for Ukraine to close Chernobyl, but the energy-starved former Soviet republic says it needs the electric-

ity and jobs the plant provides.
Dr. Fred Mettler, a University of New Mexico professor who led a 1990 study into the health hazards of the Chernobyl disaster, said the risks from radiation

were minimal. The cesium contamination from the 1986 accident mostly is in the soil, and not likely to be carried by smoke from burn-ing buildings, Mettler said by telephone.

'I would be surprised if anybody would get enough of a lungful to significantly change their normal cancer risk," he said.

The environmental group Greenpeace, however, said fires

can carry radioactive material to previously uncontaminated areas.

"This is clearly a danger to the health of people, and not only in Ukraine," spokesman Antony Frogatt said in Kiev.

Firefighters from Chernobyl's fire station rushed to the cluster of villages after the fire broke

out at noon.
Small forest fires are not uncommon in the exclusion zone around the plant. But Vasily Melnik, chief of the Kiev regional fire service, called Tuesday's blaze the "most significant" since

the 1986 accident.

The Group of Seven industrialized nations has pledged \$3.1 billion to help close the plant by 2000, but the Western democracies set no date for delivering the aid at their summit last weekend despite an appeal from Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma.

In Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, 19 activists from around the world were arrested Tuesday at a demonstration demanding the plant's immediate closure. Twelve were released. Among the seven still in custody were an American

and a Dutchman, police said. Only two of Chernobyl's four reactors are in operation. The No. 4 reactor is encased in a concrete sarcophagus that some experts say has deteriorated badly.

Victims' pain not forgotten

By Michelle Lyons

National Crime Victim Rights Week is being observed at Texas &M and in Bryan-College Stan with the dedication of a livg memorial, a candlelight vigil nd a children's art contest.

ol. 102, No. 136 (14 pages)

Monitors flown in helicopters

er the area of the fire recorded ly a slight radiation increase,

okesman for Ukraine's nuclear

"We see no reason to be con-

ulatory agency.

ed now," he said.

Bob Wiatt, University Police epartment director, said the ek's events are important bese crime victims are often for-



The criminal justice system focuses on catching the perpetrator, he said, which makes victims feel

forgotten.
"Victims should be acknowledged," Wiatt said. "We in the community and in the criminal justice system are aware of the hurt they have endured. "We want to make sure the vic-

there in the community devoted to them and their welfare."
A red oak tree was planted on the A&M campus Tuesday in

tims know there are places out

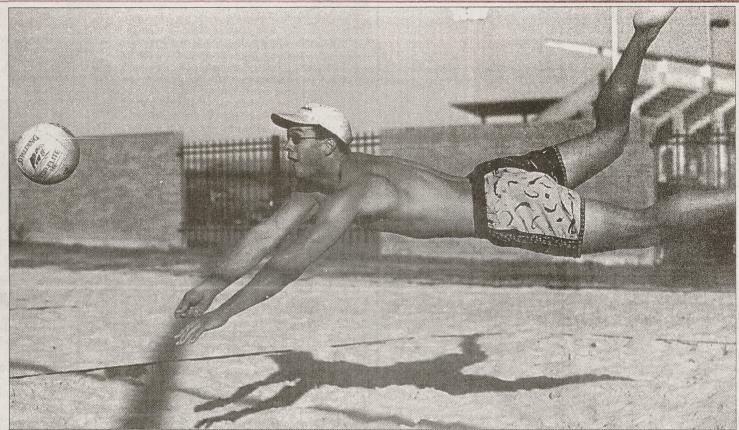
memory of crime victims. Sgt. Betty Lemay, University Police Department Crime Prevention Unit, said the tree planted on West Campus will serve to honor anyone who lost their lives to violent crime, whether it be domestic abuse, random violence or a cal-

culated crime. Lemay said the memorial serves as a reminder that victims

are real people. Beginning at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, a candlelight vigil will be held at Wolf Pen Creek Am-

phitheater. Balloons inscribed with the

See Victims, Page 8



Cory Willis, THE BATTALION

FUN IN THE SUN

Travis Gulbis, a senior kinesiology major from Dublin, Ohio, digs a spike at the Student Rec Center Tuesday afternoon.

Got a question? Physicists look for answers

By Heather Pace THE BATTALION

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For millennia, man has searched for answers to the fundamental questions of life.

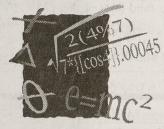
Now, several Texas A&M physicists from the Center for Theoretical Physics are helping pave the way toward an all-encompassing theory that will aid man in his quest for answers.

Dr. Michael Duff, an A&M physics professor, said a the-ory that the building blocks of the universe change from points to bubbles, sheets, and tubes is attracting the atten-tion and respect of the scientific community.

The mathematical equations that describe this process could become part of a "theory of

verything. "Theoretical physicists are so excited because the ultimate theory that would explain all of these ancient questions is within our grasp," Duff said. "... For many years, physicists have looked for a theory that would explain all physical phenomena, including the beginning of

Because theoretical physicists seek to reduce complicated



phenomena to simple formulas, they are hoping to find one or perhaps several equations to explain the fundamentals of

the universe. "The hope is that the theory of everything would explain all of this in a simple way," he said. "We want to have just one equation that would fit on the front of a T-shirt.'

The M Theory, one piece of the larger theory, says the fun-damental objects of the universe are not dimensionless point-like objects as once believed, but membranes that take many forms.

The idea is that membranes exist in 11 dimensions, not just the four that most people typically think of — length, width,

height and time. A&M's research has gained recognition as many physicists have begun accepting the theory of an 11-dimensional uni-

"In the last year, many people have come to believe there are 11 dimensions, which has vindicated our work here at A&M," Duff said. "The reason we're excited is we think we

See Answers, Page 8

CS shaves utility bills through Oct.

The average residential customer will save about \$3 per month

By Kendra S. Rasmussen THE BATTALION

College Station utility customers will soon share a \$990,694.40 refund from the Texas Municipal Power Agency

for fuel cost overpayment. Bob Pohl, College Station electric division manager, said that when the city's contract with TMPA expired on December 31, 1995, actual costs were compared with estimated costs and reconciliation adjustments were made.

"When the contract ended, they found that they had overcollected about \$990,000," he

\$800,000 (overpayment) estimate and deducted it from our last bill. Then, as they did the final reconciliation, they determined the balance to still be about \$190,000 and refunded

that to us as well."

Pohl said the refund will be reflected on May through October utility bills. The average residential customer will save about \$3 per month.

"By the time it is all paid back, the average residential customer will have saved about \$22," he said.

Bruce Albright, College Station utility office manager, said only current customers will receive the said. "TMPA gave us an refund, and the amount will de-

1996, not 1995, when the overpayment occurred.

Current customers will receive a refund regardless of whether they were customers during the overpayment period. Those who were College Station utility customers during the overpayment but are no longer

will not receive refunds.

"We tried to (locate previous customers) once before," he said,
"but chasing down power customers is a serious problem. In a lot of cases it is unsuccessful."

Pohl said College Station's contract with TMPA included a fixed rate for electricity and a power cost adjustment. The been fully refunded.

pend on their electricity usage in overpayment occurred in the

power cost adjustment area. The purpose of power cost adjustment charges is to cover variations in gas and TMPA power plant prices.

Pohl said the power cost adjustment charge is billed to College Station customers.

"Since that was a cost that we passed on to our customers, we figured that we should pass the refund back," he said.

Since January, the power cost adjustment charge to College Station customers has been \$0.003 per kilowatt hour. This charge will be reduced to \$0 per kilowatt hour until the \$990,694.40 has

Bomb set to explode inside human cells

The experimental cure for cancer identifies cells by the protein produced

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists fighting cancer have engineered what they call the first genetic time bomb, set to go off inside tumor cells when they blow their cover

by producing telltale proteins.

The approach is intended to deliver its killing force to cancer cells with pinpoint accuracy while sparing the normal healthy tissue around them

The idea is still in the test tube and probably years away from human use. It is notable for its novelty, but whether it will eventually lead to a cancer cure, as its developers hope, remains to be seen.

Ordinary chemotherapy uses a scattershot approach: Toxic medicines kill not only cancer cells but plenty of innocent bystanders, too. Many scientists have been trying to identify landmarks that make tumors unique, then tailor medicines that zero in on them.

The gene bomb scans the innermost workings of the renegade cancer cells look-

ing for proteins that only they make. 'As with any bomb, it has an explosive

part and a trigger," said Luis da Costa of Johns Hopkins University.
"You can put this bomb into a cell, and if it is normal, nothing happens," he said. "We engineered the trigger so it can only be pulled by a cancer protein. This will make the bomb go

off and kill the cancer cell.' Da Costa described the innovation Tuesday at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research. A report is also being published next week in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

While researchers have talked excitedly for years about using gene therapy to cure cancer and other ills, they are confounded by one serious drawback: How do you get the killer genes into the cells you want to

eliminate? One strategy is to use viruses as Trojan horses to carry them in. But cancer cells seem especially hard to penetrate. In the clump of tumor cells, only a few may absorb the transplanted genes. Even if these

die, the others survive and spread. It might even work for viral diseases, too, such as AIDS.