

A&M hazard department always watching skies

By Tauma Wiggins
THE BATTALION

Hurricane season is June 1 through November 1, but it keeps the Texas A&M University Hazard Research Department working year round.

The A&M Hazard Research Department, which operates under contract with the Governor's Division of Emergency Management, is the single source of hurricane information for the Texas coast lines.

The research division has developed several computer programs which study hurricanes and help make evacuation time quicker.

Carlton Ruch began a study on hurricane evacuation in the '70s and came to A&M in 1981. Since then, he has managed the research division at A&M.

Ruch, the director of A&M hazard research, said the department provides data for evacuation procedures, but does not make actual evacuation decisions.

"What we do is determine when winds can tip vehicles over, when roads will flood, and the amount of time left for citizens to evacuate the area," Ruch said.

Ruch said the intense heat of the coastal waters causes most hurricanes to hit around August and September.

Ruch said the College Station area is unlikely to experience any effects of nearby hurricanes, but it is a possibility.

"Here in College Station we saw some wind effects during [Hurricane] Carla in '61," Ruch said. "Some signs were blown down, but that was about it."

Graig Schumann, Texas A&M hazard

research and planning coordinator, said citizens have been misinformed about the real danger from hurricanes.

"It's interesting that people think wind is the most dangerous threat," Schumann said. "Winds do wreak havoc, but 90 percent of all hurricane-related deaths are a result of drowning. This is when the [Hazard] research comes in."

Schumann said many inland residents who have been through hurricanes develop a potentially dangerous false sense of security.

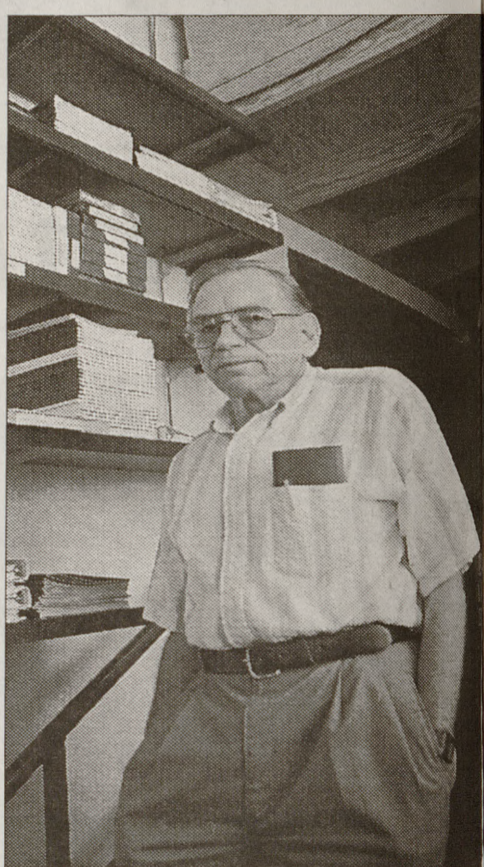
"In hurricane sub-cultures there are people who feel [the storms] are an act of God, and even some people who throw hurricane parties," he said. "Some people who have been through [a hurricane] before get a false sense of security."

A survey of Texas residents living near the coast found 98 percent said they would leave in event of a hurricane evacuation, Schumann said.

Schumann said hazard planning is not an action-packed profession, but it allows scientists to review and update their work when actual hurricanes do occur.

"Planning is not one of those dramatic professions," Schumann said. "When a storm does come in, you can stand back and see your work and realize if you did it right or not."

Hazard research is presently putting together evacuation videos that will be aired in the event of an actual hurricane. The group will also soon release a new grade of software which will include a more accurate mapping of Texas regions affected by hurricanes.



Dr. Carlton Ruch has researched hurricanes at Texas A&M since 1981.

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THE CABLE GUY (PG-13)
(on two screens)
1. 11:45 2:30 4:50 7:25 10:15
2. 11:30 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:45

THE ROCK (R)
(on three screens)
1. 10:20 1:15 4:15 7:50 10:45
2. 10:15 1:00 4:00 7:20 10:30

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE (PG-13)
(on two screens)
1. 11:15 1:45 5:00 7:30 10:40
2. 10:35 1:15 3:50 7:10 10:15

TWISTER (PG-13)
(on two screens)
1. 10:50 1:30 4:40 7:15 10:35
2. 11:00 2:00 5:00 7:40 10:50

EDDIE (PG-13)
11:40 2:40 5:00 7:35 10:30

DRAGONHEART (PG-13)
11:00 1:20 4:05 7:10 10:00

THE CRAFT (R)
11:20 2:15 5:05 8:00 10:10

THE ARRIVAL (PG-13)
10:35 1:00 3:45 6:55 10:00

PRIMAL FEAR (R)
10:55 1:40 4:55 7:50 10:45

TRUTH ABOUT CATS & DOGS (PG-13)
11:30 1:45 4:15 6:50 9:30

OLIVER & COMPANY (G)
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:05

EXECUTIVE DECISION (R)
7:40 10:25

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Summer School at Sea no easy cruise for incoming freshmen

By Melissa Nunnery
THE BATTALION

Aggie's are sailing the high seas off the coast of Texas.

Students at Texas A&M Galveston and at Texas A&M University have a chance to spend the summer before their freshman year on the Gulf of Mexico. The Summer School at Sea program provides students the opportunity to earn college credit in a different kind of classroom: a ship.

Students who wish to participate must first be admitted to Texas A&M Galveston or Texas A&M.

Students participating in the program become prep cadets while they are on the ship.

Prep cadets wear uniforms on the ship but are not considered military personnel.

The cadets have to perform duties on the ship. These duties in-

clude working in the galley, cleaning public areas and private rooms, fire and boat drilling and maintaining the ship and its equipment. Prep cadets participate in watches on the bridge and in the engine room.

The cruise gives students the opportunity to experience life in the maritime cadet corps without actually entering the Corps of Cadets.

Students then have the choice of entering the Corps in the fall.

Students on the cruise earn six hours of college credit. Courses offered include English 104, History 105, Marine Sciences 110 (general oceanography) and Geography 201. Classes meet six days a week for two hours each.

Dr. Steven Jennings taught Geography 201 on the cruise in the summer of 1994. Jennings said one advantage of the program is that students and teachers are on

the same ship. This makes it easy for them to interact.

"If students aren't doing well in a class," Jennings said, "it's easy to find them and ask why they aren't doing well."

Jennings said many students are experiencing college for the first time and do not know what to expect.

"The grade distribution is typical for a freshman level class," Jennings said.

Clay Waggoner, a junior business administration major, said it is hard to study on the ship because there are so many people in a small area. The ship is like a floating dorm — three people live in a room and two rooms share a bathroom.

Bob Byrne coordinates corps recruiting and outreach at Texas A&M Galveston.

"We have about 60 or 80 people on board each summer," he said.

The cruise calls at several ports during the summer where students have the opportunity to disembark for organized tours, shopping, sightseeing and recreation.

This summer, the cruise will stop in Veracruz, Mexico; Ponce and San Juan Puerto Rico; St. George's, Bermuda; Savannah, GA; Canaveral, FL; New Orleans; and Galveston. The students can take organized sightseeing tours and have free time to themselves in port.

Waggoner found out about the program from a letter sent to all incoming freshmen.

"It was a great experience," Waggoner said. "It was a lot of fun and I learned a lot being my own."

Summer School at Sea costs about \$2,200, which includes tuition for six credit hours, room and board and other fees.

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