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NEWS BRIEFS

Ags voice concerns on grave site relocation

TEEX sponsors fire school at Brayton

More than 3,000 firefighters from across the state will attend the 68th Annual Texas Municipal Fire Training School that begins today. The Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) is sponsoring the six-day school at the Brayton Fire Training Field. At 8 p.m. Wednesday, a public demonstration on the fire field will be held. Rick Perry, agriculture commissioner and candidate for lieutenant governor, will tour the facilities on Wednesday and attend a dinner at the Brazos River with State Sen. Steve Ogden and State Rep. Dan Kubiak.



PHOTOGRAPH: Tim Moog

Some Aggies are protesting the possible relocation of Reveille's grave site.

(AP) — Talk to students at Texas A&M about what makes the nation's third largest university special and they'll tell you, one after the other — tradition.

In the new student handbook, several pages detail the school's folklore, including the five-story-high bonfire before football games against rival Texas, the Aggie yells and how students symbolize the "12th man" by standing through football games.

But none is more important than A&M's purebred American collie mascot, Reveille.

Reveilles I through IV — there have been six dating back to 1931 — were buried with their paws and faces pointed so they could look through the north tunnel at Kyle Field and see the stadium scoreboard.

It's understandable then, that when the administration announced the grave site was being moved to accommodate a \$30 million expansion of Kyle Field, a number of devoted Aggies didn't take it lightly.

Before proceeding with stadium expansion plans, officials in the athletic department gained approval from a committee of students

representing the school's Traditions Council, Student Senate and E-2, the company of cadets responsible for Reveille.

But after outraged faxes, letters and e-mails started coming into E-2 cadets, Jeff King, who will be E-2 commander in the fall, began having second thoughts about moving the grave site.

“... We underestimated the amount of alums who were opposed to the idea.”

Jeff King
E-2 Commander

“At the time, we underestimated the amount of alums who were opposed to the idea,” King said.

The grave site is supposed to be moved in the near future to a garden area across the

street from the stadium until the expansion is completed in 1999.

Then they are to be moved to a new, larger, tree-lined plaza with lights, just outside the north end of the stadium. But the tunnel that opened to the grave site would be filled in with an elevator shaft leading to luxury sky boxes.

“I respect the leadership at Texas A&M for their forthrightness in planning for a modern, first-class facility,” said Robert Keathley, a retired school teacher in Corsicana who graduated from A&M in 1961 and comes from a prominent family of Aggie alums.

“But the case of the Reveille grave site and tunnel view being traded for a large elevator shaft to provide access to private apartment sky boxes, is just too much of a violation of the spirit of Aggieland.”

Keathley said he plans to form a group called “Friends of Reveille” to keep the grave site from being moved.

Said A&M Athletic Director Wally Groff: “Nobody liked the idea of having to do it, but it wasn't practical to build around them so we proceeded with the plan.”

A&M honors civil engineering head

Dr. Ignacio Rodriguez-Iturbe, head of the Texas A&M Department of Civil Engineering, was named a distinguished professor at A&M.

The title is effective Sept. 1. Rodriguez-Iturbe is the author of 100 books and more than 150 academic articles. He has received awards in Latin America, Europe and the United States.

Candidates for this title must be nominated and ranked in the top five percent of active researchers internationally in their field.

Professor recognized for economics research

Svetozar Pejovich, a Texas A&M economics professor, won the Templeton Award for Excellence in Higher Education for his work in the area of property rights and the “new institutional economics.”

Institutional economics examines the relationship between economics and the political and legal systems.

The award is sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation.

Pejovich's name will be placed on the Templeton Honor Rolls as part of the award.

Veteran pilot dies while testing plane

BROWNSVILLE (AP) — A veteran pilot who designed aircraft as long as the 1940s died Sunday when his self-built experimental plane crashed during a test.

Edis V. Eichman, 84, had just taken his Aerobat Three, on Sunday morning when it went down at the Brownsville Air Center.

The plane did not even get 6 feet off the ground before it just flipped over,” said Ralph Mark, manager of the air center. “I can't imagine what went wrong.”

Mark said Eichman had been flying the plane for a couple of years at the Brownsville Air Center.

Residents evacuate Alabama

Hurricane Danny caused flooding in coastal areas

GULF SHORES, Ala. (AP) — Flooding caused by Hurricane Danny's torrential rain forced scores of people to evacuate Sunday as rushing water washed out roads and poured through homes.

The storm, downgraded to a tropical depression as it weakened and drifted into the Florida Panhandle, left thousands without power, boats wrecked and homes damaged in southern Alabama. One death was blamed on the storm.

More than 30 inches of rain had fallen on the Alabama coast over three days, with even more concentrated on Mobile Bay, where Danny stalled for most of Saturday, the National Weather Service said. By comparison, the total rainfall for all of last year at Mobile's airport was just over 66 inches.

Rescue teams using boats and Humvees evacuated scores of people from coastal communities Sunday.

At Fish River, authorities said 125 people were evacuated, many by boat from half-submerged homes. At one point the water became so rough that one boat capsized and forced a brief suspension of rescue efforts.

Some evacuees said only the water was so high along Fish River that only the tops of some roofs were visible.

However, the evacuation was not mandatory, and a couple of dozen people apparently decided to stay, said Jim Sabell, chief of the fire department for Fish River and a rescue team leader.

National Guard officials said they were in no immediate danger.

The storm was downgraded from a tropical storm to a tropical depression during the morning when its maximum sustained wind eased to less than 39 mph. By 10 a.m., that top wind speed was down to 35 mph.

The storm was moving toward the north-northeast and was expected to continue weakening as it moved inland, the National Weather Service said.



PHOTOGRAPH: Rony Angkriwan

Bird's-Eye View

Scott Frandsen, a sales representative, demonstrates the retractable ladder of a fire truck for John Kiracofe, assistant fire chief from Jollyville, in the Kyle Field parking lot Saturday.

GOP dissidents swayed by DeLay

WASHINGTON (AP) — Going public with their story, young Republicans disenchanted with Newt Gingrich said they would not have tried to oust the House speaker without a solid push from Rep. Tom DeLay and other party leaders.

Despite the disaster that befell the attempt, however, the rebels appeared still in an insurgent mood. They agreed Sunday that Rep. Bill Paxton, who lost his leadership position in the commotion's aftermath, would make a fine speaker.

Reps. Matt Salmon of Arizona and Joe Scarborough of Florida, conservatives from the activist GOP class of 1994, told ABC's “ThisWeek” that they both attended a pivotal

meeting July 10 where the move to remove Gingrich was discussed.

Salmon said they were swayed by a clear-cut message from DeLay of Texas, as party whip the no. 3 Republican in the House leadership, that he would join them in voting Gingrich out of office. “I can tell you unequivocally that the 17 members that were in that room with Tom DeLay had that impression,” Salmon said.



Gingrich

Scarborough said on ABC and later on CNN's “Late Edition” that DeLay appeared to have the backing of others in the GOP leadership. He said, “The entire leadership team was on board.”

The two lawmakers insisted that an immediate uprising against Gingrich was never their intention. “I think most of us were in a wait-and-see mode” as Republican leaders negotiated with the White House on tax cuts and balancing the budget, Salmon said. “We wanted to see the speaker go in with full strength,” he said.

Please see GOP on Page 2.

FBI finds new traces of Cunanan

Fugitive is prime suspect in Versace murder case

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Andrew Cunanan, already a most wanted fugitive by the FBI now being sought in Gianni Versace's killing, used his real name and willingly left a thumbprint at a pawnshop eight days before the designer was gunned down.

The clerk at the pawnshop, Vivian Olivia, said she followed Florida law requiring her to mail a receipt to Miami Beach Police for the gold coin Cunanan pawned. The coin is believed to be stolen from one of Cunanan's prior victims.

It's not clear whether police whether police received that receipt or what they did with it.

“There are four copies of (the sales receipt),” Olivia told The Associated Press on Saturday. “One I give to the customer, one I put in with the coin, and the one with the fingerprint I give to police.”

Cunanan also left a record of the name of the hotel where he was staying and a room number where he continued to live until the day before the killing.

Olivia said records show the transaction took place at 4:42 the afternoon of July 7. She told the Sun-Sentinel of Fort Lauderdale that she mailed the receipt to police the next day.

She didn't talk to police until the day after Versace's killing, when she called to tell them about the receipt she still had. They came and confiscated the fingerprint card and the coin, which investigators said was stolen from Lee Miglin, a Chicago developer Cunanan is charged with killing.

Calls to the Miami Beach Police Department and the FBI by the AP were not returned Sunday. Cunanan, accused of shooting Versace on Tuesday, is also the prime suspect of an ex-lover and a former friend in Minnesota, Miglin and a cemetery caretaker in New Jersey.

Even before the Versace slaying, the FBI was already receiving reports of Cunanan sightings from all corners of the country. Boarding airplanes. At a laundry in Oklahoma City. In the audience on the Geraldo Rivera show.

Now that his face is plastered on virtually every storefront in south Florida, the supposed Cunanan sightings are pouring in. “There are just literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of sightings and bits of information,” Miami Beach Police Chief Richard Barreto told CBS's Face the Nation Sunday morning. “So this is a daunting task.”

Episcopal bishop will resist mandate for women clergy

FORT WORTH (AP) — The head of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth said he will resist compliance with a newly approved canon requiring acceptance of women as priests.

Bishop Jack Iker said he believes that “radical feminists” influenced a vote at the Episcopal General Convention in Philadelphia on Saturday to make it mandatory for him to accept female clergy.

“In the heart of radical feminism, there is a lot of internal anger. I think we saw that here,” Iker said after the 140-44 vote in the convention's House of Bishops.

The church voted 21 years ago to ordain women, but Iker and bishops in Quincy, Ill.; San Joaquin, Calif., and Eau Claire, Wis., have refused to do so.

The new policy will not force the four to perform the ceremonies. However, they must arrange for someone else to ordain women and allow female priests to serve in the diocese.

About 10 percent of the church's 15,000 priests are women.

“History teaches us the oppressed become the oppressors,” Iker said. “Women felt they were oppressed in the church.

Now they are getting the upper hand and want to turn the tables.”

Advocates of women as priests in the Fort Worth diocese say the oppression continues under those such as Iker.

“We've had a tyranny going on in the Diocese of Fort Worth for a long time,” said Brenda Seaver of Fort Worth, president of the Council of the Laity, an independent group that supports women as priests.

Iker, a conservative in the House of Bishops, said he will send women to the neighboring Dallas diocese for ordination. Fort Worth parishes that ask for a female priest would come under the Dallas diocese's oversight, he said.

That won't be good enough, said Katie Sherrod of Fort Worth, a board member of the national Women's Caucus of the Episcopal Church.

“It is unworkable, and it still relegates women priests to second-class status in the Diocese of Fort Worth,” she said last week.

Iker said he has no intentions of splitting from the Episcopal Church and will continue to work within a 2.1 million-member denomination.

TODAY IN BATTALION

SPORTS

The National Youth Sports Program wrapped up at Texas A&M this weekend.

See Page 3.

OPINION

Video: Television medium loads American public with extremist news coverage.

See Page 5.

ONLINE

http://bat-web.tamu.edu

See links to the FBI homepage.

