

### **BRIEFS El Niño may cause Texas drought** Warmer temperatures help keep tropical storms from forming eteor shower to

#### ght ake appearance annual Perseid meteor shower

duled to peak Monday night and esday morning, according to an Houston Chronicle article.

best time to watch the meteors in two hours after the moon sets. shower appears to come from irection of the constellation s, which will lie in the northm sky Tuesday morning.

#### mmencement set r Friday, Saturday

as A&M will hold summer comment ceremonies Aug. 15 at o.m. and Aug. 16 at 9 a.m. ay's ceremony will be for deandidates from the Colleges iculture and Life Sciences, tion, Science, Veterinary ine and the Dwight Look Colof Engineering. James R. s, chair of Texas Instruments will be the speaker.

urday's ceremony will be for deandidates from the Colleges of ecture, Geosciences and Mar-Studies, Liberal Arts, Medicine e Lowry Mays College and te School of Business. Robert dwin, president and CEO of the of Light Foundation in Wash-, D.C., will be the speaker.

mbers of the Corps of Cadets ng the military will be commislat Saturday's ceremony, also.

### K Jr. criticizes latives in article

WYORK (AP) - The Kennedy whose marital and extramaractivities have filled tabloid nes for years, are being pilby one of their own - none than JFK Jr

the September issue of e, the magazine he founded dits, John F. Kennedy Jr. calls fhis cousins "poster boys for ehavior.

th Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II, s., accused by his ex-wife ing to have their marriage led for political expediency, Michael Kennedy, accused of affair with an underage baby "chased an idealized altere to their life," JFK Jr. says in



**PHOTOGRAPH:** Tim Moog El Niño is causing a drought in Texas this year, withering corn and other crops in the dry heat.

# Gov. Bush: Tax battle not over yet

AUSTIN (AP) - Texas voters have given homeowners a slight tax break, but they need to speak up if they want to keep property tax rates and values from continuing their steady rise, Gov. George W. Bush said.

'This is definitely a step," Bush said, celebrating the overwhelming victory Saturday of a \$1 billion property-tax cut for homeowners.

In unofficial results, 690,678 Texans, about 94 percent of those who cast ballots, the homestead exemption from \$5,000 a

year to \$15,000; 41,338 voted against it. The tax break will save the average homeowner about \$140 a year. Bush, who for two years has pushed an effort to lower and cap school property tax rates, said the issue is hardly resolved. Gov. Bush

"Hopefully during the course of this campaign, Texans will make their sentiments known to those of us who are seeking office," said the governor, who is seeking re-election next year. Lawmakers tried to limit the number of By JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER THE BATTALION

A hurricane has not hit the Texas Gulf Coast since 1991. and the U.S. Weather Service's National center for Atmospheric Research says this is because of a strong El Niño. El Niño is the period of warmer water temperatures

in the Eastern Pacific Ocean along the equator. The rise in water temperature causes strong winds that typically shear off developing hurricanes. The strength of El Niño varies every year.

But El Niño also may cause droughts in some parts of the United States and flood other parts of the nation.

Dr. Kwang Kim, a Texas A&M meteorologist, said El Niño is strong this year, and the effects of the period are beginning to appear.

'El Niño changes each season," Kim said. "But this year El Niño will have a dramatic effect on Texas weather.'

Ping Cheng, an A&M climatology professor, said warm El Niño temperatures may lead to fewer tropical storms in the Atlantic Ocean.

Although Gulf Coast residents may not have had to board up windows or evacuate their homes this year, Texas A&M Agriculture Specialist John Wards said agriculture is suffering from the effects of El Niño.

In early August, the Atmospheric Research Center in Oklahoma said that El Niño has the potential to cause billions of dollars in damage to key agriculture regions worldwide, including the Southern United States.

Wards said that in the fall, Texas may experience an increase in temperatures, making the it feel like summer, and rain shortages may be common because of El Niño also.

"El Niño not only has an impact on the weather," Wards said, "but it greatly affects agriculture income-based families as well. Some years crops go dry because of a lack of rain and high temperatures

Donna Kent, public relations officer for Brazos County Farm Bureau, said more than 13 percent of families in the Brazos Valley rely on farming for income. This year, she said, some are worried about losing crops.

Please see EL NIÑO on Page 2.

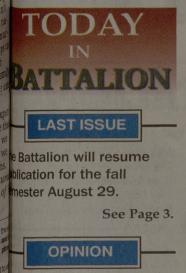


PHOTOGRAPH: Rony Angkriwan

gned article.

the ensuing notoriety, he writes: aps they deserved it. Perhaps hould have known better. whom much is given, much is ted, right? The interesting gwas the ferocious condemnaof their excursions beyond the

ds of acceptable behavior." nd he adds, cryptically: "I've ed a lot about temptation re-, but that doesn't make me deny less.



fin: People learn the most luable lessons from the atest heroes: parents.

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times a home's value can be assessed and limit the increase in appraised property values. In November, voters will be asked whether hikes in property value should be capped at 10 percent a year. Voters also would be allowed to defer property tax payments if values rose more than 5 percent, but would pay 8 percent interest to do so. Since 1995, Bush has said rising prop-

erty tax rates and values pose a looming threat to home ownership in Texas. He said the state's healthy economy, the newly approved tax cut and increased state funding for education could take the pres-

But he added that if Texans want more to be done, they will have to make that known to elected officials

The constitutional amendment approved Saturday raises the minimum homestead property tax exemption by \$10,000, giving most homeowners a roughly \$12 a month tax cut. Renters and business property owners were left out of the savings.

## **Cycling shop** owner killed in accident

Wayne Bryan, owner of Aggieland Cycling and Fitness and 41-year-old Bryan resident, was killed at 8 a.m. Sunday two miles east of College Station on Texas Highway 30, the Department of Public

Bryan was riding a bicycle on the westbound shoulder of Hwy 30, the DPS said, when a 1992 two-door Honda traveling westbound in the outside lane crossed the line and struck the bicycle on the shoulder of the road.

The DPS said four other people were bicycling with Bryan, but they were not

### Killing lime

esna camper, a -old, buys a gumball while waiting for her mother to do laundry Sunday alternoon at Wash-n-Go.

# A&M changes overassignment policy

Students will be able to accept or reject the room at an earlier date than previous years

#### By JOEY JEANETTE SCHLUETER THE BATTALION

In the next few weeks, Texas A&M students will be busy meeting their roommates for the fall semester and scrambling to find furnishings for their dorm rooms.

On-campus residence hall assignments have been given to students, and the number of overassignments will be known during the first week of school.

The Texas A&M Department of Residence Life said it expects the same number of overassignments for the fall as last year.

In Fall 1996, 80 percent of housing applicants received room assignments, and 20 percent were overassigned.

Residence Life began mailing letters to students who received oncampus housing last month. The letters inform students of their room numbers, roommates and if

they have been overassigned. Dan Mizer, assistant director of facilities and planning for Residence Life, said overassignment is under control and should not be a problem this year because of revisions to the overassignment process.

'Memos have been sent out [to students] which show revisions to overassignment," Mizer said. "We shouldn't have problems as we did in the past.'

The revisions require that overassigned students either accept or reject the room assignment at an earlier date than previous years.

This year four A&M students will live in an apartment-style room on the first floor of McFadden Hall. Three modular rooms were combined and designed with a living room, a kitchen, two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

Please see HALLS on Page 2.



PHOTOGRAPH: Tim Moog

Four students will live in an apartment-style room on the first floor of McFadden Hall this fall. The suite has a living room, kitchen, two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

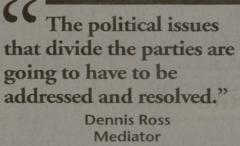
## U.S. peace envoy says mission goal is security cooperation

IERUSALEM (AP) — President Clinton's Mideast envoy focused on Israel's security demands Sunday, shuttling between Israeli and Palestinian leaders in a drive to salvage the battered peace process

Dennis Ross' task is delicate and difficult: Trust is at a low point after a five-month crisis, with Israelis bitter about bombings in their cities and Palestinians livid Israel is building settlements and imposing travel bans.

Ross said his orders from Clinton were to restore the "security underpinning" of the peace process and resume security cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces.

The strategy appeared to make some head-



way: Ross succeeded in bringing Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and his security officials together with Israeli Shin Bet security chief Ami Ayalon and other Israeli officials for a meeting, Israel Radio said.

The meeting began around midnight in the autonomous West Bank city of Ramallah and continued into Monday. U.S. officials also were participating in the meeting.

David Bar-Illan, a top adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said such meetings alone "are not going to be enough. .. The question will be, 'Did we get the intelligence that we need and that we know they have?"

Please see Envoy on Page 2.