

TODAY

HIGH 95°
LOW 76°

TOMORROW

HIGH 94°
LOW 75°

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Sports:

After sharing his Aggie experiences at Muster, Former A&M Football Coach Gene Stallings returns to College Station for a book tour.

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THE BATTALION

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY • COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

Mercury Rising

Experts explain unusual heat, give tips for surviving summer sun

Story by
Rod Machen

Photo by
Brandon Bollom

"Awfully hot, awfully early." This is the way KBTX weatherman Bob French described weather the College Station area has been experiencing lately.

After a dry early spring, French said late spring looks more like the mid-summer.

"We are about two months ahead of schedule," he said.

Saturday through Tuesday have all record highs, French said. He said he expects this trend to continue for the next few days.

French attributes this weather pattern to a high-pressure ridge that has developed over West Texas. When the ridge gets pressed down, he said, temperatures rise.

One positive side effect of this ridge is that it has pushed the Pacific High Texas has experienced in the last few weeks from Mexican forest fires to the Pacific Ocean.

However, French said this "mountain of air" has prevented storms from entering the area and providing any precipitation.

John Nielson-Gammon, associate professor of meteorology, said the area is in the middle of a drought.

After a very wet February that saw many thunderstorms, the past two months have been extremely dry.

At the end of March, the area was 3.5 inches ahead on precipitation for the year. By the end of May, it was behind over 3 inches.

In May alone, rainfall was just seven hundredths of an inch, compared with an average of 4.8 inches for the usually wet month.

Nielson-Gammon sees the lack of precipitation and record highs as part of a cycle.

"The lack of evaporation from the ground makes it hotter," he said, "just like when your car can't sweat."

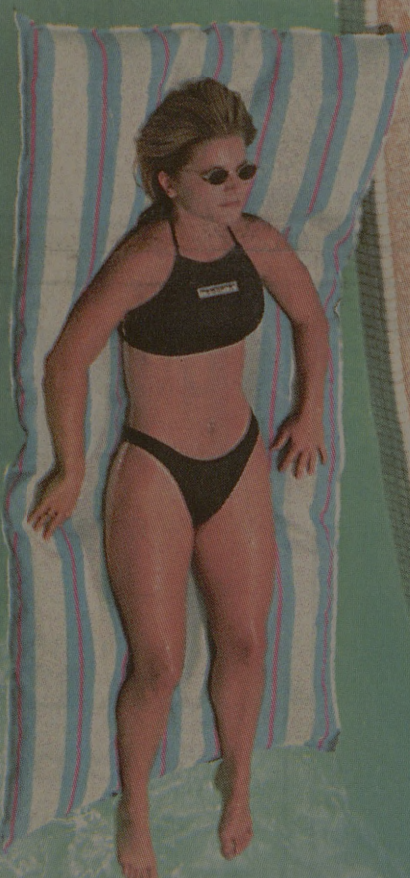
He also said lack of evaporation reduces the number of thunderstorms striking the weather even drier.

French said the area might be in for some temporary relief. A weak cold front might come through this weekend. However, he said the weather will revert back to recent high temperatures soon thereafter. Students are noticing the high temperatures as well. Ryan Murphy, a junior chemical engineering major, said the heat has altered his summer schedule.

"I go to my friend's dorm room on campus to cool off," he said. "It's blazing out there."

Dr. Jane Cohen, R.D., health educator and nutrition specialist at P. Beutel Health Center, and Nicole Verkruyse, communication coordinator for campus EMS, offer these tips on coping with the heat:

- Drink at least eight 12-ounce glasses of water per day. Thirst is not a good indicator of dehydration so drink regardless of thirst.
- When exercising, drink one glass of water every 15 minutes and take breaks as needed.
- Stay away from caffeine and alcohol as they have dehydrating effects.
- Beware of heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Warning signs are lack of sweating, dizziness and nausea. Contact EMS immediately (Dial 9-911 on campus.)
- Wear light-colored, loose, comfortable clothing.
- Take extra precautions between the hours of 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



State officials reissue haze alert

AUSTIN (AP) — Less than a week after cancelling it, state officials Wednesday reissued a public health alert because of smoke and air pollution from fires in Mexico and Central America.

Patrick Crimmins, spokesperson for the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, said satellite images showed a large area of smoke from the fires in Mexico southeast of Brownsville moving to the north.

Smoke was expected to begin to affect large portions of South Texas by late Wednesday, while Central and East Texas were expected to be affected by Thursday and Friday, Crimmins said.

Fine particulate matter in the smoke has the potential to exceed federal air quality standards, which is the basis for the re-issuance of the statewide alert.

The alert had been lifted May 28 after more than two weeks of south-of-the-border smoke clouding up Texas skies and causing health officials to warn Texans against physical exertion outdoors.

"The re-issuance of this alert is a precautionary measure," said TNRCC Chairman Barry McBee. "It is difficult to know with any precision how thick the smoke will be when it gets to Texas, and what areas will be most affected."

The TNRCC and state health officials have been warning Texans with respiratory problems to avoid physical exertion both indoors and outdoors. They warn that others, particularly the elderly and children, consider avoiding outside activity and limiting indoor exertion.

Thousands of fires continue to burn in Mexico.

Incoming ...

Campus leaders prepare for New Student Conferences

BY SHATERA KENNEDY
Staff Writer

The Texas A&M Admissions office and the Student Life Organization anticipate the arrival of the sweaty-palmed, freedom-seeking freshmen and their nervous parents to the New Student Conferences.

Starting June 8 until June 19, 18 conferences will be held to welcome students and get them started on their college career.

The Student Life Organization will be responsible for seven programs throughout three days of scheduled events.

New students can participate in a campus tour, an Aggie Energizer that includes a variety of games and exercises and the Howdy Barbecue in the Duncan Dining Center.

The orientation also requires the students to meet with the dean of their college, schedule their first semester of classes and take the tests necessary for admissions.

In addition to the campus services, other organizations and service groups use these conferences to showcase the information they provide for the A&M community.

The conferences are staffed by more than 200 student volunteers

who will facilitate the 7,400 students A&M is expected to receive.

Brian Anglin, Class of '98, has worked in the orientation leaders program for the past three years and looks forward to this summer enthusiastically.

"I joined this group because it is the only program that enables student leaders to meet every freshman coming to A&M," the earth science major said.

Jody Ford is a second year graduate student from Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, and a secondary conference advisor.

He and about 20 other advisers are present to handle any problems that may occur.

"Our goal and job," Ford said, "is to be the troubleshooters and ensure a smooth conference flow for all involved."

Parents are kept busy with a parents reception and a chance to tour the

Forsythe Galleries, the George Bush Presidential Library & Museum and the Recreational Sports Center while the students are testing.

Starting a new school away from home can be difficult, but the new student conferences are designed to provide comfort during the chaos of the move.

“Our goal and job is to be the troubleshooters and ensure a smooth conference flow for all involved.”

— Jody Ford
Secondary Conference Advisor

4-H celebrates 52nd year at A&M

BY PATRICK PEABODY
Staff Writer

The four-leaf clover of the 4-H flag was flying high in the Academic Plaza this week.

The 1998 Texas 4-H Roundup brought 1,500 volunteers and over 100 4-H members to the campus of Texas A&M, making it the second largest summer program held this year.

The program marks the 52nd year the annual event has been held on the campus and the 90th anniversary of the Texas 4-H Clubs.

"4-H began in 1908, with the founding of the Boy's Corn Club," said Gayle Hall, an associate professor and 4-H youth development specialist. "Later in 1912, the Girls Tomato Club was formed, and later they combined into the 4-H we now know today."

"The 4-H we know today has a membership of 624,000 members between the ages of 14 to 19."

Eric Wood, a junior animal science major and the Round-Up house coordinator, said 4-H offers a variety of opportunities for students.

"It is so much fun for them," Wood said, "and they get to interact and meet other members from all over the state."

Wood said that the 4-H Roundup was one of the reasons he chose

to attend A&M.

"The purpose of these Roundups and 4-H is to build leadership in the youth," Wood said.

Clayton Ratliff, a Texas 4-H secretary, said the organization was for more than just those interested in animals and agriculture.

"It has something for everyone," said Ratliff, "you just have to get involved."

Although 4-H is best known for their agricultural-related activities, Hall said the organization also completes community service projects.

This year alone they collected over 2,000 books which were donated to Sheltering Arm, a group that helps kids find foster homes.

They also collected 469 board games for Elderaid, and donated thousands of eye glasses to the Lion's Club for recycling.

This year's Roundup boasted of 45 contests, nightly dances and educational rallies every morning.

This year over \$1 million in scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000 were given out at the event.

"It has been a full and exciting week," 4-H State Council Member Kristin Kruciak said.



PHOTO BY J.P. BEATO / THE BATTALION

Spectators gather to look at the 4-H photography exhibit in the MSC Flagroom Wednesday. The display featured judges favorites in various categories. The display will remain through this week.