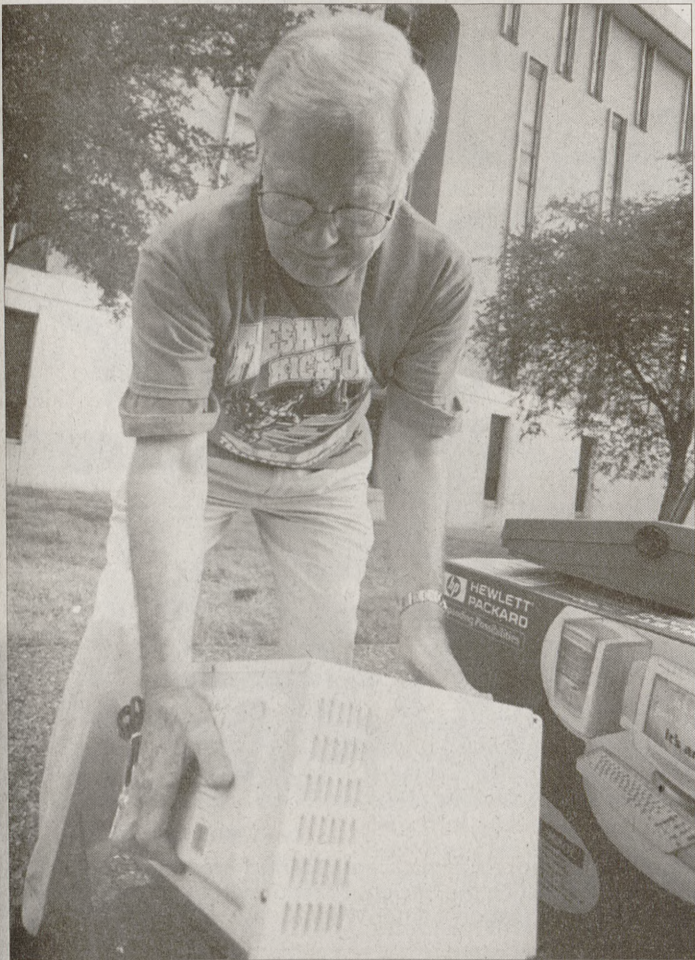


Helping hand



STUART VILLANUEVA/THE BATTALION

Texas A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen helps students move in the Southside dorms Wednesday as part of the Freshman Welcome Day.

Bush puts Crawford in spotlight

CRAWFORD (AP) — A Central Texas town is wrestling with how to best handle the national attention garnered by its most famous resident, Gov. George W. Bush, who owns a ranch nearby.

Mayor Robert Campbell said he thinks some residents are starting to worry the town may be known more for the Republican presidential candidate than its own merits. He does not want his city to be known just as "Bush country."

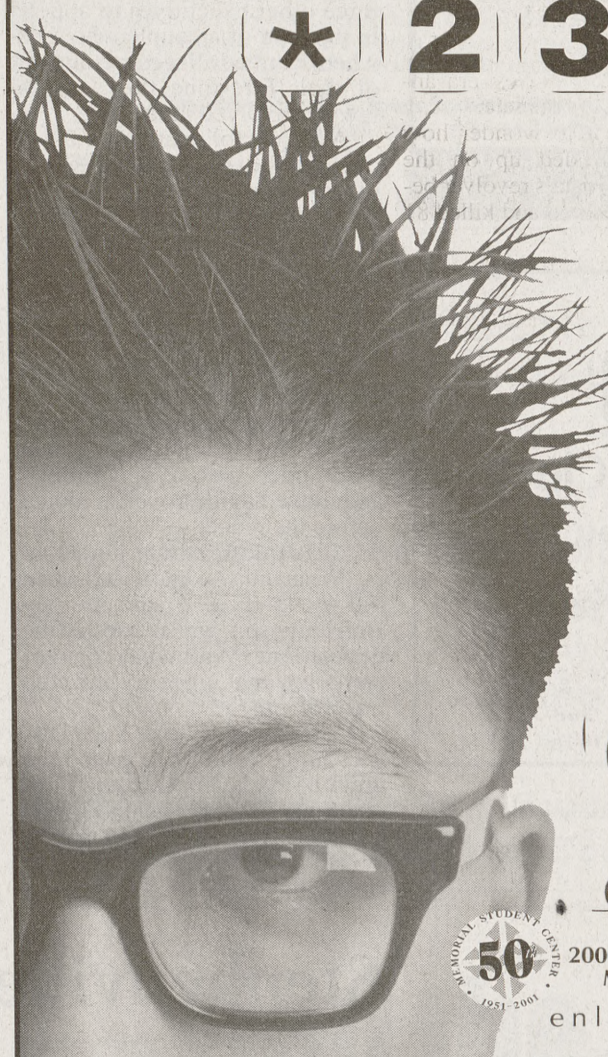
Until recently, Crawford, located about 90 miles north of Austin, eschewed the media spotlight. But a year ago, after Bush purchased his ranch near the McLennan County town of fewer than 700 residents, things started to change.

The city council voted to support early plans for a Bush celebration on Nov. 4, the Saturday before Election Day. No city funds will pay for the celebration, and Campbell insists it will encourage residents to vote, not to lend support to a select candidate or party.

On Tuesday, county commissioners will consider new traffic rules on roads near the Bush ranch. The suggested changes include a 40 mile-per-hour speed limit and new "no parking" signs.

The sheriff's office and Secret Service officials suggested the new rules.

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Brush fires plague Texas

HOUSTON (AP) — An outbreak of wildfires fueled by parched conditions across North and East Texas could worsen during the upcoming Labor Day weekend, when many residents head outside for barbecues, picnics and other family gatherings, Texas fire officials said.

"It is dry enough now that anything that makes sparks can cause a fire," said Mahlon Hammetter, a fire prevention specialist with the Texas Forest Service in Lufkin. "Most fires are caused by human carelessness. On Labor Day, there is ample room for carelessness."

Multiple brush and forest fires burned through East and North Texas on Saturday and Sunday, threatening homes. No injuries were reported, however.

Bulldozer crews were brought in to control fires in East Texas, and last week 15 firefighters from North Carolina, Georgia and Florida were called to control blazes in the pine forests of East Texas. Texas Air National Guard helicopters with 2,000-gallon water slings also assisted.

In Hill County, about 40 miles southeast of Fort Worth, firefighters toiled Saturday and Sunday to douse a 105-acre fire that started at a boat ramp on the east side of Lake Whitney.

The fire, which threatened 55 homes, was fought by a crew of about 70 from eight fire departments.

Another fire that started Friday in the brushland of Palo Pinto County, about 70 miles south of Wichita Falls, was contained but still burning Sunday. The fire spread to adjoining Jack and Young counties, officials said.

"It was very rugged terrain and the crew actually had to use axes and grubbing hoes to make a line to contain it," Hammetter said. "It is very dangerous when you get fires in those little canyo-type areas and it creates a wind tunnel. The fire just races."

In East Texas, firefighters worked to control a fire that has raged all week near Nacogdoches and destroyed 1,800 acres of timber so far. The fire was contained but still burning Sunday.

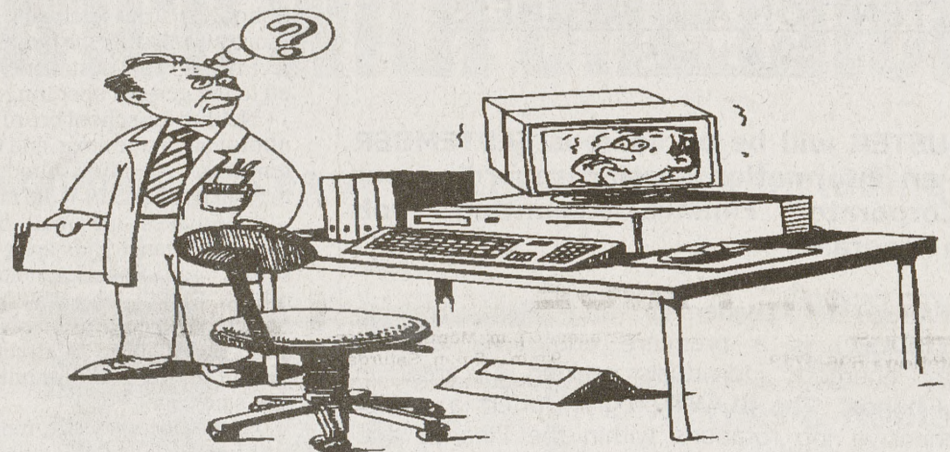
In southeast Texas, eight fires destroyed 21 acres of woodland near Conroe Saturday. Three fires in Montgomery County, two in Houston County and one each in Harris, Trinity and San Jacinto also destroyed woodlands Saturday.

Forestry officials said the fires reported only represented a fraction of the total number burning across the state.

"We only count the ones we fight," Hammetter said. "Not the ones put out by all the fire departments across the state."

He said Texas firefighters have not been able to gain reinforcement from states farther West, because of wildfires raging there.

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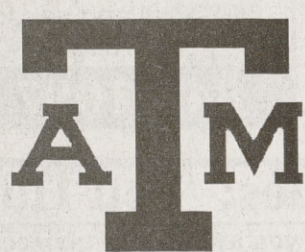


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