

# THE BATTALION

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## Brazos on watch for West Nile

By Rob Munson  
THE BATTALION

No immediate threat from the potentially deadly mosquito-borne West Nile Virus exists in Brazos County, local health officials said, but they continue to warn residents to remain alert for signs of the virus.

Don Plitt, assistant director of the Brazos County environmental health division, said the county is implementing West Nile Virus prevention measures that include a TV commercial and door hangers.

"We didn't have any problems last year, and we'd like to

keep it that way," Plitt said.

The county health department will place door hangers on Bryan homes in the Haswell Park area where dead birds, tested positive for West Nile Virus, were found last August.

Plitt said county workers have collected dead birds in Bryan and College Station, but none have been sent to the Texas Department of Health in Austin.

Last year, two blue jays, one crow, two horses and 13 mosquito sampling areas were found containing West Nile Virus, Plitt said.

The county routinely looks for barrels of standing water and

will dump them or put screens on them to guard against mosquito larvae, Plitt said.

"We also take reports of leaking septic systems and fix them," Plitt said. "They (mosquitoes) love to breed in that kind of water."

Dr. Jim Olson, an entomologist at the A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, said he is working with the health department to ensure the safety of residents.

"We've expanded surveillance and are now working in cooperation with the county health department," he said.

Olson said he will monitor

new areas as dead birds are reported.

"Early rains created a lot of standing water," he said. "They are turning stagnant and generating the Culex mosquito we're concerned about."

Olson said Southern House and Asian Tiger mosquitoes are the species that are potentially dangerous.

"We still look to the Southern House as the source of urban vectors," he said. "The Asian Tiger is an auxiliary vector but will help spread the virus in an infested area."

Olson said Bryan and College Station residents can

### West Nile Virus PRECAUTIONS

Use yellow yard lights containing sodium vapor

Wear protective clothing

Avoid being outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitos are most active

RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

SOURCE: BRAZOS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT, DR. JIM OLSON

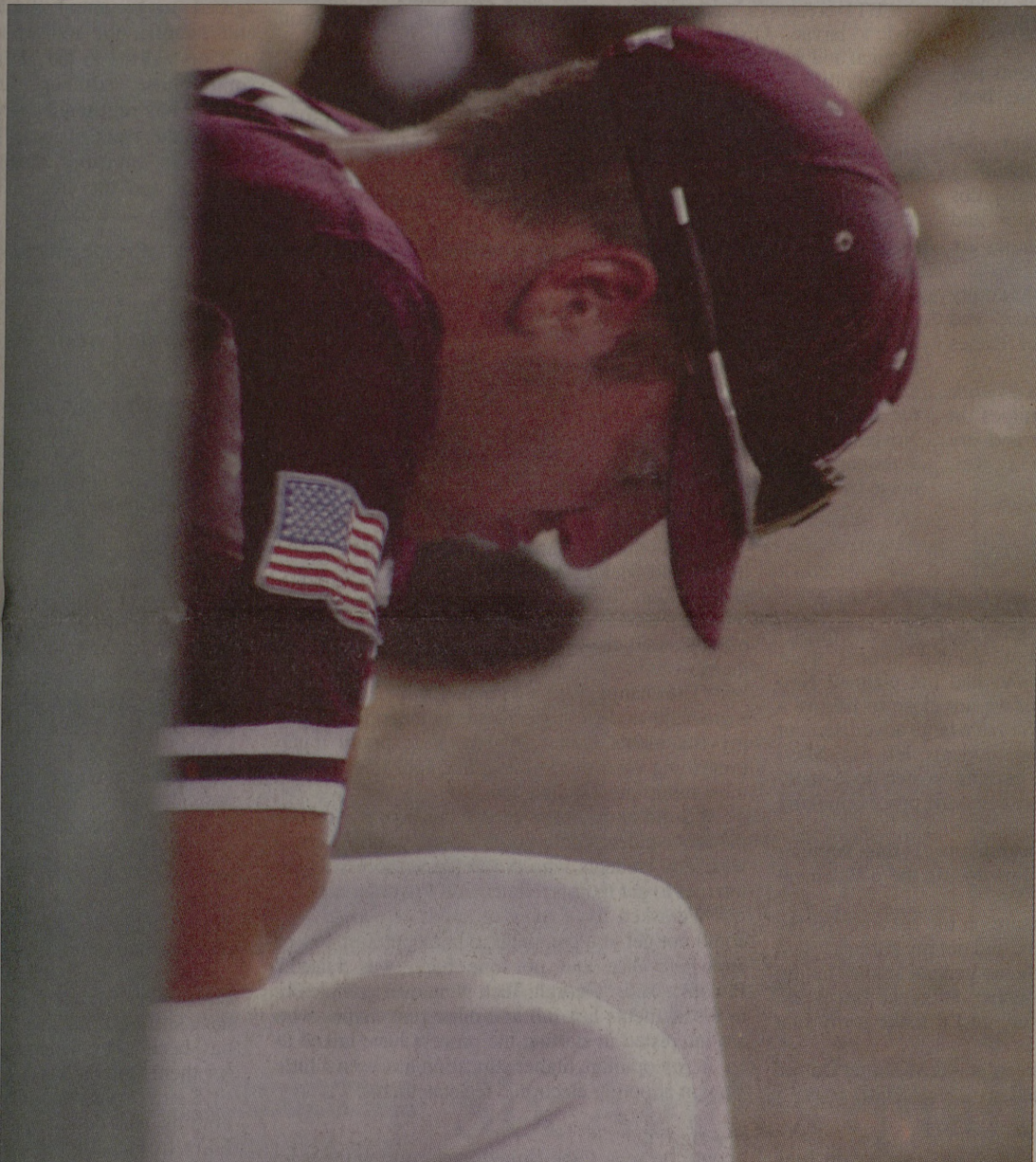
take precautions to avoid mosquito-borne infections.

"The first line of defense rests with people protecting

themselves first and foremost from mosquito bites by wearing

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### Dejection



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M catcher **Craig Stinson** hangs his head after the Aggies lost in the 10th inning against the University of Houston on Sunday night. The 7-6 loss ended A&M's season. See related story on page 3.

## Palestinians demand return of ruined lands

By Steve Weizman  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DEHEISHE REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank — A shrine of sorts fills a corner of Fatima Jafari's living room. Two well-worn coffee pots, a water jug used for washing hands and some squares of embroidered fabric are all that remain of the home her family left in July 1948 as Israeli guns closed in on her village.

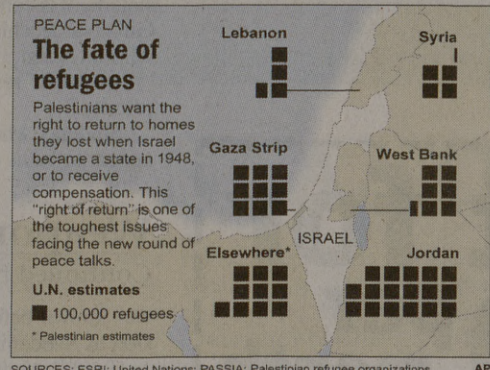
More than half a century later, she still dreams of returning to that land southwest of Jerusalem and now inside Israel's borders, even though she was only 40 days old when she left, and even though that home is now rubble.

Jafari was one of about 700,000 Palestinians who lost their homes in the fighting that followed Israel's independence in 1948.

Their fate, and that of their descendants — 4 million by U.N. estimate, likely will be one of the toughest issues to resolve in a new Mideast peace effort powered by the United States.

For Israelis, even the most committed doves, the so-called "right of return" to a country already populated by 5.5 million Jews and 1.2 million Arabs is a non-starter.

Many Palestinians, some of whom



SOURCES: EBRI; United Nations; PASSIA; Palestinian refugee organizations AP

still have the keys to the houses their families left, feel just as strongly that it is a matter of principle to redress their national catastrophe.

Some argue that Palestinian leaders, including Yasser Arafat, made the issue the cornerstone of the liberation movement for decades and would look like traitors if they caved in.

On a subject so touchy there are whispered ideas, too: Palestinian leaders quietly say Israel can afford to accept the idea because most Palestinians would, in reality, opt for compensation and stay where they are.

Israelis say most nations were born in upheaval, they have taken in almost a million Jewish refugees from Arab countries, and that if the Palestinians suffered an injustice they should learn to live with it as other refugees have.

They maintain that they, too, have returned to what was their homeland after 2,000 years of exile and persecution.

Under a plan put forward by then-President Clinton in December 2000, the Palestinians would have given up the right of return and Israel would have allowed in a small number of refugees for family reunifications. Arafat never accepted the proposal.

The refugees are scattered throughout the region, many living in miserable camps and shanty towns in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and yearning to return to a land most only know from stories.

Many more have prospered in Arab countries, but theirs has always been a tenuous existence, as evidenced by the mass expulsions from the Gulf following the 1991 war to free Kuwait.

"To smell the soil of our land is

See **Lands** on page 2

## Fails family takes A&M to court

By Justin Smith  
THE BATTALION

A lawsuit has been filed against Texas A&M by the family of Brandon Fails, the A&M football player who died last November from complications of a blood clot after a knee surgery.

The lawsuit, filed May 19 in Brazos County, seeks unspecified damages for Charles and Valerie Fails and states that Fails' physicians and trainers were negligent in identifying the clot that formed after the surgery and eventually lead to

his death.

Along with A&M, the lawsuit names Fails' doctors, Dr. Joe Paul Bramhall and Dr. Richard Smith, who treated him after he injured his knee.



FAILS

Also named were A&M trainers Daniel Kniffn and David Weir, Assistant Athletic Director Timothy Cassidy, Assistant Athletic Director for Athletic Training or Therapy Karl

Kapchinski, and The Physicians Centre and Central Texas Sports Medicine and Orthopedics, where Fails received treatment.

University spokeswoman Cynthia Lawson said A&M does not comment on pending lawsuits.

On Oct. 15, Fails, an 18-year-old 6-foot-3-inch, 275-pound lineman from Euless, Texas, injured his right knee in football practice and later underwent arthroscopic surgery to repair his knee.

See **Fails** on page 2

## Fee statements go electronic

By Karen Yancy  
THE BATTALION

Beginning in August 2003 Texas A&M will use online fee statements, known as e-statements, to replace the paper statements usually mailed to students' home addresses.

Student Financial Services will send e-mail notices to students' Neo accounts to inform them to check their online fee statement. They will be posted at <http://register.tamu.edu> and linked at AggieE-pay on the SFS Web site.

"We want to get the best

available information to students," said Bob Pionwonka, director of SFS. "The electronic statement allows us to use the campus e-mail system to contact students about changes in their fee statements."

On July 1, SFS will send a letter to each student's permanent address informing him that paper copies of fee statements will no longer be sent through the mail. This letter will also include instructions on where to find fee statements online.

"We hope this change will save the University a great deal of money," Pionwonka said. "We

have estimated the University will save at least \$50,000 during the first year. It costs 40 cents in postage and handling per statement sent out. That is about \$18,000 per semester and that doesn't include the cost of printing and envelopes."

Since 1999, SFS has been involved in a five-year transition from printed to electronic fee statements.

"In the summer of 2000 we started encouraging people to claim their Neo accounts. Then in the spring of 2001 we began

See **Online** on page 2

## Poor security hinders U.S. weapons collections

By Sameer N. Yacoue  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraqi forces ordered by the U.S.-led occupation force to begin turning in their weapons showed little sign of compliance Sunday, the first day of a two-week amnesty period designed to make the streets of postwar Iraq safer.

In a land where gun culture

runs deep and lawlessness is a serious concern, separating people from their firearms is no easy task — especially in Baghdad, a city occupied by heavily armed American forces.

"During the Saddam era, few people used to keep weapons in their houses because there was real security, but now you have to protect your family by yourself," said Ali Hassan, a 27-year-old fac-

tory worker. He says he won't turn in his Kalashnikov assault rifle until a new Iraqi government is established and security is restored.

While looting and crime have ebbed since American tanks rolled into the Iraqi capital April 9, security remains a major issue across the city — particularly at night, when gunfire remains common and most streets are deserted soon

after sunset.

That's why many Iraqis say they need to remain armed.

Hassan has hidden his AK-47 in a place he says no one can find. Not the Iraqi police, not "even the Americans with their high-tech equipment," boasted Hassan, who lives in al-Thawra, a poor neigh-

See **Weapons** on page 2

### Disarming Iraq of weapons by mid-June

The U.S.-led coalition has ordered most Iraqis to disarm by June 14 in an attempt to get weapons off the streets and to return public security to cities under American occupation. The collection process begins June 1.



SOURCE: Associated Press