

THE BATTALION

Thursday, November 6, 2003

Lightning

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actually are, and how it all works."

An important aspect of the show is the lightning safety it teaches children. Sarah Fowler, an A&M graduate student in the architecture department, is part of the group working on the visualization portion of the project.

"We hope that the people coming to watch (the show) will get a general sense of lightning safety — that's our main concern," Fowler said. "And then they come away with a little of how it works and why it's dangerous in some respects and pretty neat in others."

People do not always realize the dangers that are associated with lightning and storms, Orville said.

"Lightning kills about 100 people in the United States each year and injures between 400 and 500 people," he said. "When lightning strikes the body, it sends the heart into fibrillation and the person will die in five to 10 minutes if first aid is not administered immediately."

Orville said he hopes the planetarium show will increase awareness of the dangers of lightning and will help people know what to do if they find themselves stuck in a lightning storm.

"(People viewing the show) will learn to recognize when there is a lightning danger," he said. "They will learn to pay attention to warnings from the National Weather Service and the local television stations."

A&M has a lightning warning system on campus to alert people when there is a high possibility for lightning to strike on or near the campus.

"When there is a high lightning electric field at the earth's surface produced by a nearby thunderstorm, the warning system will sound," said Orville. "A high electric field at the surface (of the earth) frequently precedes a lightning flash to ground."

If a student hears the warning system sound — a horn will blare for about 15 seconds — he should stay away from trees, light poles or high open areas, and seek shelter inside a building or car.

"When lightning strikes the body, it sends the heart into fibrillation, and the person will die in five to ten minutes if first aid is not administered immediately"

— Richard Orville
atmospheric sciences professor

Lunar eclipse to occur Saturday

By Rick Callahan
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stargazers across North America will watch the full moon dim into a dark, ruddy orb Saturday night as the moon drifts through Earth's shadow in the latest celestial event this year to pull eyes skyward.

Astronomers who scrutinized Mars this summer during its closest approach to Earth in 60,000 years were more recently awed by red and green aurora displays as far south as Florida thanks to big explosions on the sun.

And now more heavenly happenings are on the way.

Saturday's lunar eclipse will be followed by the Leonid meteor shower, a total solar eclipse

over the southern hemisphere — and a chance for more auroras if the sun stays active. Another eruption Tuesday on the sun may rank among the most intense solar events ever recorded. But the explosion was aimed away from Earth, meaning it would have little impact here.

Still, the otherworldly event the public has the best chance of seeing is Saturday's total eclipse of the moon. At its peak, the moon will hang eerily in the night sky like a dark, reddish-orange coal.

Unlike unpredictable comets and meteors, the moon is a reliable show, said Stephen Maran, a spokesman for the American Astronomical Society.

"Nowadays people who've grown up in the city or suburbs have never seen the Milky Way,

but even in the most light-polluted place I've ever been — downtown Los Angeles — you can see the moon," he said.

Weather cooperating, people in the eastern United States will witness the entire eclipse; it will already be under way when the moon rises around sunset in the West.

The eclipse reaches totality at 8:06 p.m. EST. That stage — when the moon, Earth and sun are lined up precisely and the moon passes through the darkest part of Earth's shadow — lasts just 24 minutes.

The eclipse can also be seen in South America, Europe and Africa. The last eclipse of the moon visible from North America was on May 15, but much of the United States was cloudy.

Director

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Agriculture, said many positive changes have occurred during Hiler's term as dean.

"We've seen a lot of emphasis on more basic sciences in the college and more attention given to environmental issues," Bazer said.

Hiler has also done a good job of promoting diversity, Bazer said.

About a year and a half ago, the College of Agriculture was the first college to place a recruiter in south Texas. This resulted in more students, predominantly Hispanic, coming to A&M, Bazer said.

"He's the kind of person that is hard not to like," Bazer said. "He always has a smile on his face."

Upon his retirement, Hiler is considering several professional options, including possibly returning to the classroom to teach.

Guilty

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However, no deal was cut that might spare him from death penalties in other jurisdictions. Ridgway has not been charged elsewhere, but admitted dumping victims outside the county and in Oregon.

The King County agreement, signed June 13, puts more murders on his record than any other serial killer in U.S. history.

Since signing off on the deal, Ridgway has worked with investigators to recover still-missing remains of some victims, one of the most baffling and chilling serial killer cases the nation has ever seen.

The Green River Killer's murderous frenzy began in 1982, targeting women in the Seattle area, mainly runaways and prostitutes. The first victims turned up in the Green River, giving the killer his name. Other bodies were found near ravines, airports and freeways.

The killing seemed to stop as suddenly as it started, with prosecutors believing the last victim had disappeared in 1984. But one

of the killings Ridgway admitted to occurred in 1990 and another in 1998.

In court Wednesday, Ridgway entered the 48 guilty pleas, one by one.

He said in his statement that he killed all the women in King County, mostly near his home or in his truck not far from where he picked them up. He said he enjoyed driving by the sites afterward, thinking about what he had done.

"In most cases, when I killed these women, I did not know their names," Ridgway said in the statement. "Most of the time I killed them the first time I met them, and I do not have a good memory of their faces."

He said he had several reasons for preying on prostitutes.

"I hate most prostitutes and I did not want to pay them for sex," he said. "I also picked prostitutes as victims because they were easy to pick up without being noticed. I knew they would not be reported missing right away and might never be reported missing. I picked prostitutes because I thought I could kill as many of them as I wanted without getting caught."

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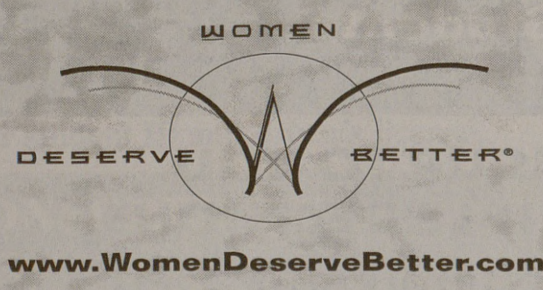
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