

PUM BOY

BY: WILL LLOYD



Hydrilla returning to Lake Bastrop

BASTROP, Texas — After almost vanishing from Lake Bastrop, the hydrilla water weed is back.

The invasive plant had covered more than half of 900-acre Lake Bastrop before inexplicably beginning to retreat in 1999 and then nearly vanishing.

Now, the aquatic weed's long, ropy strands are matting together to almost fill some coves and threatening to clog the cooling water intake vents at the Lower Colorado River Authority's Sim Gideon Power Plant.

A recent survey by river authority scientists found hydrilla covering 256 acres, or about 28 percent, of the lake, built in the 1960s as a water source for the natural gas-fired plant on its east shore. The lake is about 30 miles southeast of Austin.

The survey showed that the weed is continuing to spread, adding 36

acres since another survey earlier this month.

"This is the most hydrilla we've seen since 1998," river authority aquatic scientist John Wedig told the Austin-American Statesman for its Sunday editions. "We have found hydrilla growing in up to 14 feet of water in five general areas, including an area at the North Shore Park and coves leading to the power plant intakes."

The weed, which snags boat propellers, impedes skiers and was blamed for one drowning on Lake Austin in 2001, is found in about 100 public bodies of water in Texas. Officials believe that it got into the state's lakes from a dumped aquarium years ago and has been spreading on boat trailers.

In 1998, Lake Bastrop's problem gave then-Gov. George W. Bush

a photo opportunity as he happily straddled the controls of a \$200,000 mechanical harvester eating its way through the hydrilla.

Bush had arranged for the Tennessee Valley Authority to loan the floating combine to the river authority. The river authority liked the harvester so much that it bought it and now is revving up its big paddlewheels almost daily on Lake Bastrop.

Lake Austin's thousands of Asian grass carp, which were first authorized by the state in May 2002, have kept the hydrilla there to fewer than 200 acres. But Wedig said the river authority would prefer to use the harvester rather than the carp because, unlike Lake Austin, Lake Bastrop has a rich diversity of aquatic plant life that the carp might prefer to eat instead of hydrilla.

Husband-wife soldiers killed in murder-suicide

KILLEEN, Texas — Police were investigating the shooting deaths of two Fort Hood soldiers this week as a murder-suicide, authorities said.

Fort Hood officials on Saturday identified the victims as Sgt. Erin Elizabeth Edwards, 24, and her estranged husband, Sgt. William McKinley Edwards, also 24.

Both served with the 4th Infantry Division in Iraq before returning to Fort Hood in recent months.

Police found Erin Edwards' body Thursday morning on the front porch of her home in this military community 75 miles north of Austin. She had been shot in the head, Capt. Jackie Dunn said.

William Edwards' body was found a short time later in an apartment complex parking lot across the street. He suffered what appeared to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound, and a gun was recovered at the scene, Dunn said.

The official causes of death were pending a medical examiner's confirmation, police said.

The couple's 4-year-old son and 20-month-old daughter were not home at the time of the shootings and were believed to be with Erin Edwards' family in Pennsylvania,

officials said. The couple had a violent domestic history, according to court records reviewed by the Killeen Daily Herald. Neighbors said police were constantly at the residence because of domestic problems.

In June, William Edwards was arrested on a charge of assault with bodily injury hurting his wife. That day, a justice of the peace issued a 60-day emergency protection order ordering William Edwards to stay away from his wife. A two-year protection order was issued on Wednesday.

Fort Hood spokesman Cecil Green said both soldiers were light vehicle mechanics although Erin Edwards had been working as an administrative assistant in the headquarters.

Erin Edwards listed Shawville, Pa., as her home of record. She joined the Army in 1999 and arrived at Fort Hood in 2001, deployed to Iraq in March 2003 and returned there for a year.

William Edwards listed Silver Spring, Md., as his home of record. He joined the Army in 1998 and arrived at Fort Hood in 2001. He was sent to Iraq earlier this year and served four months there.

Hiler

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Landry said one example of this can be seen through his efforts in the Agriculture Program.

"He has made a big impact on the Agriculture Program through combining the efforts of the Texas Agriculture Experiment Station and Texas Cooperative Extension with those of the University," Landry said.

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Executive Associate Dean Fuller Bazer said Hiler is also proactive about increasing diversity awareness through programs such as minorities in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences.

MANNRS adviser Edward Romero said Hiler gets to know the officers on a personal basis and

remains updated on activities and progress within the organization.

"It gives the students confidence to know that a dean and vice chancellor has such an open-door policy to students and that he is so easily accessible," Romero said.

Bazer adds that Hiler also works toward helping students get scholarships and has made progress in gaining funding for these as well.

Hiler said when he came to A&M, it was a great joy for him to work with students, and that it still is today.

"I hope to have made some positive impact through the help I've provided, and that students I've worked with go on to make a difference and succeed in their careers," Hiler said. "The message I have for students is to dream big dreams and be the best you can be — always strive to be better."

Science

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the Department of Energy prompted by alarming security issues.

The lab came under scrutiny after allegations by a group called Project on Government Oversight that employees sent classified information over non-secure lines. Classified material on storage disks has also been reported missing several times over the past year.

Peddycord said while plans to bid on the contract are not yet definite, the system has already placed a bid to work at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory.

"It's not definite yet," Peddicord said. "Ultimately it will be up to the system and the Board of Regents."

Kerry

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noisily just outside a seven-foot-tall temporary security fence that ringed the convention hall complex. The two — one protesting the war in Iraq, the other opposed to abortion — crossed paths at one point and a brief scuffle ensued.

Whatever the street scene, there was no evidence of dissension among the Democrats gathering to nominate Kerry — no platform fight, no battle over floor credentials, not even a sour note from Kerry's rivals in last winter's primaries.

"It's not normally how this party operates," laughed Terence McAuliffe, the party chairman.

"I think it's one of the most unified parties we've had in recent history," added New Jersey Rep. Bob

Menendez, who will speak to the delegates on Monday night. "It's a coalescence both against the president's policies ... and it's also a very strong sense of purpose of taking the country in a new direction."

"(The convention is) a coalescence both against the president's policies ... (and) taking the country in a new direction.

— Rep. Bob Menendez, New Jersey

It was the latter that Kerry's convention scriptwriters wanted to accentuate.

ate. If Bush-bashing was exactly banned in the program for the week, convention officials said it had been relegated to the rhetoric margins.

It was a strategy designed in part by polls showing Kerry's Democratic base already solidly behind him and that the relatively untested remains undecided voters hear more about him and plans for the future.

It was coincidence that brought the Democratic convention to a liberal state that Kerry represented in the Senate for more than two decades. Republicans view it as an opportunity, though they have sought to use the platform to position their own poll as part of an attempt to show Kerry more liberal than even his own constituents.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A&M to hire consultant for chancellor search

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents on Friday approved spending up to \$24,999 to hire a consultant to help in its search for a new chancellor.

The A&M University System is searching for a new chancellor after Howard Graves, who had held the position since 1999, resigned in August due to his battle with cancer. Graves died just over a month later.

The consultant to be hired by the Board of Regents will help check the backgrounds and references of a small, select group of candidates, said Vice Chairman Erle Nye.

The plan is for the chancellor's position to be filled as soon as possible, with a finalist or finalists named possibly as early as September.

A. Benton Cocanougher, a marketing professor serving as special assistant to the president of Texas A&M University, is serving as interim chancellor.

The A&M System is made up of nine universities, a comprehensive health science center and educates nearly 100,000 students.

Texas Tech chancellor gets extension, pay raise

LUBBOCK, Texas — The chancellor of the Texas Tech University System, who withdrew this week as a finalist for a similar position in Wisconsin, has received a contract extension and a raise.

The executive committee of the Tech regents board voted unanimously Friday to extend Chancellor David Smith's contract through 2007 and grant him a 1.5 percent pay raise. The univer-

sity didn't announce the dollar amount. The president has authority to act for the full board.

Smith had been scheduled to interview Thursday for the position of president of the University of Wisconsin System president before removing himself from consideration.

Smith has led Texas Tech since 2002. He has been reported to earn \$375,000 a year in a contract that was set to expire in August 2006.

Energy Department halts nuclear weapons research

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — While teams at Alamos National Laboratory searched for two missing disks, the Energy Department halted classified research at facilities around the country that disks like those missing from the New Mexico

Shell

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help strengthen students' interest and proficiency in this field."

Lillehaugen said the new building provides students with the opportunity to meet educational goals in a safe research environment designed for chemical engineers.

"The chemical engineering department is currently housed in three different buildings, none of which were designed to modern safety standards or with chemical engineering specifically in mind," Lillehaugen said.

The primary location of the Chemical Engineering Department, which is on the third floor of Zachry, will be relocated to the new building in September. The building is to be completed in August.

"It (the Jack E. Brown building) will help usher Chemical Engineering to a whole new level of research and education excellence," Lillehaugen said.

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