

Gramm takes 'landslide' victory

By KEVIN M. HAMM
Of The Battalion Staff

Waving American flags and sporting stickers, area Republicans gathered Tuesday night at the College Station Hilton to support their candidates.

In addition to a handful of local politicians, U.S. Rep. Joe Barton and U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm attended the gathering.

When it was clear Texans had voted him to a second term "in a landslide of historic proportions," Gramm, his wife and two sons with him, addressed the cheering crowd.

"If there is one constant in a great democracy, it is that no political leader can have more influence in Washington than they have support back home," Gramm said.

"Tonight the people of Texas have given me a bigger shovel to do more work on behalf of the working men and women of Texas, and I am grateful for that opportunity."

Gramm also addressed the fact he is an incumbent in an increasingly anti-incumbent country.

"Tonight all over America, people are saying, 'Throw the rascals out,'" he said, referring to the slogan to

vote all incumbents out of office. "I am grateful the people of Texas do not consider me one of the rascals."

"In fact, tonight the people of Texas said they considered me to be part of the solution, not part of the problem."

The senator said his large margin of victory proves the "tough issues" can be solved in Washington and people are willing to sacrifice for the future.

Gramm concluded his address with his vision of the future.

"Phil Gramm is talking about dreams, talking about visions — and they're right. I'm talking about a very unique dream called the American Dream."

"I want an America where families are limited only by the size of their dreams," he said.

Before the final results were in, Barton, from Ennis, expressed optimism in his race and those of other Republicans.

"It's going to be tight," he said.

"The Republican Party has definitely come of age in this election statewide. It is still to be determined whether we are clearly the majority party."

Barton said that the main goals during his next term include passing

the balanced budget amendment, the war on drugs and the superconducting super collider.

He also said the United States needs to find alternative sources of energy, especially in light of the Persian Gulf crisis. Barton serves on the energy and commerce committee.

"We need to develop some additional resources," he said. "We can't continue to depend on larger and larger oil imports. I think nuclear power has a bright future in this country if we can get some of the technical problems resolved."

Brazos County Republican Chairman Rodger Lewis said he was relieved the campaign almost was over.

"There's so much work that goes into the campaign," he said. "They've (the candidates) had their lives on the line for the last year."

Texas A&M Student Body President Ty Clevenger also was at the Hilton and said he was glad to see the campaign end.

"I think it's probably one of the dirtiest, most negative campaigns I can recall," he said. "I'm sick of having to put up with the barrage we've been under the last few months."

"We've been made fun of on national television (and) our whole election has become a total disgrace. This election has been a mess."



Phil Gramm meets with a supporter after being re-elected to a second term as a U.S. senator Tuesday. Gramm easily defeated Democratic challenger Hugh Parmer.

JAY JANNER/The Battalion

Democratic wins inspire new hopes

By SEAN FRERKING
Of The Battalion Staff

Victories by Ann Richards and other Democrats statewide, coupled with close losses in several local elections, prove the party made progress here and throughout Texas, the local Democratic Party chairman said Tuesday night.

Bill McGuire said although several Democrats lost in local elections, he believes the close results show Brazos County residents are beginning to question the strength of the Republican Party.

"People are starting to say, 'Hey, isn't this the same old thing we heard before?' and they are beginning to realize we (the Democrats) are dealing with the real issues," McGuire said while watching election returns at the Ramada Inn, headquarters for the Brazos County Democratic Party.

Reactions to a ballot controversy started the night's activities with some confusion. The governor's race, however, soon captured the interest of most of the 150 supporters.

When CBS News announced Richards as the projected winner for governor, the crowd cheered for more than five minutes.

Merinda Condra, president of Aggies for Ann Richards, said she believes one reason the race was so exciting was because many Texans' true characters emerged during elections.

"With Ann's election victory, the people of Texas finally have said that no amount of money can buy the governor's office," said Condra, a junior political science major at Texas A&M.

She said Richards and other Democratic candidates won because they dealt with campaign issues.

"Ann stuck with her beliefs, and voters knew where she stood," Condra said. "Her stand on the issues clearly was the reason she won."

Another Richards' supporter agreed with Condra and said it was time one party addressed issues critical to Texas and Brazos County.

Stephen Medvic, president of Aggie Democrats, said he believes Richards' victory also can be credited to her opponent's political inexperience.

"With all of Clayton Williams' gaffes, I'm really not surprised Ann



FREDRICK D. JOE/The Battalion

Democrats cheer the victory of Ann Richards as the results are shown at the Democratic Headquarters in the Ramada Inn. Richards won the election with 49.6 percent of the votes.

won," Medvic said. "I think we saw the real Clayton Williams during the campaign. He just couldn't hide his true nature for that long."

Medvic, a senior political science major at A&M, also worked to elect Jim James, Democratic candidate for District 14 state representative.

Although James lost to Republican Steve Ogden by 2,000 votes, Medvic said he believes Democrats are gaining ground in Brazos County.

"I think people are taking notice that Jim dealt with the issues," Medvic said. "In a typically Republican county, we did very well."

James, Class of '76, said even though he lost the election, he is excited about progress made by the

Democratic Party in Brazos County.

"Sure I'm disappointed I lost, but we ran on the issues," James said. "However, I'm ecstatic Democrats won almost every high office in Texas."

"Ann's victory almost makes this loss OK. It's almost OK."

Speaking to campaign workers, McGuire said the Democratic Party will make further gains during future elections.

"What's important is that we won some of the biggest offices in the state," McGuire said. "Sure, we lost some of these races, but once the people of Texas see what the Democratic Party is all about, we'll start winning even more of these elections."

Constitutional amendment passes, updates appointment effectiveness

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas voters approved Tuesday a constitutional amendment that aroused little notice until GOP gubernatorial candidate Clayton Williams couldn't recall its provisions.

The amendment, which deals with the timing of Senate confirmation of gubernatorial appointments, won approval with 66 percent of the ballots in favor and 34 percent opposed.

The amendment, the only one on the ballot, allows appointees named in between legislative sessions to serve until the next regularly scheduled session.

In an interview on KERA-TV in Dallas, Williams was asked how he voted on the amendment, but stumbled over his answer and eventually said he didn't know much about it.

Democratic challenger Ann Richards immediately seized on the performance as evidence Williams, a Midland oilman-rancher, did not have the experience to be governor.

Following the interview, Richards rapidly closed what had been a double-digit gap, and came away with a victory over Williams Tuesday.

The process of considering gubernatorial appointments was thrown into limbo six months ago by an at-

torney general's opinion that jeopardized more than 200 nominees to various boards and commissions.

The Texas Constitution says the Senate, which meets only every two years, must review gubernatorial appointments and confirm or reject them.

But the governor often makes appointments when the Legislature is not in session, and the Senate traditionally has let the appointees continue serving until the next regular legislative session.

Attorney General Jim Mattox threw tradition out the window last spring with an opinion saying that the Senate must act on the appointments at its first opportunity, including special legislative sessions.

If the Senate fails to confirm an appointment at the next legislative session, the nomination is considered rejected, Mattox said.

Sen. Chet Edwards, D-Waco, chairman of the committee that advises the full Senate on appointments, proposed the constitutional amendment, saying it is needed to clarify the status of appointments.

Without the amendment, decisions by boards affecting prisons, electric rates, air pollution penalties and other functions of state government could have been challenged in court and put on hold, he said.

GOP candidates falter Declining Republican Party support trickles down ranks

By BILL HETHCOCK
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Brazos County Republicans believe a weak showing at the top of the ticket hurt Republicans running for state offices, the president of Texas A&M College Republicans said Tuesday night.

Scot Kibbe said he thinks Republican candidates peaked too early this year.

He said declining popularity of high-visibility Republicans such as President Bush and gubernatorial candidate Clayton Williams caused some voters to lose faith in the Republican Party.

Bush's public-approval rating dropped when he broke his "no new taxes" pledge. Polls also show the president lost favor because of a perceived weakness in dealing with Congress over the latest budget agreement.

Williams' popularity suffered after he refused to shake Democratic opponent Ann Richards' hand and when he showed uncertainty about an amendment to the Texas Constitution, analysts say. A recent admis-

sion he did not pay income tax in 1986 also hurt his campaign.

"It started in Washington with Bush's popularity falling," Kibbe said. "And the last couple of weeks, Williams has always been on the defensive."

He said Democratic candidates had more momentum going into election day.

"It all comes down to momentum," he said. "There's no question the Democrats had the momentum in the final weeks, and that's very hard to overcome."

However, Kibbe said he is pleased with Republican state representative candidate Steve Ogden's win.

"On a night when Republicans weren't doing terribly well as a whole, we were pleased to see Steve have the showing he did," Kibbe said.

Ogden beat Democrat Jim James in the race for the District 14 state representative seat.

Rob Giesecke, Ogden's campaign manager, said he believes specific proposals by Ogden on issues such as education and ethics reform led to his victory.

A last-minute attempt by James to

play up the abortion issue proved unsuccessful, he said.

"That was clearly an act of desperation on his part," Giesecke said.

He said Ogden's pro-life stance might have caused him to lose votes among Texas A&M students. However, when James focused on the abortion issue, many Bryan voters were turned off, Giesecke said.

"His abortion ads probably cost us some in the student boxes, but we still won by a comfortable margin," he said. "There was a backlash to those ads that hurt James. I think it cost him votes in Bryan."

Giesecke said Ogden had a difficult time winning since Republicans weren't attracting votes in more visible races.

"There were no coattails for us at all tonight," he said. "We had to do it almost all on our own."

Giesecke said Democrats seemed to make more headway statewide than Republicans. He said he thinks this will be a big factor in redistricting.

"I definitely think we'll see districts drawn that favor Democrats," he said.

Democratic judge's approach targeted A&M students' votes

By LIBBY KURTZ
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Democratic Judge Sarah Ryan saw her campaign strategy beginning to work Tuesday night as she secured 52 percent of the vote, becoming judge for 2nd County Court-at-Law.

Two months ago, Ryan said Democrats at Texas A&M need to develop a strategy if they want to overcome A&M's anticipated straight-Republican vote.

David Branham, Ryan's husband and campaign manager, said he's pleased with the support his wife received from Brazos County voters.

"We felt the local Republicans might take A&M voters for granted," Branham said. "We decided to tailor her campaign to A&M students. She's a former A&M instructor, and our daughter attends the University. That in itself was a big plus."

Branham said Ryan's campaign also capitalized on her experience and court records.

"Her experience speaks for itself," he said. "We felt Aggies would support her because of her fine public service record."

He said he believes the campaign for 2nd County Court-at-Law is one of the best campaigns in Brazos County.

"The campaign was well run," he said. "We tried to avoid nasty comments. We wanted a clean campaign that centered around Ryan's experience."

Branham said although Ryan didn't receive many Republican votes, she did manage to capture some votes her opponent tried to win.

Irma Cauley, a county coordinator for the Ann Richards campaign, said Democratic victories can be attributed to growing Democratic Party strength in Texas.

"I'm very excited for Texas," Cauley said. "Democrats have and will continue to do great things for the state."

Cauley said she hopes Democrats will continue to flourish in Texas.

"We owe our victories to the hard work and loyalty of our supporters," she said. "Richards proved herself to Brazos County voters tonight. She was a valid candidate who addressed all the issues. Average citizens can relate to her, and she can relate to them."

Brazos County Clerk Mary Ann Ward also attributed her victory to A&M student support.

"I couldn't have done it without them," she said. "My 17 years of experience from working in the clerk's office should prove to be beneficial when I take office in January. I look forward to my new job as county clerk."

Ward, a Democrat, captured 59 percent of the vote.

State history made with election of minorities

DALLAS (AP) — Democrat Morris Overstreet on Tuesday became the first African-American to win statewide office in Texas since Reconstruction with his election to the Court of Criminal Appeals.

Overstreet, 40, a county court judge from Amarillo, defeated Republican incumbent Louis Sturns to win the 5th Place on the court.

Sturns, 41, who also is African-American, was appointed by Gov. Bill Clements on March 16 to fill the seat. The vacancy was created by the death of incumbent Judge M.P. "Rusty" Duncan in a Feb. 28 automobile accident.

Records from Reconstruction are unclear as to whether any African-

Americans were elected to statewide office during that period.

With his election as attorney general, Dan Morales became the second Hispanic voted into statewide office in Texas. The first is Supreme Court Justice Raul Gonzalez, elected in 1986 and again in 1988 after first being appointed to the post.

Morales, 34, is a state representative from San Antonio. In the Legislature, he headed the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee.

He said he is "gratified" to be the first Hispanic attorney general.

"I'm so pleased that our state has now matured and developed politically to the point where Texas voters

select their political leaders based upon qualifications, experience and records of accomplishment irrespective of race and irrespective of ethnicity," he said.

"I think that Judge Gonzalez showed that to be the case four years ago when he was first elected. I am simply following in the judge's footsteps. There will be others following behind me."

In addition, Ann Richards was the first woman to be elected governor of Texas in more than 50 years, since Miriam "Ma" Ferguson.

She joined a cadre of female leaders in the Lone Star State, where mayors of the four largest cities are women.