

NEWS BRIEFS

Election results to be announced tonight

The results of the 1995-96 Student Body Elections will be announced at 10 p.m. in front of the Academic Building.

Voting continues today until 6 p.m. at the Sterling C. Evans Library, the Memorial Student Center, Zachry Engineering Center and the West Campus Gazebo for student body president, yell leaders, student senators, Residence Hall Association president and Off-Campus Aggies president.

Seniors can also vote for their class gift and class agents.

Food fair to promote healthy eating habits

Those interested in learning more about healthy eating habits can sample an array of healthy food items today from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. in 201 MSC.

The Healthy Choice Food Fair is sponsored by the Department of Food Services, the A.P. Beutel Health Center and Health Promotion.

A cover charge of \$2 provides a sampling of breakfast items, salads, hot entrees and desserts.

The proceeds will provide a scholarship for a student in the Department of Nutrition.

House OKs watered down food libel bill

AUSTIN (AP) — Peas didn't go flying through the air, but there was definitely a food fight in the Texas House on Wednesday.

The bone of contention was a bill that opponents said would make it illegal to "say bad words against vegetables."

The measure by Rep. Bob Turner, D-Voss, would allow agriculture producers to sue individuals who make disparaging statements regarding the safety of food products.

The House tentatively approved the bill, but only after an amendment was added that opponents said gutted the measure.

The amendment deleted a provision requiring the person who makes a disparaging statement to prove that it is based on scientific data and instead requires the person suing to prove the statement is false.

Children, federal agencies pledge to protect Gulf of Mexico, marine life from pollution

United States' Gulf of Mexico Symposium attempts to look at solutions to clean up water.

CORPUS CHRISTI (AP) — Pollution in the Gulf of Mexico comes from hundreds of sources and creates a sobering array of problems that cross international boundaries.

But for 10 children who signed a resolution Wednesday to protect the Gulf, the issue boils down to a simple principle: Pay attention.

"I hope a lot of people think about what has happened here today so that we can keep the Gulf of Mexico strong," said 13-year-old Charlie Goble of Houston.

Goble was among the children — five from Mexico, five from the United States — who signed the resolution kicking off the Gulf of Mexico Symposium during a ceremony aboard the retired aircraft carrier USS Lexington.

The symposium comes at a time of dwindling sympathy in the U.S. Congress for new environmental regulations and dwindling government cash in Mexico, which is in a deep economic crisis.

"If this is viewed as a crisis, it's also an opportunity," said Douglas A. Lipka, acting director of the Gulf of Mexico Program, which organized the event. "And I think it will give us more incentive to be looking at joint approaches to issues or problems."

Population growth along the Gulf Coast is expected to more than double between 1960 and 2010, meaning more pollution and less habitat for marine life.

Threats range from oil spills

to pesticide runoff, from loss of wetlands to raw sewage dumping, from speedboats that hit endangered sea turtles to litterbugs who dump plastic containers into rivers that flow into the Gulf.

During the ceremony, representatives of 19 U.S. government agencies signed an agreement to share information and coordinate efforts to protect the Gulf.

The Gulf of Mexico Program was created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1988 to devise a plan and coordinate federal efforts to protect the Gulf. The program conducts a symposium every two years.

"It's a chance to bring together scientists, students, teachers and federal agencies to provide a progress report on how we are meeting the challenges of the Gulf of Mexico," said Diane Altman, a conference organizer.

The Gulf is home to four of the nation's busiest ports and provides nearly half of the U.S. commercial catch of finfish, shrimp and shellfish. Its shores provide crucial habitat for 75 percent of migratory North American waterfowl.

It is equally vital to Mexico, said Maria Eugenia Lezcano, deputy director for environmental affairs in the Mexican Secretariat of the Environment, Natural Resources and Fisheries.

"Even though our country is going through a very difficult economic situation at the moment, we will consider it a priority to protect our environment," Lezcano said.

Conference participants will meet through Saturday for sessions on habitat degradation, floating debris, toxic substances, coastal erosion, freshwater inflow quality, aquatic life, nutri-

ent enrichment from sewage fertilizers, and human concerns such as consumption of contaminated seafood.

Lipka said one of the growing problems along the Gulf Coast is the loss of lands and shallow estuaries which provide nurseries for and shellfish and feeding for waterfowl.

"Ninety-eight percent of fisheries, we estimate, are dependent on the estuaries," said. "We really don't have the full understanding of the amount of wetlands within the fisheries."

Texas Land Committee Garry Mauro called the Gulf "forgotten border" between the United States and Mexico.

"We have got to have actions if we're going to maintain the productivity of the Gulf of Mexico," Mauro said.

Texas House gives tentative approval to alternative fuel bill

Measure gains praise from environmentalists.

AUSTIN (AP) — The House on Wednesday gave tentative approval to a bill that environmental activists contend would undermine a state program requiring the use of alternative fuels to help reduce pollution.

The measure, approved with a voice vote, was passed in the Senate earlier this month. It faces final House approval before it can go to Gov. George W. Bush for consideration.

At issue is the Texas Alternative Fuels Program, which requires certain state agencies, local mass transit authorities and school districts to convert specified percentages of their fleet vehicles to run on natural gas or other approved alternative fuels.

The program includes time periods by which the entities must convert

their fleets.

The plan affects about 100 school districts, state agencies with more than 15 vehicles and the cities of Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, El Paso, Fort Worth, Corpus Christi, Laredo and Port Arthur.

The bill by Rep. Mark Stiles, D-Beaumont, would expand the list of approved alternative fuels to include reformulated gas and low-sulphur diesel. It also would extend the time periods for compliance.

Stiles said the measure would provide greater flexibility to the entities involved in the program while saving them money.

But opponents of the bill said reformulated gas and diesel fuels do not go as far in helping reduce pollution as natural gas and other alternative fuels.

"The idea of having diesel on a list of alternative fuels is patently absurd," said Ken Kramer, state director of the Sierra Club. "Diesel is certainly not a cleaner-burning fuel."

Motorcycle helmet repeal likely dead, sponsor says

State senator unable to gain enough votes for review.

AUSTIN (AP) — A proposal to repeal the mandatory helmet law for adult motorcyclists crashed in the Texas Senate Wednesday, and its sponsor says the issue likely is dead for the session.

As a crowd of bikers, many wearing black leather and boots, watched from the Senate spectators' gallery, Sen. Jerry Patterson failed to win enough Senate support to allow the bill to be taken up for a vote.

Procedural rules require at least two-thirds of the senators to agree to consider a bill. The vote on taking up Patterson's measure was 18-12, two short of the 20 needed.

"I think it's probably a better than 50

percent chance the bill is dead," Patterson, R-Pasadena. "I think truly we're going to have to look at this in the next session."

Sputnik Strain, a biker who worked to repeal the helmet law, said he was disappointed at the vote and his sentiment against the measure on a repeal against motorcyclists.

"They are prejudiced against our lifestyle they know absolutely nothing about," said Strain, who is from San Fe, Texas, near Galveston.

"This is not to us about a helmet. This is about the freedom of citizens of the state of Texas, which is supposed to be a free republic, to make decisions themselves," Strain said.

Patterson said some people are prejudiced against motorcyclists because "They look different."

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STAFF PERMIT INFORMATION

PTTS recently renewed staff permits for twelve months beginning March 1, 1995, through February 29, 1996 and is offering the deferred payment plan option. A late fee of \$5.00 will be added to payment received after the tenth day of March, April, May and June.

If you have any questions regarding your billing cycle, please contact a parking counselor at 862-PARK. PTTS hours are Monday - Thursday 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., and Friday 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Parking News:
March 30 - Beginning at 3:30 p.m. the University Center Garage will be reserved for OPAS.
April 3 - A majority of the University Center Garage will be reserved for conferences. PTTS encourages all permit holders to park in their designated lots.

Bus Operations:
Bus operations will be accepting new driver applications March 27 - March 31. Applications are available at the bus operation facility on Agronomy Rd.

Watch for PTTS updates in the Battalion, each Monday and Thursday!
We're doing our best to keep you informed of activities and events that could impact your parking and transportation needs. For more information, call our parking counselors at 862-PARK or Shuttle Bus Operators at 845-1971.

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This Week!

	Monday April 3	Tuesday April 4	Wednesday April 5	Thursday April 6
7 - 9 p.m.	Acct 230 Part III	Acct 230 Part IV	Acct 230 Part V	Acct 230 Part VI
9 - 11 p.m.	Bana 303 Part I	Bana 303 Part II	Bana 303 Part III	Bana 303 Part IV
11 p.m. - 1 a.m.	Acct 230 Part I	Acct 230 Part II		
8 - 10 p.m.	Acct 229 Part IV	Acct 229 Part V	Acct 229 Part VI	Acct 229 Part VII
10 p.m. - 12 a.m.	Acct 229 Part I	Acct 229 Part II	Acct 229 Part III	

For questions call 846-TUTOR (846-8886)
Tickets on sale Sunday, April 2nd at 3-6 p.m.