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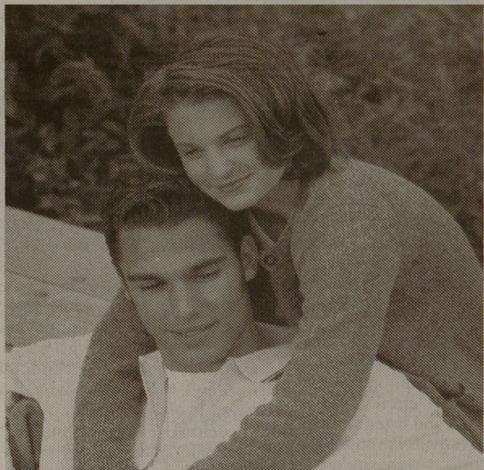
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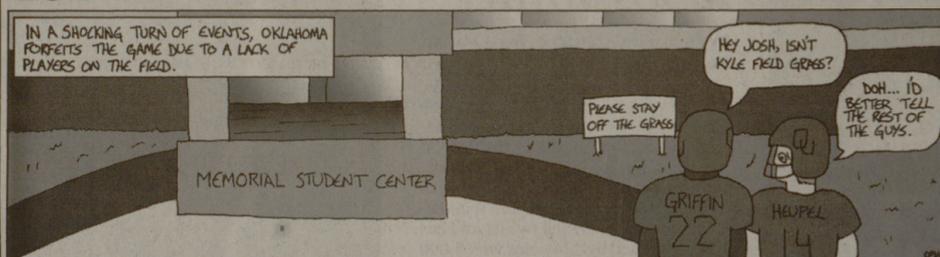
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GOP

Continued from Page 1

about 80 percent of the estimated votes counted.

Among the few bright spots for state Democrats was their ability to maintain their narrow majority in the Texas House. As a result, Speaker Pete Laney likely will return to his post.

"Is this an especially good year to be a Republican in Texas? Yes it is," said Christopher Wlezien, professor of political science at the University of Houston. "You have a popular governor running in Texas with virtually no challenge. It's not going to get much better than this for the Republican Party in Texas."

Bush led Gore, 59 percent to 38 percent, with 92 percent of the precincts reporting in Texas. Republican Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison was

outdistancing Democratic challenger Gene Kelly about 2-to-1.

With Republicans easily turning away two appellate court challenges, the GOP again ensured that no Democrat will hold statewide office for at least another two years. The Republican Party swept all statewide seats on Bush's coattails in 1998.

Turnout on Tuesday was high, despite bad weather in some parts of the state. The Texas Secretary of State's Office estimated that 7 million of the state's 12.3 registered voters, or 57 percent, had gone to the polls. That surpassed record turnout of 1992, when 6.2 million voted.

Victorious Railroad Commission candidate Charles Matthews, a Republican, said negative attacks on the state contributed to the strong GOP showing.

"Texans are Texans before they're Republicans or Democrats or just

about anything else," Matthews said. "Texans are extraordinarily proud of George Bush."

Momentum for Bush's presidential campaign began building after his re-election to governor in 1998 and peaked Tuesday night with Texas handing him a large chunk of electoral votes.

The true battles were being waged for key legislative seats, with the balance of power in the state House and Senate at stake. The party in control holds the cards when lawmakers draw new lines for congressional and legislative seats during the 2001 session.

Democrats protected their majority in the House, which they have ruled since the 1870s. They won 77 — or more than half — of the contests to the Republicans' 72 seats. Democrats held the lead in the only undecided race.

AUSTIN

Continued from

and waving flags and political signs. "We're encouraged by happening and just keeping fingers crossed," said Graciela, a Bush supporter at the Austin night rally.

In particular, CNN's decision to retract its previous projection that Gore had won Florida drew crowd's ire and led to heckling boos as watched the network's coverage on the jumbotron. The crowd began chanting more Gore."

"It was a big mistake for Waters said. "They should be calling states so early before votes have even been counted."

Stacey Dillon, another supporter, agreed.

"I think they made a mistake in a state without knowing the real numbers were," she said. "That the atmosphere at the capitol was enjoyable."

"We are having fun," she said. She stood with her family. CNN retracted its decision to call Florida its broadcast, and was criticized by one of its guests, William Kristol, of Empower America.

"You don't call a state anti-Bush," he said on national television. "You call it a state that is garnering enthusiastic approval from the people in Austin."

The crowd responded to the other than the presidential election. Hillary Clinton was announced as the winner of the Senate seat in New York.

As the crowd awaited election results, a string of entertainers and politicians took the stage, spirits high.

Texas Lt. Gov. Rick Perry, Class of '74, was one of many state officials who made an appearance.

"Americans have elected someone they know will do what's right. They know what's right," he said. "The beginning is coming to Washington, D.C. Let the Bush-Cheney era begin."

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas, was re-elected handily in Tuesday's elections. She delivered a short acceptance speech, promising to return to Washington to continue her work on a number of legislative efforts important to Texas.

"I will not forget the honor have bestowed on me," Hutchison said. "I will not stop until people on the border have the same standards we do. We will clean up the colonies."

Texas songwriter Pat Green, among the entertainers. The crowd stopped him mid-song as he reported that Bush won the electoral votes of Ohio and Tennessee.

As the clock passed midnight, the crowd brought down the temperature. Enthusiasm soared among supporters awaiting the outcome of the ever-close battle in Florida.

After they spent almost an hour on their feet, their perseverance paid off. The crowd reacted with a manic outburst at 1:20 a.m. when announced Bush as the 43rd president of the United States.

3RD GENERAL MEETING



Come out and hear Basketball Coach Tom Billeter!!!

Date: Wednesday, Nov. 8

Time: 8:30 p.m.

Location: Rudder 601

Prizes! Prizes! Prizes!

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