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Candidates jockey in SBP contest

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

When students return to classes March 17, the campus will be plastered with campaign flyers, and volunteers will be camped out in Rudder Plaza peddling their candidates' campaign literature and trinkets.

With crowded fields in both the student body president and yell leader contests, students will get more than their fill of campus politicking. Six candidates are vying for student body president, seven are running for

three senior yell positions and 14 students are running for two junior yell positions.

The student body president candidates include Ed Brown, Appelt Hall secretary; Stoney Burke, a former Student Government Association vice president for campus relations; Luke Carlton, who led Unity Project's off-campus bonfire last fall; Kyle Cheatham, chair of the Student Senate external affairs committee; Matt Josefy, current SGA vice president for campus relations; Karl Pfluger, SGA director of risk management.

Voting will be held March 26-27, and if no

candidate in a race captures a majority, a runoff will be held April 2-3. Election results will be announced at midnight, and not at 10:30 p.m. as in the past, said SGA election commissioner Erin Eckhart. The change was prompted by the freshman elections in the fall when election officials failed to notice a computer glitch in the vote counting and announced incorrect results.

"We need more time to review the numbers

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STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT CANDIDATES	
KYLE CARLTON	JUNIOR FINANCE MAJOR
MATT JOSEFY	JUNIOR ACCOUNTING MAJOR
LUKE CHEATHAM	SENIOR CIVIL ENGINEERING MAJOR
ED BROWN	SENIOR ECONOMICS MAJOR
STONEY BURKE	SENIOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES MAJOR
KARL PFLUGER	SENIOR POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

GRAPHIC BY: TRAVIS SWENSON • THE BATTALION
SOURCE: TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Fat Tuesday



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Masked riders from the Krewe of Thoth parade throw beads and other trinkets to the crowds lining Canal Street at the Mardi Gras Celebration in New Orleans, Louisiana on Monday. Mardi Gras ends today, Fat Tuesday, before Lent begins.

Student services faces budget cuts

By Rolando Garcia
THE BATTALION

Proponents of the proposed fee hikes voted down last week are predicting dire budget cut-backs for student services.

Students overwhelmingly rejected increases in the Recreation Sports fee (69 percent against), Student Service fee (79 percent against) and the computer service fee (51 percent against) in a Feb. 26-27 referendum.

Gabby Oroza, chair of the Student Fee Advisory Board, said despite the referendum, the fee would still be raised by a small amount. The fee, which stands at \$142 a semester, requires student approval to exceed the \$150 threshold, but University officials can raise it to less than that amount without student approval. Oroza said Vice President for Student Affairs J. Malon Southerland would likely raise the fee.

Oroza also blamed student ignorance and a general revolt against fee increases for the rejection of the student service fee hike.

"I don't think students even bothered to read the ballot before voting no," said Oroza, a senior psychology major. "It's a complicated issue, and students were just misinformed."

Dennis Corrington, director of the recreation sports department, blamed the defeat on what he

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Supreme Court debates limits of forced drugging

By Gina Holland
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court wrangled Monday over the government's authority to force nonviolent criminal defendants — and potentially other people not charged with crimes — to take drugs against their will.

The court is considering whether a dentist, now locked up in a psychiatric unit, can be forced to take anti-psychotic drugs to make him well enough

to stand trial for health care fraud. But the justices did not limit their discussions to the drugging of people facing charges.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor asked if the government can require children to be vaccinated against smallpox. Justice Anthony Kennedy evoked an image of defendants and witnesses being injected before a trial with drugs that control their behavior. If the government can medicate the dentist, why not a person charged with a traffic violation, Justice Stephen Breyer asked.

The case asks the court to balance the government's interest in punishing nonviolent crime with a person's constitutional right to control his or her body.

Some justices indicated they may throw out the case without ever answering that question because of concern that it was improperly appealed, since the case hasn't yet come to trial.

Government attorney Michael Dreeben said the court needs to resolve uncertainty about forced medications.

Each year hundreds of federal defendants are put on medication to make them competent to stand trial. Most take the drugs willingly. In a recent 12-month period, 59 people were medicated against their wishes and about three-fourths were restored to competency, according to government.

In a series of decisions more than a decade ago, the Supreme Court ruled that inmates considered dangerous could be forced to take medication and that defendants in criminal trials could

be required to take drugs if it was medically appropriate.

Charles Sell, 53, of St. Louis, has spent more than four years in a prison hospital as his lawyers fought over his drugging, more jail time than he would receive if convicted of the fraud crimes.

He has been diagnosed with a delusional disorder. Court records show that Sell has seen imaginary leopards, believes the FBI is trying to kill him and wants to go into combat.

Deficits to exceed \$300 billion, first for yearly federal budget

By Alan Fram
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The government is on track to amass annual federal deficits this year and next exceeding \$300 billion for the first time. Republicans insist the red ink would not be a record, a contention Democrats reject in a linguistic duel less about economics than politics.

"They're not always engaged in an academic search for truth," Indiana University economics professor Willard Witte said of both parties.

Economists agree the most meaningful way to compare historic budget figures is to factor in changes in the dollar's value or the size of the economy. Republicans say that when inflation is considered, there have been nine shortfalls since World War II worse than the projected deficits for 2003 and 2004.

Even so, that argument is part of a weeks-long GOP campaign to downplay their deficit forecasts in hopes of aiding congressional passage of President Bush's proposed \$1.46 trillion in fresh tax cuts over the next decade.

"They're engaged in trying to carry the day in some policy argument," Witte said of the two parties, "so they're bound to interpret the truth in the light that makes their case most strongly."

Republicans and Democrats always compete for words and numbers that help them define an issue most favorably. Republicans eager to abolish the tax on large estates call it the "death" tax, while Democrats trying to taint Bush's proposed new tax cuts label them the "leave-no-millionaire-behind" plan, a play on his "no-child-left-behind" education initiative.

In the budget Bush sent Congress last month, he projected shortfalls of \$304 billion this year and \$307 billion next — numbers that war and other factors are expected to make worse.

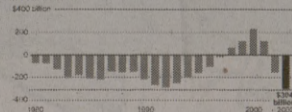
Until now, the \$290 billion deficit of 1992 under the first President Bush has never been surpassed.

"How can they say it's not a record? You don't need a Ph.D. in economics to know \$304 billion is more than \$290 billion," said Tom Kahn, Democratic staff director of the House Budget Committee,

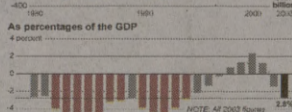
Vying to set the deficit record straight

The \$304 billion budget deficit projected by the Bush administration is not the largest ever. But Republicans are quick to point out the deficit is not for a record when adjusted for inflation or represented as a percentage of the gross domestic product.

Federal budget surpluses and deficits in real dollars



As a percentage of the GDP



NOTE: All 2003 figures are based on preliminary data.

SOURCE: Office of Management and Budget

U.S. expects U.N. vote to authorize war in Iraq

By Edith M. Lederer
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — Signaling that the United States intends to bring the Iraq debate to a final showdown, U.S. officials said Monday a vote on a new U.N. resolution authorizing force against Iraq will likely come next week.

U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte said the United States expects a vote in on its resolution "quite soon" after top weapons inspectors Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei update the deeply divided Security Council Friday on Iraq's cooperation in eliminating its nuclear, chemical, biological and long-range missile programs.

"Our view is that we don't need to debate this very simple and straightforward resolution," the U.S. envoy said after discussing the date for the inspectors' briefing with Guinea's U.N. ambassador, the council president for March. "We would expect a vote quite

soon thereafter."

A U.S. official said "there is no current plan to vote" immediately after Friday's report. "All indications are that the vote would be next week," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Some council diplomats didn't rule out an earlier snap vote, but the most talked about date was March 13, which currently has no Security Council meeting scheduled.

The sponsors of the resolution — the United States, Britain and Spain — are allowed to call for a vote at any time.

The resolution declares that Saddam Hussein has missed "the final opportunity" to disarm peacefully and indicates he must now face the consequences — an assessment that France, Russia, China and Germany reject.

Those four council nations — all but

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