

**The United States Presidential Election with a focus on Florida
Looking back at 38 days:
November 7 through December 18, 2000
A re-reading of articles published in a major United States daily
newspaper published in a major metropolitan area
during the 2000 presidential election
prepared by Dick Bernard
January, 2001**

Some quotes from history:

**"Those who cannot remember the past
Are condemned to repeat it."
George Santayana**

**"As long as I count the votes,
what are you going to do about it?"
William Marcy ("Boss") Tweed,
Of the ballot in New York City, November 1871**

**"It's too bad so many people say that politics is a dirty business, when in reality it is
the life-blood of the American government. When they tell me that politics is a dirty
business I tell them 'why don't you get into politics then and clean it up?' "**
NY Governor Nelson Rockefeller in a stump speech,
Valley City, ND, June 4, 1960, while seeking the Republican nomination for President of
the United States (Richard Nixon later received the nomination, and was then defeated
by John F. Kennedy in the general election.).

**"Nothing changes if nothing changes."
Earnie Larson**

Wednesday, November 8, 2000:

A1 Banner headline on page one of the Wednesday paper: "Florida holds the key to
presidency BUSH, GORE IN CLIFFHANGER". It later is reported that some earlier
editions of the paper headlined that George Bush had won. (A11 of November 8, 11 p.m.
State Edition was headlined "Bush, Gore run to the wire"; 1 a.m. Early Metro Edition
"Bush Wins Cliffhanger".

(headline on page A23)"Federal campaign spending hits 3 billion, nearly 50% more than
1996".

A28 Editorial: "... In the United States, the government is not some separate, alien,
oppressive force. It is a creature of "we the people". And it is a very good one...

Declaring that government is not to be trusted is a strange way to build citizen trust in government. Yet that has been the rhetorical stock in trade for candidates of both parties for a generation. A pundit said in partial jest a decade ago that if airline companies adopted the advertising style of America politicians, no one would fly again. This year, the line is too true to be funny...."

A29 Howard Kleinberg, Cox News Service: "...I write this before the vote is complete (if ever an election can be complete) and I can assure you that we will be here tomorrow, the week after and years after that...."

Thursday, November 9

A2 Who Doesn't Vote? Q&A column (a daily feature of the newspaper)

Surveys by Harvard and the Washington Post - "average age of all registered voters is 46, while average age of nonvoters is 10 years younger. Nonvoters are less affluent and not as well educated. Nearly four in 10 of them say they care little about politics. Twenty-six percent of them don't participate because they are angry with politics and politicians. Another 25 percent are dismayed at the constant barrage of campaign ads, spin doctoring and the vast amount of special interest money flooding modern campaigns. And one in seven simply couldn't vote. Some of them have recently moved and are not yet registered, some are not yet citizens, and still others are disabled or infirm."

(The same column on January 4, 2001, says as follows: total number of eligible voters were estimated at 205,813,000 by the U.S. Commerce Department. 140,000,000 were preregistered; 105,380,829 actually cast ballots, according to the Committee for the Study of American Elections.)

A1&10 Lead Story (David Westphal, Tribune Washington Bureau): "...Florida recount [is] automatic under state law... Gore... appeared almost certain to win the popular vote, leading Bush by roughly 100,000 votes[nationwide]... [Ralph] Nader won nearly 100,000 votes in Florida, and exit polls suggested that about a third of them might have been siphoned off from Gore - more than enough to reverse the outcome... President Clinton [said] "the American people have now spoken, but it's going to take a little while to determine exactly what they said... The loser would have up to 10 days after the automatic recanvassing to demand a hand recount of the ballots... Democrats were also focusing on ballots that may have misled some Palm Beach County voters into marking Pat Buchanan's box when they meant to back Gore...."

A12 head "Unfolding Electoral Drama poses pressing questions" "We are already on the precipice of a constitutional crisis...." Jonathan Turley, George Washington University. First mention of Kennedy-Nixon race in 1960.

A16, David Shribman, Boston Globe: "...public levels of trust in government lower than in the period leading up to Watergate...."

Friday, November 10, 2000

A1 Boston Globe Lead story: "...Gore campaign requested that another recount be done by hand in four counties...."(Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Volusia.) (Personal

note: when all was said and done, due to assorted anti-recount strategies, only a small part of the requested recount was completed in the 33 days between November 9 and December 12, the date the presidential electors supposedly had to be selected in Florida. All indications were that the requested recount could have easily been done in a short period of time after the Florida Supreme Court ordered a statewide recount December 8 (See December 9).

A34 Editorial "...in Palm Beach County about 3,000 votes that should have gone to ... Gore apparently went to Pat Buchanan. Another 19,000 ballots were discarded because confused voters chose two candidates. In both instances, a confusing ballot layout seems to be the culprit..."

chart page 27 showed vast majority of Florida votes for Pat Buchanan were in Palm Beach County.

Saturday, November 11, 2000

Lead story, Associated Press, page one: "Former Secretary of State James Baker said Gore should concede "for the good of the country". "The vote here in Florida was very close, but when it was counted Governor Bush was the winner."

A10 Washington Post - first mention of "chad", "undervote", "overvote". *(Personal note: page A11 of the November 9 paper had an article about the country of Chad; page A7 of the December 2 paper had an article about a St. Chad.)*

Sunday, November 12, 2000

Page one headline: "Bush sues to halt Florida recount. Campaign argues hand counts raise potential for mischief." New York Times "Announcement came a day after the Republicans criticized the Democrats for threatening to take the ballot issue to court. But on Saturday morning it was the Republicans who pursued legal remedies first, in an abrupt reversal of positions that they must have found politically painful...."

A1 "Headline: Analysts say impasse must be settled without Court aid." (RW Apple, New York Times) "Another week, and not a day longer, by next weekend a group of scholars and senior politicians interviewed this weekend agreed, the presidential race of 2000 must be resolved - without recourse to the courts... Manual recounts, however, are explicitly allowed under Florida election law if any candidate requests them within 72 hours of the election. Though they are not common, election officials said they had often been used in disputed local races.... Bush's narrow margin over Gore in Florida triggered an automatic recount under Florida law. An unofficial tally of that recount conducted by the Associated Press show that Bush's lead in Florida has dwindled to 327 votes from more than 1700."

A35 *Electoral map, county by county, creates the visual - and inaccurate - perception that the United States is overwhelmingly Republican: Red for counties that went Republican, blue for Democrat.*

Monday, November 13, 2000

A13 Column by Behnam Dayanim and Hamilton Loeb (lawyers in DC writing for Los Angeles Times) headline "Florida county's ballot was illegal, period." "... The pertinent Florida election statute mandates that paper ballots must list the box for the candidate to the right of the candidates name. For machines like one's used in Palm Beach County, the statute instructs that "the order in which the voting machines ballot is arranged shall as nearly as practicable conform to the requirements of the form of the paper ballot...."

Tuesday, November 14, 2000

Headline page A6 "Corrections for Republican absentee voters raises more questions in Florida." New York Times "In Seminole County, just north of Orlando, local election supervisor Sandra Goard refused to accept the applications without the registration number. But she allowed Republican operatives to camp out in her office for as long as 10 days to make handwritten corrections on the previously printed applications."

A1 (News Services) "Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris announced [November 13] that she would not extend the deadline for local officials to deliver certified election results from Florida's 67 counties to her office [by 5 p.m. November 14]."

A7 (New York Times) Visual description of assorted chads - hanging, dimpled, etc.

A14 William Safire (New York Times) column "For one shining moment last week it seemed that we would come to election closure... But the natural Democratic inclination towards litigation was making [Al Gore] look like a sore loser at best, a would be usurper at worst...."

A15 "Much was different in the '60 election" Kennedy v Nixon - (Theodore Sorensen, former Special Counsel to President Kennedy, writing for the Washington Post about analogies to 1960 that Nixon graciously bowed out of contesting that presidential election for the good of the country.) "Nixon decided to refrain from challenging the result only after, as stated in his memoirs, he had "looked into the legal aspects of the situation" and found no basis on which he could get a timely victory...." In addition, Kennedy had won the popular vote, and the electoral vote, even if Illinois was reversed; and Alabama's electors bolted to segregationist candidate Harry Byrd. The "Texas margin [for Kennedy] was too large to reverse, even had a recount been available."

Wednesday, November 15, 2000

A1 (Washington Post) "Early Tuesday evening, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris issued the latest vote totals from all 67 counties as of 5 p.m. showing Bush with 2,910,492 votes and Gore with 2,910,192. That lead is much narrower than Bush's 1,784 vote lead the morning after the election, before all counties began the process of recounting. Harris ordered counties that were still counting votes by hand to report in writing by 2 p.m. today... remaining overseas absentee ballots are counted by the deadline of midnight Friday [November 17]... In a blow for Gore, Democratic leaning Miami-Dade County refused his request for a recount, and Broward County also was inclined to reject Gore's request. Volusia County's hand recount was completed Tuesday with the

98-votegain for Gore, and a fourth County, Palm Beach, will begin its manual recount today...."

A6 (Washington Post) re Florida Supreme Court: "I don't think that the fact the [Jeb] Bush and the Republican legislature have been constantly bashing the [Florida] Supreme Court is going to play any role in their decision making" said former Justice Gerald Kogan, who was appointed by Republican Governor Bob Martinez. "If the court sticks to its recent case law on disputed elections, it may well be inclined to overturn the deadline set by Harris...."

A23 column of Ellen Goodman (Boston Globe): "Just weeks ago we were ruing the dumbing down of the American public. Some 70 percent of Americans between 18 and 24 couldn't name both vice-presidential candidates. They didn't know what an Electoral College was and whether you needed SAT's to get admitted...."

Thursday, November 16, 2000

A1 (Washington Post) Vice president Al Gore issued a dramatic offer to Texas Governor George W Bush Wednesday night, proposing that the two agree to accept the results of manual recounts in selected Florida counties or even all 67 counties in the state. But Bush rejected the offer, saying the disputed presidential election should be decided on the basis of the law, "not the result of deals."

A8 headline "Election could hinge on Florida absentee vote." (Los Angeles Times) "Florida law holds that absentee ballots are for state residents who cannot make it to the polls on Election Day. Yet over the years, absentee ballots have been filed by people who no longer live in Florida. And a pre election mailing by the state Republican Party encouraged party faithful to request absentee ballots so they could vote "from the comfort of your own home." The process is based on the honor system, and there is no requirement to prove residency when registering to vote...."

Friday, November 17, 2000

A8 (continued from A1, Washington Post) "In Miami-Dade County, the Canvassing Board agreed to reconsider a Democratic request for a hand count of presidential ballots. The panel previously rejected the request on a 2-1 vote..."

A9 headline "Industry says machine counters can't be 100% accurate". (New York Times) "...machines can be, in ideal conditions, 99.99% accurate... that tiny error rate alone could have changed 345 votes... but that's under the most favorable conditions, with the machines perfectly maintained and whisked free of all those bits of loose paper now famously known as "chads"....[the] maker of one type of card reader said the accuracy rate of his machine would be 99.90%... Another manufacturer says that under realistic conditions, the machines error rate can be even higher, 1 percent or more - a potential swing of 34,500 votes... a 1975 study for Federal Election Commission found that only 99.5% of the ballots were read accurately when the card readers were used in a Los Angeles County election... Robert Swartz, president of Cardomatic, which has been

making punch-card readers for 25 years,... said "it is totally reasonable that the most accurate way to do it is a carefully run recount...."

A12 (Eric Black, Minneapolis Star Tribune) Vin Weber (former Conservative Republican Minnesota Congressman) "Having judges pick our presidents is not the way things are supposed to go in this country."

A28 column of Tom Teepen (Cox News Service) "With the presidency plainly undecided, Bush has nonetheless ... set about outfitting a new administration, as if this were a game of finders-keepers. Bush castigated Gore for mulling a legal challenge, then beat Gore into federal court to head off a recount Gore has a perfect right to request. And Bush, who as governor happily signed a Texas law allowing for hand counting ballots, now says hand counts should be banned in Florida...."

Saturday, November 18, 2000

A1 (News Services) Florida Supreme Court ordered Katherine Harris "to withhold certifying the result until the Court rules on vice president Al Gore's legal challenge to her authority and the validity of the state vote count." In a two sentence statement the Court said "it was taking the action "to maintain the status quo," but that it was not intended to stop the counting of overseas ballots that were due by midnight and the manual recounting of ballots in three heavily Democratic Counties... After the Supreme Court's rulings officials in Miami-Dade voted to join Palm Beach and Broward counties in a full manual recount of about 500,000 ballots there. That raises to 1.5 million the number of ballots to be recounted....Also Friday evening, the full 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta denied a request by the Bush campaign to block further hand recounts as unconstitutional [saying] "that "states have the primary authority" over selecting their delegates to the Electoral College, and that "state procedures are not in any way inadequate to preserve for ultimate review in the U.S. Supreme Court any federal questions arising "from the case".

A11 headline "Partisan Wrangling erupts over rejection of military votes." (Associated Press) "... State law says ballots from other countries must be postmarked... Republicans circulated a letter from ... deputy director of the military postal service who said [that] "military mail is required to be postmarked. But..."there are instances when time constraints do not allow for proper postmarking/cancellation of the mail The last flight may be departing the ship and the mail has to get on it...."

Sunday, November 19, 2000

A1 (James Rosen, Minneapolis Star Tribune Washington Bureau) "...Bush extended his lead... to 930 votes Saturday after a statewide count of 2,130 ballots from Floridians living overseas. However... counties rejected 1,420 ballots, many of them from U.S. military bases abroad, because they allegedly had no postmarks or had invalid signatures, or because they failed to meet other Florida election standards... The elections canvassing board in Miami-Dade County met Saturday and decided to begin counting 654,000 ballots Monday, setting a target finish date of December 1...."

A15 (New York Times) First reference to Title 3 Section 2 of the U.S. Code-
"Republican state legislators in Florida are honing in on an obscure, never-used federal statute that, they contend could offer them a decisive hand in choosing Florida's 25 electors... Electors must be seated by December 12...."

A16 (New York Times) "...Bush had picked up 1,380 votes from the overseas absentees, to 750 for... Gore... Statewide, canvassers accepted 2,206 ballots and rejected 1,420, or 39 percent of the total...."

Monday, November 20, 2000

A10 (New York Times) Joseph Lieberman on Meet the Press: "My own point of view, if I was there, I would give the benefit of the doubt to ballots coming in from military personnel, generally... Senator Paul Wellstone... also said the military ballots should be counted... Florida law says that for overseas absentee votes "only those ballots marked with an APO (Army Post Office), FPO (Fleet Post Office) or foreign postmark shall be considered valid."

Tuesday, November 21, 2000

A6 (Associated Press) Lead: "Democrats: count rejected overseas votes." [Concerning overseas absentee ballots] "while a lack of a postmark was the most common reason for rejecting overseas ballots, few military ballots were thrown out purely for that reason. Most of the ballots without postmarks, these people said, had other disqualifying flaws, such as lack of signature, a witness signature or date. Interviews with county officials indicated that scores of these ballots, not hundreds, were rejected for lack of a postmark...."

A8 (New York Times) "Each side dueling to cement preferred image of recount".
"...Across the state, through legal arguments, protests and news conferences, Republicans intensified their campaign to portray the hand count of ballots as a confusing, corrupt circus that mocked democracy. Their word of the day: mess. Likewise, the Democrats worked to portray the recount as a calm, careful, civic-minded endeavor that venerated democracy. Their chosen word: smooth... [Democrats] have chosen to avoid, where possible, demonstrations that could contribute to a perception of chaos... [they have chosen] not to match the Republican street soldiers, who have been a noisy presence at rallies across the state...."

Wednesday, November 22, 2000

A1 (Associated Press) Head: [Florida Supreme] Court OK's recount. "... must be included in the state's final tally, as long as they are submitted no later than Monday morning [November 27]. But it set no firm standards for determining how to count partially punched ballots...."

A1 (New York Times) "...Republicans reacted with fury to the decision...."

A5 (News Services) "Miami-Dade County, which decided late to conduct a hand recount of hundreds of thousands of ballots and only began work on Monday [November 20], is

the one county that have to increase its pace significantly to finish its work by 5 p.m. Sunday, the Court-imposed deadline... Miami-Dade has produced Gore's greatest gains to date, 157 votes in 135 of 614 precincts recounted. It is applying the most generous criteria in the recount, including many dimpled ballots...."

A6 Excerpt from Florida Supreme Court ruling: "Twenty-five years ago, this Court commented that the will of the people, not a hyper-technical reliance upon statutory provisions, should be our guiding principle in election cases. The real parties in interest here, not in the legal sense but in a realistic terms, are the voters...."

Thursday, November 23, 2000

Headlines page 1: "U.S. Supreme Court called into the fray. Bush asks to end Florida count, sues over rejected military ballots" "Cheney has heart attack"

A4 (Associated Press) "Some Florida legislators mull picking electors."

A6 (New York Times) "Rapid reversal: Miami-Dade board scraps recount" "After a furious demonstration by Republicans, Miami-Dade County election officials stunned both sides in the bitter contest for Florida's presidential vote and decided unanimously to end their recount of 654,000 ballots... The recount began Monday. By the time it ended Wednesday, Gore had gained 157 votes with 99 of 614 precincts counted.... Shortly after the angry demonstration subsided, the board convened and announced they had abandoned the recount. "We simply can't get it done," David Leahy, the elections supervisor and a board member told the audience... "It was not so much a change of heart. It just became clear to all of us that the deadline could not be met...."

Friday, November 24, 2000

A4 (Associated Press) Florida Supreme Court denied "... Gore's request for the court to order Miami-Dade County officials to resume a hand recount of presidential election ballots...."

A35 Maureen Dowd-New York Times columnist "... It would be a mistake to rule out George W. Bush. Sure, he didn't win the popular vote, and he seems to be shrinking every day... But it still may well be W, because the Republicans won't let him quit. The Democrats, while elated on Wednesday, once again could start edging up on Gore to make him quit. Gore wants the presidency more than the Democrats do. And the Republicans want the presidency more than W does...."

Saturday, November 25, 2000

A1 Headline "U.S. Supreme Court steps in. Justices will weigh Bush appeal on Friday. (Walter Mears, Associated Press) A18 "... It promises to be a scene like none before in U.S. history, with the nine justices of the judicial branch of government considering a case that could determine which of two men will lead the executive branch for the next four years... six Democratic members of Congress demanded a Justice Department investigation on Friday, saying civil rights had been violated in "a shocking case of undermining the right to vote through intimidation and threats of violence" by

GOP protestors in Miami on Wednesday. Democrats have accused Republicans of sending paid demonstrators to try to intimidate election officials. In Broward on Friday, a brick was thrown through a window at the county Democratic Party office, with a note attached that read: "We will not tolerate any illegal government"... Each side has imported legions of lawyers to contest every point in the election dispute... David Boies, Gore's lead lawyer, said the Bush campaign "has already filed a contest with respect to about a dozen counties...."

A22 (Washington Post) headline: Cheney goes home, plans return to work. Doctors don't think his heart attack would preclude vice-presidential duties.

Sunday, November 26, 2000

A6 (News Services) continuation of lead story on page one: "... Florida itself offers ample precedent for successful election challenges that topple victors. Most recently, in 1997, an appeals court unseated Xavier Suarez, who had been elected mayor of Miami, after his challenger, Joe Carallo, contested the election on the basis of fraudulent absentee ballots...."

A9 (New York Times) "... Florida's anti-vote fraud law places strict rules on how absentee ballots can be obtained, and in 1998 the state election office ruled that while it was acceptable for political parties to mail and even collect the absentee applications, the voters or their close relatives or guardians must provide ID information, including voter-registration numbers. Both parties interpret the law as allowing them to supply the data as a convenience, as long as the voters then sign and return the forms...."

A31 (Column by Wy Spano, Minnesota lobbyist, political newsletter publisher and author) head "Post election 'shouldas" could have smoothed the way" "So what should have been done from November 7 on... MOVE FLORIDA TO MINNESOTA... In total, Hennepin County [Minneapolis and suburbs], with more than half a million voters, had 1,040 overvotes, i.e. people who voted for more than one presidential candidate. Palm Beach County, with 20 percent fewer voters, had more than 19,000 overvotes. Palm Beach County also had 10,000 undervotes, i.e. people who didn't vote for president at all. Hennepin County had 813. Machines count Hennepin votes immediately. There are no chads, and voters who've made stray marks (or voted twice for an office) can change what they've done on the spot... DON'T LET THE LAWYERS RUN THE RECOUNT. A lawyer is trained to win... this post election period shouldn't have been about winning, it should have been about truth... FIX THE SYSTEM. Election administration reform should be the first priority of the new administration...."

Monday, November 27, 2000

Headline: "Florida calls Bush winner. Gore will contest outcome; he plans speech today." (Associated Press) "The count certified by Secretary of State Katherine Harris put the margin at 537 votes."

Bush	2,912,790
Gore	2,912,253

"Palm Beach County. No change. Note: The Florida Secretary of State rejected the results of a hand recount."

Broward County: change for Bush +579; Gore +1146

Miami-Dade County. No change. Note: Miami-Dade decided to drop its manual recount.

Tuesday, November 28, 2000

A5 (Los Angeles Times) Florida Legislature moves to choose electors "In legal papers it filed with the U.S. Supreme Court, the Legislature asserted broad authority to allocate Florida's electoral votes even if the state courts order further recounts that could give the lead to Democrat Al Gore....No state legislature has ever voted to authorize a slate of electors to compete with those chosen in a popular vote...."

A15 (David Broder of the Washington Post) "You have to sympathize with Al Gore and George W. Bush. The missteps both have committed during the endless days of the Long Count Election result from pressures few of us can even imagine...."

A14 (Editorial) "... You hear a lot these days about [Gore] wanting his "umpteenth recount". That is simply spin. The First Florida recount was by machine and was automatic under Florida law. Gore had nothing to do with it. Then he did request a manual recount in three counties, as was his right by law. That's the only recount he has sought. Everything since then has been, basically, a struggle to get those manual recounts completed. The Bush camp did everything it could to slow or thwart the effort. It succeeded big time: the first Florida vote tally announced Sunday included a manual recount from only one count - Broward...."

Wednesday, November 29, 2000

A6 (from News Services) "A second heavily Republican County allowed party officials to fix hundreds of flawed absentee ballot applications that had been submitted by voters but rejected by the elections office... The Martin County supervisor of elections, a Republican, let GOP workers add missing voter Id's and resubmit them on a daily basis... At the same time, the office allowed other incomplete applications submitted by voters, some of them Democrats and independents, to stack up without being corrected...."

A10 continuation of front page story by James Rosen, Minneapolis Star-Tribune "... America has never had a presidential election decided by a contest of the election outcomes in the Court", said former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, Bush's adviser in Florida...."

A21 (Bob Herbert, New York Times) "While some Democrats were wavering early on, the Republicans never considered giving any ground. They made it clear that they'd take every possible step to keep Gore out of the White House, even if he managed to finish ahead of Bush in the final Florida tally. The level of belligerence from the Republicans was so great it helped to rally Democrats behind Gore... The White House will be worth little to Gore if the impression is conveyed that he won it at the very last minute by using

the court to torture the count. No doubt you've heard about winning the battle but losing the war."

Thursday, November 30, 2000

A12 (From News Services) headline: NAACP plans to file suit in Florida over allegations of voting irregularities. "...Most of the complaints focus on Miami-Dade County, where about one in five of the estimated 2.2 million residents are black and more than half are of Cuban or other Latino heritage. But the allegations of irregularities spread far and wide...."

A25 (Clancy Sigal, column written for the Los Angeles Times) headline: "The left has better things to do than assign blame" "...Every time a progressive third party candidate - whom I supported in this election - surfaces to defy machine and money politics, Democrats and liberal feel betrayed... Choosing an issue and working on it is the best therapy I know for despair. For each person it will be different. Maybe, at the start, the only thing we'll have in common is mutual venom and a share, dim memory of how an American democracy functions when people of good-will, regardless of party affiliations and past disputes, work together for something they believe in...."

Friday, December 1, 2000

A13 (Associated Press) headline "Butterfly ballot causes confusion and mistakes, Canadian study finds." "...Our study [to be published next week in the journal Nature]... suggests that the butterfly ballot may cause systemic errors in voting... 20% of the test subjects who intended to vote for one candidate erroneously voted for another candidate when using the butterfly ballot. The experiment involved 116 men and women test subjects. Half voted on the butterfly ballot, and half on a straight single-column ballot...." *(Personal note: In the 1/10/01 paper, this story was reported as one of the "Great news flubs of 2000. At the same time, considerable news space was given in the November 11 paper to a group of second graders in Leesburg GA who had no trouble with the Butterfly ballot, and a long letter from a parent, Kathleen Sonnek, appeared in the November 18 paper making the same assertion about her own 2nd grader. A writer on November 25, Judith Akehurst, criticized the critics.)*

A20 (George Will column, Washington Post) "...The best vote count, in terms of actual and perceived integrity, is almost always the one done on election night...."

A21 (Maureen Dowd, New York Times) "... W is starting to weird me out. Why is our kinda-sorta chief executive the low man on his own totem pole... The grown ups keep sending him off to play. They know he doesn't like messes, he doesn't do serious well and he can't do followup answers except to refer reporters to James Baker, his Manchurian operator.... W does not seem to grasp that the president can't delegate the presidency itself. Of course, his aides might not have told him that yet."

Saturday, December 2, 2000

Headline page 1: "High Court wades into the fracas" "We're looking for a federal issue" Justice Anthony Kennedy "I do not know of any case in which we have impugned a state

supreme court in the way you have" Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg speaking to Bush's lawyer."

A6 (from News Services)"... The Florida Supreme Court, in back-to-back announcements, refused to order the recount of any of the 1.16 million ballots from Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties that are now under guard in Tallahassee. The seven-judge panel also dismissed claims that the Palm Beach ballots were so confusing as to be invalid... Earlier... Judge... Sauls rejected a plea by the Gore team to start counting the ballots immediately... The Gore campaign was not a party to the butterfly ballot case...."

A7 (Associated Press) "At least 445 Florida felons voted illegally November 7... despite the states multimillion dollar effort to purge dead and illegal voters from lists of registered voters...." "The chances are... Winning an election by 537 votes out of 5,825,043 is like: - Finding a one-gram needle in a 24 pound haystack; - Winning a 2 hour, 15 minute marathon by less than a second; - Winning a 2,824 mile car race between New York and Los Angeles by one-third of a mile; - Winning an around the world race at the equator (24,850 miles) by 2.3 miles; - Winning the 1.5 mile Belmont Stakes by less than 9 inches."

A8 (Cox News Service) head "Suits in Martin and Seminole Counties could affect outcome"

"... The only real differences in the case from Martin County is that Republican workers were allowed to take the absentee ballot applications out of the Elections Supervisors Office, a seemingly more serious infraction...."

Sunday, December 3, 2000

A13 (Los Angeles Times) head: "Conservative Scalia might have court's final word"

"... When the oral argument came to an end, the five conservative justices had a straightforward theory that could allow them to rule for Bush... Article II of the U.S. Constitution says state lawmakers have complete power to set the rules for presidential elections, they said."

A16 (continued from A1 - Associated Press) Court hearing on punch card ballots in Palm Beach County. "Yale University Statistician Nicolas Hengartner said his review of the Florida vote concluded that the number of votes rejected by machines varied "very strikingly" depending on whether the county used a punch-card or an optical-scanner voting machine. Only 0.3 percent of votes were not recorded in optical-scanner counties, compared to 1.5% in counties that used the punch cards, Hengartner testified. "I would judge it is less than winning the lottery," he answered, when asked about the odds that the differences were due to chance rather than a problem with punch-card voting...."

A22 - photo of 6-year old at Minnesota State Capitol holding up a "Sore Loserman 2000" sign.

Monday, December 4, 2000

A6 - continued from A1 (from News Services) "... Former Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who is advising Gore, said [on "Face the Nation"] the Gore camp is awaiting three rulings: one from the U.S. Supreme Court on the proper deadline for counting votes; a decision in the Tallahassee case on hand recounts of the ballots; and a decision in Seminole County on absentee ballots... In a surprising turn [in the hearing about hand recounts in Tallahassee] a witness called to testify by the Bush team ended up backing one of Gore's key arguments. An engineer who testified for Bush about the voting devices that produced thousands of imperfectly perforated ballots said hand recounts were necessary for accuracy "in very close elections...."

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

A1 headline "Gore is Dealt Double Setback. Florida judge hands Bush camp its clearest victory yet". [and]

A6 (News Services) "The U.S. Supreme Court avoided a definitive ruling in the Florida election case Monday, instead asking the Florida Supreme Court to clarify the basis of its November 21 ruling that permitted recounts to continue past a statutory deadline... [the] unsigned unanimous opinion did not particularly favor either side... [though] in the short term, the action may help George W. Bush. Because it vacates the Florida court's order, it could mean that the manual recounts conducted under the Florida court's ruling would be wiped out - at least until the Florida court issues a new decision - and that Bush's margin of victory would return to 930 votes from the 537 certified under the later deadline...."

A14 Editorial "No recounts" referring to Judge Sauls dismissal of the request to recount Palm Beach and Miami-Dade. "... It seems as if Gore were confronted with a Catch 22 - you need a full manual recount to prove a full manual recount is necessary...."

Wednesday, December 6, 2000

A6 (New York Times) re Seminole County absentee case: "... Judge Nikki Ann Clark... seized on [FL] law... when lawyers for Bush argued that not all of the information the voters were supposed to disclose - nine things in all - is mandatory. "In a sense, what you're telling me is that the legislature said the person making the request must disclose these nine things, but don't worry about it if they don't?" she asked.

A7 (Associated Press) "Republican lawyers urged a federal judge to rule that hundred of rejected overseas ballots, mostly from military personnel, should be counted... even if they were undated, lacked postmarks, were postmarked in the United States, were not requested on time or were not requested at all... Bush has raised twice as much money as Vice President Al Gore to pay for his Florida recount expenses... - \$7.4 million [to] ... \$3.5 million... [Bush is] helped by the same benefactors who enabled him to raise a record \$100 million for his presidential campaign...."

A8 (Bob Van Sternberg Star-Tribune National Correspondent) headline: "The 2000 campaign has crystallized the use of the Web as a political weapon." "... Phil Noble... Politics Online consulting service "... This election was to the Internet what 1960 was to television: the beginning of the change, not the end..." ... The Nets political

visibility got a huge boost in 1998, when Governor Jesse Ventura's relatively primitive Web operation was given credit for helping him eke out his unlikely victory.... Nearly 1 in 5 Americans reported going online for election news during the campaign, an increase from 4%... in 1996. Fully one-third of the online population, which itself has grown dramatically over the past four years, got election news from the Internet. But while the overwhelming majority surfed to web sites operated by national or local news organization, only 7 percent reported visiting candidates sites, a precipitous drop off since the 1996 campaign...."

A22 (Thomas Friedman, New York Times) "... It's critical that Democrats don't Bork Bush - that is, they don't try to morally impeach him before he even starts, as Democrats did with Robert Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court and Republicans did with Bill Clinton's whole presidency. If Bush prevails in the courts he is entitled to govern as if he had won by a landslide and the country needs him to be able to do so. Democrats in opposition have more to offer the nation than mimicking the vicious Tom DeLay and rooting for the president to fail... The Republicans, and the Bush team, though, really need to look in the mirror. What they will see is not pretty. Their most senior leaders trashed and smeared the very courts that are now close to delivering a legitimate victory for Bush...."

A2 Q&A (New York Times and Cox News Service). "President Clinton's highest job approval rating... was in December 1998 when 73% of those polled... had a favorable opinion... Lowest... has been 39% - twice; in June, 1993... and September, 1994... Average rating for every year from the John F Kennedy administration to the present has been 55.4%... Clinton... has averaged 54 percent... Kennedy had the highest rating with an average of 70 percent, while Jimmy Carter had the lowest, at 45 percent."

Thursday, December 7, 2000

A1 headline: Florida calls Special Session

Friday, December 8, 2000

A1 headline: Key Decision Looming "... Florida Legislature: The GOP-controlled Legislature will convene a special session at 11 a.m. today to appoint it's own slate of electors, loyal to George W. Bush."

A22 headline: First post-election finance totals boggle the mind, break records left and right. (News Services) "... In the presidential race, Republican George W. Bush refused federal funding for the primaries because that would have forced him to accept spending limits. As a result, he waged the first privately financed \$100 million campaign in U.S. history... Altogether, political donors, who four years ago anted up a record \$2 billion for candidates for federal office, raised the stakes this year by an estimated \$500 million... Special-interest donations to campaign rose 80% from 1996... led by financial services (\$66 million), manufacturing (\$29 million), labor unions (\$24 million)...."

A30 (Tom Teepen, Cox News Service) "Evidence that we, the people, are choosier and arguably even leaning toward progressive can be found in initiatives scattered among the

states... That's especially so in two ongoing policy wrangles - drug laws and education..."

A31 headline: How Florida 'cleansed' its voter rolls "The tactics have changed, but the goal remains the same: keep the colored, the blacks, the African-Americans- whatever they're called in the particular instance - keep them out of the voting booths. Do not let them vote! If you can find a way to stop them, stop them... [Florida selected the company ChoicePoint to] come up with a "scrub list" of 173,000 names... Over the spring and summer ChoicePoint was forced to acknowledge that 8,000 voters it had listed as felons had in fact been guilty only of misdemeanors, which would not have affected their right to vote... ChoicePoint came up with 58,000 people - people registered to vote - who would fall into the category [a company vice-president called] "possible felons." How in the world were county election officials supposed to check out each and every one and find out if they were felons or not? They couldn't. They didn't...."

Saturday, December 9, 2000

A1 headline: Gore's hope revived (New York Times) "Vice President Al Gore's flagging presidential hopes were jolted back to life when a bitterly divided Florida Supreme Court ordered an immediate manual recount of thousands of ballots across the state...[including] all the undervotes - a number estimated at more than 45,000... Bush's lawyers rushed to the U.S. Supreme Court to stop the count...and requesting an emergency hearing from the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta...."

A1 "Latest Developments" "Judges Nikki Clark and Terry Lewis "... ruled that irregularities in filling out requests for absentee ballots in Seminole and Martin counties did not invalidate the votes...."

Sunday, December 10, 2000

A1 headline: Hold everything! U.S. Supreme Court halts count (News Services)"... Gore was awarded another recount Friday by the Florida high court, prompting Republican lawyers to press an appeal. They were unsuccessful at the state and federal appellate levels before the U.S. Supreme Court intervened [in a 5-4 vote]."

A33 (John Lewis, D-GA House of Representatives for the New York Times)
"... Immediately after the election, analysts told us that this experience would teach us that every vote counts. I fear that the current vote counting teaches us the opposite. If you were confused by a butterfly ballot, your vote does not count. If the military neglected to postmark your absentee ballot, your vote does not count. If your ballot has a dimpled, hanging or pregnant chad, your vote does not count. Unless there are drastic changes in the way votes are being tallied, these are the lessons we will learn in Florida. The makers of the ballot machines have told us that the most accurate way to count the ballots is by hand. So, count them by hand we must...."

A33 (Noel Rubinton, Newsday) "In this improbable presidential election, the news media have taken yet another road more traveled and left a potentially bigger story mostly by the wayside... [butterfly ballots took center stage while] another story of

election irregularities- of civil rights violations against black voters throughout the state on Election Day - were circulating. But this one was passed around much more quietly and narrowly... Journalists like to think that they are of the people, are not class-conscious and are crusaders to right society's wrong. The Florida aftermath hasn't advanced that image."

Monday, December 11, 2000

A1 headline: Supreme Court hears final arguments today

Tuesday, December 12, 2000

A2 (Q&A column) Popular vote count as of Dec. 12, with 99% of the vote recorded:

Albert Gore	49,914,097
George W Bush	49,697,989
Ralph Nader	2,767,176
Pat Buchanan (Reform MN)	443,789
Harry Browne (Libertarian)	381,128
Howard Phillips (Constitution)	99,231
John Hagelin (Reform/Natural Law)	89,903
James Harris (Socialist Workers)	10,630

Final official results are expected in February, 2001.

A7 (News Services) "The Florida Supreme Court said in a 6-1 opinion that it relied on state law, but did not change it, when it extended a deadline last month for recounting ballots in the state's contested presidential election...."

A21 (Howard Kleinberg, Cox News Services) "Was the Florida ballot chaos preventable? Were there waning signs? You bet there were: big red flags. They certainly were raised a dozen years ago and likely as far back as 1982! Despite a 1988 fall by a Miami-Dade Florida legislator for an investigation of "overvotes" and "chads" nothing has changed. As a result, we have what we have today... [Robert Joffe, then of the Miami Herald, found serious problems in the then-voting process in Miami-Dade] "He quoted David Leahy, Miami-Dade's elections supervisor then as he is now, as saying chads "rarely appear on more than 1 percent of all ballots" and are a minor factor in accounting for falloff. We now know better...."

Wednesday, December 13, 2000

A1 headline It's almost over. Supreme Court rules for Bush

"Because it is evident that any recount seeking to meet the December 12 date will be unconstitutional... we reverse the judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida ordering the recount to proceed." The court's unsigned opinion.

"Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the law." Justice John Paul Stevens, dissent

(Linda Greenhouse, New York Times) "The Supreme Court effectively handed the presidential election to Governor George W. Bush on Tuesday night, overturning the

Florida Supreme Court and ruling by a vote of 5 to 4 that there could be no further counting of Florida's disputed presidential votes...."

A7 (Associated Press) "...Six hours before the nation's highest court issued its ruling, the Florida Supreme Court said Tuesday [6-1 vote] that 25,000 absentee ballots challenged in two Florida counties should count in the states contested presidential election...."

Thursday, December 14, 2000

A1 Headline: Bush prevails; Gore bows out.

"Americans share hopes and goals and values for ore important than any political disagreements, Republicans want the best for our nation, and so do Democrats. Our votes may differ, but not our hopes." President-elect George W. Bush

"Disappointment must be overcome by our love of country...I particularly urge all who stood with us to unite behind our next president." Vice-President Al Gore

A18 (David Westphal, Star Tribune Washington Bureau Chief) "For more than a year, George W. Bush cast himself as the only politician in the United States capable of governing a country so evenly split by politics and ideology. Now that he's finally prevailed in his campaign for the presidency, he'll certainly get a worthy test.

Bush's victory over Al Gore came after a no-holds-barred fight to the finish that is certain to leave deep scars. At least for the moment, bipartisanship and collegiality will be hard to come by in Washington.

The presidency he will assume on Jan. 20 isn't at all the one he pictured five weeks ago, when advisers told him he would win in a decisive vote.

Instead, Bush becomes the fourth man in U.S. history to win the presidency while receiving a minority of votes nationwide. With the debate over Florida certain to continue well past this year, questions about who really won the election will bedevil at least the early months of his administration.

How Bush emerges from the election morass is but one of the unknowns as this extraordinary political saga draws to a close...."

A30 Editorial "... The America people must now get accustomed to treating [Bush] with the gracious deference due the presidency - guided perhaps by a determination not to repeat the vile treatment to which the Republicans have subjected the Clintons for eight years. Uniting behind a president does not, however, mean uniting behind his party's agenda, and it is important that Bush and the Republicans in Congress understand that...."

A31 (Ellen Goodman, Boston Globe) "... In Part I of this civics lesson, many Americans discovered that they were not voting for the president but for the Electoral College. In Part II, Americans who shared a reverence for the Supreme Court as removed from political wrangling have begun to doubt... Eric Foner, A Columbia University legal historian, puts it... "The Supreme Court's legitimacy rests on what everyone understands is a bit of fiction, there these men and women are impartial, that they rise above partisan views and apply the law...." It's said that the court follows the election results. The

results of election 2000 is that satisfaction with the conduct of politics has slid all the way down to 25 percent. What a path the Supreme Court has chosen to follow."

Friday, December 15, 2000

A2 Q&A Q. "I heard that before President Clinton took office, all military personnel in the United States and abroad could vote on base. According to the story, he made all military personnel vote by absentee ballot. True? (From the New York Times and Cox News Service) A. Military installations under the Defense Department have never served as polling places for uniformed military people, said Glenn Flood of the Defense Department, adding that this is an example of "a lot of misinformation out there." Absentee ballots have always been used for service personnel to vote in their home states, he said."

A24 Bush's campaign promises listed.

A26 (Washington Post) "More than a dozen political media and watchdog groups, using Florida's public information laws, intend to revive the arduous process of manually tallying disputed presidential ballots now that the U.S. Supreme Court has ended the official counting of votes...."

A29 (Associated Press) "President Clinton urged the nation on Thursday to abandon the divisions of the post election fight for the White House and unify behind President-elect George W. Bush "without rancor and personal attack"...."

Saturday, December 16, 2000

Sunday, December 17, 2000

Monday, December 18, 2000

A2 Q&A "Q. What was the reason Al Gore did not carry his home state?
A. Political observers say it's the political realignment of the South, Gore's liberal views on gun control, abortion and tobacco and the fact that the Republicans pulled out all the stops in Tennessee. The New York Times points to changes in Al Gore and the state's position on the political spectrum that contributed to his loss, 51 percent to 48 percent. Tennessee, and the South in general, has been moving from the Democratic Party to the GOP during the past few decades, while Al Gore has moved to the left (particularly on issues of gun control and abortion) since his days as a congressman. In fact, Bill Clinton and Al Gore barely carried Tennessee four years ago, and only after Gore made a last-ditch effort there. Looking at the 2000 race, one political expert said that if Bill Bradley were the Democratic nominee, he would not have come close to Gore's 48 percent there. "So Gore almost surely got a boost from being the hometown boy," said John Geer, a political science professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Gore has long fought his image as an outsider to

Tennesseans, however, because he was raised mostly in Washington D.C., and educated at private schools. And George Bush, as a Texan, offered a regional relationship as well as an ideological one.

Q. Is there a Web site where I can find the e-mail addresses of U.S. senators and representatives?....

A. One Web site is www.visi.com/juan/congress...."

A13 (Thomas L. Friedman, New York Times) "When Al Gore was in Vietnam he never saw much combat. Throughout his presidential campaign, though, he insisted he wanted to "fight" for every American. Well, Wednesday night, in his concession speech, Gore took a bullet for the country. The shot was fired at the heart of the nation by the five conservative justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, with their politically inspired ruling that installed George W. Bush as president. The five justices essentially said that it was more important that Florida meet its self-imposed deadline of Dec. 12 for choosing a slate of electors than for the Florida Supreme Court to try to come up with a fair and uniform way to ensure that every possible vote in Florida was counted - and still meet the real federal deadline, for the nationwide Electoral College vote today. The five conservative justices essentially ruled that the sanctity of dates, even meaningless ones, mattered more than the sanctity of votes, even meaningful ones. The Rehnquist court now has its legacy: "In calendars we trust." You don't need an inside source to realize that the five conservative justices were acting as the last in a team of Republican Party elders who helped drag Bush across the finish line. Like precinct captains in black robes, the five delivered the decisive votes. You just needed to read the withering dissents of Justices Breyer, Ginsburg, Souter and Stevens, who told the country exactly what their five colleagues were up to - acting without legal principle or logic and thereby inflicting a wound, said Breyer, "that may harm not just the court, but the nation...."

Tuesday, December 19, 2000

A1 "Electors met nationwide, giving the Bush-Cheney ticket 271 votes and the Gore-Lieberman camp 266." [There was one abstention from the District of Columbia].

A35 (Molly Ivins, Creators Syndicate) "Memo to Democrats Only: Nikolaevich Tolstoy once wrote a short story titled "God Sees the Truth, But Waits." I suggest we nurse this grudge very carefully... What we need here is the old Joe Hill reaction: Don't mourn or even sulk: organize! Why be bitter when you could be useful instead?...."

Saturday, January 13, 2001

A2 Q&A "Q. News reports in December indicated that the media wanted to conduct a recount of the Florida ballots. Where does that stand?

A. As you no doubt have read by now, the review of Florida ballots is just beginning. Some of the nation's largest news organizations have contracted with a research firm to conduct a comprehensive survey of disputed ballots from the presidential election in Florida, according to reports Jan. 10. Opinion Research Center, a non-profit survey research firm affiliated with the University of Chicago, will produce a database that will describe in detail the

estimated 180,000 ballots that didn't register a vote for president during machine counts. Journalists will oversee the review, which will cost at least \$500,000. It is expected to take about two months to complete."

THANK YOU for reading this account, prepared by an ordinary citizen who entered this election season as a moderately active and very "centrist" Democrat.