

When two holidays come together



Veterans' Day and Thanksgiving decorations came together at a house on the southeast corner of Eighth and Kansas. Photo by Rachel Miscall/The Goodland Daily News

Candidates continue legal duel

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of the Texas governor in the race for the state's 25 electoral votes and the White House.

In dueling legal actions, Gore filed papers with a state court in Tallahassee seeking an order to have the hand recounts rolled into the totals, even if the counting isn't finished by Friday night. Bush looked to a federal appeals court in Atlanta to shut down the canvassing altogether.

When officials in Broward County arrived to resume their hand counting of 588,000 votes, they found a manila police envelope emblazoned with the words: "Crime. Found Property."

Inside were 78 "chads," the bits of paper produced when holes are made in punchcard ballots, found on the counting room floor when the recanvassing stopped Wednesday night.

"We go with the saying, 'Let the chads fall as they may,'" said County Elections Supervisor Jane Carroll, a Republican member of the canvassing board. "Chads are not partisan."

Up the coast in West Palm Beach, about 100 demonstrators turned out to rally support for recounts. Some held signs that read "Honk for Dimples," a reference to indentations made in punchcard ballots.

Officials in yet a third county, Miami-Dade, disclosed plans to meet Friday to reconsider their earlier refusal of Gore's request for a hand recount of all 654,000 ballots there.

The developments came on the day after Gore and Bush had made dueling television appearances, the vice president suggesting a statewide hand recount to settle the election, the Texas governor firmly rejecting the offer.

Democrats resumed their public relations offensive in the morning.

"The choice really is whether the voters are going to decide this election by having every vote count," Gore said on a radio call-in program, "or whether that process is going to be short-circuited without all the votes being examined."

His running mate, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, was on the morning television programs, telling ABC he was "disappointed by Governor Bush's re-

sponse to the offer last night."

He expressed his disappointment, too, with Florida's Republican secretary of state, Katherine Harris, who announced Wednesday night she would not allow the certified vote totals to be adjusted with the results of the hand counts.

Florida's governor, Jeb Bush, brother of the GOP presidential hopeful, had words of support for his secretary of state. "Subject to the courts weighing in on this," he said, "Saturday morning we'll know who won the state."

That left plenty of time for the courts, and there was no shortage of opportunity.

Florida Circuit Judge Terry Lewis was weighing the Gore team's request for the results of hand recounts to be certified, and convened an early afternoon hearing on the case.

Both sides filed written briefs with the federal appeals court in Atlanta, where Bush was hoping for legal relief.

"The Florida manual recount process is being used to eliminate any possibility of an orderly, rational and final end to the election,"

Countered the Gore legal team, "This case is simply not appropriate for federal court intervention of any kind at this point in the proceeding."

Radio show host Tom Joyner, recipient of Gore's morning telephone call, tried to draw the vice president into talk of a stolen election but the vice president wouldn't bite.

"I would discourage the use of that word because, however it comes out, we're going to come behind the winner," he said, cautioning that there are "high emotions on the other side," too.

Bush and his campaign aides were silent during the morning, following the Texas governor's firm rejection of Gore's proposal Wednesday night.

"The outcome of this election will not be the result of deals or efforts to mold public opinion," Bush said. Hand recounting "introduces human error and politics into the vote-counting process."

At the same time, GOP sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Republicans were rushing additional political troops to the state in case the courts rule the hand recounts may proceed.

With Gore urging them on, officials in Broward County said they intended to continue recounting 588,000 ballots by hand Thursday. Just up the Florida coast, Palm Beach County officials said they, too, intended to review ballots cast on Election Day.

Just over the legal horizon was the U.S. Supreme Court, and already there were predictions the election to pick the nation's 43rd president would wind up there.

"Anything this important is going to find its way to the most important court in the land," former Sen. Alan Simpson of Wyoming, a longtime friend of Bush's running mate Dick Cheney, said in an interview.

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Regents delay merger plan

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education study is done, but there was enough opposition to drop that idea from the motion. Kerr's motion to have further negotiations with two regents, two members of the Pratt board and others to be named by the chairman of the board of regents. The motion was seconded by Regent James Weep and passed unanimously.

On the way out, one regent was heard to say, "We had a train wreck with this one, but we saved as many lives as possible."

Regent Floris Jean Hampton was the first to speak against the proposal. She said she wanted to wait until the board had sufficient time and resources to study the proposal, and to complete a statewide study of the higher education system.

Regent Steve Clark said he thought the decision ought to be made on an issue other than economic development. He felt the decision ought to be made on the issues of improved access and improved efficiency.

"I don't think \$137,000 in efficiency saving is as much as I had hoped," Clark said. "I think this is precedent setting, and we need to know what we say to the next school. I don't think we have a vision yet to know where this fits, and I feel we need to make Pratt accountable if we are going to drop the mill levy."

Clark suggested that Pratt should be required to produce more credit hours and efficiency in return for the drop-

ping the local tax levy.

Regent Janice DeBauge said she was concerned about building a system with all the schools in the state, and that the proposal could actually be harmful to other community colleges. She noted that none of the other 36 schools had written any letters in support for the merger.

As to the question of increased access to university for Pratt students, DeBauge said she felt there were policies in place which could address that situation.

"I think we have two proposals on parallel tracks," Regent James Wempe said. "The Pratt-Fort Hays State proposal is on one track and the regents are on another track. Pratt and Fort Hays State had a year or more head start, but the regents are catching up. I believe this board is for change and some dramatic changes have been accomplished, but not this proposal."

"I believe we need to do our homework and be thorough. I don't want this board to be accused of acting without doing our homework. Ultimately, something like this is going to happen in Kansas. I also think we need to look at the financial burden we have on our community college communities."

"We have to know where we are going," Regent Harry W. Craig, Jr. said. "I am not comfortable at this time because I don't know where we are going. I don't think we need to do this on a piecemeal basis. I think we can encourage the access between the two

schools, but don't know how to solve the governance questions. I would like to see this tabled."

"I would approve a revenue neutral proposal right now. I see this as a question of funding, and am not willing to commit specific funding for this."

Regent William Docking said he had a problem with the governance proposal, but suggested that the program might be approved as a pilot project to try to handle the real need in Pratt. He said one of the concerns is that there is not enough money for higher education and unless that expands "we won't have anything happen."

Chairman Clay Blair, the last to speak, said he was not convinced that the plan would accomplish what is proposed, and that the board needs to take a broader view.

"The math doesn't show the critical mass to make this work," Blair said. "I also think the timing is wrong it needs to be on our timetable and on our policies. We have raised \$100,000 from private sources for the statewide study, and are trying to raise \$300,000 more to be able to start in January."

"Pratt has come together, and I salute that, but my vote would be no on the present proposal."

After the compromise motion to continue negotiations had passed, Blair said he thought it had been a positive and consensus building discussion. The board adjourned at 1:15 p.m. to board buses for a tour of Colby Community College.

Lawmakers to revisit seat belt issue

TOPEKA (AP)— It looks like lawmakers next year will have another chance to debate whether Kansas should have a tougher seat belt law. But some say chances of changing the law are doubtful.

The Special Committee on Judiciary agreed Wednesday to recommend drafting legislation for next year making failure to wear a seat belt a primary offense, meaning a driver could be stopped simply for not being buckled up.

State law now says a driver can be cited for not wearing a seat belt only when stopped for another offense, such as speeding.

House Judiciary Chairman Mike O'Neal, who heads the special committee, cast doubts on whether the legislation has much chance of passage. Lawmakers defeated two similar proposals earlier this year.

"I don't think there's going to be a

primary seat belt law. It's still going to be personal choice," O'Neal, R-Hutchinson, told the committee.

Senate Judiciary Chairman Tim Emert, R-Independence, a member of the special committee, agreed that passing such legislation will be difficult.

Supporters of a stronger law say it would save more lives. Opponents say it's another example of government

intrusion.

"There are more than 100 reasons for law enforcement to stop a car, but we can't stop them for not having a seat belt," said Rep. David Huff, R-Lenexa.

The committee considered the issue at the request of Gov. Bill Graves, who included the seat belt proposal in his legislative package for the 2000 session.

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