

Gore, Bush share goal, not method

Both candidates call for end to election disputes

(AP) — Al Gore made a surprise proposal for a statewide recount of Florida's 6 million ballots Wednesday night and George W. Bush swiftly rejected it, calling the effort under way in several Democratic-leaning counties an "arbitrary and chaotic" way to settle the presidential race.



With their futures tied up in a knot of legal battles, the presidential rivals made dueling appearances on national television, calling for a quick end to the contested election but disagreeing on how to do it.

"Our goal must be what is right for America," the vice president said at his official mansion in Washington.

"This process must be fair, this process must be accurate, and this process must be final," Bush said from the governor's mansion in Austin.

Their evening addresses capped a whirlwind day of legal activity that gave both weary camps tastes of victory and defeat — but no clear road to completion.

The Florida Supreme Court, all Democratic appointees, rejected a request from Republican Secretary of State Katherine Harris to block any manual recounts while the courts decide whether the process is legal.

The high court's ruling, though far from the final word, gave Democrats new vigor in their ballot-by-ballot bid to trim Bush's 300-vote lead in the state. Officials in Broward and Palm Beach counties hunkered down for an excruciating hand count of 1 million ballots.

The secretary of state also announced she would not accept the hand-counted ballots, calling the counties' reasoning "insufficient." Harris vowed to certify the Florida election results Saturday without the hand-recount totals. Gore's lawyers

said they will challenge her decision today.

In another front, Bush's lawyers filed a 182-page appeal in a federal appeals court in Atlanta. The Texas governor lost a round Monday on his move to shut down the recounts in Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, Broward and Volusia counties.

Legal matters aside, both presidents-in-waiting launched fierce public relations campaigns in the court of public opinion. They wanted to look prepared to serve, but not hungry for power.

"This is the time to respect every voter and every vote," Gore said from his official residence, framed by pictures of his family.

Gore pledged that, if Republicans allow manual recounts to continue in Florida's Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties, he would accept without challenge whatever tally those recounts should yield — added to certified results from 64 other counties and overseas absentee ballots due by midnight Friday.

"I will take no legal action to challenge the result, and I will not support any legal action to challenge the result," Gore said, offering to drop the threat of major Democratic litigation that has hung over the proceedings for days.

He suggested a meeting with Bush before state officials certify the results "not to negotiate, but to improve the tone of our dialogue in America." And he said both candidates should meet again after a winner is declared "to close ranks as Americans."

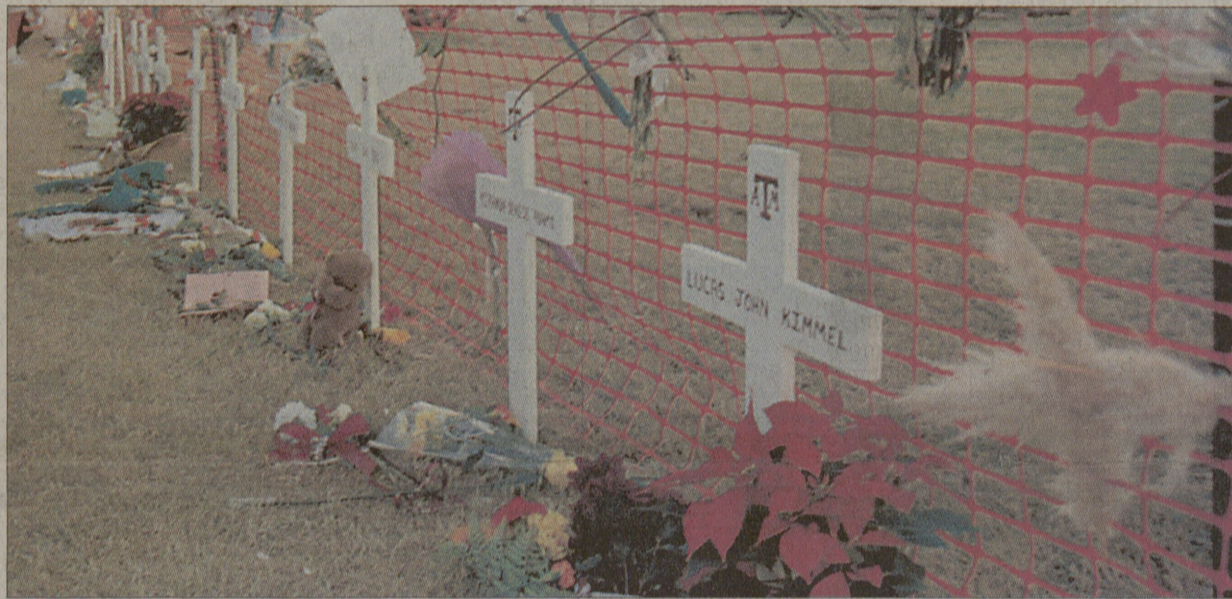
Bush dismissed the notion. "The outcome of this election will not be the result of deals or efforts to mold public opinion," he said. "The outcome of this election will be determined by the votes and by the law."

"For all us Longhorns who discount A&M ... we need to realize one thing. Aggieland is a special place, with special people."

— Eric Opiela, former University of Texas student body vice president

1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse

Leaves ongoing legacy



Top left: Students attach flowers to the fence around the collapse site; Top right: Aggies walk in masses to

attend the candlelight vigil at the site on Nov. 24, 1999. Bottom: Crosses were erected for the 12 Aggies.

A&M, UT lay aside rivalry, remember 12 fallen Aggies

By MARIANO CASTILLO
The Battalion

Tremors from the tragedy of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse were felt across the state and remain in the thoughts of university students throughout Texas one year later.

On Nov. 17 and 18, the UT Tower at the University of Texas-Austin (UT) will remain dark in remembrance of the 12 Aggies who lost their lives in the accident.

Snow Montesinos, student relations assistant at the UT Ex-Student's Association, said that ob-

serving the tragedy is natural.

"We wanted to make a special statement," he said. The darkening of the tower is a rare occurrence, said Peggy Kruger, director of the Office of Public Affairs at UT. The tower has been darkened only three times.

In a letter to A&M President Dr. Ray M. Bowen, UT President Larry R. Faulkner wrote that Bonfire is still in the thoughts of the students.

"As we approach Nov. 18, the Bonfire accident at College Station a year ago

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Donations allowed for creation of two Bonfire memorial funds

By ANDREW STEPHENSON
The Battalion

In the wake of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse, Aggies and other concerned individuals responded with a flood of support, resulting in the creation of two Bonfire memorial funds.

"The outpouring of sympathy and concern has been overwhelming," said Eddie J. Davis, Texas A&M Foundation president. "People have sought to give in a variety of ways, so we've created two Bonfire funds to help focus the many ideas."

The Bonfire Relief

Fund, managed by the Association of Former Students, and the Bonfire Memorial Endowed Fund, managed by the Texas A&M Foundation, have already received hundreds of gifts.

"The majority of Aggies who phoned and emailed the Association wanted to immediately help the families of the victims," said Jerry Boles, president of the Association of Former Students.

The Bonfire Relief Fund was created to allow the University to assist the

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This is the fourth in a week-long series in memory of the 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse. The series will conclude Friday with a special memorial service.

By ERIC DICKENS
The Battalion

Listening to Dr. Sylvia Grider, associate professor of anthropology, speak of "high degree of repetition" and "additional coding and reference numbers," one might get the impression of being in class. The setting — an environmentally controlled laboratory half-filled with white cardboard boxes stacked floor to ceiling — does nothing to change that impression. However, contained in those boxes and covering shelves and tables of the laboratory are the physical manifestations of grief.

In the weeks after the the Aggie Bonfire collapse, students and members of the extended Aggie family traveled to the Bonfire site and several other campus locations to leave tributes to the victims. Starting in December, a team of volunteers and student workers in A&M's anthropology department gathered and archived the tangible pieces of memories.

Grider has overseen the effort — which she describes as "student-driven" — since the beginning. In December, with inclement weather and the impending semester break, student workers were under pressure to perform their best in the collection phase.

"We were working under emergency conditions nearly the whole time," Grider said. "In three days, workers gathered nearly all items left out at the site — approximately 1,500 items."

"The students made it really clear to me how important, how precious, those artifacts were to the student body," Grider said. "So I assured the kids everything would be treated with respect, and we wouldn't throw anything away — and we haven't."

The workers are now double-checking artifacts and inventory numbers against a catalog and creating a computerized database of artifacts. After that, the workers will move into the curating phase to stabilize all artifacts that need additional preservation. Grider said some tough decisions will have to be made during the curating phase.

"Students will have to agree to let us wash the grodes," Grider said. "We can't conserve the mud, the sweat and the blood because the chemicals — especially in sweat — will cause [the grodes] to decay."

Renee Gillman, a sophomore business major, spends close to 15 hours a week in the laboratory, and she said her job can be emotionally straining.

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A&M holds diversity conference

By ELIZABETH RAINES
The Battalion

Students, faculty and staff from throughout Texas who are interested in increasing diversity will attend the Texas A&M Department of Multicultural Services' Texas Higher Education Diversity Conference (THEDC) today and Friday.

"The purpose of this conference is to provide participants with a greater understanding of their roles in creating an institution where diversity and excellence are paramount," said Megan Palsa, assistant director of Multicultural Services. "We hope that after the conference, the students and faculty that attend from Texas A&M will take what they learn and apply it to making Vision 2020 happen."

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A&M System works to improve performance

By ROLANDO GARCIA
The Battalion

An unskilled workforce, high crime rates, more spending on social programs and a lower quality of life are in store for Texas in the 21st century unless it educates its growing population, demographers say.

In an effort to meet the higher-education needs of the state, the Texas A&M University System has produced an integrative plan — a set of long-range objectives for the nine universities that constitute the sys-

tem. Among the goals are improving collaboration among the system campuses, improving academic programs and closing the minority enrollment gaps.

"We would like to be a leader and partner in the transformation of Texas," said Dr. Walter Wendler, the vice chancellor for planning and system integration. "This plan identifies key issues and looks ahead to what higher education should be doing in the next 15 to 20 years."

The plan is intended to help each

"We would like to be a leader and partner in the transformation of Texas."

— Dr. Walter Wendler
vice chancellor for planning and system integration

system university realize its unique role, Wendler said.

For Texas A&M, the system's flagship university, priorities include expanding research and increasing the graduate student population. Questions such as whether to build on current research excellence or open new areas of research are left to the University, and the plan sets a goal for A&M to become one of the top five universities in the country in total research funding.

The long-term agenda for A&M

has already been outlined in Vision 2020, said Dr. Ronald Douglas, executive vice president and provost.

"Vision 2020 is our marching orders, and it fits in with the more broad strategy set forth in the integrative plan," Douglas said.

A&M has already started working to increase collaboration with other system universities, such as the new joint doctoral program in horticulture with Texas A&M-Kingsville and a joint doctoral program in education

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EMS uses new technology to increase chances of survival

By NOEL FREEMAN
The Battalion

Emergency medical teams in rural areas will enter the realm of cyberspace as Texas A&M became part of a group developing technology that will bring level-one trauma centers into ambulances. Along with A&M, the University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center and the U.S. Army are working toward that goal.

Disaster Relief and Emergency Medical Services (DREAMS), also called Digital EMS, is designed to improve the chances of survival for trauma patients in rural areas by incorporating digital audio and video technology into ambulances.

Dr. Jim Wall, a professor with the Texas Center for Applied Technology at A&M, said accidents often occur in places like West Texas,

where the nearest level-one trauma center is an hour away. Wall said he is confident that technology can close that distance.

The technology brings into ambulance bays three digital cameras that broadcast pictures of patients via satellite to the nearest emergency room. Emergency technicians can also wear a head-mounted camera for mobile response at accident scenes or house calls.

"Digital EMS is designed for rural areas to allow physician intervention sooner," Wall said.

Other aspects of the project include an Internet uplink allowing emergency technicians to transmit vital signs and personal contact information to physicians.

Wall also said that in Texas counties, mortality-by-injury rates are much higher in rural

See EMS on Page 6A.