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**Light Rain**  
62° / 50°  
Forecast, 8:10

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THURSDAY  
NOVEMBER 9, 2000  
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# THE MORNING CALL

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ALLENTOWN  
LEHIGH  
BERKS

EDITION

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ELECTION \* 2000

## Local voters on edge

■ Uncertainty of election kept many glued to their TV sets as tallies teetered.

By **JEFF GELMAN**  
Of The Morning Call

Andrew Stammel felt tired, was sneezing and had a headache and runny nose. To top it off, the Muhlenberg College freshman knew he had to find himself out of bed at 7:30 a.m. for Spanish class.

Yet Stammel couldn't tear himself away from the television, where the most tightly contested presidential election in 30 years was playing out before the first-time voter's eyes.

Like many in the Lehigh Valley, the Al Gore supporter went to sleep in the early morning hours because it appeared that Texas Gov. George W. Bush would become the nation's 43rd president. And like most of the country, Stammel, of Stamford, N.Y., woke to the surprise news that the race remained a toss-up between Bush and the vice president.

So instead of discussing the merits of the next president, the country intensely watched the country intensely watched the country intensely watched the race with more nerves than Dorothy Park's jerky Wild Mouse ride.

"It's like a fever," Maria Verzino of Allentown said as she ate at the Bear Swamp Diner in Macungie. "Everyone's hot to know what's going to happen. And when the fever breaks, it's all over."

Patience certainly wasn't a virtue for many voters.

"I have that sense of unease," said Dr. Jeff Burtaine of Upper Merion Township.

Burtaine, a Gore supporter, says it will take a miracle for his candidate to beat Bush. The fact that it's such a tight race would make Gore's defeat even more painful, said the medical physician at Mack Trucks Inc.

"It's like being in a football game. You'd rather lose by 20 points [in regulation] than by one point in overtime," Burtaine said.

Kim Myerson appeared to be having a much easier time waiting for the outcome, which may come as early as today.

The Lower Macungie Township resident hit the golf course after getting five hours of sleep because she stayed up late watching the election.

"It's helped my golf game," Myerson joked Wednesday afternoon while taking a break from practicing chip shots at Brookside Country Club. "I'm not thinking so much about my grip."

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**DON FISHER / The Morning Call**  
Jeff Burtaine, a supporter of Al Gore, says it'll take a miracle for his candidate to prevail over Republican George W. Bush.



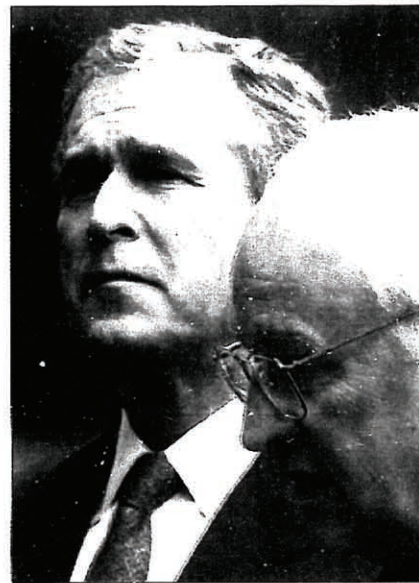
**DON FISHER / The Morning Call**  
Muhlenberg College junior Jennie Vroman, 20, of Reading, says she'll likely remember Election 2000 for the rest of her life.



**DON FISHER / The Morning Call**  
Maria Verzino, eating lunch with husband German Garzon and daughter Lucia Garzon, 4, compared the election to a fever.



**DON FISHER / The Morning Call**  
Muhlenberg College freshman Andrew Stammel, 18, found the election so riveting he couldn't pull himself away from the returns shown on television.



**M. SPENCER GREEN AND J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE / Associated Press**  
At top, George W. Bush (left) and Dick Cheney hold a Wednesday news conference. Above, Vice President Al Gore (right) and running mate Joseph Lieberman discuss the recount in Florida.

## Election candidate for history books

■ Gore had 48,591,357 votes, Bush 48,421,815 — just 169,542 apart. Result hinges on Florida's electoral strength.

By **RON FOURNIER**  
Of The Associated Press

In an election for the history books, George W. Bush cautiously declared victory in the presidential race Wednesday even as Al Gore portrayed the outcome as uncertain and said Florida's crucial recount should be conducted "without any rush to judgment." Democrats talked of a potential legal challenge and said it could be days or weeks before the nation knows its next president.

Bush was looking ahead to his transition to power, preparing to announce key roles in his administration for retired Gen. Colin Powell and former Transportation Secretary Andy Card. Running mate Dick Cheney, a former defense secretary under Bush's father, will head the GOP transition team, aides said. And yet election officials were reviewing vote totals that appeared to give Bush a narrow win in Florida. The state's 25 electoral votes would provide the margin of victory as both Bush and Gore were agonizingly close to the 270 required to win the White House. The AP tally showed Bush leading by about 1,700 popular votes out of 6 million cast in the state.

"It's going to be resolved in a quick way," Bush said. "I'm confident that the secretary and I will be the president-elect and the vice president-elect." If Bush ends up winning Florida and Gore's lead in the national popular vote holds, Bush would be the fourth man in history — the first in more than a century — to win the presidency despite coming in second in popular votes.

Calling this an "extraordinary moment in our democracy," Gore noted that the Constitution awards the presidency to the Electoral College winner, not necessarily the leading vote-getter. "We are now, as we have been from the moment of our founding,"

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## Thorpe school bus crashes, injuring at least 17 students

■ 1 has broken bone in his back. Car sideswiped vehicle in Penn Forest.

By **CHRIS PARKER**  
And **DAVID SLADE**  
Of The Morning Call

Jim Thorpe High School junior Regina Senavitis was driving to school Wednesday morning when she saw a school bus carrying her

friends crash, roll over and smack into a utility pole.

"I flipped out, because all my friends were on the bus," she said. Senavitis said she pulled over and helped comfort her friends along Route 903 in Penn Forest Township.

Emergency crews from about a half-dozen municipalities rushed to help at least 17 students who were hurt. One of them, a junior high pupil whose name was not disclosed, was seriously injured with

a broken vertebra, state police at Lehighton said. Another student suffered a fractured collarbone, and a girl was thrown from the bus, police said.

Police said the bus was sideswiped by an oncoming car in what one school official described as the worst district accident in 23 years.

Senavitis said she called her boyfriend, Glenn Berger, after seeing that his younger sister was among the injured.

Berger said his sister, 14-year-old Courtney Burke, was taken to Muncie Memorial Medical Center in Coaldale, where she was being

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## Federal court blocks execution of Pottsville killer Saranchak

Double murderer was supposed to die Wednesday, but judges issued stay pending more hearings.

The Associate's Press

**BELLEFOUNTAIN** — A federal appeals court blocked the execution of double murderer Daniel Saranchak, who was scheduled to die by lethal injection Wednesday night for the 1993 shooting deaths of his grandmother and uncle. However, prison officials continued to prepare for Saranchak's execution while the state attorney general's office appealed the ruling to the U.S.

Supreme Court

A three-judge panel of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued the stay pending further court hearings, although Saranchak has opposed all appeals on his behalf.

"I just don't want to do any time in prison. I have a choice of sitting or dying, and I'd rather not sit," Saranchak told U.S. District Judge Sylvia Rambo earlier Wednesday.

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