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Groton Area Schedule of Events

Monday, November 12, 2018

2:00pm: Veteran's Day Program, Groton Area School District

4:15pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game vs. Webster MS @ GHS Arena (7th Grade 4:15pm 8th Grade 5:30pm)

7:00pm- 9:00pm: School Board Meeting, Groton Area High School

Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Debate at Watertown High School

Region Oral Interp at Aberdeen Central High School

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

8:30am- 11:35am: 6th Grade MathCounts at Aberdeen Holgate Middle School

Friday, November 16, 2018

Debate & Oral Interp, McGovern at Mitchell High

LifeTouch Retake Pictures at Groton Area Schools

Saturday, November 17, 2018

Debate & Oral Interp, McGovern at Mitchell High School

Robotics at Harrisburg High School

Monday, November 19, 2018

5:00pm- 7:00pm: Family Night at GHS Gymnasium 7:00pm: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.



www.harrmotors.com 605-225-3078 ~ 1-800-658-3463

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Groton Post No. 39 American Legion



Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon to be given away



FREE ADMISSION

PRIZE!

Lunch served by Auxiliary



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Ancient marriage break-up law still on SD law books Despite controversy, 'alienation of affection' cases still occur State one of only seven still with 'alienation of affection' tort still active Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

Under the tenets of ancient English common law, when wives were legally considered the property of their husbands, a jilted husband could sue any man who deliberately broke up his marriage and stole away his wife.

Even as centuries have passed, and society has generally done away with the notion of wives as property, the state of South Dakota has kept a version of that civil law on the books.

The state is one of only seven U.S. states to retain the civil action known as "alienation of affection" in state law.

One element of the tort was argued before the South Dakota Supreme Court in October, though that case is unlikely to result in removal of the law in the state.

Meanwhile, a long-term controversy continues to rage in the South Dakota legal and legislative communities over whether the law is an appropriate way to resolve disputes over third-party involvement in breaking up a marriage and if financial damages should be rewarded as a result.

Cases typically surround marriages between well-heeled individuals who are worth suing when an affair occurs and a marriage ends.

A man was awarded \$950,000 in a 2002 case in which a South Dakota jury ruled that an orthopedic surgeon from Las Vegas had enticed the man's wife into an affair and broken up their marriage (the judgement was later reduced to \$400,000.)

A small number of alienation cases remain active in the state. The tort language was expanded to be gender-neutral by the state Legislature in 2002 by allowing women to sue another woman who has stolen away her husband.

Opponents of the alienation tort argue that it treats people as a commodity, puts a price tag on an emotion, and leads to humiliating public revelations of infidelity that can harm the adults and children involved far beyond that impacts of a typical divorce proceeding.

Roger Baron, a professor emeritus in the University of South Dakota Law School, said the alienation tort is unnecessary because divorce laws already enable fault to be determined and financial remedies to be assessed.

"It's kind of a mess, and it continues to be a mess," said Baron, author of the legal textbook "Cases and Materials on Family Law for the South Dakota Lawyer." "Just because something bad has happened to someone in life doesn't mean you have a cause to sue for it. It's not saying we're not sympathetic to you, but it's not something you should be able to file a lawsuit over."

That view is countered by experts who argue that marriage is a legal contract like any other agreement

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that can be broken and lead to damages when someone interferes. Some experts say alienation lawsuits are comparable to any malpractice or civil injury suit in which the actions of a person cause pain, suffering and financial loss to another.

Sioux Falls attorney Robert Christenson, a leading alienation of affection lawyer in the state, says alienation cases can be handled with dignity and serve as a way for a spouse whose marriage is broken up to be compensated financially for loss of love, companionship and an expectation of earnings.

"When you get in a car accident driving home and you have pain and suffering and emotionally you can't deal with the pain, that's no different than this," said Christenson. "In our system we compensate for loss with money. We're not compensating for a person, we're compensating for a relationship, a feeling of love and affection that is taken."

Christenson said alienation cases also allow for healing on the part of the jilted

spouse whose life has been intentionally turned upside down by the actions of another.

"People come in here, and they're hurting; they don't understand why this happened, and by and large they're trying to heal from it," he said. "These cases, believe it or not, advance the healing process for these people because their spirits are hurting."

Alienation of Affection

As common law, alienation of affaction brought by a deserted spot party alleged to be responsible for marriage. The defendant in an alienation suit is typically an adultioner, although for the street of the street o

Alienation of affection is one of the areas of law handled by Sioux Falls attorney Robert Christenson, and he uses his firm's website to explain some of the basic parameters of the law and its requirements. (Photo courtesy of Christenson Law LLC of Sioux Falls)

Rare cases, tough to prove

Alienation of affection is part of a group of English common law civil remedies known as "heart balm" laws, which include suing over violating a promise to marry or for so-called "criminal conversation" in which a man could sue any other man who had sex with his wife.

"The rationale is that your heart is broken and there's a balm you can put on that to soothe it, and the money is the balm," Baron said.

Most of those torts have been stricken from state and federal laws, but alienation has been retained in South Dakota, Hawaii, Illinois, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina and Utah.

The South Dakota alienation law is contained within Title 20, a section known as Personal Rights and Obligations. The law, 20-9-7, includes language forbidding "abduction or enticement" of a husband from his wife or a wife from her husband. The language specific to alienation forbids the "seduction of a wife, daughter or orphan sister," and the new language added in 2002 which now forbids "the seduction of a husband, son or orphan brother."

The text regarding children, Baron said, applies to rare instances where one parent may seek remedies from the other parent who turns a child against them or physically removes them from the relationship.

Supporters of alienation of affection argue that it is limited in scope due to the high legal standard which must be met in order for damages to be awarded.

The three main elements that must be proven in an alienation case are that the marriage in question contained a degree of love or affection prior to the outside affair; that the affair alienated or destroyed

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that love or affection; and that the defendant's malicious conduct contributed to or caused the loss of affection or love.

Jonathan Van Patten, a professor in the USD Law School who represented clients in alienation cases when he was in private practice, said the law essentially requires a plaintiff to show that someone who had an affair with a married person exploited a situation and "intentionally set out to" to break up or disrupt a happy marriage.

"It's not like if someone who's married has an affair you can get sued, because the requirements are much higher than that," Van Patten said. "You've really got to have a smoking gun."

Van Patten cited one case he tried in which a note from the defendant to the married woman specifically mentioned that he knew



Even at age 87, former South Dakota lawmaker Stan Adelstein remains active in statewide politics and government. Adelstein, shown here in the office of his Rapid City engineering firm, still hopes to encourage the Legislature to do away with the alienation of affection civil tort that allows jilted spouses to sue someone they claim broke up their marriage. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch)

the woman was married and that he didn't care if the affair broke up the marriage.

"It was clear he knew what he was doing, that he was actively wooing her even though she was married," Van Patten said.

Van Patten said he understands that some people are uncomfortable with alienation of affection as a legal concept. But he said the law simply addresses marriage as a form of legal contract not unlike a business or employment contract. He said ownership or treating a person as property is no longer part of the tort.

"We always defend it, not on that basis, but on the modern basis that the law in many, many instances, and generally in commercial context, the law protects contracts," he said. "We have other torts called interference with contractual relations, and we feel that a marriage contract should have no less protection than we afford commercial contracts for the sale of tomatoes or of any product."

Christenson said it's possible that someone could be sued for alienation of affection even if they never had sex with the married person but instead somehow turned one spouse emotionally away from the other.

Supreme Court hears cases

The South Dakota Supreme Court has been the final stop for several alienation of affection cases.

One element of alienation of affection was argued before the state Supreme Court in October. In the 2017 case of Cedar versus Johnson, a man in Frederick, S.D., argued that his wife was stolen from him by the owner of the bar where she worked, ultimately breaking up his marriage and leading to divorce. A trial judge dismissed the case because the plaintiff did not during the trial testify or make a statement as "to

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the pecuniary value of his loss of love and/or consortium, physical pain, mental agony, lacerated feelings, wounded sensibilities, humiliation, blow to honor, hurt to family life, suspicion cast on offspring, etc."

The judge ruled that by not placing a firm financial value on his loss, the plaintiff did not make a case for damages, and he threw out the case. The supreme court justices were asked in an appeal by the plaintiff's attorney to rule on whether the plaintiff or his attorney had a legal obligation to set a value on the woman's affection, rather than simply allowing the jury to decide the financial value of the affection or the marriage. A ruling on the case is expected in the coming months.

Through the years, the South Dakota Supreme Court justices have both defended and expressed dismay about the alienation of affection law. Writing on behalf of the majority that upheld the law in the 1981 case of Hunt versus Hunt, then-Justice Francis G. Dunn said the tort is relevant in the modern world to prevent attacks on the institution of marriage.

"Finally, because we happen to be living in a period of loose morals and frequent extramarital involvements is no reason for a court to put its stamp of approval on this conduct," Dunn wrote. "And I feel certain that a case will arise in the future where some party has so flagrantly broken up a stable marriage that we would rue the day that an alienation suit was not available to the injured party."

However, in the same case, then-Justice Frank "Rudy" Henderson wrote a scathing indictment of the tort. "The underlying rationale for alienation suits, that is, the preservation of the marriage, is ludicrous," Henderson wrote. "Alienation of affection ... as a remedy fosters bitterness, promotes vexatious lawsuits, uses the marriage as a means of blackmail and character assassination, puts the marriage in the marketplace, and generally exposes the marriage to a public cleansing with a price tag attached to it."

Christenson, the Sioux Falls lawyer, said that vindictiveness and revenge are not major components of the alienation cases he's handled over the years, and he rejects Justice Henderson's view of the tort.

"That doesn't happen when people come to see me," Christenson said. "Henderson was a bombastic judge, and the fact of the matter is, he's wrong."

If plaintiffs are seen as bringing the suit to harass or embarrass their former spouse, juries will feel compassion for the defendant and rule in their favor, he said.

About three-quarters of the alienation cases he takes are settled before trial, and most are taken on a contingency basis, Christenson said.

In the Hunt case in 1981, Henderson joined with then-Justice Roger L. Wollman to argue that the tort has outlived its usefulness, noting that alienation was one of several common law legal remedies that are "archaic holdovers from an era when wives were considered to be the chattel," or possession, of their spouse.

Christenson rejects the notion that modern alienation cases are sexist or view wives as being owned by their husbands. He said he has handled a few dozen cases in the past 15 years and that about half involved men suing men over alienation of a wife's affection and the other half included women who sued women over loss of a husband's affection.

"This idea that women are property, that may have been true at some point in time but it isn't true now," said Christenson, who receives about two or three inquiries about alienation cases each month and takes on four of five alienation cases a year.

Public shaming can result

Christenson acknowledged that – mostly due to rarity and a curiosity surrounding alienation cases -- the media tends to report on cases that make it to trial and that some intimate details of infidelity may be made public.

In a high-profile case in Rapid City in 2012, the Pennington County state's attorney at the time, Glenn Brenner, was sued by a man who claimed that Brenner engaged in a sexual affair with the man's wife and had alienated her affection. The case went to the Supreme Court before being sent back to a lower court for trial.

During the legal proceedings, media coverage revealed highly personal accounts of Brenner's relation-

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ship with the woman as well as details of her former marriage to the plaintiff. Court documents and media accounts, still readily available online, highlighted conversations the woman and her former husband had with a marriage counselor as part of a debate over whether the marriage was void of affection prior to her relationship with Brenner.

Reached in Texas, where he is now in private practice, Brenner did not want to comment on the case except to note that the trial judge threw out the alienation claim and ruled in Brenner's favor. He also noted that he is still married to the woman involved in the case.

Van Patten does not see the potential for public airing of personal details as a reason to vilify alienation as a tort, however. He argues that if people don't want intimate or racy details of infidelity aired in court or the media that they should behave as though their actions are being recorded and could someday be made public.

"I've always liked the idea that character is revealed when you act as if you know that somebody is watching, that you still should do the right thing," Van Patten said. "The corollary is, well, act as if people are watching, and if you ignore that, it's at your peril."

On the books to stay?

Former state Sen. Stan Adelstein, a moderate Rapid City Republican, tried twice during his long legislative career to strike the alienation language from South Dakota law. He failed both times.

"It's a ridiculous law; the concept of putting a value on a woman," Adelstein, 87, said during a recent interview at the office of his engineering firm in Rapid City. "The concept that you're going to get a certain payment for this woman to decide who she loves, and then decide what she's worth?"

While serving in the House of Representatives in 2002, Adelstein brought a bill to abolish the law in South Dakota. The measure failed, but a committee revived the bill and changed its course, ultimately in a way that may make it harder to strike the law in the future.

In amendments that ultimately were passed into law, legislators made the law applicable to both women and men who were lured away from their spouses. While the law long held that civil torts forbid the "abduction or enticement of a wife from her husband" and the "seduction of a wife," lawmakers made the tort gender-neutral by adding language that also forbids "the seduction of a husband" into the law.

Adelstein saw the gender-neutral language as a compromise to improve the tort, though he still opposes the concept of alienation of affection. He said the opposition to removing the law hinges on strong conservative beliefs of religious legislators.

"There is a reluctance among some legislators to allow people to behave in a way which to them violates the Bible, and a feeling that marriage is a sacred institution and that anyone who interferes with that deserves to be punished," Adelstein said. "It's a pecuniary penalty for violating not a social or economic contract, but a religious contract."

Baron said it appears as though the both the judiciary and the legislative branches of South Dakota government do not have the fortitude to abolish the alienation tort because on a base level it enables punishment for adultery.

"Both of them want it to be gone but neither of them is willing to bite the bullet and do it," he said.

During the recent arguments before the state Supreme Court, attorney Thomas Cogley of Aberdeen represented the defendant and asked the justices to not allow the case to move forward. In his arguments, Cogley also asked the justices to abrogate the tort entirely. Reached by phone, Cogley told News Watch he did not want to comment on the case or his request to abolish the tort.

Adelstein said he plans to contact lawmakers before the 2019 legislative session, possibly a female legislator, and encourage them to introduce a bill to abolish alienation of affection from state law.

Yet Van Patten said that for the time being, he does not expect the Legislature to eliminate from the law. "There is no active lobby or lobbyist for adulterers, so it's not like anybody wants to come out and go out on a limb and say this tort is too hard on adulterers," he said. "There's no politics that support that, so it's likely to stay that way for a while."

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Freshmen come in clutch for Northern State in 23-14 win over Concordia Moorhead

Aberdeen, S.D. – In their 2018-19 season opener, the Northern State University wrestling team defeated Concordia Moorhead 23-14. The Wolves battled from behind, improving to 1-0 on the year.

NSU was down 8-0 heading into the third match of the evening. Senior Kaden Campbell got the ball rolling for the Wolves with a 10-2 major decision win over Nick Gravdahl. Campbell scored early and often recording a takedown in each of the three periods, as well as escapes in the second and third. He sealed the major with a penalty point and riding time point in the third.

Diego Gallegos continued to chip away at the Concordia lead in the 197-pound match, defeating Jacob Arends. Gallegos took a quick 3-point lead in the first with an awarded penalty point and a takedown. Arends answered with two escapes in the first and second, cutting the lead to one. The sophomore chose down to begin the third, and extended his lead with a takedown, ultimately taking the match 4-2.

The Wolves were within one heading into the 285-pound bout, however the Cobbers extended their team score lead with a decision victory.

Following the 5-minute intermission, freshman Dayne Morton grabbed his first collegiate victory with a 6-5 win over Jake Nohre. It was a back and forth battle through three periods with Morton scoring three points in the first, one in the second, and two in the third. His third period takedown sealed the win, and brought the Wolves within one as the scoreboard read 11-10 Concordia.

NSU fell by decision in the 133-pound match, but rallied back in the 140-pound weights with back-to-back wins by freshmen Kolton Roth and Caden Moore.

Roth recorded the team's second extra point win of the dual, defeating Bret Wilson 10-2. The wrestlers with tied heading into the third after a takedown by Roth in the first, and reversal by Wilson in the second. Roth took things into his own hands starting the third period on bottom. He was awarded a penalty point and rallied from there with a takedown and four point nearfall. He added a point of riding time after accumulating over 4-minutes through the first two periods, sealing the major decision win.

The two teams were tied at 14-all heading into the final two weights of the evening. Moore took a 2-1 lead over Ty Johnson through the first period and chose down to begin the second. He broke through with an escape at the 1:20 mark, extending his lead to 3-1. Moore road Johnson out through a majority of the third, and despite giving up an escape, came away with the 3-2 win and what ended up being the decisive match for the Wolves.

Walker Carr took the 6-point forfeit victory in the 157-pound match as the Cobbers decided to wrestle open.

Northern returns to the mat this Saturday for the DWU Open from Mitchell. Competition is set to begin at 9 a.m. from the Christen Family Athletic Center.

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Today in Weather History

November 9, 1977: An intense early winter storm moved northeast from Colorado to Iowa during the morning of November 9th, and then to Lake Superior by the morning of November 10th. In most areas, the precipitation began late on the 8th as rain with temperatures in the 50s, changing to snow early on Wednesday the 9th, with the storm continuing through Thursday the 10th. In west central Minnesota, some freezing rain also occurred before it changed to all snow. As the storm intensified, the winds in the eastern half of South Dakota increased with some gusts as high as 60-70 miles per hour with widespread visibilities reduced to zero in blowing snow. In west central Minnesota, north to northwest winds of 60 to 80 mph reduced visibility to zero and piled snow into eight-foot drifts. The temperature dropped rapidly into the 20s. Many roads throughout the eastern part of South Dakota and west central Minnesota were blocked, and the heavy wet snow immobilized snow plows. Many cars and trucks were snowbound on the roads and highways. Approximately 100 cars and trucks were stalled on Interstate 90, east of Murdo. Near Fergus Falls in western Minnesota, two trucks loaded with turkeys became stuck, and half the birds were frozen. Many schools were closed on the 9th and 10th. Snowfall amounts in the eastern half of the state were greater than four inches. A band of heavy snow, ten inches or more, extended from Bridgewater to Howard to Clear Lake into parts of west central Minnesota. The high winds also destroyed a 1400-foot TV tower at Garden City. There was some loss of the corn crop. Sunflowers comprised the greatest loss because they had not been completely harvested. Reports of livestock losses were minimal. Some storm total snowfall amounts include; 15 inches in Watertown; 14 inches in Sisseton; 12 inches in Clear Lake and Wheaton; 10.5 inches in Castlewood; and 9 inches near Raymond and Bryant.

1864: On Election Night, a violent tornado strikes a ferry on Mississippi River near Chester, Illinois blowing away all but the hull. The boiler and engines are found up the bluff. Half of Chester was destroyed, and twenty die during the storm.

1913: The Great Lakes Storm of 1913 was a blizzard with hurricane-force winds that devastated the Great Lakes Region, sinking as many as 19 ships and stranded 19 others. This storm would be the deadliest and most destructive natural disaster ever to hit the Great Lakes.

1926: An estimated F3 to F4 tornado tore through La Plata, Maryland, killing 14 individuals at a small school. This storm caused 17 deaths and injured 65 others.

1913 - The freshwater fury , a rapidly deepening cyclone, caused unpredicted gales on the Great Lakes. Eight large ore carriers on Lake Erie sank drowning 270 sailors. Cleveland OH reported 17.4 inches of snow in 24 hours, and a total of 22.2 inches, both all-time records for that location. During the storm, winds at Cleveland averaged 50 mph, with gusts to 79 mph. The storm produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Buffalo NY, and buried Pickens WV under three feet of snow. (9th-11th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1982 - Seven tornadoes touched down in southern California, three of which began as waterspouts. The waterspouts moved ashore at Point Mugu, Malibu, and Long Beach. The Long Beach tornado traveled inland ten miles causing much damage. (The Weather Channel)

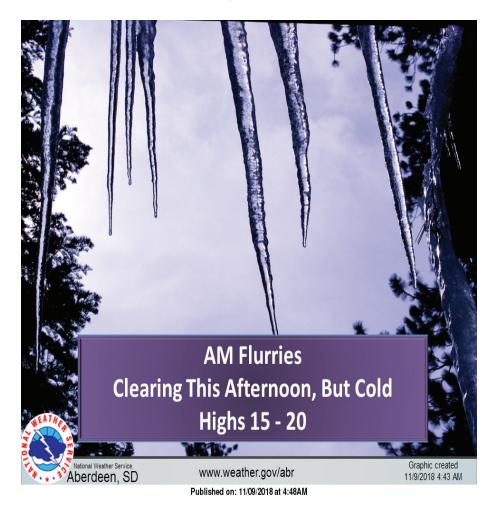
1987 - Showers and gusty winds associated with a cold front helped extinguish forest fires in the Appalachian Region and clear out smoke in the eastern U.S. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains from eastern Texas to the Tennessee Valley. Longview TX received 3.12 inches of rain, including two inches in two hours, Tupelo MS was soaked with 2.80 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a strong cold front produced severe weather from eastern Oklahoma to central Indiana. Hail more than two inches in diameter was reported around Tulsa OK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - High winds prevailed along the eastern slopes of the Rockies from the afternoon of the 8th into the early morning hours of the 9th. Winds of 50 to 80 mph prevailed across the northwest chinook area of Wyoming, with gusts to 100 mph. Winds in Colorado gusted to 97 mph at Fritz Peak (located near Rollinsville) the evening of the 8th, and early in the morning on the 9th, gusted to 78 mph west of Fort Collins. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today Tonight Saturday Saturday Veterans Night Day 30% Chance Increasing Chance Snow Slight Chance Mostly Cloudy Flurries Clouds Snow then then Mostly Mostly Cloudy Cloudy and Blustery High: 19 °F Low: 7 °F High: 26 °F Low: 20 °F High: 27 °F



Low pressure exits this morning taking any remaining flurries with it. As high pressure moves in this afternoon, fewer clouds are expected. Temperatures will remain below average through Tuesday.

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Yesterday's Weather High Outside Temp: 24 °F at 2:49 PM

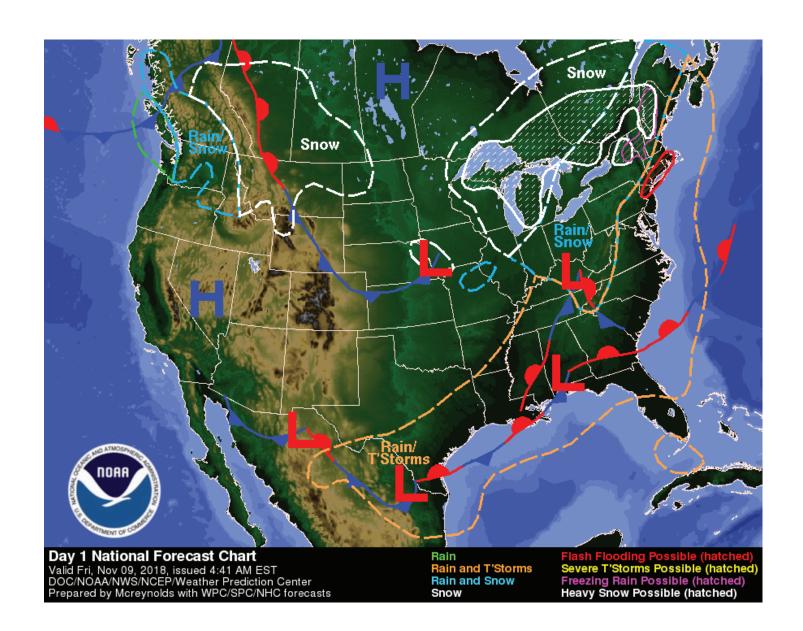
High Outside Temp: 24 °F at 2:49 PM Low Outside Temp: 7 °F at 10:26 PM High Gust: 17 mph at 5:29 PM

Precip: 0.00 More dusting of snow on the ground

Today's Info Record High: 70° in 1903

Record High: 70° in 1903 Record Low: 0 in 1966 Average High: 44°F Average Low: 22°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.24 Precip to date in Nov.: 0.76 Average Precip to date: 20.71 Precip Year to Date: 15.81 Sunset Tonight: 5:10 p.m. Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:26 a.m.



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THE MEMORIES OF A HOLY GOD

It almost seems contradictory when we read these words of the Psalmist: For He remembered His holy promise. Its as if God were in a grocery store and just as He began to walk through the parking lot to His car He stopped and said, Oh my. I forgot the milk! Im glad I thought of it. But, not so.

As Psalm 105 ends, the author reminds us of the faithfulness of our God. So, he wanted to remind the readers, once again, that whether or not they were faithful to Him, He was faithful to them. He made a covenant with Abraham and through the many generations from the day that covenant was made until that very moment, He was always with them. When they felt alone, He made His presence known. When they needed protection, He was there to guard them. When they were hungry, He provided food to nourish them. When they were weak and weary, they could rely on His power.

God has been, is and will be true to what He says. And, He is faithful to keep His word to whomever He gives it. Wherever we look in history - in times of defeat and delay - it does not mean that God has forgotten what He has promised. God is always faithful to His holy promises. His promises are holy and sacred because they come from a God who is holy and sacred. Through days that seemed unbearable and nights that had no stars, God was always with them - working out His will in His way according to His plan.

God calls us to Himself to make us like Himself. He will do whatever it takes to restore His image in us. Remember: God is a working in us God and always faithful.

Prayer: Give us patience and perseverance, faith and willingness, hope and trust, Lord, as we become like You. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 105:42 For He remembered His holy promise to his servant Abraham.

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2018 Groton SD Community EventsGroton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)

- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
 - 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
 - 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
 - Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
 - SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
 - 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
 - 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
 - 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
 - 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
 - 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
 - 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party
 - Best Ball Golf Tourney
 - SDSU Golf Tourney
 - Sunflower Golf Tourney
 - Santa Claus Day
 - Fireman's Stag
 - Tour of Homes
 - Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
 - School Events

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News from the App Associated Press

Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL
Class 11A(equals)
State Championship
Tea Area 39, Dell Rapids 7
Class 9AA(equals)
State Championship
Bon Homme 35, Kimball/White Lake 20
Class 9A(equals)
State Championship
Canistota 46, Howard 14

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, https://scorestream.com/

Volleyball

Class AA

State Quarterfinal

Brookings def. Aberdeen Central, 25-23, 25-17, 17-25, 25-15

Huron def. Brandon Valley, 25-17, 25-9, 25-12

Mitchell def. Pierre, 27-25, 25-11, 25-22

Rapid City Stevens def. Sturgis Brown, 25-9, 25-11, 25-14

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-16, 20-25, 25-7, 25-15

Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Rapid City Central, 21-25, 25-19, 25-13, 25-21

Sioux Falls Washington def. Spearfish, 25-6, 25-9, 25-10

Watertown def. Harrisburg, 32-30, 25-23, 25-23

South Dakota St. wins 78-61, extends home win streak to 22

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 23 points and pulled down 13 rebounds and South Dakota State extended the nation's longest current home winning streak to 22 with a 78-61 victory over Alabama State on Thursday night.

Daum was 7 of 16 from the floor and made all seven of his free throws while recording his 34th career double-double.

Skyler Flatten added 17 points, Tevin King made all four of his field-goal attempts in scoring 12 and Matt Dentlinger scored 10 for the Jackrabbits (2-0), who made 23 of 25 free throws.

Jacoby Ross was 9-of-20 shooting, including 7 of 15 from the arc in scoring 25 points for the Hornets (0-2). Braden Johnson made all five of his shots and added 10 points.

South Dakota State led from the opening minute with Flatten scoring the game's first six points. A 9-0 run late in the first half led to a 54-28 lead at the break.

David Jenkins hit a pair of 3-pointers to open the second half in an 11-3 run as the Jackrabbits took their largest lead of 24.

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Rapid City man pleads not guilty to trying to kill doctor

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man has pleaded not guilty to charges he tried to get a gun to kill a doctor who treated his wife.

Sixty-two-year-old William Thoman appeared in court Thursday to hear the charges against him of attempted first-degree murder and criminal solicitation.

Thoman's attorney moved to dismiss the criminal solicitation charge, arguing that Thoman was charged incorrectly and that there was no evidence of a plan.

Prosecutors argued that Thoman tried to get a weapon.

KNBN-TV reports no decision was made about dismissing the charge.

Thoman is accused of saying he wanted to kill the Rapid City Regional Hospital doctor for incorrectly treating his wife, who recently died of cancer.

Another court hearing is set for Dec. 6. Thoman remains in the Pennington County Jail on \$500,000 bond.

Information from: KNBN-TV, http://www.newscenter1.com

Sioux Falls manages contaminated water from toxic foam

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls officials are grappling with well shutdowns as the extent of the city's water contamination from decades of firefighting foam use remains unclear.

Sioux Falls currently has 19 municipal wells sitting dormant in the aftermath of innumerable gallons of toxic firefighting foam that contaminated the grounds of the city airport nearly 50 years ago, the Rapid City Journal reported. Chemicals linked to cancer and other health issues were found to have contaminated 15 municipal wells, including 10 that have concentrations above what the Environmental Protection Agency deems safe.

About 28 percent of the city's water production from the Big Sioux aquifer is shut down.

The South Dakota Air National Guard and the Sioux Falls Fire Department both used the toxic firefighting foam for many years near the airport, which led to the contamination of the city's drinking water. But the scope of the issue is still unknown.

"We really haven't determined the extent of release yet," said Capt. Jessica Bak, a public affairs officer with the Air Guard at the Sioux Falls Regional Airport.

In 2013, the city's water purification plant found chemicals from firefighting foam, known as per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), at levels below the EPA's health advisory level. The level of exposure beneath the EPA's threshold means there aren't expected adverse health risks.

The city responded to the findings by testing all municipal wells to identify the source and shutting down every well where the chemicals were found.

City engineer Tim Stefanich, who oversees the water system, acknowledged that "there was a little bit of time between" finding the contamination, determining its source and deciding to shut off wells. But he said that there was minimal fear of an immediate health risk with the low levels of exposure.

The city tested for PFAS again in 2014 as part of an EPA-mandated water sampling program, but didn't detect any of the chemicals. The city tested again in 2016, when some low levels were found.

The city shut off more wells, leading to the 19 wells offline today. Water leaving the city's purification plant is now sampled monthly, and no water samples have contained the chemicals since 2016.

Stefanich and Trent Lubbers, the city's utilities operation administrator, believe the contaminated water situation is under control.

The city has been purchasing water from the Lewis and Clark Regional Water system, a nonprofit, whole-sale provider of treated water. But Sioux Falls will likely need a more sustainable option.

"They have the short term kind of covered," said Mark Meyer, drinking water program administrator for the state's Department of Environment & Natural Resources. "But as we march into the future, having 28 percent of their well capacity offline. the future is going to come sooner than later."

____ Information from: Rapid City Journal, http://www.rapidcityjournal.com

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Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Yankton, Nov. 6

MMC Reaches Out To The World

During the last few weeks (and really, a lot longer than that), our nation's political discourse has been infested with an undercurrent — and occasionally, an all-out deluge — of xenophobia, of animus toward outsiders, of rhetoric that reveals a dark and closed side of the world view some Americans have.

It's been disheartening, to be honest, and just plain discouraging.

However, citizens from other countries can also present opportunities that can be embraced as positives. For instance, a program has been implemented this fall at Yankton's Mount Marty College (MMC) to deal with an influx of international students.

As reported in Tuesday's Press & Dakotan, MMC has instituted a network of "welcome families," who are local residents who volunteer to embrace these new students — there are 17 new international students this year — from other lands in order to give them a more welcoming and secure feeling to this place the rest of us call home.

This program allows Yankton to put its best foot forward — as it has done before with two recent international archery tournaments, for example — and permits people here to do what they do best: to be the welcoming, friendly face of this community.

The students interviewed for Tuesday's story said they deeply appreciate the program, as do the local families involved. For the former, it's a warm hand of friendship in an otherwise unfamiliar environment; for the latter, it's a chance to broaden their boundaries as they extend their hospitality.

It's a win-win for everyone.

And, indeed, it actually feels good, considering some of the aforementioned political rhetoric that dominated the news in the waning days of the midterm campaigns.

More than that, it's a good move for Mount Marty, which is gradually expanding its reach on a global scale. Earlier this semester, the school announced an arrangement with the University of Southern Bohemia in the Czech Republic that can see both students and faculty involved in exchange ventures. Also, the influx of foreign students opens up new pipelines of potential recruitment for the school in other countries. As such, MMC is starting to think in broader terms while it also works to cultivate stronger recruitment closer to home.

The program does indeed serve as a reminder that we can welcome the world, find connections and commonalities with those who are different from us, and see that we can be stronger together than apart. MMC's global outreach and welcome-family program help do just that.

American News, Aberdeen, Nov. 8

Lovrien was the epitome of a public servant

In South Dakota we expect plenty from our public servants.

We expect them to be involved, intelligent and impartial.

Larry Lovrien met each of those thresholds. And that's why so many parts of our community are hurting after his unexpected death last week.

A look at his robust resume plainly reveals how much he did for so many in Aberdeen and beyond:

- Long-time magistrate and circuit court judge.
- State's attorney and deputy state's attorney.
- Soccer coach, advocate and aficionado.
- Brown County Commission candidate.
- Presentation College instructor.
- Member of the James Valley Water Development District Board of Directors.
- President of both the Aberdeen and state soccer associations.

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Active community member.

For many, Lovrien was best known as a retired judge. In his career, he handled everything from traffic offenses to a murder case.

Lovrien always had control of his courtroom. And Judge Jack Von Wald, who worked with Lovrien in the judicial system for more than 15 years, said he was known for thoroughly researching cases before issuing rulings. That's the mark of not only dedication, but a desire for justice.

Char Cornelius, chairwoman of the Brown County Republicans, called Lovrien a fixer. Before his time on the water district board and at the Brown County State's Attorney's Office, both groups had dealt with some tumultuous times. Lovrien calmed the waters.

Friend and veteran Brown County Commissioner Duane Sutton recalled Lovrien's many contributions to Aberdeen soccer as a coach, organizer and much more.

For people who are not involved with the sport, that work might be easy to overlook. But it shouldn't be. Lovrien's love for soccer helped lay the groundwork for the hundreds of kids who today scamper across Aberdeen's fields nearly every Saturday and Sunday the weather allows.

Few people are involved in such a wide swath of activities. That makes his loss substantial.

We offer our condolences to those who knew Lovrien well, particularly his family. We thank them from sharing his time and many talents with us.

Larry was the epitome of a true public servant. He was both well-liked and well-respected. He will be missed.

Madison Daily Leader, Madison, Nov. 6

New weather warnings could cut accidents

We appreciate a new winter weather warning recently added by the National Weather Service. "Snow squall" warnings will be now be issued during periods of brief but heavy snowfall.

According to the weather service, this refers to "sudden white-out conditions that move in and move on quickly. They typically only last 15 to 30 minutes and often cause flash freezing of road surfaces in addition to the whiteout conditions."

Normally, only predictions of longer periods of snow or blizzards have been issued by the weather service. A warning of this type of weather event is particularly useful for those of us in the northern Plains. We drive longer distances between cities, and there are fewer highway lights that would help in visibility. We've all been in white-out conditions when we can't see cars or objects in any direction, and we worry about a reckless driver coming up behind us.

Snowfall rates can range between one to three inches per hour during in a snow squall. Visibility less than a guarter of a mile is also common within such winter storms.

The key use for us will be not to drive. A squall wouldn't pose any particular risk for homeowners, and it typically wouldn't cause ice buildup on power lines that might cause an outage.

The new warning went into effect at the start of the month after successful testing last winter. Warnings will be issued 10 to 20WateroW minutes ahead of an approaching squall.

We'll watch and see how many warnings are issued this winter. It will be hard to estimate how many accidents are avoided by such warnings, but we're eager to see if they are considered effective by winter's end.

Record soybean harvest expected amid continued trade dispute

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture says farmers are expected to harvest the largest soybean crop on record but must deal with a constricted market in which to sell the crop because of President Donald Trump's tariff battle with China.

In its latest update released Thursday, the USDA places the expected soybean harvest at 4.6 billion bushels, the largest ever.

Illinois leads soybean production with 688 million bushels and Iowa is second.

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Selling soybeans to China has nearly halted with the tariff dispute resulting in a growing stockpile and the lowest prices for farmers in more than a decade.

Corn production is estimated at 14.6 billion bushels, the second largest crop on record.

Iowa remains the nation's leading corn producer with an expected 2.5 billion bushels.

Trump to pardon 2 South Dakota-raised Thanksgiving turkeys

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — State tourism officials are soliciting names for the two South Dakota-raised turkeys that will be pardoned by President Donald Trump.

The two birds were raised by a turkey farmer near Huron. Before the turkeys make their way to Washington for the pardoning ceremony, they will be sent off with a tour of their hometown and local school visits on Nov. 14.

South Dakota Tourism Secretary James Hagen says tourism officials are "excited and honored" that the South Dakota birds will be on the national stage leading up to Thanksgiving.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is asking for the public's help in naming the two turkeys. Names can be submitted online until Nov. 11

The top pairs of names will be sent to the White House for consideration.

Man accused of trying to run over officers in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 35-year-old man is jailed after Sioux Falls authorities say he tried to run over law officers, prompting one officer to fire a shot into the suspect's van.

Police say a citizen called police to report parole absconder Phillip His Law was at an apartment building in Sioux Falls. Officers from the Sioux Falls Area Fugitive Task Force tried to arrest His Law on Wednesday, but he allegedly tried to run over two officers.

An officer fired a shot at the van to try to stop it. Police say His Law then sped away. Authorities received several reckless driving reports involving the van, which was involved in a hit-and-run.

The Argus Leader reports police found the van and arrested His Law. He faces charges including aggravated assault and reckless driving.

Daugaard orders flags at half-staff for shooting victims

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard has asked that all U.S. and South Dakota flags be flown at half-staff as a sign of respect for the victims of the shooting in Thousand Oaks, California.

The order is in effect until sunset Saturday. The governor's directive is in accordance with a proclamation by President Donald Trump.

Twelve people were killed when a hooded Marine combat veteran opened fire during college night at a country music bar in Thousand Oaks, sending hundreds fleeing in panic before apparently taking his own life. The motive for the attack is not yet known.

Body of missing Yankton woman found in Nebraska

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Sheriff's officials say the body of a missing Yankton woman has been found in rural Nebraska.

The Yankton County Sheriff's Office says foul play is suspected in the death of 59-year-old Phyllis Hunhoff. She had been missing since leaving her mother's house in Utica, north of Yankton, on Sunday.

Authorities say she was found dead Wednesday in her car in Knox County, Nebraska, on the Santee Sioux Reservation.

An investigation is ongoing with the Yankton County Sheriff's Office, Knox County Sheriff's Office, Nebraska State Patrol, the FBI and Santee Tribal Police.

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Domestic assault defendant accused of witness tampering

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man accused of domestic assault is facing additional charges of witness tampering.

Authorities say 34-year-old Nicholas Beesley tried to get the victim, a recovering addict, to relapse so she couldn't testify against him in court because she would be in jail or in treatment.

A Minnehaha County grand jury indicted Beesley on charges of witness tampering, violating a protection order and criminal solicitation of a felony. Beesley has pleaded not guilty. He was arrested in March on charges of domestic assault and ordered to have no contact with the victim. She told law enforcement Beesley had called her several times from jail.

The Argus Leader says Beesley pleaded guilty to manslaughter in 2006 for fatally shooting a 22-year-old man. He was sentenced to five years in prison.

Information from: Argus Leader, http://www.argusleader.com

Man accused of sex crimes in 4 counties reaches plea deal

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — An Aberdeen man facing 28 sexual assault-related charges in four counties has pleaded guilty to two counts during court appearances this week in Brookings and Webster.

The American News reports 59-year-old Gregory Rutherford is charged in Brown, Day, Brookings and Codington counties. Charges in Codington and Day counties will be dismissed as part of a plea agreement with prosecutors.

Rutherford faces a total of up to 20 years in prison on the two counts in Brookings and Brown counties. He's to be sentenced in late January.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, http://www.aberdeennews.com

Army veteran elected leader of the Oglala Sioux tribe

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — Army veteran Julian Bear Runner has been elected leader of the Oglala Sioux tribe.

The Rapid City Journal reports that unofficial results from Tuesday's election show that the 33-year-old Bear Runner received 59 percent of the vote in his race against Richard Zephier, a 73-year-old with decades of leadership experience.

Current tribal President Scott Weston did not seek a second term.

Bear Runner served three years in the Army's 101st Airborne Division. He also has worked as a corrections officer, dispatcher for the ambulance service and compliance technician at the tribal clinical lab.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, http://www.rapidcityjournal.com

Man accused in mall assault sentenced to prison

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of sexually assaulting a teenage girl in a bathroom at a Sioux Falls mall has been sentenced to an additional two and a-half years behind bars.

Twenty-year-old Christopher Dale pleaded guilty to child abuse in July. Charges of second- and third-degree rape were dismissed. Prosecutors say Dale met the girl on Facebook. The Argus Leader reports court documents say the 16-year-old girl has cognitive issues and functions at a fourth- or fifth-grade level.

A judge sentenced Dale this week to five years in the state penitentiary with two and a-half years suspended and credit for 54 days already served.

Dale was charged after the teen told her caregiver and a family member that he assaulted her at the Empire Mall in December of 2016.

____ Information from: Argus Leader, http://www.argusleader.com

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Soybean harvest in South Dakota nearing the end

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's soybean harvest is nearing the end.

The federal Agriculture Department in its weekly crop report says 92 percent of the crop is in the bin, slightly behind the average pace.

Other late-season harvest progress reports include 45 percent for sunflowers, 59 percent for corn and 63 percent for sorghum. All are behind average.

Subsoil moisture is rated 69 percent adequate to surplus, and topsoil moisture is 85 percent in those categories.

Pasture and range conditions are rated 47 percent in good to excellent condition, up over the week.

Sioux Falls woman admits to embezzling more than \$1 million

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls woman who admitted embezzling from Furniture Mart over the course of six years has been sentenced to serve nine years in prison and repay more than \$1.1 million.

The Argus Leader reports 47-year-old Kristi Burrow stole money from the business from about 2011 to 2017, until accounting discrepancies were discovered. She pleaded guilty in August to aggravated grand theft.

Burrow said she spent the money on personal bills and to finance a shopping addiction.

Information from: Argus Leader, http://www.argusleader.com

Australian police say stabbing attack linked to terrorism By TREVOR MARSHALLSEA, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — A knife-wielding man stabbed three people, one fatally, in Australia's second-largest city on Friday in an attack police linked to terrorism.

The attack during the afternoon rush hour brought central Melbourne to a standstill. Hundreds of people watched from behind barricades as police tried to apprehend the attacker.

Police said the man got out of a pickup truck, which then caught fire, and attacked three bystanders with a knife. He also attempted to attack police who arrived on the scene before being shot in the chest by an officer.

The suspect died later at a hospital. One of the victims also died, while the two others were hospitalized. Police said the attacker's vehicle contained several barbecue gas cylinders in the back. A bomb squad rendered them safe without any exploding.

Victoria state police Commissioner Graham Ashton said the suspect, who was originally from Somalia, was known to police and the incident was being treated as terrorism.

"From what we know of that individual we are treating this as a terrorism incident," Ashton told reporters, adding that the police counterterrorism command was working on the case, as well as homicide detectives.

"He's known to police mainly in respect to relatives that he has which certainly are persons of interest to us, and he's someone that accordingly is know to both Victorian police and the Federal intelligence authorities," he said.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement released through its Aamaq media arm. It said the man was "one of Islamic State fighters" and had responded to IS calls for attacks in countries that are part of the international coalition fighting the militants in Syria and Iraq.

IS, which has suffered heavy battlefield setbacks in the past year, often claims attacks in an opportunistic vein.

The attack occurred on the eve of a busy weekend in Melbourne, with a major horse race scheduled for Saturday and a national league soccer match the following day. Sunday is also Remembrance Day, when memorial ceremonies for World War I are held.

Ashton said police were "doing security reassessments of these events in light of what's occurred," but

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there was "no ongoing threat we're currently aware of in relation to people surrounding this individual."

Prime Minister Scott Morrison condemned the "evil and cowardly attack."

"Australians will never be intimidated by these appalling attacks and we will continue to go about our lives and enjoy the freedoms that the terrorists detest," he said in a statement.

One witness said one of the stabbing victims, believed to be a man in his 60s who later died, was stabbed in the face, and that desperate efforts were made to save him.

"Because he was on his stomach, they turned him over to see if he's all right, he was still alive," the witness, Markel Villasin, told Australian Associated Press.

"He was breathing and he was bleeding out."

Video from the scene showed a man swinging a knife at two police officers near a burning car before he was shot.

In December 2014, a 17-hour siege in which a gunman took 18 people hostage in a Sydney cafe ended with two hostages dead and the gunman killed by police. Though the erratic gunman demanded that police deliver him an Islamic State flag at the outset of the crisis, there was no evidence he had established contact with the militant group.

However, at a later inquest, the coroner of New South Wales state said the gunman's actions fell "within the accepted definition of terrorism."

Melbourne was also the scene of two fatal car-ramming incidents last year, but neither was linked by police to terrorism.

Eagle Scout, aspiring lawyer, father killed in bar attack By JONATHAN J. COOPER, AMY TAXIN and REBECCA BOONE, Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — One was a veteran police officer who didn't hesitate to run toward danger. Another was an art student who worked with children at her church. Others were a Navy veteran, an a cappella singer who worked as a caregiver, and a security guard with a "big personality" who was known for making sure everyone got home safely.

They were among a dozen people killed in a shooting at a country music bar in Southern California. Authorities believe the gunman, Ian David Long, ultimately killed himself.

The victims' stories began to emerge Thursday. It was going to be a "very difficult day for many people," said Andrew Fox, mayor of Thousand Oaks, California, where the attack happened Wednesday night.

RON HELUS: 'COP'S COP'

Ventura County sheriff's Sgt. Ron Helus was talking to his wife when calls started coming in about a shooting at the Borderline Bar & Grill.

"Hey, I got to go handle a call. I love you. I'll talk to you later," he told her, according to Sheriff Geoff Dean.

It was the last time she would talk to her husband.

Helus rushed toward the shooting and immediately exchanged fire with the shooter inside the bar, Dean said. Helus was hit multiple times and died at a hospital.

Sqt. Eric Buschow, who said Helus was a friend, described him as a "cop's cop."

"The fact that he was the first in the door doesn't surprise me at all," he said. "He's just one of those guys that wouldn't hesitate in a situation."

Helus took up fly fishing a few years ago and loved pursuing the hobby in the Sierra Nevada mountains with his grown son, Buschow said.

"He was just a great guy, a gentle soul," Buschow said. "Patient. Calm no matter what. When you call 911, he's one of the guys you want showing up."

Helus was on the SWAT team for much of his career and worked in narcotics and investigations, he said. "If you were a victim of a crime, you want him investigating the case," Buschow said. "He would go to the ends of the Earth to find a suspect."

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Thousands of people lined streets and many others pulled over to honor the fallen officer during a somber 25-mile (40-kilometer) procession that took Helus' body from a hospital to a coroner's office.

Dean choked back tears talking about Helus and called him a hero.

"He went in there to save people and paid the ultimate price," he said.

CODY COFFMAN: 'THE BIG BROTHER THAT MY KIDS NEED'

Cody Coffman, who had just turned 22, was talking with Army recruiters and preparing to fulfill his dream of serving his country, said his father, Jason Coffman, who wept as he told a group of reporters that his first-born son was among the victims.

Cody adored his siblings — three brothers between ages 6 and 9 — and he couldn't wait for the birth of a sister, due on Nov. 29, said Jason Coffman of Camarillo.

"Cody was the big brother that my kids need," he said. "He was so excited to have his first sister and now she'll never know ..."

He trailed off, sobbing, then said, "Oh, Cody, I love you, son."

He said his son was passionate about baseball, serving as an umpire for a little league, and they went fishing together.

"That poor boy would come with me whether he liked it or not," he said. "That's the kind of stuff I am truly going to miss."

Jason Coffman said he last spoke to his son Wednesday night before Cody headed to the bar where the gunman opened fire.

"The first thing I said was, 'Please don't drink and drive," he said. "The last thing I said was, 'Son, I love you."

JUSTIN MEEK: 'FULL OF LIGHT AND HAPPINESS'

Newly graduated from California Lutheran University, Justin Meek cared for children with special needs, performed as a singer and worked at the Borderline bar.

It was there he "heroically saved lives" before being killed, Cal Lutheran President Chris Kimball said in a statement. He didn't provide details.

The campus chapel overflowed Thursday with people attending a service of mourning. Meek, 23, majored in criminal justice and graduated in May, school spokeswoman Karin Grennan said.

Since last summer, Meek had worked for Channel Island Social Services as a respite caregiver, supporting families with children with special needs, mostly developmental disabilities, chief executive Sharon Francis said.

"Parents just adored him. He was able to bond with their kids," she said. "He was just an all-around guy." Danielle Gallo, who also works at the family-run organization, said he was dedicated to the kids he worked with.

"You could tell he really had a heart for what he did," she said, sobbing.

Meek also toured professionally as an a cappella singer, said family friend Patrick Ellis, who called Meek a talented musician, singer and athlete and a "fantastic human being."

"He was a hero every day of his life," Ellis said. "It was just always positive energy. ... Anything he could do for you, he was just there."

Meek played water polo for Cal Lutheran and had planned to go to San Diego this coming weekend for the retirement party of his dad, a Navy SEAL. Meek also worked at the bar with his sister and fellow Cal Lutheran student, Victoria Rose Meek, who survived, Ellis said.

"Both very polite, iconic American kids, highly educated, wholesome," Ellis said of the siblings.

As a student, Meek lent his full, velvety voice to the Cal Lutheran choir, where "every time he sang, you could just feel it in your soul," recalled choir member Rachel Counihan, 20.

"He cared so much about his craft and just cared so much about other people," she said. "He was just full of light and happiness."

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Scott Roberts, 20, a junior at the school and friend of Victoria Rose Meek's, had warm memories of her brother.

"He was just the nicest dude," Roberts said. "I'm just praying he's in a better place."

ALAINA HOUSLEY: 'AN INCREDIBLE YOUNG WOMAN'

Alaina Housley was just 18, a promising student at Pepperdine University with plans to study law, her family said.

Adam Housley, a former Fox News correspondent, and Tamera Mowry-Housley, an actress known for the 1990s TV series "Sister Sister," said their niece was killed at the bar where she had gone line dancing with friends.

"Alaina was an incredible young woman with so much life ahead of her, and we are devastated that her life was cut short in this manner," the couple said in a statement.

Alaina was bright, popular and well-loved, a student who had a 4.5 grade-point average since junior high school and earned college scholarships, said her grandfather, Art Housley.

She played soccer and tennis all through high school, studied piano and violin, and sang, he said.

"She's a really good kid," he said, fighting tears, before her relatives learned their fears of her death were true. "Everybody loves her."

NOEL SPARKS: 'ALL-AROUND GOOD GIRL'

Noel Sparks, a 21-year-old college student, loved going to the Borderline Bar & Grill, so friends and family were not surprised when she posted a photo of herself dancing there Wednesday night.

Her aunt Patricia Sparks of Morristown, Tennessee, said police informed Sparks' father Thursday that she had died in the shooting.

"We're in shock," Patricia Sparks told The Associated Press.

She described her niece as an "all-around good girl. She was the kind of girl that if you had friends, you'd want them to marry her."

Sparks was a regular at Borderline, where she spent Halloween and celebrated her 21st birthday in August. She often went there with friends and her mom.

When friend Jackie Jones heard about the shooting, she jumped into her car and headed to the bar shortly after midnight. She was determined to find Sparks.

"She would do that for me," Jones said.

The two met through church two years ago and became fast friends. Sparks was artistic and a leader in church activities. She was majoring in art at nearby Moorpark College.

Sparks worked part time at Calvary Community Church in Westlake Village. She helped with children's programs, the Rev. Shawn Thornton said.

"She loved kids. We had a lot of parents show up today to say, 'She made my child feel important and that they mattered," Thornton said.

SEAN ADLER: 'A VERY, VERY BIG PERSONALITY'

Sean Adler, 48, was a security guard at Borderline who would stay late to ensure people could get home safely, said Debbie Allen, a longtime friend.

The married father of two boys died doing what he was passionate about — protecting people, Allen said. "He was a very, very big personality and had a very, very gorgeous smile," she said, adding that he had once considered becoming a police officer. "I don't think in all the years I've known him, and it's almost 30, I ever heard him say 'no' to someone."

His other passion, she said, was coffee. Adler recently opened his own coffee shop, Rivalry Roasters, in Simi Valley, said Phil Englander, another longtime friend.

"He was just the most passionate person about coffee you would ever want to meet," Englander said. Adler joked about being a "coffee dealer" and spoke energetically, using his hands, while people listened. "He always had that energetic personality," he said. "He's just such a warm and friendly and passionate

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person about everything in his life."

Englander said he stopped by the coffee shop Wednesday to visit Adler.

"We talked about family, and we reminisced about an old friend of ours we haven't seen in years," he said. "I woke up this morning to tragedy."

A vigil is being held for Adler Thursday night at the coffee shop. Another one will be held Friday to include family traveling from out of town.

TELEMACHUS ORFANOS: NAVY VETERAN NICKNAMED 'TEL'

Telemachus Orfanos, 27, was a U.S. Navy veteran with a thick beard, an easy smile and a gladiator helmet tattoo. His friends called him "Tel."

"Here are my words: I want gun control," his mother, Susan Schmidt-Orfanos said, her voice shaking with grief and rage after learning her son was killed. "I don't want prayers. I don't want thoughts."

She said wants Congress to "pass gun control so no one else has a child that doesn't come home."

Photos on Orfanos' Facebook page show the Eagle Scout with friends at ballgames or at work. Some photos are embellished with patriotic graphics and another marks the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Taxin reported from Santa Ana and Boone from Boise, Idaho. Associated Press writers Amanda Lee Myers in Lose Angeles, Terry Tang and Alina Hartounian in Phoenix, Christopher Weber in Thousand Oaks, Julie Watson in San Diego and Jennifer Peltz in New York contributed.

APNewsBreak: Michelle Obama rips Trump in new book By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former first lady Michelle Obama blasts President Donald Trump in her new book, writing how she reacted in shock the night she learned he would replace her husband in the Oval Office and tried to "block it all out."

She also denounces Trump's "birther" campaign questioning her husband's citizenship, calling it bigoted and dangerous, "deliberately meant to stir up the wingnuts and kooks."

In her memoir "Becoming," set to come out Tuesday, Obama writes openly about everything from growing up in Chicago to confronting racism in public life to her amazement at becoming the country's first black first lady. She also reflects on early struggles in her marriage to Barack Obama as he began his political career and was often away. She writes that they met with a counselor "a handful of times," and she came to realize that she was more "in charge" of her happiness than she had realized. "This was my pivot point," Obama explains. "My moment of self-arrest."

Obama writes that she assumed Trump was "grandstanding" when he announced his presidential run in 2015. She expresses disbelief over how so many women would choose a "misogynist" over Hillary Clinton, "an exceptionally qualified female candidate." She remembers how her body "buzzed with fury" after seeing the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape, in which Trump brags about sexually assaulting women.

She also accuses Trump of using body language to "stalk" Clinton during an election debate. She writes of Trump following Clinton around the stage, standing nearby and "trying to diminish her presence."

Trump's message, according to Obama, in words which appear in the book in darkened print: "I can hurt you and get away with it."

The Associated Press purchased an early copy of "Becoming," one of the most anticipated political books in recent memory. Obama is admired worldwide and has offered few extensive comments on her White House years. And memoirs by former first ladies, including Clinton and Laura Bush, are usually best-sellers.

Obama launches her promotional tour Tuesday not at a bookstore, but at Chicago's United Center, where tens of thousands of people have purchased tickets — from just under \$30 to thousands of dollars — to attend the event moderated by Oprah Winfrey. Other stops on a tour scaled to rock star dimensions are planned at large arenas from New York City's Barclays Center to the Los Angeles Forum, with guests includ-

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ing Reese Witherspoon and Sarah Jessica Parker. While some fans have criticized the price as too high, 10 percent of tickets at each event are being donated to local charities, schools and community groups.

In "Becoming," Obama shares both pain and joy. She writes lovingly of her family and gives a detailed account of her courtship with her future husband, whom she met when both were at the Chicago law firm Sidley Austin LLP; she was initially his adviser. Secretaries claimed he was both brilliant and "cute," although Michelle Obama was skeptical, writing that white people went "bonkers" any time you "put a suit" on a "half-intelligent black man." She also thought his picture had a "whiff of geekiness."

But she was more than impressed after meeting him, by his "rich, even sexy baritone" and by his "strange, stirring combination" of serenity and power. "This strange mix-of-everything-man," when she finally let him kiss her, set off a "toppling blast of lust, gratitude, fulfillment, wonder."

But throughout her husband's life in politics, she fought to balance public and private needs, and to maintain her self-esteem. She agonized over what she feared was a cartoonish, racist image. She remembered being labeled "angry" and, by the Fox network, "Obama's Baby Mama." At times, she feared she was damaging her husband's 2008 presidential campaign, especially after conservatives seized on a line from one of her speeches — taken out of context, she notes — that for the first time as an adult she was "really proud" of her country.

The remarks faded from the news, but she sensed lasting damage, a "pernicious seed," a "perception" that she was "disgruntled and vaguely hostile."

As the first black first lady, she knew she would be labeled "other" and would have to earn the aura of "grace" given freely to her white predecessors. She found confidence in repeating to herself a favorite chant: "Am I good enough? Yes I am."

"Becoming" is part of a joint book deal with former President Barack Obama, whose memoir is expected next year, that is believed worth tens of millions of dollars. The Obamas have said they will donate a "significant portion" of their author proceeds to charity, including the Obama Foundation.

Widely praised as a gifted orator and communicator, Michelle Obama has long said she has no interest in running for office, although she held a few campaign-style rallies before the midterms urging people to register to vote. The rallies were part of her work as co-chairman of the nonpartisan, nonprofit organization When We All Vote.

Last month, she launched a program to help empower girls worldwide through education. The Global Girls Alliance aims to support more than 1,500 grassroots organizations combating the challenges girls encounter in their communities.

This story has been corrected to show Mrs. Obama launched the program last month, not last year.

Southern California city mourns in wake of bar massacre By KRYSTA FAURIA and JONATHAN J. COOPER, Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — The mourners gathered to hold hands, to sing and to wonder how one of the safest cities in America could become a killing zone.

Hundreds of people gathered Thursday evening to remember the dozen people shot and killed by a Marine veteran at the packed Borderline Bar & Grill the night before.

It was a scene of horror enacted in many places around the country in recent months, but never before in Thousand Oaks.

Terrified patrons who had gathered for the weekly line dancing and college night hurled barstools through windows to escape or threw their bodies protectively on top of friends as shots erupted. Twelve people were killed including Ventura County sheriff's Sgt. Ron Helus, a 29-year veteran nearing retirement who responded to reports of shots fired and was gunned down as he entered the bar.

He and other first responders "ran toward danger," Sheriff Geoff Dean said at the vigil.

"When I told her (his wife) that we had lost her hero, I said to her: 'Because of Ron, many lives were saved," Dean said. "And she looked at me through her tears and she said: 'He would have wanted it that

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way."

The dead also included a man who had survived last year's massacre in Las Vegas, Telemachus Orfanos, 27.

"I don't want prayers. I don't want thoughts," his mother, Susan Schmidt-Orfanos, said earlier. "I want those bastards in Congress — they need to pass gun control so no one else has a child that doesn't come home."

Dani Merrill also attended the 2017 Las Vegas country music festival where a gunman in a high-rise hotel opened fire and killed 58 people. She was appalled that such bloodshed had come to her community.

"I'm super upset that it happened in our home and I feel awful for the families that have to go through this," Merrill said at the vigil. She escaped from the Borderline bar when the shooting began, hurting her knee as she ran onto a loading dock.

The city of about 130,000 people about 40 miles (64 kilometers) from Los Angeles, just across the county line, is annually listed as one of the safest cities in America.

"Hope has sustained communities, very much like Thousand Oaks, through the exact same triages of mass shootings," said Andy Fox, the city's outgoing mayor. "Tonight Thousand Oaks takes its place with those cities, who in order to move forward will rely on hope. we are Thousand Oaks strong."

The motive for the attack was under investigation.

The killer, Ian David Long, 28, was a former machine gunner and Afghanistan war veteran who was interviewed by police at his home last spring after an episode of agitated behavior that authorities were told might be post-traumatic stress disorder.

Dressed all in black with his hood pulled up, Long opened fire with a handgun with an illegal, extracapacity magazine. He shot a security guard outside the bar and then went in and took aim at employees and customers, authorities said. He also used a smoke bomb, according to a law enforcement official who was not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. He apparently killed himself as scores of police converged on the nightspot.

Many of the estimated 150 patrons at the Borderline dived under tables, ran for exits, broke through windows or hid in the attic and bathrooms, authorities and witnesses said.

Matt Wennerstrom said he instinctively pulled people behind a pool table, and he and friends shielded women with their bodies after hearing the shots. When the gunman paused to reload, Wennerstrom said, he and others shattered windows with barstools and helped about 30 people escape. He heard another volley of shots once he was safely outside.

"All I wanted to do was get as many people out of there as possible," he told KABC-TV. "I know where I'm going if I die, so I was not worried."

A video posted on Instagram after the shooting by one of the patrons shows an empty dance floor with the sound of windows shattering in the background. As a silhouetted figure comes through a doorway, the camera turns erratically and 10 gunshots ring out.

"I looked him in his eyes while he killed my friends," Dallas Knapp wrote on his post. "I hope he rots in hell for eternity."

Earlier, people stood in line for hours to give blood, although some found it hard to get to the donation site because of a wildfire that erupted not far away and closed down a major freeway.

All morning, people looking for missing friends and relatives arrived at a community center where authorities and counselors were informing the next-of-kin of those who died.

Jason Coffman received the news that his son Cody, 22, who was about to join the Army, was dead. Coffman broke down as he told reporters how his last words to his son as he went out that night were not to drink and drive and that he loved him.

"Oh, Cody, I love you, son," Coffman sobbed.

It was the nation's deadliest such attack since 17 students and teachers were killed at a Parkland, Florida, high school nine months ago. It also came less than two weeks after a gunman massacred 11 people at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

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Democratic Gov.-elect Gavin Newsom, in his first public appearance since winning office on Tuesday, lamented the violence that has returned to California.

"It's a gun culture," he said. "You can't go to a bar or nightclub? You can't go to church or synagogue? It's insane is the only way to describe it. The normalization, that's the only way I can describe it. It's become normalized."

President Donald Trump praised police for their "great bravery" in the attack and ordered flags flown at half-staff in honor of the victims.

Authorities searched Long's home in Newbury Park, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) from the Borderline bar, for clues to what set him off.

"Maybe there was a motive for this particular night, but we have no information leading to that at all," the sheriff said.

Long was in the Marines from 2008 to 2013, rose to the rank of corporal and served in Afghanistan in 2010-11 before he was honorably discharged, the military said. Court records show he married in 2009 and was divorced in 2013.

Authorities said he had no criminal record, but in April officers were called to his home, where deputies found him angry and acting irrationally. The sheriff said officers were told he might have PTSD because of his military service. A mental health specialist met with him and didn't feel he needed to be hospitalized.

Tom Hanson, 70, who lives next door to Long and his mother, said he called the police about six months ago when he heard "heavy-duty banging" and shouting coming from the Longs' home.

"Somebody has missed something here," his wife, Julie Hanson, said. "This woman has to know that this child needed help."

AP journalists Christopher Weber in Thousand Oaks, Andrew Dalton, Amanda Lee Myers, John Antczak and Brian Melley in Los Angeles, Michelle A. Monroe in Phoenix and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to say that Telemachus Orfanos was 27 years old, not 22.

Letter shows a fearful Einstein long before Nazis' rise By ARON HELLER, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — More than a decade before the Nazis seized power in Germany, Albert Einstein was on the run and already fearful for his country's future, according to a newly revealed handwritten letter.

His longtime friend and fellow Jew, German Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau, had just been assassinated by right-wing extremists and police had warned the noted physicist that his life could be in danger too.

So Einstein fled Berlin and went into hiding in northern Germany. It was during this hiatus that he penned a handwritten letter to his beloved younger sister, Maja, warning of the dangers of growing nationalism and anti-Semitism years before the Nazis ultimately rose to power, forcing Einstein to flee his native Germany for good.

"Out here, nobody knows where I am, and I'm believed to be away on a trip," he wrote in August 1922. "Here are brewing economically and politically dark times, so I'm happy to be able to get away from everything."

The previously unknown letter, brought forward by an anonymous collector, is set to go on auction next week in Jerusalem with an opening asking price of \$12,000.

As the most influential scientist of the 20th century, Einstein's life and writings have been thoroughly researched. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, of which Einstein was a founder, houses the world's largest collection of Einstein material. Together with the California Institute of Technology it runs the Einstein Papers Project. Individual auctions of his personal letters have brought in substantial sums in recent years.

The 1922 letter shows he was concerned about Germany's future a full year before the Nazis even attempted their first coup — the failed Munich Beer Hall Putsch to seize power in Bavaria.

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"This letter reveals to us the thoughts that were running through Einstein's mind and heart at a very preliminary stage of Nazi terror," said Meron Eren, co-owner of the Kedem Auction House in Jerusalem, which obtained the letter and offered The Associated Press a glimpse before the public sale. "The relationship between Albert and Maja was very special and close, which adds another dimension to Einstein the man and greater authenticity to his writings."

The letter, which bears no return address, is presumed to have been written while he was staying in the port city of Kiel before embarking on a lengthy speaking tour across Asia.

"I'm doing pretty well, despite all the anti-Semites among the German colleagues. I'm very reclusive here, without noise and without unpleasant feelings, and am earning my money mainly independent of the state, so that I'm really a free man," he wrote. "You see, I am about to become some kind of itinerant preacher. That is, firstly, pleasant and, secondly, necessary."

Addressing his sister's concerns, Einstein writes: "Don't worry about me, I myself don't worry either, even if it's not quite kosher, people are very upset. In Italy, it seems to be at least as bad."

Later in 1922, Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics.

Ze'ev Rosenkrantz, the assistant director of the Einstein Papers Project at Caltech, said the letter wasn't the first time Einstein warned about German anti-Semitism, but it captured his state of mind at this important junction after Rathenau's killing and the "internal exile" he imposed on himself shortly after it.

"Einstein's initial reaction was one of panic and a desire to leave Germany for good. Within a week, he had changed his mind," he said. "The letter reveals a mindset rather typical of Einstein in which he claims to be impervious to external pressures. One reason may be to assuage his sister's concerns. Another is that he didn't like to admit that he was stressed about external factors."

When the Nazis came to power and began enacting legislation against Jews, they also aimed to purge Jewish scientists. The Nazis dismissed Einstein's groundbreaking work, including his Law of Relativity, as "Jewish Physics."

Einstein renounced his German citizenship in 1933 after Hitler became chancellor. The physicist settled in the United States, where he would remain until his death in 1955.

Einstein declined an invitation to serve as the first president of the newly established state of Israel but left behind his literary estate and personal papers to the Hebrew University.

Follow Aron Heller at www.twitter.com/aronhellerap

California gunman was volatile but passed mental assessment By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and JUSTIN PRITCHARD, Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — Neighbors of Ian David Long described the man who shot and killed 12 people at a country music bar as distant in public but combative with his mother inside the suburban Los Angeles home the two shared.

One ruckus in April was so extreme that they called law enforcement. Authorities brought in a mental health specialist who concluded that Long could not be involuntarily committed for psychiatric observation but worried the 28-year-old Marine veteran might have post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The mental health experts out there cleared him that day," Ventura County Sheriff Geoff Dean said Thursday, the morning after Long opened fire inside a bar that was hosting a night for local college students.

Julie Hanson, who lives next door to Long's ranch-style home, described him as "odd" and "disrespectful" well before he left home a decade ago, got married and enlisted in the Marines, becoming a machine gunner.

She could often hear him yelling and cursing, but several months ago unusually loud banging and shouting prompted her husband to call authorities.

"I was concerned because I knew he had been in the military," Tom Hanson said Thursday, as federal and local law enforcement officers searched Long's house, where an American flag flew over the garage. Hanson described Long as an introvert and said he was "dumbfounded" by the massacre.

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Other than the call in April, Long's only other contact with authorities came after a traffic collision and after he alleged he was the victim of a violent encounter in 2015 at another bar in Thousand Oaks, the sheriff said.

Long joined the Marines at 18 and was married as a 19-year-old in Honolulu in June 2009, according to military and court records.

His military service lasted nearly five years, and he was honorably discharged with the rank of corporal in 2013, the Pentagon said. He was part of the infantry, responsible for hauling and shooting machine guns.

During his service, Long's marriage fell apart. He and his wife separated in June 2011, while he was deployed on a seven-month tour in Afghanistan. The couple cited irreconcilable differences in divorce papers filed in May 2013, two months after Long left the Marines.

Later, he enrolled at nearby California State University, Northridge, last attending in 2016, the school said in a statement.

More recently he was living in a home where neighbors said they could hear frequent, aggressive shouting between Long and his mother, especially over the last year.

About 18 months ago, Don and Effie MacLeod heard "an awful argument" and what he believes was a gunshot from the Longs' property. Don MacLeod said he did not call police but avoided speaking with Ian Long.

"I told my wife, 'Just be polite to him. If he talks, just acknowledge him, don't go into conversation with him," Don MacLeod said Thursday.

Sparse pictures on social media showed a happy family. Long's mother, Colleen, posted Facebook photos of her son in his military uniform in 2010 and 2011.

"My Son is home, well sort of, back in Hawaii, soon to be in Cali come January, hooray!" she wrote on Dec. 14, 2012.

Another photo from 2014 shows Ian Long with his arm draped around his mother in front of Dodger Stadium. The two were wearing Dodgers T-shirts and smiles.

Authorities haven't identified what motivated Long to open fire during college night at Borderline Bar and Grill in Thousand Oaks, around 40 miles (64 kilometers) from downtown Los Angeles. The dead included 11 people inside the bar and a veteran sheriff's sergeant who was the first officer through the door.

The Marine Corps said Long earned several awards, including a Combat Action Ribbon and a Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Third Marine Division in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

Pritchard reported from Los Angeles. Contributing were Michael Kunzelman in College Park, Maryland; Tami Abdollah and Lolita Baldor in Washington; Alina Hartounian in Phoenix; and Reese Dunklin in Dallas.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. ONE OF AMERICA'S SAFEST CITIES GRIEVES

Hundreds of people gathered in Thousand Oaks, California to mourn the dozen people killed by a Marine veteran at the packed Borderline Bar & Grill.

2. CALIFORNIA GUNMAN WAS VOLATILE BUT PASSED MENTAL ASSESSMENT

Neighbors of Ian David Long have described him as distant in public but combative with his mother inside the suburban Los Angeles home the two shared

3. FLEEING THE FLAMES

A fast-moving wildfire ravages Northern California town of Paradise as residents race to escape on roads turned into tunnels of fire.

4. WHERE THE MUELLER INVESTIGATION STANDS

The White House is bracing for the probe of the presidential campaign to fire up again, as his advisers

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worry that the special counsel has been stealthily compiling information and could soon issue new indictments or a damning final report.

5. CARAVAN CONTINUES NORTHBOUND JOURNEY

Thousands of Central American migrants have decided to depart Mexico City and head toward the northern city of Tijuana, opting for the longer but likely safer route to the U.S. border.

6. GOVERNMENT SEEKS STRICTER FRONTIER CONTROLS

The Trump administration says it will deny asylum to migrants who enter the country illegally, invoking extraordinary presidential national security powers to tighten the border.

7. SUNSHINE STATE AWAITS ELECTION OUTCOME

Razor-thin margins in Florida's bitter races for the U.S. Senate and governor are raising the specter of possible recounts, potentially prolonging two of the most closely watched contests of the nation's midterm elections.

8. FORMER FIRST LADY'S CANDID MEMOIR

Michelle Obama blasts President Donald Trump in her new book, says she was in shock the night she learned he would replace her husband in the Oval Office and tried to "block it all out."

9. ALTERED REALITY?

A video distributed by the Trump administration appears to have been doctored to make CNN reporter Jim Acosta look more aggressive than he was during an exchange with a White House intern

10. PITTSBURGH FINALLY LOOKS LIKE AFC CONTENDER

Ben Roethlisberger threw for five touchdowns as the Steelers put together a systematic 52-21 dismantling of the Carolina Panthers.

Kemp: I'm Georgia's next governor. Democrats: Prove it By BILL BARROW and KATE BRUMBACK, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Outgoing Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal stood before a bank of cameras and welcomed into his office a man he recognized as his successor.

"The governor-elect," Deal called Brian Kemp on Thursday, accepting his fellow Republican's resignation as secretary of state and promising the two would begin work immediately on transition business ahead of a January transfer of power.

All of it would be a routine scene two days after an election — except the Kemp's opponent, Democrat Stacey Abrams, maintains that enough ballots remain uncounted to force a runoff, and she's dispatched her legal team to explore every option to see if she's right.

"We won a clear and convincing victory," Kemp said of returns showing him with 50.3 percent of almost 4 million votes, about a 63,000-vote lead over Abrams. That's a narrow sum considering the near-presidential election year turnout, though sufficient for the majority required for outright victory.

The Associated Press has not called the governor's race.

With legal wrangles opening and Abrams showing no signs of conceding, the dispute is prolonging a bitter contest with historical significance and national political repercussions. Abrams would become the first black woman elected governor of any American state. Kemp seeks to maintain Republican dominance in a growing, diversifying Deep South state positioned to become a presidential battleground.

The key question is how many uncounted ballots actually remain.

Kemp said on Thursday morning that it's less than 21,000 — almost certainly not enough to force a runoff. The elections chief from the secretary of state's office — which Kemp ran until noon Thursday — said in an afternoon federal court hearing that the number is 21,190.

"Even if she got 100 percent of those votes, we still win," Kemp told reporters.

Abrams' campaign argues the total could be higher, and the secretary of state's office has been scant in sharing details as officials in Georgia's 159 counties keep counting.

"This is about the integrity of the election in the state of Georgia," said Abrams' campaign manager Lauren Groh-Wargo. "Brian Kemp can't just walk away from that ... Our governor (Deal) can't just walk

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away from that."

John Chandler, one of several attorneys for Abrams, promised to "litigate until we have determined that every person's vote has been counted."

A runoff, if needed, would be Dec. 4.

County authorities must certify final returns by Tuesday. The state must certify a statewide result by Nov. 20. Deal appointed one of his Cabinet members to oversee the process in Kemp's place.

One of the lawsuits heard Thursday in federal court requested Kemp be barred from overseeing the rest of the certification procedure — a requested pre-empted by Kemp's resignation.

Abrams, other Democrats — including former President Jimmy Carter — and voting rights activists had for months called for Kemp to step down amid charges he was abusing his office to make it harder for some Georgians, particularly minorities, to vote.

Kemp said his resignation "will give confidence to the certification process." He maintained he wasn't bowing to pressure but preparing to be governor.

"That was all political," Kemp said, dismissing the criticism. He said Tuesday's turnout — about 1.4 million more than in Deal's last election — proves it.

Leaders of Abrams' campaign said they believe she needs to pick up about 25,000 votes to force a runoff. Offering examples of potential ballots Democrats say Kemp isn't contemplating, Groh-Wargo said four counties reported considerably fewer early votes in the governor's race than the number of early ballots cast. Groh-Wargo said it seemed implausible that voters cared enough to cast ballots early but not in the hotly contested governor's race.

She added officials in suburban Atlanta's Cobb County added several hundred votes to that count Thursday morning from absentee ballots. That came after the secretary of state's office said all absentee and early ballots had been counted.

Abrams' lawyers also said they plan to sue officials in Dougherty County because absentee ballots were delayed after Hurricane Michael devastated parts of south Georgia. Separately, the ACLU raised concerns over 1,200 absentee ballots in Gwinnett County, northeast of Atlanta, which it said were rejected because of missing birthdate information.

"Brian Kemp owes voters an explanation," Groh-Wargo said, demanding to see lists and names. "We do not believe any of these numbers are credible."

When Kemp's campaign declared victory Wednesday, his aides cited a statewide estimate of uncounted ballots from the secretary of state's office. But that office had not publicly offered a county-by-county breakdown to Abrams' campaign or to the media at that point.

The provisional vote total is considerably higher than in 2016, when a slightly larger electorate yielded 16,739 provisional ballots. Of those, 7,592 were counted.

State and campaign officials have said they expected a much higher proportion to be counted this year. In federal court Thursday, a secretary of state's representative said the provisional count included at least some votes cast late at a handful of metro Atlanta precincts that courts ordered to stay open past Tuesday's 7 p.m. poll closing time.

Follow Barrow and Brumback on Twitter at https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP and https://twitter.com/KateBrumback.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. midterm elections: http://apne.ws/APPolitics

A year apart, some country music fans face 2 mass shootings By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and AMANDA LEE MYERS, Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP) — Barely a year after surviving a massacre at a country music festival in Las Vegas, Brendan Kelly found himself in a terrifyingly familiar scene.

Kelly, 22, said he was dancing with friends at a bar in suburban Los Angeles on Wednesday night when

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the bullets began flying. When the gunfire was over, 12 people were dead, including a Navy veteran who had lived through the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history a year ago.

"I already didn't wish it on anybody to begin with for the first time," Kelly said outside his home in Thousand Oaks. "The second time around doesn't get any easier."

Kelly, a Marine, said he heard "pop, pop" at Borderline Bar and Grill and instantly knew it was gunfire.

"The chills go up your spine. You don't think it's real — again," he said.

The mother of the 27-year-old man killed in the latest attack, Telemachus "Tel" Orfanos, said her son survived Vegas only to die inside Borderline, less than 10 minutes from his home.

"Here are my words: I want gun control," said Susan Schmidt-Orfanos, her voice shaking with grief and rage. "I don't want prayers. I don't want thoughts."

She said she wanted Congress "to pass gun control so no one else has a child that doesn't come home." At a vigil Thursday night, survivors of both shootings gathered to honor those who didn't make it.

"It's hard to sleep after these kinds of things," said Dani Merrill, who lived through the Vegas shooting and escaped the Borderline bloodshed at the bar by running out the loading dock. "You just don't know how to feel.

During Wednesday's shooting, Kelly said he threw two of his friends to the floor and covered them with his body. Then he got a look at the shooter and the terror unfolding and decided they needed to escape.

Kelly said he dragged one woman out a back emergency exit and then, using his belt, T-shirt and Marine training, applied a tourniquet to his friend's bleeding arm.

After the shooting was over, Kelly said he and another Marine friend helped victims alongside first responders. Two of his friends were among those killed.

Chandler Gunn, 23, told The Los Angeles Times that a friend who survived the Vegas shooting works at the bar. When Gunn learned about the shooting, he rushed to Borderline.

Gunn said his friend, whose name he didn't provide, escaped safely out the back.

"There's people that live a whole lifetime without seeing this, and then there's people that have seen it twice," he said.

In social media posts, Molly Mauer said she was at Borderline and also survived Vegas.

"I can't believe I'm saying this again. I'm alive and home safe," she said on Facebook.

In Las Vegas and Thousand Oaks, country music fans were the victims. Borderline features country music, and Wednesday was "college night" that drew many young people to the bar. The Last Vegas shooter targeted a crowd of country music fans gathered for the Route 91 Harvest Festival.

Kelly has a large tattoo on his left arm memorializing the Las Vegas shooting, which killed 58 people. On his other arm Thursday, he still had his wristband from the California bar.

When the Las Vegas gunman opened fire from a 32nd-floor hotel room, Kelly said he threw a friend to the ground before helping get her out of the area and into a room. Armed with a knife in case an attacker came in, he hunkered down and waited with 40 other people for four hours.

He said living through Vegas changed his life. He doesn't know how a second mass shooting will affect him down the road.

"Everywhere I go, everything I do is affected," he said. "I don't sit in a room with my back to the door. You're always picking up on social cues. You're always overanalyzing people, trying to figure out if something were to go down, 'What would I do?""

Kelly said Borderline had become a safe haven for dozens of Vegas survivors: "It is our home."

A few weeks after the Vegas shooting, the bar held a benefit concert for five people from the area who were killed, and now-eerie social media posts show a number of survivors holding up a "Route 91" sign inside the bar at a six-month anniversary event.

Kelly said he'll be looking to God for comfort in the coming weeks and months.

"I know that, being a religious person, that God is never going to give me anything more than I can handle," he said. "I'm here for a reason."

____ Myers reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho, and Christopher Weber in Thousand Oaks, contributed.

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Wildfire devastates California town of Paradise By DON THOMPSON and NOAH BERGER, Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. (AP) — Tens of thousands of people fled a fast-moving wildfire Thursday in Northern California, some clutching babies and pets as they abandoned vehicles and struck out on foot ahead of the flames that forced the evacuation of an entire town and destroyed hundreds of structures.

"Pretty much the community of Paradise is destroyed, it's that kind of devastation," said Cal Fire Capt. Scott McLean late Thursday. "The wind that was predicted came and just wiped it out."

McLean estimated that a couple of thousand structures were destroyed in the town of 27,000 residents about 180 miles (290 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco, where residents scrambled to flee. The extent of the injuries and specific damage count was not immediately known as officials could not access the dangerous area.

Butte County CalFire Chief Darren Read said at a news conference that two firefighters and multiple residents were injured.

As she fled, Gina Oviedo described a devastating scene in which flames engulfed homes, sparked explosions and toppled utility poles.

"Things started exploding," Oviedo said. "People started getting out of their vehicles and running."

An Associated Press photographer saw dozens of businesses and homes leveled or in flames, including a liquor store and gas station.

"It's a very dangerous and very serious situation," Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said. "I'm driving through fire as we speak. We're doing everything we can to get people out of the affected areas."

The blaze erupted as windy weather swept the state, creating extreme fire danger. A wind-whipped fire north of Los Angeles in Ventura County burned up to 15 square miles and at least one home in a matter of hours. It threatened thousands of homes and prompted evacuations of a mobile home park, a state university campus and some neighborhoods. A nearby blaze was smaller at about 2 square miles but moving quickly.

Acting California Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for the fire-stricken area in Northern California and requested a presidential disaster declaration, saying that dangerous weather conditions were expected to last several days.

Shari Bernacett said her husband tried to get people to leave the Paradise mobile home park they manage. He "knocked on doors, yelled and screamed" to alert as many residents as possible, Bernacett said.

"My husband tried his best to get everybody out. The whole hill's on fire. God help us!" she said before breaking down crying. She and her husband grabbed their dog, jumped in their pickup truck and drove through flames before getting to safety, she said.

Terrifying videos posted on social media showed cars driving along roads that looked like tunnels of fire with flames on both sides of the road.

Concerned friends and family posted frantic messages on Twitter and other sites saying they were looking for loved ones, particularly seniors who lived at retirement homes or alone.

Among them was Kim Curtis, who was searching for her grandmother, who told family at 8 a.m. Thursday that she would flee her Paradise home in her Buick with her cat. Her grandmother, who is in her 70s and lives alone, never showed up up at a meeting spot in Chico, though.

"We've just been posting all over social media. And just praying for a miracle, honestly," said Curtis, who lives in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Officials were sending as many firefighters as they could, Cal Fire spokesman Rick Carhart said.

"Every engine that we could put on the fire is on the fire right now, and more are coming," he said. "There are dozens of strike teams that we're bringing in from all parts of the state."

The sheriff confirmed reports that evacuees had to abandon their vehicles. Rescuers were trying to put them in other vehicles, he said.

"We're working very hard to get people out. The message I want to get out is: If you can evacuate, you need to evacuate," Honea said.

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The wildfire was reported around daybreak. Within six hours, it had grown to more than 26 square miles (69 square kilometers), Gaddie said.

Thick gray smoke and ash filled the sky above Paradise and could be seen from miles away.

Fire officials said the flames were being fueled by winds, low humidity, dry air and severely parched brush and ground from months without rain.

"Basically, we haven't had rain since last May or before that," said Read, the fire chief. "Everything is a very receptive fuel bed. It's a rapid rate of spread."

At the hospital in Paradise, more than 60 patients were evacuated to other facilities and some buildings caught fire and were damaged. But the main facility, Adventist Health Feather River Hospital, was not, spokeswoman Jill Kinney said.

Some of the patients were initially turned around during their evacuation because of gridlocked traffic and later airlifted to other hospitals, along with staff, Kinney said.

Four hospital employees were briefly trapped in the basement and rescued by California Highway Patrol officers, Kinney said.

The National Weather Service issued red-flag warnings for fire dangers in many areas of the state, saying low humidity and strong winds were expected to continue through Friday evening.

Associated Press writers Paul Elias, Jocelyn Gecker, Janie Har, Daisy Nguyen, Olga R. Rodriguez, Sudhin Thanawala and Juliet Williams in San Francisco, Sophia Bollag in Sacramento and Jennifer Sinco Kelleher in Honolulu contributed to this report.

Expert: Acosta video distributed by White House was doctored By DAVID BAUDER and CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A video distributed by the Trump administration to support its argument for banning CNN reporter Jim Acosta from the White House appears to have been doctored to make Acosta look more aggressive than he was during an exchange with a White House intern, an independent expert said Thursday.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders tweeted the video, which shows Acosta asking President Donald Trump a question on Wednesday as the intern tries to take his microphone away. But a frame-by-frame comparison with an Associated Press video of the same incident shows that the one tweeted by Sanders appears to have been altered to speed up Acosta's arm movement as he touches the intern's arm, according to Abba Shapiro, an independent video producer who examined the footage at AP's request.

Earlier, Shapiro noticed that frames in the tweeted video were frozen to slow down the action, allowing it to run the same length as the AP one.

The tweeted video also does not have any audio, which Shapiro said would make it easier to alter. It's also unlikely the differences could be explained by technical glitches or by video compression — a reduction in a video's size to enable it to play more smoothly on some sites — because the slowing of the video and the acceleration that followed are "too precise to be an accident," said Shapiro, who trains instructors to use video editing software.

Sanders, who hasn't said where the tweeted video came from, noted that it clearly shows Acosta made contact with the intern. In her statement announcing Acosta's suspension, she said the White House won't tolerate "a reporter placing his hands on a young woman just trying to do her job."

While the origin of the manipulated video is unclear, its distribution marked a new low for an administration that has been criticized for its willingness to mislead.

The White House News Photographers Association decried the sharing of the footage.

"As visual journalists, we know that manipulating images is manipulating truth," said Whitney Shefte, the association's president. "It's deceptive, dangerous and unethical. Knowingly sharing manipulated images is equally problematic, particularly when the person sharing them is a representative of our country's highest office with vast influence over public opinion."

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CNN has labeled Sanders' characterization of Acosta's exchange with the intern as a lie. Its position has been supported by witnesses including Reuters White House correspondent Jeff Mason, who was next to Acosta during the news conference and tweeted that he did not see Acosta place his hands on the White House employee. Rather, he said he saw him holding on to the microphone as she reached for it.

"The irony of this White House video involving Jim Acosta is that if it is found to be doctored, it will show the administration to be doing what it accuses the news media of doing — engaging in fake information," said Aly Colon, a professor in journalism ethics at Washington & Lee University.

Several journalists and organizations — including the American Society of News Editors, the Associated Press Media Editors and the Online News Association — demanded Acosta's press pass be reinstated.

"It is the essential function of a free press in every democracy to independently gather and report information in the public interest, a right that is enshrined in the First Amendment," said Julie Pace, AP's Washington bureau chief. "We strongly reject the idea that any administration would block a journalist's access to the White House."

The New York Times editorialized in favor of restoring Acosta's pass, saying it signaled Trump's view that asking hard questions disqualifies reporters from attending briefings. The newspaper said that if Sanders was so offended by physical contact, "what did she have to say when her boss praised as 'my kind of guy' Rep. Greg Gianforte of Montana, who was sentenced to anger management classes and community service for body-slamming a Guardian reporter last spring?"

CNN has been a frequent target of the president, who has characterized journalists as enemies of the people and who routinely accuses the mainstream media of spreading "fake news." And Acosta has been one of the more visible thorns in the side of the White House. During their verbal altercation on Wednesday, Trump called Acosta a "terrible person."

Still, it's rare for the White House to pull the so-called hard passes from journalists.

During Lyndon Johnson's presidency, the Secret Service denied clearance to Robert Sherrill, a reporter for The Nation who had gotten into physical fights with government officials. During the George W. Bush presidency, Trude Feldman, who worked for various news outlets, was suspended for 90 days after security cameras recorded her looking through a press aide's desk late one night. In the 1970s, President Nixon tried to get Washington Post reporters banned from the White House.

Despite losing his White House pass, Acosta is expected to travel to Paris this weekend to cover Trump's trip to meet with world leaders.

Calvin Woodward reported from Washington. Associated Press journalists Jill Colvin, Catherine Lucey, Zeke Miller, Tami Abdollah, Padmananda Rama and Deb Reichmann contributed from Washington.

Florida faces prospect of recounts in governor, Senate races By BRENDAN FARRINGTON, Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Florida faced the prospect of recounts in the razor-thin races for governor and U.S. Senate, potentially prolonging the battle over two of this year's most-closely watched campaigns. In the governor's race, Democrat Andrew Gillum's campaign said Thursday it's prepared for a possible recount. He conceded to Republican Ron DeSantis on Tuesday night, though the margin of the race has since tightened. As of Thursday afternoon, DeSantis led Gillum by 0.47 percentage point.

Meanwhile, Democratic incumbent Sen. Bill Nelson has already begun preparing for a potential recount in a race still too close to call against Republican Gov. Rick Scott. Nelson's lawyer called that race a "jump ball" — though Scott's campaign urged Nelson to concede. Scott held a 0.21 percentage lead over Nelson on Thursday afternoon.

The tight races underscored Florida's status as a perennial swing state where elections are often decided by the thinnest of margins. Since 2000, when Florida decided the presidency by 537 votes in a contest that took more than five weeks to sort out, the state has seen many close elections, but never so many dead heats in one year.

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And like 2000, the counting process is becoming contentious.

Scott, as outgoing governor, said at a news conference Thursday night that he was asking the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to investigate elections offices in the Democratic strongholds of Palm Beach and Broward counties, questioning whether they were trying to inflate the Democratic vote. Scott's campaign filed a lawsuit demanding that the Broward County supervisor of elections be ordered to turn over several records detailing the counting and collection of ballots cast.

Gretl Plessinger, a spokeswoman for the FDLE, said by phone that the agency would follow up on the governor's request.

Nelson's campaign released a statement saying Scott's action appears to be politically motivated and borne out of desperation as he tries to win the Senate contest.

On Thursday evening, President Donald Trump weighed in with a tweet on the Senate race. Trump tweeted: "Law Enforcement is looking into another big corruption scandal having to do with Election Fraud in #Broward and Palm Beach. Florida voted for Rick Scott!"

Sarah Revell, a spokeswoman for the Florida Department of State, said she didn't know of any other recount in a governor or Senate race in state history. She was researching the subject Thursday.

Under Florida law, a recount is mandatory if the winning candidate's margin is less than 0.5 percentage points when the first unofficial count is verified Saturday by Florida's secretary of state.

The Associated Press has called the governor's race for DeSantis. If Saturday's count shows DeSantis with a margin narrow enough to trigger a recount, AP will retract its call for DeSantis. It is AP policy not to call a race that is facing a recount.

The AP has not called a winner in the Senate race.

In yet a third statewide seat — the Cabinet position of agriculture commissioner — the candidates were separated by 483 votes out of more than 8 million cast — a margin of 0.006 percent.

Gillum's campaign said it's monitoring the situation with an elections lawyer and readying for a possible state-mandated recount. He hired attorney Barry Richard, who represented President George W. Bush in the 2000 recount.

"On Tuesday night, the Gillum for Governor campaign operated with the best information available about the number of outstanding ballots left to count. Since that time, it has become clear there are many more uncounted ballots than was originally reported," the campaign said. "We are committed to ensuring every single vote in Florida is counted."

At an event in Hialeah Gardens, DeSantis declined to discuss prospects for a recount, telling reporters he was "very proud to be elected."

"It's a great honor," he said. "We're working really hard on the transition. We'll let the lawyers do what they got to do. But, we're good and look forward to serving."

Florida was mocked for the way it handled the infamous 2000 recount, especially since there was no uniform process then on how to proceed. That has changed, with the Legislature passing a clear procedure on how a recount should be conducted.

"This is not like it was in 2000. There's not a lot of room for strategy," Richard said.

Elections officials in Broward County, where Democrats have a large advantage, were still reviewing ballots Thursday.

Broward Elections Supervisor Brenda Snipes said she didn't know how many ballots remain to be counted, but all were being processed. She also did not know how many provisional, military and mismarked ballots need to be counted. Her department's website said ballots cast on Election Day have been counted.

Marc Elias, a lawyer hired by Nelson, said he expects the margin to narrow further.

"The results of the 2018 Senate election are unknown and I think that you and the elections officials should treat it as such," Elias told reporters on a conference call. "We believe that at the end of this process that Senator Nelson is going to be declared the winner."

Scott's campaign has said Nelson should concede the race rather than push for a recount.

"Let's be clear: When Elias says 'win,' he means 'steal." The campaign said in a statement. "It is sad

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and embarrassing that Bill Nelson would resort to these low tactics after the voters have clearly spoken." While the Senate and governor races drew national attention, a Florida Cabinet seat also will likely have a statewide recount.

In the agriculture commissioner race, Democrat Nikki Fried had a 483-vote lead over Republican state Rep. Rep. Matt Caldwell, or a difference of 0.006 percentage points — well within range of a hand recount. Florida counties have until noon Saturday to submit unofficial election results to the Department of State.

Secretary of State Ken Detzner, who was appointed by Scott, will review the results and decide whether to order recounts.

This story has been corrected to show that Scott has asked, not ordered, state law enforcement authorities to investigate elections offices in the Democratic strongholds of Palm Beach and Broward counties.

Associated Press writer Terry Spencer in Fort Lauderdale and Ellis Rua in Hialeah Gardens contributed to this report.

Indictments? Final report? White House braces for Mueller By ERIC TUCKER, JONATHAN LEMIRE and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House is bracing for the probe of Donald Trump's presidential campaign to fire up again. Trump's advisers are privately expressing worries that the special counsel, who's been out of the news for the past month, has been stealthily compiling information and could soon issue new indictments or a damning final report.

Trump abruptly altered the chain of command above Mueller on Wednesday, putting his work under the supervision of a Republican loyalist who has been openly skeptical of the special counsel's authority and has mused about ways to curtail his power. But Trump and his aides are concerned about Mueller's next move with the work that is complete, according to a White House official and a Republican with close ties to the administration.

They insisted on anonymity to comment on conversations they were not authorized to describe.

Mueller kept a low profile for the past month as voters were mulling their choices for this week's elections. But a flurry of activity during his quiet period, including weeks of grand jury testimony about Trump confidant Roger Stone and negotiations over an interview with the president, hinted at public developments ahead as investigators move closer to addressing key questions underpinning the special counsel inquiry: Did Trump illegally obstruct the investigation? And did his campaign have advance knowledge of illegally hacked Democratic emails?

Trump has told confidants he remains deeply annoyed by the 18-month-old Mueller probe, believing it is not just a "witch hunt" but an expensive and lengthy negative distraction. The latest indication of the fury came Wednesday when he forced out his attorney general, Jeff Sessions, whose recusal opened the door to Mueller's appointment.

To this point, Trump has heeded advice not to directly interfere, though a new chapter in the relationship with the probe may have begun with the appointment of Matthew Whitaker as new acting attorney general. Even if Whitaker, Sessions' former chief of staff, does not curtail the investigation, Trump could direct him to take a more aggressive stance in declassifying documents that could further undermine or muddle the probe, the White House aide and Republican official said.

The investigation until now has been overseen by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller last year and granted him fairly broad authority.

"It's very significant because Whitaker's position on indictments or future indictments may be different than Rosenstein's, and Rosenstein had given Mueller a broad mandate to pursue various crimes," said Washington criminal defense lawyer Jeffrey Jacobovitz.

The Mueller investigation has so far produced 32 criminal charges and four guilty pleas from Trump associates. But the work is not done.

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A clear focus concerns Stone, a longtime political dirty trickster. The special counsel's team has been investigating Stone's connection to WikiLeaks during the 2016 campaign and whether he had advance knowledge of the group's plans to release hacked material damaging to Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Stone has said he did not, but emails, Twitter messages and his own public statements show he portrayed himself as plugged into the WikiLeaks orbit. That includes implying he had inside knowledge in separate email exchanges with a Breitbart editor and Steve Bannon, the former Trump campaign chief executive, just days before WikiLeaks began releasing thousands of emails stolen from Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

Bannon and other Stone associates have been questioned, and multiple witnesses have appeared before the grand jury. One associate, Jerome Corsi, said in a video recording Monday that he's "been involved in a really constant basis" for two months with Mueller's investigation.

On Thursday, a federal appeals court heard a challenge to Mueller's authority brought by Stone aide Andrew Miller, who defied a grand jury subpoena last summer and was held in contempt by a judge.

In the president's orbit, there remains some concern about his eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., though there are no outward indications that charges are imminent, according to a Republican close to the White House not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

Beyond Mueller, but also within the Justice Department's oversight, is a federal investigation into Trump's longtime legal fixer, Michael Cohen, who admitted as part of a guilty plea in August to coordinating with Trump on a hush-money scheme to silence a porn actress and an ex-Playboy model who say they had affairs with Trump.

The president hasn't been charged with any wrongdoing, but federal prosecutors have said that a grand jury investigation is ongoing and it targets unspecified "others." Court papers show Trump's conduct and that of top executives at the Trump Organization, some of whom have received immunity, have been scrutinized.

It's unclear what additional charges prosecutors are pursuing and how much of it pertains to the president personally. Federal prosecutors have said in court papers that the case involves numerous "uncharged" third parties and have argued against disclosing search warrants and other documents that would "certainly result in a very public guessing game" about their identities.

Overseeing it all is Whitaker, a former college football player and U.S. attorney from Iowa who was brought into the Justice Department last year to serve as Sessions' chief of staff. In the months before, Whitaker was a familiar presence on CNN, where he questioned Mueller's scope and reach.

In one appearance, he defended a June 2016 Trump Tower meeting between Trump Jr. and a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer, saying, "You would always take that meeting."

He also once tweeted an ex-prosecutor's opinion piece that described the Mueller team as a "lynch mob," and wrote his own op-ed saying Mueller would be outside his authority if he investigated Trump's family finances.

Trump had enjoyed Whitaker's cable TV appearances — including one on CNN in which he suggested that the Mueller probe be starved of resources — and the two men soon struck a bond. Trump told associates that he felt that Whitaker would be "loyal" and would not have recused himself from the Russia probe as Sessions had done, according to two Republicans close to the White House not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

Despite demands from Democrats that he recuse because of his past comments, Whitaker showed no signs Thursday that he intended to do so. And not everyone is convinced he needs to.

"Based on my experience with Matt," said John Richter, a former U.S. Attorney in Oklahoma and highranking Bush administration Justice Department official, "I think he will act consistently with the best traditions of the department and call things as he sees them.

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Acting AG Whitaker has thoughts on Mueller's Russia probe By LAURIE KELLMAN and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Matthew Whitaker has warned that Robert Mueller's Russia investigation risks "going too far" and supported limits on the prosecutor's power. President Donald Trump couldn't agree more. So the loyalty-loving Trump on Wednesday dumped Jeff Sessions from the helm of the Justice Department and replaced him, for now, with the onetime college football player and federal prosecutor. Unlike Sessions, who recused himself from the Russia investigation to Trump's everlasting fury, Whitaker will oversee it.

Trump and the country already know much about Whitaker's perspective on the probe.

A look at the investigation and what Whitaker has said about it:

BACKGROUND

After months of bitter attacks on Sessions, Trump on Wednesday announced via Twitter that the former Alabama senator was being replaced. He named Whitaker, 49, who had served as Sessions' chief of staff, as acting attorney general, overseeing the Justice Department.

That job gives Whitaker the power to oversee the Russia probe. And though Democrats have called for him to recuse himself because of his past comments, the case is less clear-cut than it was for Sessions — who stepped aside because of his prominent role in Trump's campaign.

That's raising questions about the fate of Mueller's investigation. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein has been overseeing it because of Sessions' recusal. It includes questions about a 2016 Trump Tower meeting involving the president's son Donald Trump, Jr., and a Kremlin-connected lawyer offering damaging information about Democrat Hillary Clinton.

The ongoing investigation has produced guilty pleas from four former Trump aides.

Whitaker is a former U.S. attorney from Iowa who founded a law firm with other Republican Party activists.

TRUMP TOWER, NO BIG DEAL?

In a July 10, 2017, appearance on CNN, Whitaker shrugged off the idea that the Trump Tower meeting could be part of a criminal conspiracy. He said "there was so much smoke" surrounding Clinton that it made perfect sense for Trump Jr. to take a meeting at which he expected to receive dirt on her.

"You would always take that meeting. You would have somebody from your campaign take the meeting to try to get the information," he said. "If you have somebody that you trust that is saying you need to meet with this individual because they have information about your opponent, you would take that meeting."

RECOMMENDED READING

On Aug. 6, 2017, Whitaker tweeted an op-ed piece from a former Philadelphia prosecutor carrying the headline: "Note to Trump's Lawyer: Do not cooperate with Mueller lynch mob." Whitaker accompanied the tweet with his own comment to his followers: "Worth a Read."

BLEED IT DRY

Whitaker laid out in a July 26, 2017, CNN appearance a hypothetical scenario in which Mueller's investigation could be stifled without him being fired.

Noting that the special counsel's budget falls within the attorney general's purview, Whitaker said he could envision a situation in which Sessions was replaced as attorney general and replaced by a new boss who doesn't fire Mueller but "just reduces his budget to so low that his investigation grinds to almost a halt."

NO COLLUSION

In an interview with a conservative talk radio host, Whitaker said there was "no collusion" between Trump's presidential campaign and Russia, a key question being examined by the special counsel's office. "There was interference by the Russians into the election, but that was not collusion with the campaign," Whitaker said on "The Wilkow Majority." 'That's where the left seems to be combining those two issues."

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REIN IT IN

In an Aug. 6, 2017 online opinion piece for CNN, Whitaker said Trump is "absolutely correct" to say that Mueller would be going too far if he were to investigate the president's family finances. He said it did not take a lawyer or former federal prosecutor to recognize that any inquiry into Trump's finances "falls completely outside of the realm of his 2016 campaign and allegations that the campaign coordinated with the Russian government or anyone else."

"Mueller has come up to a red line in the Russia 2016 election-meddling investigation that he is dangerously close to crossing," Whitaker wrote.

The headline on the op-ed: "Mueller's investigation of Trump is going too far."

Follow Kellman and Tucker on Twitter at: http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman and http://www.twitter.com/ETuckerAP

Marine combat veteran kills 12 in rampage at California bar By KRYSTA FAURIA and JONATHAN J. COOPER, Associated Press

THOUSAND OÁKS, Calif. (AP) — Terrified patrons hurled barstools through windows to escape or threw their bodies protectively on top of friends as a Marine combat veteran killed 12 people at a country music bar in an attack that added Thousand Oaks to the tragic roster of American cities traumatized by mass shootings.

Dressed all in black with his hood pulled up, the gunman apparently took his own life as scores of police converged on the Borderline Bar and Grill in Southern California.

The motive for the rampage late Wednesday night was under investigation.

The killer, Ian David Long, 28, was a former machine gunner and Afghanistan war veteran who was interviewed by police at his home last spring after an episode of agitated behavior that authorities were told might be post-traumatic stress disorder.

Opening fire with a handgun with an illegal, extra-capacity magazine, Long shot a security guard outside the bar and then went in and took aim at employees and customers, authorities said. He also used a smoke bomb, according to a law enforcement official who was not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The dead included a man who had survived last year's massacre in Las Vegas, a veteran sheriff's deputy who rushed in to confront the gunman, a 22-year-old man who planned to join the Army, a freshman at nearby Pepperdine University and a recent Cal Lutheran graduate.

"It's a horrific scene in there," Ventura County Sheriff Geoff Dean said in the parking lot. "There's blood everywhere."

Survivors of the rampage — mostly young people who had gone out for college night at the Borderline, a hangout popular with students from nearby California Lutheran University and other schools — seemed to know what to do, having come of age in an era of active-shooter drills and deadly rampages happening with terrifying frequency.

For some it was not a new experience. Survivors and their relatives said several people who were at the bar Thursday had been at the outdoor country music festival in Las Vegas last year where a gunman in a high-rise hotel killed 58 people.

"I don't want prayers. I don't want thoughts," said Susan Schmidt-Orfanos, whose son Telemachus Orfanos survived the Vegas shooting only to die less than 10 minutes from his home. "I want those bastards in Congress — they need to pass gun control so no one else has a child that doesn't come home."

Many of the estimated 150 patrons at the Borderline dived under tables, ran for exits, broke through windows or hid in the attic and bathrooms, authorities and witnesses said.

"Unfortunately our young people, people at nightclubs, have learned that this may happen, and they think about that," the sheriff said. "Fortunately it helped save a lot of lives that they fled the scene so rapidly."

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Matt Wennerstrom said he instinctively pulled people behind a pool table, and he and friends shielded women with their bodies after hearing the shots. When the gunman paused to reload, Wennerstrom said, he and others shattered windows with barstools and helped about 30 people escape. He heard another volley of shots once he was safely outside.

"All I wanted to do was get as many people out of there as possible," he told KABC-TV. "I know where I'm going if I die, so I was not worried."

A video posted on Instagram after the shooting by one of the patrons shows an empty dance floor with the sound of windows shattering in the background. As a silhouetted figure comes through a doorway, the camera turns erratically and 10 gunshots ring out.

"I looked him in his eyes while he killed my friends," Dallas Knapp wrote on his post. "I hope he rots in hell for eternity."

The tragedy left a community that is annually listed as one of the safest cities in America reeling. Shootings of any kind are extremely rare in Thousand Oaks, a city of about 130,000 people about 40 miles (64 kilometers) from Los Angeles, just across the county line.

Mourners gathered for a vigil on Wednesday evening as smoke from a fast-moving, nearby wildfire billowed over them.

Earlier, people stood in line for hours to give blood. All morning, people looking for missing friends and relatives arrived at a community center where authorities and counselors were informing the next-of-kin of those who died. Many people walked past TV cameras with blank stares or tears in their eyes. In the parking lot, some comforted each other with hugs or a pat on the back.

Jason Coffman received the news that his son Cody, 22, who was about to join the Army, was dead. Coffman broke down as he told reporters how his last words to his son as he went out that night were not to drink and drive and that he loved him.

"Oh, Cody, I love you, son," Coffman sobbed.

It was the nation's deadliest such attack since 17 students and teachers were killed at a Parkland, Florida, high school nine months ago. It also came less than two weeks after a gunman massacred 11 people at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Democratic Gov.-elect Gavin Newsom, in his first public appearance since winning office on Tuesday, lamented the violence that has returned to California.

"It's a gun culture," he said. "You can't go to a bar or nightclub? You can't go to church or synagogue? It's insane is the only way to describe it. The normalization, that's the only way I can describe it. It's become normalized."

President Donald Trump praised police for their "great bravery" in the attack and ordered flags flown at half-staff in honor of the victims.

Authorities searched Long's home in Newbury Park, about 5 miles from the Borderline bar, for clues to what set him off.

"There's no indication that he targeted the employees. We haven't found any correlation," the sheriff said. "Maybe there was a motive for this particular night, but we have no information leading to that at all."

Long was in the Marines from 2008 to 2013, rose to the rank of corporal and served in Afghanistan in 2010-11 before he was honorably discharged, the military said. Court records show he married in 2009 and was divorced in 2013.

Authorities said he had no criminal record, but in April officers were called to his home, where deputies found him angry and acting irrationally. The sheriff said officers were told he might have PTSD because of his military service. A mental health specialist met with him and didn't feel he needed to be hospitalized.

Tom Hanson, 70, who lives next door to Long and his mother, said he called the police about six months ago when he heard "heavy-duty banging" and shouting coming from the Longs' home.

"Somebody has missed something here," his wife, Julie Hanson, said. "This woman has to know that this child needed help."

Long was armed with a Glock 21, a .45-caliber pistol designed to hold 10 rounds plus one in the chamber, according to the sheriff. But it had an extended magazine — one capable of holding more ammunition —

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that is illegal in California, Dean said.

Sheriff's Sgt. Ron Helus and a passing highway patrolman arrived at the club around 11:20 p.m. in response to several 911 calls, heard gunfire and went inside, the sheriff said. Helus was shot immediately, Dean said.

The highway patrolman pulled Helus out, then waited as a SWAT team and other officers arrived. Helus died at a hospital.

By the time officers entered the bar again — about 15 to 20 minutes later, according to the sheriff's office — the gunfire had stopped. They found 12 people dead inside, including the gunman, who was discovered in an office, the sheriff said.

"There's no doubt that they saved lives by going in there and engaging with the suspect," said Dean, who was set to retire Friday. He praised the slain officer — a close friend — as a hero: "He went in there to save people and paid the ultimate price."

One other person was wounded by gunfire, and as many as 15 others suffered minor injuries from jumping out windows or diving under tables, authorities said.

Five off-duty police officers who were at the bar also helped people escape, authorities said.

For several hours after the violence, survivors gathered in the dark, some sobbing and hugging as they awaited word on the fate of friends as ambulances idled nearby. Several men were bare-chested after using their shirts to plug wounds and tie tourniquets.

Around midday, the body of the slain sheriff's officer was taken by motorcade from the hospital to the coroner's office. Thousands of people stood along the route or pulled over in their vehicles to watch the hearse pass.

Helus was a 29-year veteran of the force with a wife and son and planned to retire in the coming year, said the sheriff, choking back tears.

AP journalists Andrew Dalton, Amanda Lee Myers, John Antczak and Brian Melley in Los Angeles, Michelle A. Monroe in Phoenix and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

Central American migrants in Mexico want buses to US border By MARIA VERZA and CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Central American migrants in a caravan that has stopped in Mexico City demanded buses Thursday to take them to the U.S. border, saying it is too cold and dangerous to continue walking and hitchhiking.

About 200 migrants, representing the roughly 5,000 staying in a stadium in the south of Mexico's capital, marched to the United Nations office in Mexico City to make the demand for transportation.

The office was closed when the migrants arrived, but a dozen were received by U.N. representatives at a nearby location, said Ilberto Sosa Montes, a 45-year-old Honduran who is one of caravan's coordinators.

"We need buses to continue traveling," said Milton Benitez, a caravan coordinator. Benitez noted that it would be colder in northern Mexico and it wasn't safe for the migrants to continue along highways, where drug cartels frequently operate.

"This is a humanitarian crisis and they are ignoring it," Benitez said as the group arrived at the U.N. office. The plan was that when the migrant delegation returned to the stadium, roughly a three-hour walk from the U.N. office, the migrants would gather in an assembly to decide when they would leave Mexico City and what route they would take to the U.S. border. But the meeting with U.N. officials was continuing into the evening Thursday, representatives of the U.N. and the caravan confirmed.

Mexico City authorities say that of the 4,841 registered migrants receiving shelter in a sports complex, 1,726 are under the age of 18, including 310 children under five.

The Mexican government has said most of the migrants have refused offers to stay in Mexico, and only a small number have agreed to return to their home countries. About 85 percent of the migrants are from Honduras, while others are from the Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

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"California is the longest route but is the best border, while Texas is the closest but the worst" border, said Jose Luis Fuentes of the National Lawyers Guild to gathered migrants.

There have already been reports of migrants on the caravan going missing, though that is often because they hitch rides on trucks that turn off on different routes, leaving them lost.

However, the U.N. human rights agency said its office in Mexico had filed a report with prosecutors in the central state of Puebla about two buses that migrants boarded in the last leg of the trip to Mexico City early this week, and whose whereabouts are not known.

Mexico City is itself more than 600 miles from the nearest U.S. border crossing at McAllen, Texas, and a previous caravan in the spring opted for a much longer route to Tijuana in the far northwest, across from San Diego. That caravan steadily dwindled to only about 200 people by the time it reached the border.

Activists and officials explained the options available to migrants in Mexico, which has offered them refuge, asylum or work visas. The government said 2,697 temporary visas had been issued to individuals and families to cover them while they wait for the 45-day application process for a more permanent status.

Thursday's meeting with U.N. representatives comes two days after U.S. midterm elections in which President Donald Trump had converted the migrants into a campaign issue, portraying them as a major threat.

Marlon Ivan Mendez, a farm worker from Copan, Honduras, was waiting in line for donated shoes to replace the worn crocs he has used since leaving his country three weeks ago. He said he left because gangs were charging him rent to live in his own home.

"It is not fair that the good ones pay for the sinners," Mendez said of fears that gang members are coming with the caravan.

Christopher Gascon, the Mexico representative for the International Organization for Migration, estimated there are perhaps another 4,000 in caravans that are working their way through southern Mexico.

But some migrants had been visiting the organization's tent asking about how they can return home.

On Wednesday night, a bus left from Mexico City to return 37 people to their countries of origin.

In the stadium, hundreds of Mexico City employees and even more volunteers helped sort donations and direct migrants toward food, water, diapers and other basics. Migrants searched through piles of clothes and grabbed boxes of milk for children.

Darwin Pereira, a 23-year-old construction worker from Olanchito, Honduras, left his country with his wife and son, 4, for the very simple reason that "there is no work there."

Pereira, who still wears the same cheap plastic sandals he left Honduras with a month ago, thought about what he would do if he met the U.S. president.

"If I meet Donald Trump, I am going to cry. I will cry because there is nothing else to do," he said.

Appeals court rules against Trump on DACA immigrant policy By SUDHIN THANAWALA, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A U.S. appeals court blocked President Donald Trump on Thursday from immediately ending an Obama-era program shielding young immigrants from deportation, saying the administration's decision was based on a flawed legal theory.

A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously kept a preliminary injunction in place against Trump's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

Lawsuits by California and others challenging the administration's decision will continue in federal court while the injunction stands.

The U.S. Supreme Court could eventually decide the fate of DACA, which has protected about 700,000 people who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children or came with families that overstayed visas. Earlier this week, the Trump administration took the unusual step of asking the Supreme Court to take up the case even before any federal appeals courts had weighed in. It was the second time the administration sought review of its DACA decision by the Supreme Court.

In Thursday's ruling, 9th Circuit Judge Kim Wardlaw said California and other plaintiffs were likely to

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succeed with their claim that the decision to end DACA was arbitrary and capricious.

The Department of Homeland Security moved to end the program last year on the advice of just-fired Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who determined DACA to be unlawful because, he said, President Barack Obama did not have the authority to adopt it in the first place.

That was incorrect, Wardlaw wrote, noting that the federal government has a long and well-established history of using its discretion not to enforce immigration law against certain categories of people. Examples include President Dwight D. Eisenhower's decision in 1956 to extend "immigration parole" to 30,000 Hungarian refugees otherwise unable to remain in the U.S. and President Ronald Reagan's "Family Fairness" program, which allowed certain relatives of illegal immigrants who had been granted amnesty to likewise remain in the country.

While the federal government might be able to end DACA for policy reasons under its own discretion, it can't do so based on Sessions' faulty belief that the program exceeds federal authority, the court held.

"We hold only that here, where the Executive did not make a discretionary choice to end DACA — but rather acted based on an erroneous view of what the law required — the rescission was arbitrary and capricious," Wardlaw wrote. "The government is, as always, free to reexamine its policy choices, so long as doing so does not violate an injunction or any freestanding statutory or constitutional protection."

That said, the judges also declined to dismiss claims that the government's action might violate the constitutional rights of DACA recipients. The disproportionate effect the decision would have on Latinos might be unconstitutionally discriminatory, the court said, and the plaintiffs had also made a credible claim that it would violate due process for the government to turn around and use information they provided when they enrolled in DACA in deportation proceedings.

The Trump administration has said it moved to end the program last year because Texas and other states threatened to sue, raising the prospect of a chaotic end to DACA. The administration cited a 2015 ruling by another U.S. appeals court that blocked a separate immigration policy implemented by Obama.

The 9th Circuit disagreed with the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and said one of its conclusions did not apply to DACA.

An email to the U.S. Department of Justice was not immediately returned.

Trump's decision to end DACA prompted lawsuits across the nation, including one by California. A judge overseeing that lawsuit and four others ruled against the administration and reinstated the program in January.

U.S. District Judge William Alsup rejected the argument that Obama had exceeded his power in creating DACA and said the Trump administration failed to consider the disruption that ending the program would cause.

The administration then asked the 9th Circuit to throw out Alsup's ruling.

During a hearing in May, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Hashim Mooppan argued that the courts could not review the administration's decision to end DACA. The 9th Circuit rejected that notion.

The administration has been critical of the 9th Circuit and took the unusual step of trying to sidestep it and have the California DACA cases heard directly by the U.S. Supreme Court. The high court in February declined to do so. It again asked the Supreme Court on Monday to take up the case after warning that it would seek review by the high court if the 9th Circuit did not issue a ruling by Oct. 31.

Federal judges in New York and Washington also have ruled against Trump on DACA.

Associated Press writer Gene Johnson contributed from Seattle.

Heroes rushed into gunfire, pulled people to safety at bar By JOHN ROGERS, Associated Press

College students out for a good time and a veteran lawman on patrol became heroes during a shooting at a country music bar by pulling people to safety and rushing into the gunfire.

Many of the scores of young people regularly went to Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks, California,

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where a gunman stormed in Wednesday and opened fire, killing 12 people before killing himself.

"It was just a normal Wednesday night, just having a good time," said Moorpark College freshman Cole Knapp, who suddenly heard a loud bang that he initially dismissed as a prankster setting off a firecracker. Then he looked up and saw a man in a black hoodie holding a gun.

"I tried to get as many people to cover as I could," Knapp told The Associated Press. "There was an exit right next to me, so I went through that. That exit leads to a patio where people smoke. People out there didn't really know what was going on. There's a fence right there so I said, 'Everyone get over the fence as quickly as you can.' And I followed them over."

He saw a California Highway Patrol officer who had just pulled over a driver and shouted to him that there was shooter inside the building. The officer didn't seem to believe him at first, Knapp said, until he shouted that he wasn't joking. The city is consistently ranked near the top of the lists of safest places in California.

Matt Wennerstrom, who like Knapp is a Borderline regular, was there with friends when he heard what he called the unmistakable sound of gunfire.

The 20-year-old looked over to see a man dressed in black firing on bar employees who worked the front desk.

"At that point, I grabbed as many people around me as I could and grabbed them down under the pool table we were closest to until he ran out of bullets," Wennerstrom told reporters.

When the gunman stopped to reload, he and others grabbed barstools and used them to smash open a window. Then they began "shuffling as many people out as possible."

Wennerstrom, a student at nearby California State University, Channel Islands, soon followed them to safety. He lives near the bar and said many of the regulars grew up in the area and have known each other since childhood.

"It's not just something where you get out of there and fend for yourself," he told CBS News. "It's 'what can I do to protect as many of my friends as possible.""

Ventura County sheriff's Sgt. Ron Helus, a 29-year veteran nearing retirement, was the first law enforcement officer into the bar. He'd been chatting on the phone with his wife when he got a report of trouble.

He ran into the bar and was shot multiple times in an exchange of gunfire, said Sheriff Geoff Dean, who added that the confrontation gave innocent bystanders time to escape.

"Ron was a hardworking, dedicated sheriff's sergeant who was totally committed," Dean said of the man who was also his longtime friend and gym partner.

"And tonight, as I told his wife, he died a hero," added the sheriff, choking back tears.

The California Highway Patrol officer who followed Helus into the building dragged him back out. Helus was taken to a hospital where he died Thursday morning.

Hundreds of people lined the streets to pay their respects as his body was taken by motorcade from the hospital to the coroner's office.

He is survived by his wife and adult son.

Associated Press reporter Krysta Fauria contributed to this story.

Democrats vow action on gun control after Calif. shooting By MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Newly ascendant Democrats are promising congressional action on gun control amid a rash of mass shootings, including a late-night assault at a California bar that killed 12 people.

Measures including expanded background checks and a ban on assault-style weapons are likely to reach the House floor when Democrats retake control after eight years of Republican rule.

"The American people deserve real action to end the daily epidemic of gun violence that is stealing the lives of our children on campuses, in places of worship and on our streets," said Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, the Democratic leader who is running for a second stint as House speaker.

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Pelosi vowed to push for a range of actions to stem gun violence, including restrictions on high-capacity magazines and a measure allowing temporary removal of guns from people deemed an imminent risk to themselves or others.

The measures could win approval in the Democratic-controlled House next year but will face opposition from the Republican-controlled Senate and the White House, where President Donald Trump has promised to "protect the Second Amendment."

Still, gun control advocates believe they have the political momentum to make guns a central issue next year.

The political calculus on guns is changing, said Democratic Rep. Ted Deutch, whose Florida district includes the Parkland high school where 17 people were killed in February.

"We saw it start on Tuesday and we're going to see it accelerate in January," he said.

Gun control was a major issue even before the most recent shootings. Lawmakers debated action following the Parkland attack and a 2017 shooting in Las Vegas that left 58 dead, and ultimately took modest steps to boost school safety funds and improve compliance with the federal background check system for gun purchases.

The Democrats' new majority includes dozens of candidates who support gun control, including Lucy McBath in Georgia, whose 17-year-old son was fatally shot in 2012 and who made gun violence the centerpiece of her campaign

At least 17 newly elected House Democrats back stricter gun laws, including Jennifer Wexton, Abigail Spanberger and Elaine Luria in Virginia, who defeated incumbents backed by the National Rifle Association. In Colorado, Democrat Jason Crow beat GOP Rep. Mike Coffman, who received an A rating from the NRA and more than \$37,000 in campaign contributions from the group.

"I do think there's new energy" on gun issues, even before the California assault late Wednesday night and an Oct. 27 shooting that killed 11 people at a Pittsburgh synagogue, said Kris Brown, co-president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

"Our base is worked up, and people are reacting in a positive way at the ballot box," said Brown, who campaigned with the three Virginia Democrats in the final week alongside a stream of volunteers. "A large number of folks showed up and knocked on doors and said they finally have a candidate who will do something about gun violence," she said.

Wexton, Spanberger and Luria all made gun violence a central issue in their campaigns — disproving the notion that gun control is a "third rail" of politics that Democrats should not talk about, Brown said. "We're finding candidates who aren't afraid to talk about this issue," she said.

Spending to support candidates backing tougher gun control surged this year, even as campaign spending by the NRA declined. Everytown for Gun Safety, a group founded by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, pledged \$30 million for this year's elections and continued to put new money into competitive races in the final days. A political action committee formed by Gabby Giffords, the former Arizona congresswoman wounded in a shooting, spent nearly \$5 million.

Sixty-one percent of voters who responded to VoteCast, a survey of the electorate conducted by The Associated Press, said they support stricter gun laws, compared with 8 percent who said they should be loosened. Eighty-six percent of those supporting Democratic candidates backed stricter gun laws, along with 34 percent of those who supported Republicans.

McBath said her victory over Republican Rep. Karen Handel sent a strong message to the country. "Absolutely nothing — no politician & no special interest — is more powerful than a mother on a mission," she said in a tweet.

McBath, an African-American, became a spokeswoman for Everytown for Gun Safety after her son was slain at a Florida gas station by a white man angry over the loud music the black teenager and his friends had been playing in their car.

While encouraged by the election results, gun control advocates know that getting any kind of weapons or ammunition ban signed into law will be difficult if not impossible in the next Congress.

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Republicans expanded their Senate majority Tuesday and Trump remains a favored ally of the NRA. But if the House votes to approve gun control and a bill is pending in the Senate, "it's harder to ignore," Brown said. "We can keep the pressure on."

Deutch said gun control opponents would be wise to heed Tuesday's results.

For years, GOP lawmakers thought they could avoid talking about gun control while accepting campaign contributions from the NRA and promoting an A rating from the group, he said. "They learned this week that just won't work anymore," Deutch said.

Justice Ginsburg in hospital after fracturing 3 ribs in fall By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Eighty-five-year-old Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg fractured three ribs in a fall in her office at the court and is in the hospital, the court said Thursday.

The court's oldest justice fell Wednesday evening, the court said. She called Supreme Court police to take her to George Washington University Hospital in Washington early Thursday after experiencing discomfort overnight, court spokeswoman Kathy Arberg said.

She was admitted to the hospital for treatment and observation after tests showed she fractured three ribs.

In her absence, the court went ahead Thursday with a courtroom ceremony welcoming new Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who joined the court last month. President Donald Trump and new acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker were on hand.

Ginsburg has had a series of health problems. She broke two ribs in a fall in 2012. She has had two prior bouts with cancer and had a stent implanted to open a blocked artery in 2014. She also was hospitalized after a bad reaction to medicine in 2009.

But she has never missed Supreme Court arguments. The court won't hear arguments again until Nov. 26. Rib fractures are common among older adults, particularly after falls. The severity depends in part on whether the ribs are cracked or broken all the way through, and how many are broken. The extent of Ginsburg's injury was not clear.

A complete break requires making sure the two ends are in alignment, so that a sharp piece of bone doesn't puncture nearby blood vessels or organs. Broken ribs typically heal on their own in six weeks to a month, and patients are advised to limit strenuous activity. But they can be very painful and controlling pain is key. A chief complication is pneumonia, when patients don't breathe deeply enough or cough enough because of the rib pain.

Appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1993, Ginsburg rebuffed suggestions from some liberals that she should step down in the first two years of President Barack Obama's second term, when Democrats also controlled the Senate and would have been likely to confirm her successor.

She already has hired clerks for the term that extends into 2020, indicating she has no plans to retire. Ginsburg leads the court's liberal wing.

Associated Press writer Lauran Neergaard contributed to this report.

APNewsBreak: Govt Olympic funds not usable for abuse probes By EDDIE PELLS, AP National Writer

DENVER (AP) — A growing sex-abuse problem in Olympic sports has led to a steady stream of Congressional hearings and a three-year grant worth \$2.2 million.

Yet not a penny of those federal funds can be used to fight the actual problem: investigating or resolving more than 800 open cases, many brought by victims themselves.

That leaves an ever-growing backlog for the U.S. Center for SafeSport, the organization that opened 20 months ago to investigate sex-abuse complaints in Olympic sports.

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"We didn't realize until the (bid instructions for the grant) came out that we would not be able to use it for performing investigations," said SafeSport CEO Shellie Pfohl. "Clearly, that is a need, and we are continuing to look for more robust funding, both from government sources, as well as from outside of government."

SafeSport's mission is to investigate cases and serve as an independent clearinghouse for educating about abuse, with the authority to ban athletes and coaches across organizations that run Olympic sports in the United States. It is backed by the U.S. Olympic Committee, which took steps to decertify USA Gymnastics this week for botching an organizational rebuild following the sexual abuse scandal involving now-imprisoned team doctor Larry Nassar.

To be sure, the money — SafeSport will use \$1 million in the first year, \$875,000 in Year 2 and \$378,000 in Year 3 — represents a significant infusion for an office operating on \$6.4 million in 2018. But according to the rules of the Justice Department grant awarded last month, it must all be directed toward prevention and education programs, and for auditing national governing bodies' work in sex-abuse prevention — not the most acute needs for an operation that has struggled to hire investigators to look into the 1,622 complaints, an average of 85 a month, that have come its way.

The backlog is growing steadily, with spikes coming whenever sex-abuse and assault cases make big headlines.

Not long after opening, when the #MeToo movement and Nassar allegations were in the headlines, the number of reports coming into the center rose from 20 to 30 a month to that same number each week. Over the two weeks that Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation topped the news because of sexual assault allegations that he denies, the center received 135 calls.

The center has 14 employees on its response and resolution team, including six full-time investigators and another dozen who work on a contract basis. According to numbers provided by the center, full-time investigators handle an average of 10 active cases at any given time and the contractors handle between three and six. That means no more than 132 of the 800-plus cases are being investigated at any given time.

The \$2.2 million grant won't help resolve any of those manpower issues.

"We're looking at all kinds of strategies of knocking down that backlog," Pfohl said. "It's not just throwing bodies at the workload. It's also being very strategic about the type of people we're hiring who can help folks from the time they call us to submit a report."

The Senate subcommittee hearings being chaired by Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, may lead to revisiting the law that formed the USOC, potentially reshaping the relationship between the USOC and the 50 national governing bodies it oversees. More stringent language about handling sex-abuse cases could be added.

A spokeswoman for Moran said the panel is reviewing whether the center needs additional resources but could not explain the reason the grant was written the way it was.

"Senator Moran ... is uniquely positioned to address resource-related concerns as appropriate," said spokeswoman Morgan Said. Lawmakers are looking for other ways to fund the center, she said.

The U.S. Olympic Committee provides \$3.1 million a year for SafeSport. Earlier this year, the organizations that run Olympic sports in America (national governing bodies) doubled their contributions to \$2 million total per year in 2019, which at the time increased SafeSport's overall budget by about 25 percent.

When the USOC pushed to open the center amid growing outrage over slow responses to scandals in swimming, taekwondo and other sports, it searched for funding across the sports landscape — from pro leagues to the NCAA and elsewhere — but found few backers. The relative dearth of cash flow has slowed the center's mission.

Since its opening, SafeSport investigations have led to 381 disciplinary actions, including 222 cases that led to permanent ineligibility.

The discipline is similar to what the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency does on the drug front.

By comparison, USADA, which also must fund a robust testing system, reported \$21 million in revenue in 2017, \$9.5 million of which came from a grant from the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy and another \$5.1 million of which came from the USOC. There were no significant strings attached to USADA's government grant.

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(The USOC, chastened by critics for not reacting strongly enough to the Russian doping scandal, increased USADA funding by about 35 percent from 2016. Under similar criticism, it has doubled its outlay to the SafeSport Center since the opening.)

Earlier this year, Congress passed a bill requiring that the USOC and sports federations under its umbrella report abuse allegations to law enforcement. It also granted authority to SafeSport as a place for athletes to report abuse allegations. The Senate version of that bill included \$1 million for the SafeSport center, but that funding was stripped when the bill reached the House.

The grant, part of the omnibus spending bill, originally was written to be \$2.5 million per year for five years, but the full amount was not appropriated, Pfohl said.

That left \$2.2 million total over three years, and though the SafeSport center was the only legitimate competitor for the money, it still needed about six months to apply for and receive the grant.

"When you know the original bill was worth \$2.5 million for five years, then you come to find out that the actual final allocation is \$2 million over three years that can't be used for investigations, it's just a slap in the face for an important effort," said Max Cobb, the American NGB leader who spearheaded that group's funding increase.

This version clarifies that when national governing bodies increased their SafeSport funding, it increased SafeSport's overall budget by 25 percent. The contributions themselves doubled.

More AP sports: https://apnews.com/apf-sports and https://apnews.com/AP_Sports

LGBT triumphs: 2 governorships, at least 9 seats in Congress By DAVID CRARY, AP National Writer

On the East Coast, West Coast and in heartland states between them, LGBT candidates scored a raft of notable midterm election victories — winning two governorships, at least nine seats in Congress, and their first-ever legislative seats in Indiana, Kansas and Nebraska.

The head of the LGBTQ Victory Fund, which recruits and assists LGBT candidates, said many of the winners in Tuesday's elections were motivated by concerns over the Trump administration's rollback of protections for transgender people.

"We've worked hard to achieve the rights we have today," said the fund's CEO, former Houston Mayor Annise Parker. "But we realize we're still in a vulnerable position in many places."

From Parker's perspective, the highlights were many. In Colorado, U.S. Rep. Jared Polis became the first openly gay man elected as a governor of any state. In Wisconsin, Tammy Baldwin — who in 2012 became the first openly gay person to win a U.S. Senate seat — easily won re-election despite being targeted by outside conservative groups that spent millions attacking her.

In races for the U.S. house, a record eight LGBT candidates won seats for the Democrats. Four incumbents— Mark Takano of California, Sean Patrick Maloney of New York, David Cicilline of Rhode Island and Mark Pocan of Wisconsin — will be joined in January by newcomers Katie Hill of California, Sharice Davids of Kansas, Angie Craig of Minnesota and Chris Pappas of New Hampshire.

For two other LGBT candidates, their races were too close to call — U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema's bid for a U.S. Senate seat in Arizona and Gina Ortiz Jones' race for a U.S. House seat in Texas.

Hill, Davids and Craig were among a batch of Democratic winners who flipped control of GOP-held House seats, overcoming initial skepticism that LGBT candidates were not best-suited for that challenge.

"We saw LGBTQ candidates talk openly about their lives to a degree unseen in past elections — and it resonated with voters," Parker said.

In Minnesota, Craig featured her wife and their sons in TV ads en route to winning a rematch against GOP Rep. Jason Lewis in the Twin Cities' suburban 2nd District.

"What I say is my wife and I have four sons, just like any other politician would," Craig said during the campaign. "It'd be cool to be the first openly gay member of Congress from Minnesota, but that's not

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why I'm running."

In Kansas' 3rd District, near Kansas City, Davids unseated four-term GOP incumbent Kevin Yoder. Being lesbian was only one aspect of an eye-catching biography — she's also Native American, a lawyer, a former White House fellow, and a past competitor in mixed martial arts.

"From the beginning, this campaign has been built on bringing new leaders to the table, and new voices to the table," she said in her victory speech.

In New Hampshire, Pappas did not stress his LGBT status during the campaign, but reacted with passion during a debate when his GOP rival, Eddie Edwards, questioned why Pappas had been photographed wearing a "Resist" T-shirt.

"The photo you are referring to is a rainbow shirt I wore at a gay pride event," Pappas said. "I am proud of who I am and I am proud to stand up against hate, bigotry and intolerance."

In Colorado, which was beset by gay-rights controversies in the past, Polis' successful campaign for governor was striking in that his LGBT status never became a campaign issue.

"We went from a state where our elected officials struggled to provide even basic rights to same-sex couples to a state where a gay man ran for governor and his sexual orientation wasn't discussed as a political liability," The Denver Post wrote in an editorial.

Kayla DeShon, an independent voter from the Denver suburb of Highlands Ranch, said she voted for Polis because of his stance on health care.

"I did not know he is gay. I found out afterward — it was an added bonus," said DeShon, 29. "And I do think that it doesn't matter."

Polis will join Oregon's Kate Brown as the only LGBT governors. Brown, who identifies as bisexual, narrowly won re-election over Republican Knute Buehler.

In state legislative races, the Victory Fund projects that about 130 LGBT candidates will win seats — all but two of them Democrats. That would be up from 121 LGBT legislators heading into the election, according to the fund.

Winning a state Senate seat in Utah was Derek Kitchen, a city councilor in Salt Lake City who rose to prominence when his lawsuit overturned Utah's ban on gay marriage several years ago. Voters in Omaha elected an openly bisexual candidate, Megan Hunt, to the Nebraska Senate.

In New Hampshire, two transgender women, Gerri Cannon and Lisa Bunker, won seats in the state House of Representatives.

A third transgender woman, Brianna Titone, was locked in a too-close-to-call race for the Colorado House. Unofficial near-complete returns showed Titone with a 12-vote lead after more than 47,000 votes were cast.

Among LGBT victors elsewhere was Dana Nessel, elected as Michigan's attorney general. Nessel made headlines as co-counsel in the historic lawsuit that led to same-sex marriage in Michigan.

She said the outgoing GOP attorney general, Bill Schuette, "made a mockery of state government" by bringing social scientists to court to denigrate the parenting skills of same-sex couples.

"There are LGBTQ people clamoring for representation and tired of the office of attorney general using them as a punching bag," Nessel said during the campaign.

In Massachusetts, voters soundly defeated an attempted repeal of a 2016 state law extending nondiscrimination protections to transgender people in the use of restrooms and other public accommodations.

The outcome was hailed by Parker, who was mayor of Houston in 2015 when a trans-inclusive civil-rights ordinance was repealed in a referendum. Opponents of the ordinance played upon public fears with the slogan, "No Men in Women's Bathrooms."

Parker said Massachusetts voters, having lived with the state law for two years, didn't buy such rhetoric. "They realized it was completely inane fear," she said.

Associated Press writer James Anderson in Denver contributed to this report.

Follow David Crary at https://twitter.com/CraryAP

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In the final hours of World War I, a terrible toll By RAF CASERT, Associated Press

VRIGNE-MEUSE, France (AP) — Augustin Trebuchon is buried beneath a white lie.

His tiny plot is almost on the front line where the guns finally fell silent at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, after a four-year war that had already killed millions.

A simple white cross says: "Died for France on Nov. 10, 1918."

Not so.

Like hundreds of others along the Western Front, Trebuchon was killed in combat on the morning of Nov. 11 — after the pre-dawn agreement between the Allies and Germany but before the armistice took effect six hours later.

His death at almost literally the eleventh hour only highlighted the folly of a war that had become ever more incomprehensible to many in nations drawn into the first global conflict.

Before Nov. 11, the war had killed 14 million people, including 9 million soldiers, sailors and airmen from 28 countries. Germany came close to a quick, early victory before the war settled into hellish trench fighting. One battle, like the Somme in France, could have up to 1 million casualties. The use of poison gas came to epitomize the ruthlessness of warfare that the world had never seen.

For the French, who lost up to 1.4 million troops, it was perhaps too poignant — or too shameful — to denote that Trebuchon had been killed on the very last morning, just as victory finally prevailed.

"Indeed, on the tombs it said 'Nov. 10, 1918,' to somewhat ease the mourning of families," said French military historian Nicolas Czubak.

There were many reasons why men kept falling until the call of the bugler at 11 a.m.: fear that the enemy would not abide by the armistice, a sheer hatred after four years of unprecedented slaughter, the ambition of commanders craving a last victory, bad communications, the inane joy of killing.

As the hours ticked down, villages were taken, attacks were thwarted with heavy losses and rivers were crossed under enemy fire. Questions remain whether the gains were worth all the human losses.

Historian Joseph Persico estimated the total dead, wounded and missing on all sides on the final day was 10,900.

U.S. Gen. John J. Pershing, who had been bent on continuing the fighting, even had to explain to Congress the high number of last-day losses.

Other nations also were not spared such casualties.

With two minutes to go, 25-year-old Canadian Pvt. George Lawrence Price was slain by a German sniper. About 250 kilometers (150 miles) away in France, a 23-year-old American, Henry Gunther, was killed by German machine-gun fire one minute before the armistice.

Trebuchon, 40, also was shot minutes before the cease-fire. He was running to tell his comrades where and when they would have a meal after the armistice.

All three are considered their nations' last men to fall in active combat.

"THE FUTILITY OF THE LARGER WAR"

Anti-German sentiment ran high after the United States declared war in April 1917, and Gunther and his family in Baltimore were subjected to the kind of prejudice and suspicion that many of German descent faced at the time.

"It was not a good time to be German in the United States," said historian Alec Bennett.

Gunther had little choice when he got drafted. He was given the rank of sergeant, but he later was demoted when he wrote a letter home critical of the conditions in the war.

Soon after, he was thrown into the biggest U.S. battle of the war, the Meuse-Argonne offensive in northeastern France.

There were reports he was still brooding over his demotion right on Nov. 11. When he emerged from a thick fog in the valley around Chaumont-devant-Damvillers, he and his comrades faced a German machine aun nest on the hillside.

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Indications are that the Germans fired one salvo over his head as a warning, knowing the war was almost over. But he still charged onward.

"His time of death was 10:59 a.m., which is just so haunting," Bennett said. Gunther was recognized by Pershing as the last American to die on the battlefield.

Questions remain whether it was a suicide run, an attempt at redemption or an act of true devotion.

"It is just as puzzling now as it was 100 years ago," Bennett said, adding that one thing is clear: "Gunther's act is seen as almost a symbol of the futility of the larger war."

But there was one more cruel twist for his family: They were unaware he had been killed.

Upon his expected return "they went to the train station to meet Henry — not there!" said Bruce Malone, superintendent of Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery, the final resting place for 100 Americans who died Nov. 11.

"A NEED TO KILL ONE LAST TIME"

There was no mystery surrounding the death of Price, the Canadian. It was an utterly senseless loss of life. He was a farm laborer in Saskatchewan when the swirl of history plucked him off the land in October 1917 as the Allies sought ever more manpower for the Western Front.

The summer after he was drafted, he was part of the surge of victories that seized villages and cities right up to Nov. 11. By that time, Canadians were retaking Mons in southern Belgium, where soldiers from the British Commonwealth had their very first battle with the Germans in August 1914.

It was especially sweet for the Commonwealth commanders to retake the city, bringing the war full circle where they lost their first soldier, English Pvt. John Parr, on Aug. 21, 1914.

Price decided to check out homes along the canals while civilians in the center of Mons had already broken out the wine and whiskey they had hidden for years from the Germans to celebrate with the Canadians. Suddenly, a shot rang out and Price collapsed.

"It really was one man, here and there, who was driven by vengeance, by a need to kill one last time," said Belgian historian Corentin Rousman.

The final minutes counted not just for the casualties but also for the killers.

"There are rules in war," Rousman said. "There is always the possibility to kill two minutes before a cease-fire. Two minutes after, the German would have had to stand before a judge. That's the difference." At the St. Symphorien cemetery just outside Mons, Price, the last Commonwealth soldier killed in the war, lies a stone's throw from Parr, the first.

"He is not forgotten," Rousman said of Price. "It's a soldier whose tomb is often draped in flowers."

"PART OF THIS GREAT PATRIOTIC MOMENTUM"

Trebuchon's grave stands out because of the date, underscoring the random fortunes of war.

He was a shepherd from France's Massif Central and could have avoided the war as a family breadwinner at age 36.

"But he was part of this great patriotic momentum," said Jean-Christophe Chanot, the mayor of Vrigne-Meuse, where he died.

Trebuchon knew misery as part of France's most brutal battles — Marne, Somme, Verdun. He survived right up to his last order — to tell soldiers where to gather after the armistice.

Instead, his body was found with a bullet wound to the head. He was recognized as "the last French soldier killed during the last French attack against the Germans," Chanot said.

The date on his grave — Nov. 10, 1918 — remains controversial, even if it was meant to soothe a family's sorrow.

"It was a lie, without a question," said Czubak, the French historian.

Photojournalist Virginia Mayo and video journalist Mark Carlson contributed.

For more information on World War I, go to The Associated Press' WWI hub: https://www.apnews.com/

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WorldWarI

World War I: An AP Centennial Commemorative Edition. Available now exclusively at Amazon: https://amzn.to/2JGrx5U

Google bows to worker pressure on sexual misconduct policy By MICHAEL LIEDTKE, AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google is promising to be more forceful and open about its handling of sexual misconduct cases, a week after thousands of high-paid engineers and others walked out in protest over its male-dominated culture.

Google bowed to one of the protesters' main demands by dropping mandatory arbitration of all sexual misconduct cases. That will now be optional, so workers can choose to sue in court and present their case in front of a jury. It mirrors a change made by ride-hailing service Uber after complaints from its female employees prompted an internal investigation. The probe concluded that its rank had been poisoned by rampant sexual harassment.

"Google's leaders and I have heard your feedback and have been moved by the stories you've shared," CEO Sundar Pichai said in an email to Google employees. "We recognize that we have not always gotten everything right in the past and we are sincerely sorry for that. It's clear we need to make some changes." Thursday's email was obtained by The Associated Press.

Last week, the tech giant's workers left their cubicles in dozens of offices around the world to protest what they consider management's lax treatment of top executives and other male workers accused of sexual harassment and other misconduct. The protest's organizers estimated that about 20,000 workers participated.

The reforms are the latest fallout from a broader societal backlash against men's exploitation of their female subordinates in business, entertainment and politics — a movement that has spawned the "MeToo" hashtag as a sign of unity and a call for change.

Google will provide more details about sexual misconduct cases in internal reports available to all employees. The breakdowns will include the number of cases that were substantiated within various company departments and list the types of punishment imposed, including firings, pay cuts and mandated counseling.

The company is also stepping up its training aimed at preventing misconduct. It's requiring all employees to go through the process annually instead of every other year. Those who fall behind in their training, including top executives, will be dinged in annual performance reviews, leaving a blemish that could lower their pay and make it more difficult to get promoted.

But Google didn't address protesters' demand for a commitment to pay women the same as men doing similar work. When previously confronted with accusations that it shortchanges women — made by the U.S. Labor Department and in lawsuits filed by female employees —Google has maintained that its compensation system doesn't discriminate between men and women.

The changes didn't go far enough to satisfy Vicki Tardif Holland, a Google employee who helped organize and spoke at the protests near the company's Cambridge, Massachusetts, office last week.

"While Sundar's message was encouraging, important points around discrimination, inequity and representation were not addressed," Holland wrote in an email responding to an AP inquiry.

Nevertheless, employment experts predicted the generally positive outcome of Google's mass uprising is bound to have ripple effects across Silicon Valley and perhaps the rest of corporate America.

"These things can be contagious," said Thomas Kochan, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology management professor specializing in employment issues. "I would expect to see other professionals taking action when they see something wrong."

Some employers might even pre-emptively adopt some of Google's new policies, given its prestige, said Stephanie Creary, who specializes in workplace and diversity issues at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. "When Google does something, other employers tend to copy it," she said.

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Google got caught in the crosshairs two weeks ago after The New York Times detailed allegations of sexual misconduct against the creator of Google's Android software, Andy Rubin. The newspaper said Rubin received a \$90 million severance package in 2014 after Google concluded the accusations were credible. Rubin has denied the allegations.

Like its Silicon Valley peers, Google has already acknowledged that its workforce is too heavily concentrated with white and Asian men, especially in the highest-paying executive and computer-programming jobs. Women account for 31 percent of Google's employees worldwide, and it's lower for leadership roles.

Critics believe that gender imbalance has created a "brogammer" culture akin to a college fraternity house that treats women as sex objects. As part of its ongoing efforts, Google will now require at least one woman or a non-Asian ethnic minority to be included on the list of candidates for executive jobs.

AP Technology Writer Frank Bajak in Boston contributed to this story.

In online ruse, fake journalists tried to hack Saudi critic By RAPHAEL SATTER, AP Cybersecurity Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hackers impersonating journalists tried to intercept the communications of a prominent Saudi opposition figure in Washington, The Associated Press has found.

One attempt involved the fabrication of a fake BBC secretary and an elaborate television interview request; the other involved the impersonation of slain Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi to deliver a malicious link.

Media rights defenders denounced the hacking effort, which they said would make it harder for genuine reporters to do their jobs.

"It's incredibly dangerous to employ this kind of tactic," said Elodie Vialle, who heads the technology desk at Paris-based Reporters Without Borders. "The chilling effect is that people are deterred from speaking to journalists. In the end, it undermines the freedom of information."

The most involved masquerade took place in February of this year, when someone posing as a BBC journalist called "Tanya Stalin" emailed Washington-based Saudi dissident Ali AlAhmed inviting him to a live broadcast about Saudi Arabia. Stalin engaged with AlAhmed over several days, sending him a list of proposed topics and talking him through the logistics of his purported television appearance.

AlAhmed said he knew from the beginning that something was up.

For starters, Stalin said her position was "Secretary to the Editor İn Chief," a title that didn't correspond to a job typically done by producers or bookers. Odder still, the message came over Gmail rather than from an official BBC address.

And then there was her eyebrow-raising last name.

"The Stalin business threw me off," AlAhmed said in a recent interview. "I asked my wife, who is Russian, and she said: 'No one has this name."

AlAhmed was right. The BBC said it wasn't aware of anyone called "Tanya Stalin" working for the broadcaster and that the title she claimed to hold did not formally exist. An Associated Press analysis of her messages suggests the interview request was a sloppily executed trap, an attempt to get AlAhmed to click a malicious link and break into his inbox.

AlAhmed believes Saudi Arabia is behind Stalin's emails, as well as dozens of other suspicious messages he has received over the past year. One November 2017 missive purportedly came from Khashoggi, whose killing last month on the grounds of the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul has refocused international attention on the brutality of the Arab kingdom's leadership.

The Saudi Embassy in Washington did not return written questions from the AP.

Washington Post Executive Editor Marty Baron said the hackers' theft of Khashoggi's identity was "contemptible."

A researcher with internet watchdog Citizen Lab recently reviewed AlAhmed's emails and confirmed they were malicious — although he stopped short of drawing a link between the different messages or blaming

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anyone for the hacking campaign.

"This was a targeted operation designed to gain access to his accounts and private communications," said John Scott-Railton, whose group is based at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs. "This does appear to be closely linked to his political activities."

Some of the messages — like a prompt to install a "free security update" called "Ninja security" — were generic phishing messages of the type used by criminals and spies the world over. But many of the 40-odd malicious messages recovered from AlAhmed's inbox were closely attuned to current events in the Gulf.

Most troubling was a May 31 message dressed up to look like it came from an event photography service, complete with pictures of AlAhmed holding a microphone during a question and answer session featuring the Qatari foreign minister at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

The photos, which appear to have been pulled off a publicly available video of the event, suggest that the hackers or someone working with them had been tracking AlAhmed's whereabouts closely.

"That email was really when I felt fear," said AlAhmed, who says his work is largely self-funded. "They are actually physically here. They're looking at me."

Scott-Railton said the persistence of the hackers — and the variety of different tactics they employed to try to pry open AlAhmed's inbox — pointed to a manpower-intensive effort to compromise the Saudi gadfly.

"Over an extended period of time, humans were tasked with getting into his computer and getting into his head," Scott-Railton said.

As a critic of Saudi Arabia's ruling family, AlAhmed has been a regular on Arabic and English-language cable news for more than a decade. He has long served Washington journalists as a source about the kingdom's problems, especially in relation to extremist propaganda in the country's school textbooks.

Saudi Arabia is a known practitioner of cyberespionage. The country was exposed as a customer of notorious Italian surveillance firm Hacking Team in 2015 and a mysterious Saudi investor has since taken a minority stake in the company, according to a Motherboard report published this year.

Recent reports by Citizen Lab and human rights group Amnesty International have also documented the use of Israeli-made spy software to break into the smartphones of Saudi human rights activists, including Canada-based Omar Abdulaziz, who was working with Khashoggi on several confidential projects before the columnist was killed.

Whoever is behind the bogus Tanya Stalin persona or the fake Jamal Khashoggi emails, the messages give an idea of how the always-fraught overlap between espionage and journalism has evolved in the internet age, with government-backed hackers routinely impersonating journalists or news organizations to hunt their prey. Even the FBI has impersonated reporters to hack its targets, at one point pretending to be an AP journalist to locate a bomb threat hoaxer's computer.

Scott-Railton explained that masquerading as a journalist was a perfect way of getting someone to lower their guard and click a link or open an attachment.

"It ticks all kinds of boxes," he said. "It explains messages out of the blue and as part of communications with journalists you'd expect to receive documents, like questions in advance."

The attempt to hack AlAhmed under Khashoggi's name involved a simple link sent by email, but the Tanya Stalin ruse was unusually involved.

The hackers created a fake LinkedIn profile with more than 500 connections to corroborate her identity and pass her off as a graduate of journalism schools at Columbia and Berkeley. The profile's picture consisted of a headshot of Souad Mekhennet, a real Washington Post journalist who writes about national security and the Middle East and has covered the aftermath of Khashoggi's death.

It's not clear why the hackers used Mekhennet's photo in the sham profile or whether they even tried particularly hard to make the "Tanya Stalin" persona credible. Stalin did not immediately return messages seeking comment. Neither did whoever was behind the fake Khashoggi email.

Baron, the Washington Post's top editor, said in his statement Wednesday that he condemned the use of Mekhennet's image and Khashoggi's name.

"To be clear, neither of these distinguished journalists had any involvement whatsoever in these despicable schemes," he said.

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Online:

Raphael Satter can be reached at: http://raphaelsatter.com

A selection of the phishing emails sent to Ali AlAhmed: https://www.documentcloud.org/search/projectid:41381-Fake-Journalist-Hackers

Immigrant advocates slam video hearings for detained kids By MARTHA MENDOZA AND GARANCE BURKE, Associated Press

The Trump administration says it is trying to speed up legal proceedings for some of the record 13,000 migrant children in federal custody by using video hearings to stream testimony from detained youths into courtrooms, The Associated Press has learned.

The problem, some attorneys and judges say, is that technical glitches — including bad audio, weak connections and pixelated screens — are actually making it much harder for the teens in shelters to have a fair hearing. It can be challenging for judges to assess children's credibility without eye-to-eye contact, they say. And it further obscures the cases, which legally are supposed to be public.

But the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which has custody of the teens, says its unannounced pilot program will save money and allows youths, some of whom are being housed at a cost of more than \$775 a night, to appear before a judge more quickly.

The program for teens, piloted in conjunction with the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review, launched several weeks ago. Video teleconferencing already has been widely used in a variety of adult legal proceedings.

So far, about 30 youths have appeared via videoconferencing before immigration judges in Phoenix and Harlingen, Texas, said Lydia Holt, an ORR spokeswoman. Similar hearings have been conducted in immigration courts in Miami and New York City, said Kathryn Mattingly, an EOIR spokeswoman. The AP learned they also have been scheduled in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, El Paso, Seattle, Tucson and San Francisco.

This summer, the optics of children in court became an embarrassment to the administration, with critics seizing on the fact that the immigration system requires children — some still in diapers — to appear before judges for legal proceedings.

Holt said the administration has recommended 75 more unaccompanied children for video hearings, typically migrants between the ages of 15 and 17 who have been in custody for a longer period of time and want their immigration cases heard swiftly.

"If at all possible, ORR does not want children to stay longer than necessary in our facilities while waiting for their immigration case to be heard," she said.

ORR shelters are nearly full, mostly with children who immigrated without their parents and have family or friends in the U.S. willing to take them in. But the children can spend months in detention as the government arranges their deportation or release to parents or other sponsors, who are now facing stricter guidelines for vetting in the U.S.

Almost 60 percent of all migrant children who had their first court date in fiscal year 2017 still did not have lawyers by this August, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.

In states where children have been appearing before judges via video, attorneys say the new process hasn't worked well thus far and risks rolling back due process. Much of the legal representation is pro bono, and organizations can't afford to have two attorneys at each appearance — one in the courtroom and another in the shelter.

In one case, there was no way to transmit court documents remotely, so someone had to drive to the shelter to serve the detained teen with paperwork. Another teen stopped talking and started looking around the room when the video feed coming from the court went blank, confusing the judge trying to evaluate the teen's credibility.

The government is asking shelter workers to set up mock hearing rooms, complete with a table for the

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child and empty tables for the judge and the government attorney.

Judge Ashley Tabaddor, president of the National Association of Immigration Judges, called the video teleconference equipment "very, very difficult to work with."

She said she recently oversaw a video hearing in her Los Angeles courtroom: It took a half-hour to set up the connection, for a proceeding that would have taken five minutes in person.

Phone lines drop, screens get fuzzy and participants have difficulty hearing each other, an issue exacerbated by language interpreters, who often aren't at both locations.

"There is nothing that can substitute for an in-person hearing," Tabaddor said.

Ingrid Eagly, a law professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, who has analyzed thousands of cases of detained adult immigrants, found that those who saw judges on a monitor were more likely to be deported than those who appeared in court.

The reason: During in-person hearings, detainees often better understood their options and sought legal counsel and other relief. Inside the detention centers, immigrants were frustrated with technical problems and felt the proceedings were unfair, so tended to give up, she found.

Immigration courts began using video hearings for adults 25 years ago, a process the federal government considers a "force multiplier" by saving time and money. It gives the government greater scheduling flexibility and allows judges in other regions to help clear dockets. And they have ramped up dramatically in the past decade.

Archi Pyati, a New York-based attorney for the Tahirih Justice Center, which represents migrant children, said the government's growing effort to move immigrant children into remote, locked facilities is making it tougher to provide them their legal recourse.

Sometimes, clients need to talk about deeply personal trauma, abuse and fear, Pyati said.

"It's very hard to talk about that to a screen and not to a human being," she said.

Former NY attorney general won't face abuse charges By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHAEL R. SISAK, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The special prosecutor investigating former New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said Thursday that she couldn't bring criminal charges over allegations he physically abused women he dated, in part, because current state law doesn't explicitly outlaw such behavior.

In closing the six-month investigation, Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas implored lawmakers to pass legislation to criminalize slapping, shoving and other violence committed for sexual gratification.

Singas, who was appointed to conduct the investigation by Gov. Andrew Cuomo in May, said investigators conducted an "exhaustive review" and that she personally interviewed each woman who had accused Schneiderman of assault. Investigators also spoke with members of Schneiderman's security detail and people who worked for him in the attorney general's office, she said.

"I believe the women who shared their experiences with our investigation team, however legal impediments, including statutes of limitations, preclude criminal prosecution," Singas said in a statement announcing her decision.

She said she found no misconduct by attorney general's office staff.

Schneiderman, 63, said he recognizes that Singas' decision "does not mean I have done nothing wrong." I accept full responsibility for my conduct in my relationships with my accusers, and for the impact it had on them," Schneiderman said through a publicist. "After spending time in a rehab facility, I am committed to a lifelong path of recovery and making amends to those I have harmed. I apologize for any and all pain that I have caused, and I apologize to the people of the State of New York for disappointing them after they put their trust in me."

Schneiderman, a Democrat, announced his resignation in May, hours after The New Yorker published an expose saying that four women had accused him of slapping or choking them.

Some of the women said Schneiderman was a heavy drinker.

Schneiderman at the time didn't deny the allegations, but implied in an initial statement his conduct was

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either welcomed or was not as the women described.

Michelle Manning Barish, a Democratic activist and writer, said Schneiderman became controlling and abusive — slapping her hard across the face and choking her — soon after they started dating in mid-2013.

Manning Barish said Thursday she felt "completely vindicated" by Schneiderman's acknowledgement he had abused women, and said she would work to ensure that legislation outlawing such behavior is passed into law.

Tanya Selvaratnam, an author and film producer who dated Schneiderman in 2016 and 2017 and described similar abuse, thanked Singas "for the care she gave to the investigation."

"This experience underscores the need for legislation addressing intimate violence so all of those who experience it can come forward knowing they have protection under the law," Selvaratnam said in a statement.

Under current New York law, a slap, shove, or kick that doesn't cause physical injury can be charged as a non-criminal violation, but only if the offender's intent is to "alarm, harass, or annoy" the victim.

Charges can't be brought if the offender's intent is sexual arousal or gratification, unless the victim proves the violence caused substantial pain or injuries that go beyond bumps, bruises and cuts.

Singas' proposal calls for classifying sexually motivated violence as a misdemeanor, which would carry punishment of up to one year in jail, along with a two-year statute of limitations.

Manning Barish's lawyer, Debra Katz, said closing the gap in the law is "crucial to protect victims of sexual abuse and violence from the deeply emotionally scarring injuries they experience in their intimate relationships."

"Without it, abusers can get off scot-free — even when they later admit to the behavior, as Mr. Schneiderman did today," Katz said.

In the meantime, Manning Barish is calling on Schneiderman to donate millions of dollars left in his campaign coffers to women's shelters and domestic abuse programs in the state, and that she wished him well in his recovery.

"This is a victory for all women but we need more than words," she said.

Schneiderman's campaign fund had about \$7.4 million as of July, according to a campaign finance report filed with the state. He had even more money stockpiled, but his campaign refunded about \$1 million in donations in the two months after he quit.

Schneiderman's publicist didn't immediately respond to a question about his plans for the money.

Cuomo appointed Singas as a special prosecutor, bypassing Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. because of a potential conflict of interest. At the time, the attorney general's office was investigating how Vance's office had handled a sexual misconduct allegation against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein.

The allegations tarnished Schneiderman's reputation as a defender of women at the forefront of the #MeToo movement. Schneiderman launched an investigation last year into movie producer Harvey Weinstein's studio, and in February filed a lawsuit aimed at securing better compensation for his sexual misconduct accusers.

After The New Yorker story was published, Manning Barish wrote on Twitter: "After the most difficult month of my life-I spoke up. For my daughter and for all women. I could not remain silent and encourage other women to be brave for me. I could not."

Balsamo reported from Washington. Follow him at twitter.com/mikebalsamo1 and Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak.

What's in a number? Dutchman, 69, seeks age change to 49 By MIKE CORDER, Associated Press

UTRECHT, Netherlands (AP) — Self-styled positivity guru Emile Ratelband thinks age is just a number. And his is a number the Dutchman wants changed.

The 69-year-old TV personality has asked a court in the Netherlands to approve his request for a new birthday that officially would make him 49.

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Ratelband says his legal appeal is consistent with other forms of personal transformation that are gaining acceptance and government recognition in the Netherlands and around the world.

"With this free(dom) of choice, choice of name, freeness of gender, I want to have my own age. I want to control myself," he said Thursday.

Ratelband says he wants to avoid age discrimination in society — especially on dating websites.

"So when I ask for a mortgage, for example, they say it's impossible," he told The Associated Press. "If I go on Tinder, then I get women from 68, 69 when women are there."

How about just being economical with the truth about his age?

"I don't want to lie," he said. "I want to be myself, so don't force me to lie."

Marjolein van den Brink, who specializes in human rights and gender issues at Utrecht University's law school, said age discrimination is a problem but is different than the issues involved in reassigning gender.

"It's quite clear that elderly people have a much smaller chance of getting a job than younger people," she said. "But that's just one element and it's only something that happens to you once you reach the age of 40, 45, 50, depending a bit on your job.

"Whereas gender is something that follows you from birth to grave, and it determines nearly everything — and not just in the labor market but everywhere," she said.

In rare cases, even race has also become more fluid.

In Britain, theater director Anthony Ekundayo Lennon has attracted attention in part because despite being the son of white Irish parents, he looks like a mixed-race man. He has also written and told journalists that he thinks of himself as black.

He says he was racially abused as a teenager because of his appearance, and when he started an acting career, he found it easier to pursue non-white parts. He also took an African middle name.

Now some black artists are complaining because Lennon was recently given a paid traineeship in a program designed to give more black people a chance for careers in the arts.

His case resembles in some ways that of Rachel Dolezal, a white woman in the United States who identified herself as black after she was raised by religious parents who had adopted four black children. She was working for the NAACP when her ruse was uncovered in 2015.

Ratelband, the Dutch TV personality, says the Dutch government could benefit if it were to accept his age demand. He said he'd be happy to forfeit his monthly pension of around 1,200 euros (\$1,370) — a concession he estimates would save nearly 300,000 euros (\$343,000) over the 20 years he wants shaved off his age.

The court in the central city of Arnhem is expected to issue a ruling in about four weeks.

Ratelband, who makes a living urging people and businesses to be positive, denies that the age request is a publicity stunt. He claims he is seeking a personal positive effect.

"Now I'm an old man. I have to save my money to give to my kids so that they can live," said the father of seven. "But If I have that age again, I have hope again. I'm new again. The whole future is there for me again."

Gregory Katz in London contributed.

Woman freed in blasphemy case still in hiding in Pakistan By KATHY GANNON, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A week after Pakistan's Supreme Court acquitted her of blasphemy, a Christian woman who had been on death row for eight years was freed from detention Thursday, but her whereabouts are a closely guarded secret following demands by extremists that she be hanged in public.

The case of Aasia Bibi has become a political minefield for Prime Minister Imran Khan. He is trying to placate the Muslim extremists who have threatened to topple his government, while keeping the 54-year-old mother of five safe from a lynch mob and also finding a way to allow her to leave Pakistan without bringing rioters into the streets.

Bibi has been offered asylum by the European Parliament, which championed her case after she was

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convicted in 2010 under Pakistan's harsh blasphemy law. There has been sharp worldwide criticism of the law, which remains popular in the Muslim majority country and carries the death penalty for insulting Islam but also has been used as a way to settle scores and pressure minorities.

Bibi was with her family under heavy security after being transferred to the Pakistani capital overnight from her detention facility in southern Punjab, triggering expectations of an imminent departure from the country.

For the moment, Bibi remained in Pakistan, according to two people close to her who spoke on condition of anonymity so as not to endanger her. That was confirmed later Thursday by Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry.

Following her Oct. 31 acquittal by Pakistan's Supreme Court, the hard-line Tehreek-e-Labbaik Party forced a nationwide shutdown as its supporters filled the streets for three days to protest the ruling. The rallies only dispersed after Khan's government promised that a court would review a motion to challenge the acquittal and deny Bibi permission to leave Pakistan.

Khan, who came to power after elections last summer in part on an Islamist agenda, was immediately accused by critics of giving in to the extremists.

Bibi's release, high-security transfer to Islamabad and her likely departure raised the possibility that Khan's promises to the Islamists could have been an effort to buy time. The government, however, has not openly declared that Bibi was free to leave.

Tehreek-e-Labbaik, in a video message that was circulated widely Thursday, said it received government assurances following Bibi's relocation to Islamabad that she wouldn't leave the country until the review petition was heard.

Khan, a former cricket star and playboy who has embraced religious conservatism before he ran for prime minister, is hamstrung by contradictions within his own government, according to Zahid Hussain, who has written two books on the rise of militancy in Pakistan.

"There are some within the party, senior members of the party, who are pampering religious extremists for the sake of votes, and some believe in the same kind of world view," Hussain said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Bibi's ordeal began on a blistering hot day in 2009 when she went to fetch water for herself and fellow farmworkers. An argument took place after two women refused to drink from the same container as Bibi, who is Roman Catholic.

The two women later said Bibi had insulted the Prophet Muhammad, and she was charged with blasphemy. She was put on trial, convicted and sentenced to death in 2010.

While her conviction was appealed, her case gained worldwide attention and focused international criticism on the blasphemy law. In announcing her acquittal last week, a three-judge panel of the Supreme Court upheld the law itself but said prosecutors had failed to prove Bibi had violated it.

European Parliament President Antonio Tajani invited Bibi and her family to Europe. In a letter, a copy of which was seen by the AP, Tajani told Bibi's husband Ashiq Masih that the parliament is "extremely concerned for your safety as well as your family's, due to the violence by extremist elements in Pakistan."

The letter added to expectations that she and her family would leave for Europe, though their destination has not been confirmed. Spain and France have offered her asylum.

Speaking to the AP earlier this week in the Punjab capital of Lahore, Masih said he hasn't slept much since his wife's acquittal and the subsequent outrage by extremists. His initial joy quickly turned to sadness when he realized the ordeal was not over.

He said that he is consumed by fear every time his phone rings and haunted by the shouts of "Hang her!" "Sometimes I pace on the rooftop, sometimes I walk on the road outside our home," he said. "I look at the faces around me and I wonder if anyone is waiting to hurt us."

Even the mere suggestion of blasphemy can whip mobs into a lynching frenzy in Pakistan. In 2011, the governor of Punjab province was killed by his own guard after he defended Bibi and criticized the blasphemy law. A year later, Shahbaz Bhatti, the minister for minorities and a Christian, was shot and killed. For Bibi's husband, leaving Pakistan is painful but remains a matter of life and death.

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"We have no other choice but to leave," he said. "I love Pakistan but I can't live here."

Even in Bibi's home village of Aitta Wali — an impoverished farming community where animals and residents share tiny, sunbaked mud houses — there is still outrage over her acquittal, and its remaining three Christian families have fled.

"Our entire village swore on the Quran that she insulted the prophet but no one believes us and everyone believes her," said Aman Ali, one of the villagers. "Before this, we liked the Christian families. We always got along. But now there is only anger."

Some of that anger was directed at a visiting AP reporter, who was told by one resident: "Go. Just get out. Go."

Muhammad Afzal Qadri, a leader in the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Party and a religious scholar, said he doesn't regret calling for the deaths of the three judges who acquitted Bibi, or for calling on his followers to overthrow Khan's government.

At his sprawling madrassa in the Punjab city of Gujrat, Qadri told the AP this week that he had the religious authority to declare a fatwa, or edict, demanding the judges be killed.

Pakistan is bound by Islamic injunctions, he said, adding that he was qualified to decide such matters. The West only seeks to undermine Pakistan's Islamic traditions and culture, Qadri said.

Hussain, the author on Pakistani militancy, said the demonstrations over Bibi's acquittal were an attempt to regain positions the extremists had lost in the July elections.

Another rally Thursday in the southern city of Karachi drew thousands. One religious leader, Fazlur Rehman, whose party was routed in the elections, said the "court of the masses" has rejected Bibi's acquittal.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban insurgent group warned anyone who would commit blasphemy that "our daggers will cut your throat."

Hussain said the extremists "are trying to mobilize people on this issue, creating more extremism. They have created a sense of fear in society, for anyone who disagrees with their view of Islam."

Associated Press writers Munir Ahmed in Islamabad, Asim Tanvir in Multan, Pakistan, Mohammad Farooq in Karachi, Pakistan, and Ishtiag Mahsud, in Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan, contributed.

Syria says military freed 19 hostages held by IS since July By ALBERT AJI and BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Syrian troops have liberated 19 women and children hostages held by the Islamic State group since July in a military operation in the country's center, ending a months-long crisis that has stunned Syria's Druze religious minority, state media reported Thursday. An opposition war monitor said the release was part of an exchange.

SANA news agency said in its report that the operation occurred in the Hamima area east of the historic town of Palmyra. It said all IS fighters in the area where the hostages were held have been killed.

The Suwayda 24 activist collective quoted local officials as saying the women and children held by IS have all been freed.

"My happiness is huge," Nashaat Abu Ammar, whose wife, two sons and daughter are among those freed, told The Associated Press by telephone.

The 19 women and children were among 30 people kidnapped by IS in the southern province of Sweida on July 25 when militants of the extremist group ambushed residents and went on a killing spree that left at least 216 people dead.

The rare attacks in Sweida province, populated mainly by Syria's minority Druze, came amid a government offensive elsewhere in the country's south. The coordinated attacks across the province, which included several suicide bombings, shattered the calm of a region that had been largely spared from the worst of the violence of Syria's seven-year long civil war.

A Syrian opposition war monitor contradicted the reports on state media, saying IS set free the hostages in return for the government's release of women related to IS fighters and commanders who were held

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by Syrian authorities as well as a monetary payment.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it was not immediately clear how much money the government paid for the release of the hostages.

State TV aired footage of the women, children and teenagers in a desert area standing with soldiers who gave them bread and water. The soldier then asked the women and children for their names and wrote them on a piece of paper. The TV later aired footage showing the former hostages having meals around a table.

"We are living the joy of victory in Syria," Druze cleric Sheikh Kameel Nasr told Syrian state TV.

Since July, one woman died in IS custody while another was shot dead by the extremists. In August, a 19-year-old man was also killed in detention.

Six other hostages, two women and four children, were freed in an exchange with the government last month. Negotiations were expected to free the remaining hostages but after the talks failed, Syrian troops launched a broad offensive against IS in southern Syria.

The July 25 attack on the southern city of Sweida and nearby villages was one of the deadliest by the extremists since they lost most of the land they once held in Syria and Iraq.

"I am so happy they have been freed and I thank the Syrian army for that," Abu Ammar said. The man said he is getting ready to leave his village to the provincial capital of Sweida where the freed were expected to be brought later.

By sunset, scores of people gathered in the city of Sweida waiting for the return of the former hostages. Elsewhere in Syria, opposition activists and paramedics reported that two blasts in rebel-held parts of northern Syria have inflicted casualties.

The Observatory said the first explosion occurred in the northern town of Azaz wounding six children while the opposition's Syrian Civil Defense said four were wounded including three children.

The observatory and other opposition activists reported another blast in the town of Jinderis saying a bomb went off outside an office of the Turkey-backed Failaq al-Sham rebel group killing three fighters and wounding seven.

Azaz and Jeideris are controlled by Turkey-backed opposition fighters. The two towns were once controlled by Kurdish fighters opposed to Turkey.

Explosions in rebel-held parts of northern Syria are not uncommon and have killed and wounded dozens in recent months.

Mroue reported from Beirut.

Son of Beatles' producer dives into the messy 'White Album' By MARK KENNEDY, AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Hardcore fans of the Beatles like to pore over every detail of the band and endlessly dissect their songs. Then there's Giles Martin, who manages to time travel to meet the Fab Four.

Martin is the son of legendary Beatles producer George Martin, and he's lately been returning to the treasure trove of original recording sessions to remix key albums by John, Paul, George and Ringo.

"It's really nerve-wracking because it's a legacy of music which is really important," the soft-spoken Martin said. "What I do is make sure I provide the fans — and people who don't even know the Beatles — with music that's worth listening to and is interesting."

Martin last year remixed "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and this year resurfaces with a fascinating and exhaustive look at "The Beatles," better known as the "White Album," which contains such classics as "Back in the U.S.S.R.," 'Blackbird" and "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da." It coincides with celebrations for the album's 50th birthday.

Besides punchier, remixed versions of the 30 songs on the original double album, the anniversary package includes 27 acoustic demos of material the Beatles made at Harrison's house before going into the studio and 50 studio outtakes, including the unreleased "Not Guilty," a studio jam of "Blue Moon" and early versions of "Let It Be," 'Lady Madonna" and "Across the Universe," which would appear on other albums.

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Martin was tapped by the surviving Beatles and the wives of Harrison and Lennon to rummage around in Abbey Road Studios in London and re-listen to everything, including abandoned songs and rehearsals.

That meant going through 107 takes of "Sexy Sadie," dozens of versions of both "I'm So Tired" and "Long, Long, Long" and a 13-minute "Helter Skelter." It meant hearing the Beatles discuss songs, joke and even order lunch. (You can hear Harrison at one point from the studio order a "cheese, lettuce, Marmite sandwich.")

Martin couldn't help using a Beatles reference to explain what his goals are: "I'm sort of trying to peel back the layers — the glass onion, if you like. I peel back the layers so you get to hear what I can hear at Abbey Road."

Among the gems in the box set is an unrecorded Lennon song called "Child of Nature" that will later morph into his solo hit "Jealous Guy" and also a very cool "Good Night" stripped of the orchestrations it got on the "White Album." You can hear "Happiness Is a Warm Gun" start out life as quite gentle before ending up on the "White Album" like a template for Frank Zappa.

The Beatles worked through the summer of 1968, often in exhausting all-night sessions. Martin says the multiple takes for many songs may be because the band had largely stopped performing live.

"I think the most revealing thing for me working on the 'White Album' is just how creative they were, all of the time," said Martin. "It's almost like the studio couldn't handle the level of demand that they wanted to do and the amount of songs they wanted to record."

Martin's father was heavily involved in the Beatles' prior album, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," and was even lauded as the architect of their sound. But the Fab Four came together for the recording of the "White Album" in the summer of 1968 with a different goal in mind.

"They didn't want an architect. They wanted to build an album from the bricks up and without any real idea about what it was going to be," said Martin. "They indulged themselves because they knew that each member of the band would make the song better."

William Moylan, a professor of music and sound recording technology at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, said the recording of the "White Album" found the members of the Beatles at a crossroads.

"It's really where the Beatles are exploring their own individuality and they're still working off the collective. They're coming out of 'Sgt. Pepper's' and they're coming out of 'Magical Mystery Tour' and they're coming out of the psychedelia," Moylan said. "They're branching out, into popular music, into musical theater, back to rock, even Tin Pan Alley-type pieces."

The accepted wisdom when it comes to the "White Album" is that it was a rocky time for the band, which was disintegrating. Starr quit and walked out for an 11-day period. Critics have called the record a mess — a brilliant mess, of course — with each member often delivering solo songs.

But, like a polite Moses coming down from the mountain with the original tablets, Martin disagrees. He believes some of those interpretations to be exaggerated. He hears the Fab Four working together even on songs long considered to be done by only one Beatle.

"The revealing thing for me is you go back and listen to the tapes and what we have on the tapes is a cohesive unit playing together and working on songs together," says Martin, who was born a year after the "White Album" was released.

"Listen to the sessions — they were very warm. And that's the surprising thing. I think we thought the 'White Album' was this disparate, angry record — and it has certainly elements of that — but, in essence, the four of them made an album together they wanted to make."

That sounds about right said Moylan, who has been a record producer, engineer, composer and teacher for 25 years: "I've really always had a sense that the Beatles were professional musicians as well as being friends. When they were performing, any personal friction evaporated because it was all about the music."

Online: https://www.thebeatles.com

Mark Kennedy is at http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits

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Joni Mitchell thrills concert audience just by showing up By ANDREW DALTON, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — As an adoring-but-anxious crowd wondered if she'd appear at an all-star concert celebration on her 75th birthday, Joni Mitchell was stuck in traffic.

It was only fitting for a singer and songwriter whose music helped define the experience of modern Southern California.

Glen Hansard could have been describing the guest of honor when he sang of "a prisoner of the white lines on the freeway" in his rendition of Mitchell's "Coyote" soon after the show finally began, nearly an hour late.

James Taylor, Chaka Khan, Kris Kristofferson, Rufus Wainwright and Seal were also among those serenading Mitchell with her own songs Wednesday night at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles.

Mitchell didn't speak or say a word all night, but just showing up was a triumph. For 3 1/2 years, she has been almost completely absent from public life after an aneurysm left her debilitated and unable to speak, and little has been revealed of her condition since.

"You know, Joni has had a long and arduous recovery from a really major event," Taylor, one of Mitchell's oldest friends, told The Associated Press before the show. "But she's doing so much better."

Mitchell needed help walking in and getting to her seat in a front corner. The audience greeted her with a standing ovation and spontaneous chorus of "Happy Birthday."

The crowd's love for Mitchell was matched by the artists themselves, especially the women, many of whom said Mitchell was much more than a musical influence.

"I want you to know how many times you have saved my life," Khan said to Mitchell from the stage before ripping into a sizzling take on Mitchell's "Help Me," with backing from Wainwright and Seal, who like other performers spent much of the night sitting on couches on a stage that looked like a living room.

"Joni Mitchell is an inspiration to every girl who ever picked up a guitar," Emmylou Harris said after singing Mitchell's "Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire." That inspiration apparently has its limits. Harris didn't play guitar on the song, saying with a laugh that the "chords are too hard for me."

The songs were interspersed with photos of Mitchell and audio clips of her speaking throughout her career, allowing her to serve as the evening's narrator even as she remained silent.

Later in the evening, film director and Mitchell mega-fan Cameron Crowe presented her with the Music Center's Excellence in the Performing Arts Award at a dinner gala whose guests included David Geffen, Lily Tomlin, Anjelica Huston and Tom Hanks.

The concert brought four decades of songs that showed the twisting career path of the onetime Canadian folkie who became the quintessential California singer-songwriter behind albums like "Blue" and "Court and Spark" and then took her music to places her soft-rock contemporaries would never dare go.

Diana Krall showed the depth of Mitchell's jazz influence as she sat at the piano and sang "Amelia" from 1976. Kristofferson and Brandi Carlile showed that Mitchell could be a little bit country with their version of 1971's "A Case of You" and its memorable chorus, "I could drink a case of you darling. Still I'd be on my feet."

Mitchell's "Dreamland" sounded like it was always meant to be a Latin tune when Los Lobos with La Marisoul played it. And James Taylor's solo acoustic "Woodstock" gave a necessary nod to Mitchell's simple hippie roots.

The only song not written by Mitchell was written for her. Graham Nash sang "Our House," his 1970 song about life with Mitchell when the two were dating in their 20s.

As the show approached its end, the curtain fell and the crowd chanted for an encore. They went wild when it rose to show Mitchell standing at the front of the stage in a long red coat, black hat and cane.

She blew out candles on a birthday cake and swayed to the rhythm as all of the night's musicians combined for 1970's "Big Yellow Taxi."

"They paved paradise, put up a parking lot," they all sang, in a building that was surrounded on all sides by parking lots. It was paradise anyway. At least for a night.

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Asian stock markets sink after Wall Street rally fades By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stock markets fell Friday after a post-election Wall Street rally faded amid expectations of U.S. interest rate hikes despite the Federal Reserve's decision to hold off this week.

KEEPING SCORE: The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.8 percent to 2,614.37 and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 retreated 0.7 percent to 22,338.26. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.8 percent to 25,753.23 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 shed 0.4 percent to 5,903.20. Seoul's Kospi gave up 0.2 percent to 2,088.13 and benchmarks in New Zealand, Taiwan and Southeast Asia also declined.

WALL STREET: Coming off a surge the previous day, stocks slipped as a ninth straight daily decline in oil prices hurt energy companies. Banks gained after the Federal Reserve left interest rates unchanged. The Standard & Poor's 500 shed 0.3 percent to 2,806.83 after it jumped 2.1 percent Wednesday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average inched up 10.92 points to 26,191.22. The Nasdaq composite dipped 0.5 percent to 7,530.88.

FED WATCH: The U.S. central bank left interest rates unchanged but suggested it plans to keep raising rates in response to the strong economy. The Fed has raised its key rate eight times since late 2015 and is expected to do so again in December, with several more increases to follow.

ANALYST'S COMMENT: "The sense that the Fed is well on track to continue tightening policy de-railed the post mid-term relief rally in the markets," said Vishnu Varathan of Mizuho Bank in a report. The Fed cited a stronger job market and omitted mention of tighter financial conditions, "lowering the bar" for a December rate hike, said Varathan.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude lost 24 cents per barrel to \$60.43 in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract plunged \$1 the previous session to \$60.67. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 11 cents to \$70.54 in London. It dropped \$1.42 on Thursday.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 113.86 yen from Thursday's 114.08 yen. The euro weakened to \$1.1357 from \$1.1365.

Today in HistoryBy The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Nov. 9, the 313th day of 2018. There are 52 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 9, 1938, Nazis looted and burned synagogues as well as Jewish-owned stores and houses in Germany and Austria in a pogrom or deliberate persecution that became known as "Kristallnacht."

On this date:

In 1620, the passengers and crew of the Mayflower sighted Cape Cod.

In 1918, it was announced that Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II would abdicate; he then fled to the Netherlands.

In 1961, U.S. Air Force Maj. Robert M. White became the first pilot to fly an X-15 rocket plane at six times the speed of sound. The Beatles' future manager, Brian Epstein, first saw the group perform at The Cavern Club in Liverpool, England.

In 1965, the great Northeast blackout began as a series of power failures lasting up to 13 1/2 hours left 30 million people in seven states and part of Canada without electricity.

In 1967, a Saturn V rocket carrying an unmanned Apollo spacecraft blasted off from Cape Kennedy on a successful test flight.

In 1970, former French President Charles de Gaulle died at age 79.

In 1976, the U.N. General Assembly approved resolutions condemning apartheid in South Africa, including one characterizing the white-ruled government as "illegitimate."

In 1986, Israel revealed it was holding Mordechai Vanunu, a former nuclear technician who'd vanished after providing information to a British newspaper about Israel's nuclear weapons program. (Vanunu was

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convicted of treason and served 18 years in prison.)

In 1989, communist East Germany threw open its borders, allowing citizens to travel freely to the West; joyous Germans danced atop the Berlin Wall.

In 1999, with fireworks, concerts and a huge party at the landmark Brandenburg Gate, Germany celebrated the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In 2000, George W. Bush's lead over Al Gore in all-or-nothing Florida slipped beneath 300 votes in a suspense-filled recount, as Democrats threw the presidential election to the courts, claiming "an injustice unparalleled in our history."

In 2007, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf (pur-VEHZ' moo-SHAH'-ruhv) of Pakistan placed opposition leader Benazir Bhutto (BEN'-uh-zeer BOO'-toh) under house arrest for a day, and rounded up thousands of her supporters to block a mass rally against his emergency rule.

Ten years ago: Barack Obama's transition chief, John Podesta, told Fox News Sunday the president-elect planned to review President George W. Bush's executive orders on such things as stem cell research and domestic drilling for oil and natural gas. China unveiled a \$586 billion stimulus package aimed at inoculating the world's fourth-largest economy against the global financial crisis.

Five years ago: A house party shooting in suburban Houston left two teens dead. Three of the four surviving Doolittle Raiders who attacked Tokyo in 1942, all in their 90's, offered a final toast to their fallen comrades in a ceremony at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force near Dayton, Ohio.

One year ago: During a visit to Beijing, President Donald Trump criticized what he called a "very one-sided and unfair" trade relationship between the U.S. and China, but said he doesn't blame China for having taken advantage of the U.S. The Washington Post quoted an Alabama woman as saying that Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore of Alabama had sexual contact with her when she was 14 and he was a 32-year-old assistant district attorney; three other women told the Post that Moore had approached them when they were between the ages of 16 and 18 and he was in his early 30s. Actor John Hillerman, best known for his supporting role on the TV series "Magnum, P.I.," died at the age of 84 at his home in Houston.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Whitey Herzog is 87. Baseball Hall of Famer Bob Gibson is 83. Actor Charlie Robinson is 73. Movie director Bille August is 70. Actor Robert David Hall is 70. Actor Lou Ferrigno is 67. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, is 66. Gospel singer Donnie McClurkin is 59. Rock musician Dee Plakas (L7) is 58. Actress Ion Overman is 49. Rapper Pepa (Salt-N-Pepa) is 49. Rapper Scarface (Geto Boys) is 48. Blues singer Susan Tedeschi (teh-DEHS'-kee) is 48. Actor Jason Antoon is 47. Actor Eric Dane is 46. Singer Nick Lachey (98 Degrees) is 45. Country musician Barry Knox (Parmalee) is 41. Rhythmand-blues singer Sisqo (Dru Hill) is 40. Country singer Corey Smith is 39. Country singer Chris Lane is 34. Actress Emily Tyra is 31. Actress Nikki Blonsky is 30. Actress-model Analeigh (AH'-nuh-lee) Tipton is 30.

Thought for Today: "Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it." — Robert Frost, American poet (1874-1963).