

NATION/ WORLD

Consumers Cut Back On Credit Cards Again

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumer borrowing fell in June for a fifth straight month as households keep cutting back on credit card use.

The Federal Reserve says borrowing dropped at an annual rate of \$1.3 billion in June. That marked the 16th drop in overall credit in the past 17 months.

Americans backed away from swiping their credit cards for the 21st straight month. That offset a rise in the number of auto loans.

The reduction in borrowing and efforts to by households to boost their savings have acted as a major drag on the overall economy by lowering consumer spending.

Obama Celebrates Kagan's Confirmation

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is celebrating the confirmation of Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court, his second successful appointment to the nation's highest court.

Both Obama and Kagan were beaming as the president celebrated the moment at a reception in the East Room of the White House.

Said the proud president: "This is a good day." He lauded Kagan for what he described as her formidable intellect and path-breaking career.

On Saturday, she's to be sworn in at the Supreme Court as the successor to retired Justice John Paul Stevens.

The 50-year-old U.S. solicitor general won confirmation Thursday over Republican opposition.

Obama's first Supreme Court appointment, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, joined the court last year.

Cops Mum On Shooter's Claim

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Police are refusing to say whether their investigation into a deadly shooting rampage at a Connecticut beer distributor includes the shooter's racism claims.

Omar Thornton, who killed eight people and himself at the Manchester business, told a 911 dispatcher that he shot his co-workers Tuesday because Hartford Distributors is a "racist place." Moments later, he killed himself.

Company and Connecticut officials say Thornton never filed a formal complaint of bias. His girlfriend said he showed her cell phone photos of racist graffiti in his work restroom.

Police recovered that phone from Thornton's car, but say they won't comment on any part of an ongoing investigation.

Hartford Distributors denies the racism claims, and says it will cooperate with any investigation.

Investigator Selected As CIA General

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama has nominated a veteran investigator to be the next CIA inspector general, a crucial position that has remained vacant for more than a year.

David B. Buckley, currently a senior manager with a consulting firm, will have to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate before he can fill the watchdog post charged with unearthing abuses inside the spy agency.

The nomination comes after months of congressional frustration with the White House about not putting forth a candidate for the job. Several candidates had previously been mentioned but none made the cut.

HP CEO Resigns After Harassment Probe

PALO ALTO, Calif. (AP) — Hewlett-Packard Co. said CEO Mark Hurd is stepping down following a sexual-harassment probe that found other violations of company standards.

HP said Friday that Hurd decided to leave after the investigation into a sexual-harassment claim made against him and the company by a former HP contractor. The probe concludes that the company's sexual-harassment policy was not violated, but that its standards of business conduct were.

In a statement, Hurd said that during the investigation he "realized there were instances in which I did not live up to the standards and principles of trust, respect and integrity that I have espoused at HP." He added that he believed it would be "difficult to continue as an effective leader at HP."

Hurd and Robert Ryan, HP's lead independent board member, stressed that Hurd's departure has nothing to do with the company's financial health.

The technology company named Chief Financial Officer Cathie Lesjak as its interim CEO.

HP says a board committee will search for a new CEO.

Lesjak, who has been at HP for 24 years, will continue to act as CFO. She decided not to be considered for the position of permanent CEO, the company said.

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Judge's Personal Life Debated After Gay Ruling

BY LISA LEFF
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Chief U.S. Judge Vaughn Walker has always been characterized as a conservative with libertarian leanings. But after he struck down California's voter-approved gay marriage ban this week, he was accused by some of being something else entirely: a gay activist.

Rumors have circulated for months that Walker is gay, fueled by the blogosphere and a San Francisco Chronicle column that stated his sexual orientation was an "open secret" in legal and gay activist circles.

Walker himself hasn't addressed the speculation, and he did not respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press on Thursday. Lawyers in the case, including those defending the ban, say the judge's sexuality — gay or straight — was not an issue at trial, and they have no definitive plans for it to be a factor on appeal.

But that hasn't stopped a public debate that exploded in the wake of the 66-year-old jurist's Wednesday decision. Most of the chatter has come from opponents of same-sex marriage.

"Here we have an openly gay federal judge, according to the San Francisco Chronicle, substituting his views for those of the American people and of our Founding Fathers who, I promise you,

would be shocked by courts that imagine they have the right to put gay marriage in our Constitution," said Maggie Gallagher, chairwoman of The National Organization for Marriage, a group that helped fund the ban, known as Proposition 8.

In response, the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, a political action committee for gay candidates, launched an online petition accusing Gallagher's group of "gay-baiting."

But the debate raises the question: Why is sexuality different from other personal characteristics judges possess? Can a female judge rule on abortion issues? A black judge on civil rights?

"The evidence shows that, by every available metric, opposite-sex couples are not better than their same-sex counterparts; instead, as partners, parents and citizens, opposite-sex couples and same-sex couples are equal," Walker wrote in his exacting, 136-page opinion.

Gerard Bradley, a law professor at the University of Notre Dame, published a Fox News column in the hours before Walker filed his opinion faulting the media for not forcing Walker to address his sexual orientation.

And Byran Fischer, issues director for the American Family Association, urged the group's members to contact their congressional representatives about launching impeachment proceedings because Walker had not recused himself from a case in which "his own personal sexual

proclivities utterly compromised his ability to make an impartial ruling."

William G. Ross, an expert on judicial ethics and law professor at Samford University in Alabama, said that a judge's sexual orientation has no more relevance to his or her ability to rule fairly on a case involving gay marriage than it would for a deeply religious judge or a judge who had been divorced multiple times.

"Under the logic of the people challenging the judge's fitness to rule on a case involving gay rights because he or she was gay, one would have to find a eunuch to serve on the case, because one could just as easily argue that a heterosexual judge couldn't rule on it either," Ross said.

Months before Walker struck down Proposition 8 as an unconstitutional violation of gay Americans' civil rights, members of the team defending the ban in court had complained about what they perceived as judicial bias.

Over their vigorous objections, Walker pushed to have the proceedings televised live, a plan the U.S. Supreme Court quashed at the last minute. Then, he refused to excuse as a witness a Proposition 8 supporter who had compared gays to child molesters during the 2008 campaign. Lawyers for the two same-sex couples who sued to invalidate the ban had called him as a witness to try to prove the measure was fueled by anti-gay prejudice.

Nevertheless, the defense does not plan to raise the specter of the judge's sexual orientation as they appeal his ruling to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, said Jim Campbell, a lawyer with the defense team. At this point all they have been presented with is rumors and speculation in the media, an unsound basis for any prospective legal position, he said.

"The bottom line is this case, from our perspective, is and always will be about the law and not about the judge who decides it," Campbell said. "It's just something that collectively as a legal team we have decided and going up, that's what this case is. The appellate courts are going to focus on the law."

Walker has ruled in at least two other cases involving gay rights issues during his two decades as a judge. In 1999, he rejected arguments from the parents of a San Leandro boy who claimed their religious rights were violated by pro-gay comments their son's teacher had made in the classroom.

In the other case, he dismissed a free speech claim by two Oakland city employees whose managers had confiscated a bulletin board flier for a religious group that promoted "natural family, marriage and family values." The city had "significant interests in restricting discriminatory speech about homosexuals," Walker wrote in his 2005 ruling.

Third Month Of Weak Hiring Bad Sign

BY JEANNINE AVERSA AND
CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON — The nation isn't creating nearly enough jobs to reduce persistently high unemployment.

For the third straight month, the private sector hired cautiously in July. And those meager gains in the job market were nearly wiped out by tens of thousands of cuts at all levels of government.

Making matters worse: Many of the new jobs that are being created do not pay well enough to significantly jump-start spending by shoppers and stimulate the broader economy.

The unemployment rate was stuck at 9.5 percent for the second straight month, the Labor Department said Friday. Analysts said it would probably climb back into double digits because the private sector is not creating jobs fast enough.

Private employers reported a net gain of 71,000 jobs for July — far below the 200,000 it takes for the unemployment rate just to hold steady and keep pace with the growing work force.

Counting the jobs that were lost at the local, state and federal levels in July, the net gain was only 12,000 jobs. And on top of that, 143,000 temporary jobs with the Census Bureau for the 10-year population count came to an end.

So far this year, state and local governments wrestling with bud-

get shortfalls have shed 169,000 jobs. And further losses are on the way — about 20,000 to 30,000 more job cuts a month expected over the rest of the year, despite \$26 billion in federal aid.

The weak report could put pressure on the Federal Reserve to take new steps to boost the economy when it meets next week.

Economists are especially concerned that the recovery is losing momentum as it enters the second half of this year, when the benefits of most of the government's stimulus spending will start to wear off.

For now, most of them are betting the economy will continue to grow, though at a lackluster pace, through the rest of this year.

Some analysts fear the recovery could fizzle altogether, though. "If we don't see significant job growth by the end of the year, the economy could be in serious trouble," said Bill Cheney, chief economist at John Hancock.

President Barack Obama noted that the economy has added private-sector jobs for seven straight months but said the progress "needs to come faster."

Job seekers face tough competition these days. On average, there are 4.7 people vying for each opening. That's down from the peak of 6.3 last year, but more than double the 1.8 unemployed per opening when the recession began in December 2007. Those who do have jobs are working longer and getting only scant increases in pay.

N.J. City Preparing To Close Its Libraries

BY GEOFF MULVIHILL
Associated Press Writer

CAMDEN, N.J. — The library board in Camden, one of the nation's poorest cities, is preparing to close all three of its libraries by the end of the year, saying its funding has been slashed so drastically that it cannot afford to keep operating.

Library officials are hoping enough money surfaces to save the system, but they're preparing for a shutdown and say they're not just threatening it as a ploy.

Budget cuts across the country have caused local officials to close library branches, reduce hours and spend less money on books, computers and other materials. But officials at the American Library

Association believe Camden's library system would be the first in the U.S. with multiple branches to check out entirely.

"Of all places, they're one of the places that needs free public libraries the most," said Audra Caplan, president of the Public Library Association.

The city of about 80,000 residents across the Delaware River from Philadelphia consistently ranks as one of the nation's most impoverished. It's a place where most families don't own computers, where just one big bookstore serves the local colleges and where some of the public schools don't even have librarians.

Camden Free Public Library is a major hub for many residents and draws 150,000 visits a year.

It's a place to get online to do

research, type papers, apply for jobs and check Facebook.

Homeless people stop by for respite from the weather and to read. Children listen to stories, do crafts and play board games.

"If you close the library, what are the kids going to do?" asked Frank Lee, a hospital security guard who plays chess at the library's main branch nearly daily and teaches youngsters the game. "What are they going to do?"

The problem is money. The city has a permanent financial crisis. Even when times are good, it relies heavily on the state government for support.

But the state also is in crisis. This year, Gov. Chris Christie filled an \$11 billion budget deficit, largely by making cuts. Cities, schools, libraries and just about everything else are getting less from the state.

The Surgeons and Staff at Lewis & Clark Specialty Hospital



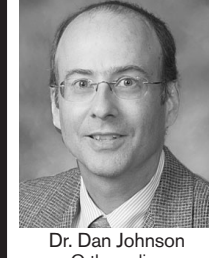
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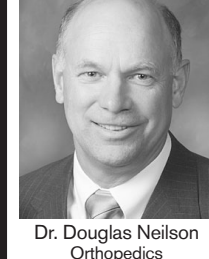
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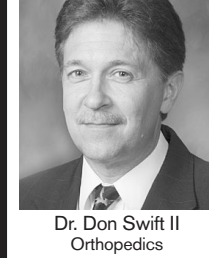
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Welcome

Dr. Christopher A. Hathaway
to Yankton and our hospital!



Christopher A. Hathaway, MD, Ph.D graduated from the University of South Dakota School of Medicine and completed his residency in Urology at the Medical College of Georgia. He joins Dr. Joseph Boudreau in practice at Yankton Urological Surgery, Prof., L.L.C.



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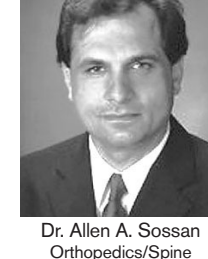
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