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Shooting

From Page 1

made three days after the massacre. It remained unclear whether Holmes' professors and other students at his 35-student Ph.D. program noticed anything unusual about his behavior.

His reasons for quitting the program in June, just a year into the five- to sevenyear program, also remained a mystery.

Holmes recently took an intense, three-part oral exam that marks the end of the first year. Those who do well continue with their studies and shift to fulltime research, while those who don't do well meet with advisers and discuss their options, including retaking the exam. University officials would not say if he passed, citing privacy concerns.

The university said Holmes gave no reason for his withdrawal, a decision he made in June

Holmes was not allowed access from the institution after his withdrawal, which was "standard operating procedure" because he was no longer affiliated with the school, Montgomery said. Holmes had no contact with university police, she said.

The university declined to release any details of his academic record, citing privacy concerns, and at least two dozen professors and other staff declined to speak with The Associated Press. Some said they were instructed not to talk publicly about Holmes in a blanket email sent to university employees.

Jacque Montgomery, a spokeswoman for the University of Colorado medical school, said that police have told the school to not talk about Holmes. The university also took down the website for its graduate neuroscience program on Saturday.

Dan Keeney, president of DPK Public Relations in Dallas, said asking for silence from university employees because of a police investigation was appropriate, but taking down the website was "indefensible" for a publicly funded university unless the school believed it contained inaccurate information relating to the

program. "It's an indefensible action," he said. "It's disappointing to hear that they would take that action because it suggests that it's not in the public's interest to have access to that information and I

Fires

From Page 1

30 miles east of Valentine, was heavily damaged by the fire. The local dance hall, however, survived.

Ainsworth Fire Chief Brad Fiala said the difficult terrain and the large amount of dry plants and trees in the Niobrara River valley are making the

to help us out."

think it is in the public's interest."

Amid the continuing investigation of Holmes and his background, Sunday was a day for healing and remembrance in Aurora, with President Barack Obama arriving to visit with families of the victims and a vigil that began in the early evening.

Obama said he told the families of the victims of Friday's massacre that "all of America and much of the world is thinking about them." He met with them at the University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora which treated 23 of the people injured in the mass shooting; 10 remain there, seven hurt critically.

Congregations across Colorado prayed for the shooting victims and their relatives. Churches sent out social-media appeals for neighbors who wanted to join in remembrance. Elderly churchgoers at an aging Presbyterian church within walk ing distance near Holmes' apartment joined in prayer, though none had ever met him.

Hundreds gathered for prayers and healing at the vigil Sunday night. Aurora resident Heather Lebedoff, 24, placed a rose on each cross that had been erected in memory of those killed. She said she didn't know anyone in the theater, but she felt connected to her neighbors and all the pain they have gone through.

"This is the city I live in, and I know there are a lot of people affected by this. Stuff like this really shows what love and community is all about.'

Meanwhile, the owner of a gun range told the AP that Holmes applied to join the club last month but never became a member because of his behavior and a "bizarre" message on his voice mail.

He emailed an application to join the Lead Valley Range in Byers on June 25 in which he said he was not a user of illegal drugs or a convicted felon, said owner Glenn Rotkovich. When Rotkovich called to invite him to a mandatory orientation the following week, he said he heard a message on Holmes' voice mail that was

'bizarre — guttural, freakish at best." He left two other messages but eventually told his staff to watch out for Holmes at the July 1 orientation and not to accept him into the club, Rotkovich said.

Ritchie Duong, a friend who has known Holmes for more than a decade, told the Los Angeles Times that in high school he liked to play cards and video games. They both attended undergraduate school at the University of California,

fire almost impossible to slow down. The only injuries reported so far have been firefighters hurt while digging fire suppression lines. Fiala said two Ainsworth firefighters sustained injuries while working on fire lines, but were treated and released from the

Several smaller fires in the area were also sparked by lightning from the same storm. So firefighters were also Niobrara River, and east of the Spencer

> By THOMAS JOSEPH ACROSS

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Riverside, where they saw each other once a week to watch the TV show "Lost."

Duong last saw Holmes in December when they met for dinner in Los Angeles and saw a movie together. His friend seemed fine, he told the newspaper. Academics came easily to Holmes both at high school and at the UC Riverside, Duong said.

"I had one college class with him, and he didn't even have to take notes or anything. He would just show up to class, sit there, and around test time he would always get an 'A,''' said Duong, 24.

The pastor for the family of the suspect also recalled a shy boy who was driven to succeed academically.

"He wasn't an extrovert at all. If there was any conversation, it would be because I initiated it, not because he did,' said Jerald Borgie, senior pastor of Penasquitos Lutheran Church. Borgie said he never saw the suspect mingle with others his age at church.

Holmes told the pastor he wanted to attend a University of California school and pursue graduate studies. Borgie, who last spoke with Holmes about six years ago, doesn't remember the suspect being more specific about his goals.

"He had some goals. He wanted to succeed, he wanted to go out, and he wanted to be the best," Borgie said. "He took pride in his academic abilities. A good student. He didn't brag about it."

The family has belonged to the church for about 10 years, Borgie said. The suspect's mother, Arlene, attends services every week and volunteers her time.

During the attack early Friday, Holmes set off gas canisters and used the military-style semiautomatic rifle, a shotgun and a pistol to open fire on the unsuspecting theater-goers, Oates said. Holmes had bought the weapons at local gun stores in the past two months. He recently purchased 6,000 rounds of ammunition over the Internet, the chief said.

The gunman's semiautomatic assault rifle jammed during the attack at the Aurora movie theater, forcing him to switch to another gun with less firepower, a federal law enforcement official told The Associated Press. That malfunction and weapons switch during the shooting rampage might have saved some lives.

Oates said a 100-round ammunition drum was found in the theater but said he did not know whether it jammed or emptied.

Gov. Dave Heineman said he's im-

pressed with the way residents have re-

sponded, and the Nebraska National

Guard will continue sending resources

to help. Heineman toured the fire dam-

very hard, and are supportive of the ef-

forts of local responders and firefight-

ers, including providing aid in the

forms of food and water," Heineman

"The local communities are working

Dam in Boyd County.

age on Saturday.

said.

Cherry County Hospital. battling fires north of Merriman in Cherry County on both sides of the

said. "They have all been more than willing

One of the main reasons that riders chose the trip from Providence to Seattle was to see a different part of the country. "I had a curiosity about the northwest,

since not a lot of people have been there

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were living all around the country," he said. Riders are offered eight different route choices, but Curran chose this route because he wanted to stay to the north. It also worked best with his school schedule.

"Another reason why I chose this route is because I wanted to see this part of the country," he added.

He said he has enjoyed the towns the group has stayed in, as he said they all have 'rolled out the red carpet" for their arrivals.

Curran said that so far there have been really no problems along the way, except for a few minor communication issues with host sites.

'We've really enjoyed every host that we've stayed with," he said. "There haven't been too many hiccups

One thing that is difficult for the group to prepare for is road closures. Curran said that sometimes road closures are not posted online, and the group often has to use maps and their GPS to navigate past the closures

In addition to those detours, Curran said that he doesn't think that many of the riders, including himself, were prepared for this heat.

"We have to get up a lot earlier than we normally would in order to prepare for and beat the heat," he said. "We try to get our daily mileage in before it gets sweltering outside."

In order to go on the trip, each rider must raise 4,500 — adding up to a total for the entire group of more than \$167,000.

Members of the group said they were inspired to join "bike and build" because of their mission of addressing the affordable housing issues.

"I found out about the program through a friend," said Alex Bloom, a student at Temple University. "I really wanted to try and help the affordable housing problem, and I thought this was the best way of doing that.'

Lauren Johnson, a student at Central Michigan University, said she was drawn to the ride for a number of different reasons.

The main draw was the challenge of biking from the East to West Coast." she said. "It's not just raising money; it's building houses, too.'

Bloom thanked the hosts that help the riders along the way.

"Without our hosts, we couldn't exist as an organization," he said. "They have helped us save a ton of money on lodging and food.

"The support that we have gotten from our hosts has been amazing," Arielle Parris that I know." said Michele Finkelstein, a student at DePaul University.

Riders noted they have had a lot of mem- 11 Singer orable and life changing experiences on the trip so far.

'One of my favorite parts of the trip so far was riding into Kent Falls in Connecticut," said William Castellano, a student at Lynn University. "After the first few days of riding, it was nice to hang out and relax there for a few hours."

Parris has also enjoyed all the scenery the riders have seen so far.

"I really loved the Sauk Rail Trail bike path in Iowa," she said. "The fog was just enough so you can see the tops of the windmills. It was really beautiful.

Other riders have enjoyed spending time with each other throughout the first month of the journey.

"I really felt we were a family after we rode through the Catskill Mountains in New 28 Stereo York," said Annie LaVigne, a Harvard student. "This was really a milestone moment 29 Saloon for us because of all the hills we had to bike up.'

Some riders also mentioned biking in New York as being the highlight of the trip so far.

"Biking out of Ithaca was a really painful experience because of all the hills and mountains," Bloom said. "When we finished, we could see the entire city and mountains below us, and seeing a physical representation of how hard we worked was so rewarding.

40 Texas Riders have also been "blown away" with the sense of adventure they have had biking from coast to coast. Bike riders from urban areas said they have enjoyed escap-43 Green ing the urban lifestyle, and that this trip has re-affirmed their faith in humanity and how generous some people are.

Despite all the groups successes, riders are not looking forward to finishing the trip in August. Many riders said they have not thought about going back into the "real world" when the trip ends. They think it is going to take a long time to adjust to their old eating habits and daily routines.

However, they are still enjoying the trip as it passes its midway point.

'The trip really makes you want to do the same thing for other people some day,' LaVigne said.

Jöhnson added, "You're truly transform- AYFBOAN ing yourself throughout the entire journey."

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7-23 **CRYPTOQUOTE**

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