

## Girl Found Alive Beneath Bodies In French Alps

ANNECY, France (AP) — French authorities struggled Thursday to explain why no one found a 4-year-old girl for eight hours at a blood-strewn crime scene as she huddled in a car under the skirt of a corpse — apparently her dead mother or grandmother.

The stunning discovery Thursday of the girl, apparently unharmed, heightened the drama around a mysterious shooting rampage in the French Alps that left four adults dead and a 7-year-old girl hospitalized after being shot and brutally beaten.

The reason for the slayings remained unclear a day after a cyclist came across the corpses in a wooded area near the mountain village of Chevaline. It took on increasingly international ramifications, with links emerging Thursday tying the slain family to Britain, Iraq and Sweden.

Prosecutor Eric Maillaud said investigators were searching for possible perpetrators and studying all possibilities, including a score-settling attack or simply that the family was “in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

The bodies of a man and two women were found shot to death in a BMW and the body of an unrelated male French cyclist was found on the ground nearby. Maillaud described a methodical killing, with three victims shot in the head.

## Amazon Unveils New Kindle Fire Tablets

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) — Amazon unveiled four new Kindle Fire tablet computers on Thursday, including ones with larger color screens, as the online retailer steps up competition with Apple ahead of the holiday shopping season.

Amazon.com Inc. showed off the larger Kindle Fire amid expectations that Apple Inc. will introduce a smaller iPad as early as next week.

The larger Fires will have screens that measure 8.9 inches diagonally, compared with 9.7 inches for the iPad. The original Fire had 7-inch screens. The basic version of the larger Fire will sell for \$299, or \$100 less than the cheapest iPad.

“It’s very clear today that there are two names in the market for tablets. One is Amazon and one is Apple,” said Carolina Milanesi, research vice president at Gartner.

Seven out of every 10 tablets sold in the second quarter were iPads, according to IHS iSuppli. Tablets using Google’s Android operating system have not been able to carve out a significant stake. Amazon is trying to change that with the new Fires, which run a modified version of Android.

## Stocks Return To Levels Seen Before Recession

NEW YORK (AP) — The last time the stock market was this high, the Great Recession had just started, and stocks were pointed toward a headlong descent.

But on Thursday, the market moved swiftly in the other direction. The Dow Jones industrial average hit its highest mark since December 2007, and the Standard & Poor’s 500 index soared to its highest level since January 2008 in a rally that seemed destined to mark a milestone: American stocks have come almost all the way back.

A long-anticipated plan to support struggling countries in the European Union provided the necessary jolt, and the gains were extraordinarily broad. All but 13 stocks in the S&P index were up. European markets surged, too.

“There’s just a sea of green,” said JJ Kinahan, TD Ameritrade’s chief derivatives strategist. “It’s pretty fun.”

At the start of 2008, the U.S. economy was already a month into recession, though most people scarcely knew it at the time. The S&P had recently hit an all-time high, and the unemployment rate was 5 percent, compared with the current 8.3 percent.

## Texas To Open Toll Road With 85 MPH Limit

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas will soon open a stretch of highway with the highest speed limit in the country.

The Texas Transportation Commission has approved the 85 mph speed limit for a 41-mile-long toll road near the increasingly crowded Interstate 35 corridor between Austin and San Antonio.

The road runs several miles east of the interstate between two of the state’s largest metropolitan areas. And while some drivers may be eager to put the pedal to the metal and rip through the Central Texas countryside, others are asking if it is safe.

“The research is clear that when speed limits go up, fatalities go up,” said Russ Rader, a spokesman for the nonprofit Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

# Jobs Outlook Improves As Campaign Heats Up

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — The jobs outlook in the U.S. brightened a bit Thursday just before President Barack Obama was to make his case for re-election to the American people.

Fewer people applied for unemployment benefits last week, the government reported. And companies boosted hiring in August, according to a private survey.

A far more consequential report politically — the government’s unemployment and hiring figures for August — will come out Friday, just as the presidential race enters its stretch run. Jobs are the core issue in the race, and that report could sway some undecided voters.

There will be two additional employment reports before Election Day. But by then, more Americans will have made up their minds.

“It’s the most important economic data point we have between now and Election Day,” said Tony Fratto, a White House spokesman under President George W. Bush.

Friday’s jobs data is unlikely to signal significant improvement in the still-sluggish economy.

Economists’ consensus forecast is that employers added 135,000 jobs last month, ac-

cording to a survey by FactSet. That’s below July’s gain of 163,000. And it’s probably not enough to bring down the unemployment rate, which is forecast to remain at 8.3 percent.

That would let Republican nominee Mitt Romney point to 43 straight months in which unemployment has exceeded 8 percent.

At the same time, Friday’s report will almost surely mark a 30th straight month of private-sector job gains, a point Obama and his allies are certain to spotlight.

“The president’s supporters will say, ‘See, it’s improving,’ and the supporters of Gov. Romney will say, ‘See, it’s not improving fast enough,’” said Robert Shapiro, an economist and former trade official under President Bill Clinton.

The biggest threat to Obama would be a rise in the unemployment rate, the most visible economic statistic for most voters. The rate declined slightly in the spring but is now back where it was in January.

For the White House, higher unemployment would offset any political benefit from slow but consistent job creation. Voters are likely to ask, “If you’re creating jobs every month, why is the rate going in the wrong way?” Fratto said.

A drop in unemployment would enable

# Jury Convicts Drew Peterson Of 3rd Wife’s Death

BY MICHAEL TARM

AND DON BABWIN

Associated Press

JOLIET, Ill. — Drew Peterson — the crass former Illinois police officer who gained notoriety after his much-younger wife vanished in 2007 — was convicted Thursday of murdering a previous wife in a potentially precedent-setting case centered on secondhand hearsay statements.

Peterson, 58, sat stoically looking straight ahead and did not react as the judge announced jurors had found him guilty of first-degree murder in the death of his third wife, Kathleen Savio. Her relatives gasped, then fell into each other’s arms and cried.

Illinois has no death penalty, and Peterson now faces a maximum 60-year prison term when sentenced Nov. 26.

The trial was the first of its kind in Illinois history, with prosecutors building their case largely on hearsay thanks to a new law, dubbed “Drew’s Law,” tailored to Peterson’s case. That hearsay, prosecutors had said, would let his third and fourth wives “speak from their graves” through family and friends to convict Peterson.

Hearsay is any information re-



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**Court-watchers applaud the guilty verdict in Drew Peterson's murder trial outside Will County Courthouse in Joliet, Illinois, on Thursday, September 6, 2012, after the former police officer was found guilty of killing Kathleen Savio.**

ported by a witness that is not based on the witness’ direct knowledge. Defense attorneys said its use at the trial would be central to their appeal.

Both relief and excitement showed on the faces of Savio’s family members as they stepped out of the crowing courtroom. Her sister, Susan Doman, threw herself into the arms of her husband.

“Finally, finally, finally,” Mitch Doman, Savio’s brother-in-law, said as he and his wife cried. Seconds later, he looked up at a reporter and said with a smile, “We finally got that murdering bastard!”

Peterson’s personality loomed large over the trial, illustrated by crowds of bystanders gathered outside the courthouse in a circus-like atmosphere,

cheering as prosecutors walked by and shouting “Loser. Loser. Loser” at defense attorneys. People driving by honked their horns.

Before his 2009 arrest, the glib, cocky Peterson seemed to taunt authorities, joking on talk shows and even suggesting a “Win a Date With Drew” contest. His notoriety inspired a TV movie starring Rob Lowe.

“The whole world has been waiting for Drew Peterson to be convicted. They hate him,” said defense attorney Joe Lopez, speaking to dozens of reporters outside over the booing and chants of detractors on a nearby sidewalk.

The verdict was a vindication for Will County State’s Attorney James Glasgow and his team, who gambled by putting on a case they conceded was filled with holes. Glasgow, who is running for election this year, drew cheers from the crowd outside and chants of, “Four more years!”

“He was a thug,” Glasgow said of Peterson, his voice rising in indignation. “He would threaten people because he had a gun and a badge. Nobody would take him on. But we took him on and he lost!”

# Drought

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The brief relief created by cooler temperatures a couple of weeks ago was short-lived, Edwards said. High temperatures and a shortage of rainfall returned in late August and early September, she said.

When it came to worsening conditions, temperatures topping 110 degrees last week did not help matters, Edwards said.

“There is no question that the drought of 2012 has taken its toll on the corn crop and hay/pasture in the region,” she said. “Now, as soybeans, sunflowers and other minor crops are taking a beating as well, it was time to reflect these agricultural impacts in the weekly drought map.”

U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) recently announced 21 South Dakota counties have been designated disaster areas. The contiguous disaster areas include Charles Mix and Turner counties.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended emergency grazing on some Conservation Reservation Program (CRP) acres until Nov. 30.

Meanwhile, the USDA has declared primary drought disasters in all counties in eastern Nebraska. Topsoil and subsoil moisture are both 72 percent very short and 25 percent short, leaving just 3 percent of Nebraska with adequate topsoil and subsoil conditions.

According to the Nebraska weekly crop report, dryland crops in particular continue to be significantly affected by the ongoing drought. At this point, the corn crop will not be aided by additional rainfall, and attention is turning to the condition of the soybean crop. Hay and pasture conditions are poor, and soybean

conditions are deteriorating across much of the area.

Low stream flows are prevalent, and scattered low ground water levels are noted in northeast Nebraska.

In southeast South Dakota, the continued drought has increased the moisture deficit dating back to last fall.

During the past month, all of southeast South Dakota has been at least 1.5 inches below normal for precipitation, according to the weekly state crop report.

For the growing season beginning April 1, nearly all of southeast South Dakota has fallen more than 5 inches below normal. The exceptions are northern Douglas and northern Hutchinson counties, which are 3-5 inches below normal.

The following are precipitation totals for selected reporting stations in southeast South Dakota, according to the weekly crop report:

- Academy: 15.69 inches since Oct. 1, or 6.02 inches below normal; 10.96 inches since April 1, or 5.52 inches below normal;
- Centerville: 11.91 inches since Oct. 1, or 10.83 inches below normal; 8.19 inches since April 1, or 8.43 inches below normal;
- Pickstown: 12.52 inches since Oct. 1, or 10.24 inches below normal; 8.86 inches since April 1, or 8.08 inches below normal;
- Vermillion: 15.13 inches since Oct. 1, or 10.63 inches below normal; 10.75 inches since April 1, or 8.43 inches below normal;
- Yankton: 14.11 inches since Oct. 1, or 9.72 inches below normal; 8.08 inches since April 1, or 9.44 inches below normal.

South Dakota state climatologist Dennis Todey encourages citizens to visit [www.iGrow.org](http://www.iGrow.org) for drought, to share how they are impacted by the drought this year.

Relief may be on the way this fall, according to the Climate Prediction Center’s outlook released

Thursday, Todey said. “When cooler temperatures and steady rains return, typically in the fall season, drought impacts could be reduced,” he said.

South Dakota is projected to experience some improvement across most of the state, with the possible exception of the far southwest. After harvest is complete, the soils can retain more moisture from each rain event, also helping with drought recovery.

For now, though, the drought appears ready to stay in the picture, according to climatologist Mark Svoboda with the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The Great Plains didn’t see as much relief from the moisture of Hurricane Isaac as did other parts of the nation, Svoboda said.

“What is showing for the next week out, the drought is still stealing the show,” he said. “Isaac is out of the picture. The drought is the flavor of the day, or week, again.”

The Dakotas and Nebraska continue to experience a “stubborn heat” that has intensified the drought, Svoboda said. The heat wave has lasted for months, with July and August as the driest two-

month period, even compared to Dust Bowl years, he said.

“This stubborn pattern keeps holding on,” he said. “It filled right back in after Isaac left, stage right.”

The long-range forecast through November for the Dakotas and eastern Nebraska calls for above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation, he said. However, conditions may improve in the coming weeks with the 70 percent chance of El Nino developing over the late fall and early winter.

“For September though November, there are equal chances of precipitation as we transition into El Nino,” he said, adding that the odds of a LaNina system are “very slim to none.”

Any future precipitation will act as a deposit for recharging the soil for the next growing season, Svoboda said. In addition, the moisture will help with the long-term rebuilding of pastures and rangeland, he said.

“There is time to hit the reset button and calm some fears out there, especially if we get an El Nino instead of a La Nina,” he said.

SDSU Extension will provide

weekly drought briefings throughout the 2012 growing season. To keep up to date on how the drought is impacting South Dakota’s agriculture industry, visit [iGrow.org](http://iGrow.org).

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at [twitter.com/RDockendorf](https://twitter.com/RDockendorf)

**Happy 90th Birthday Grandma Marge!**

The family of Marge Halverson is hosting an Open House Saturday, September 8th, 2pm-4pm Christ the King Lutheran Church 305 W. 25th St. Yankton

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