

Kentucky County Clerk Returns To Work

MOREHEAD, Ky. (AP) — Kim Davis returned to work Monday for the first time since she was jailed for defying a federal court and announced that she would no longer block her deputies from issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Standing at the courthouse door, the Kentucky county clerk read from a handwritten statement and explained in a quivering voice that she had been faced with a “seemingly impossible choice” between following her conscience and losing her freedom.

So she agreed to an “emergency stopgap” concession, her lawyer later said: She did not stop her deputy clerk from issuing licenses edited to remove her name, her title and her authorization. But, she said, she had “grave concerns” that the licenses would be invalid without her blessing.

The only couple to receive a license on Monday walked into a surreal scene. Shannon and Carmen Wampler-Collins squeezed through a throng of reporters and protesters and stood at the counter, microphones bobbing above their heads.

New Australian PM: Government Strong

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Australia’s prime minister-designate Malcolm Turnbull on Tuesday assured the country that his government remained strong despite an internal party revolt that made him the nation’s fourth leader in little more than two years and will leave deep divisions in his administration’s ranks.

Turnbull will be sworn in as Australia’s 29th prime minister on Tuesday after a surprise ballot of his conservative Liberal Party colleagues voted 54-to-44 on Monday night to replace Prime Minister Tony Abbott only two years after he was elected. Turnbull’s elevation has cemented a culture of disposable leaders as the new norm in Australian politics since the 11-year reign of the Prime Minister John Howard ended in 2007.

“There’s been a change of prime minister, but we are a very, very strong government, a very strong country with a great potential and we will realize that potential working very hard together,” Turnbull told reporters as he left his Canberra apartment on Tuesday morning.

“This is a turn of events I did not expect, I have to tell you, but it’s one that I’m privileged to undertake and one that I’m certainly up to,” he added.

Turnbull, a 60-year-old former journalist, lawyer and merchant banker known for his moderate views, was party leader for two years before he was ousted in 2009 by Abbott by a single vote in a similar leadership ballot.

Hungary Shuts Key Migrant Crossing

ROSZKE, Hungary (AP) — Hungary deployed a boxcar bristling with razor wire to close a key border crossing and warned of a new era of swift deportations Monday as governments across Europe debated how to share the burden of housing hundreds of thousands seeking refuge — and whether the continent’s hard-won policy of passport-free travel could survive the unrelenting flow of humanity.

In Brussels, ministers from the 28-nation bloc agreed to share responsibility for 40,000 people seeking refuge in overwhelmed Italy and Greece and spoke hopefully of reaching eventual agreement — possibly next month, or possibly by the end of the year — on which nations would take 120,000 more.

But their slow deliberations appeared disconnected from the rapidly shifting situation on the most besieged borders of Europe, where Austria, Slovakia and even the Netherlands joined Germany in reintroducing border controls for the first time in a generation in a bid to record the arrivals of thousands daily from the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

The checks, involving police on trains and on border roads, snarled traffic and slowed the speed and volume of migrants reaching Germany, which had received more than 60,000 newcomers since throwing opens its borders Sept. 5 to people trying to reach the EU heavyweight via Hungary, the Balkans and Greece. Since Sunday those borders have grown tighter again, reflecting German unease at the sheer volume and lack of commitment from EU partners to share the load.

“If we don’t find a solution, then this chaos will be the result,” said Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn of Luxembourg, which holds the EU presidency. Germany’s decision to deploy police on borders and trains could trigger “a domino effect and then we can forget Schengen,” he said, referring to the 1985 agreement that gradually removed passport checks on most European borders.

Egyptian Forces Fire On Tour Group

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian forces hunting militants in the country’s western desert mistakenly opened fire on Mexican tourists on safari, killing 12 people and dealing a further blow to the government’s efforts to project an image of stability as it fights an increasingly powerful insurgency, officials said Monday.

Egyptian officials said the group did not have permission to be in the area, but have not offered a full account of Sunday’s incident, in which another 10 people were wounded. Mexico’s President Enrique Pena Nieto condemned the attack and demanded a full investigation, and his foreign minister said survivors told officials they were fired upon by helicopters and other aircraft.

By late Monday, Mexico’s ambassador to Egypt, Jorge Alvarez Fuentes, told local media that two dead Mexican citizens have been identified as Luis Barajas Fernandez and Maria de Lourdes Fernandez Rubio. A third Mexican citizen, Rafael Bejarano, was confirmed dead by his sister, who said she had been informed of his death by his travelling companions.

With six Mexicans wounded, that would at least leave five unaccounted for, as reports vary on whether there were 14 or 15 tourists in the group.

The incident, among the deadliest involving tourists in Egypt, comes as the country is trying to revive its vital tourism industry after the turmoil following the 2011 uprising that toppled President Hosni Mubarak.

Sanders Woos Christian Conservatives

LYNCHBURG, Va. (AP) — In an unlikely appearance at a prominent Christian university, Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders said Monday the “massive injustice” of income and wealth inequality should unite people across the political spectrum.

From the outset, Sanders noted in his speech at Liberty University that he believed in women’s rights and gay marriage, drawing some cheers but mostly tepid applause in the cavernous Vines Center, where the school regularly assembles during the week. But the Vermont senator said the problems of wealth inequality and economic justice showed that “maybe, just maybe, we can try to work together to resolve that.”

“It would be hard to make the case that we are a just society or anything resembling a just society today,” Sanders said at the influential Christian college in Virginia that usually draws Republican presidential candidates. “In the United States of America today, there is massive injustice in terms of income and wealth inequality.”

His pitch was met with scattered applause and many students sat politely with their arms folded during his appearance, declining to clap.

Walker’s Federal Union Plan Draws Fire

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Scott Walker is hoping to pull his campaign off the mat by taking on unions — a familiar foe for the Wisconsin governor — in a sweeping plan to upend pillars of organized labor nationwide.

Walker’s plan calls for eliminating unions for employees of the federal government, making all workplaces right-to-work unless individual states vote otherwise and scrapping the federal agency that oversees unfair labor practices.

Union leaders are livid. Tony Reardon, president of the National Treasury Employees Union that represents 150,000 federal workers, said Walker is “declaring a war on middle-class workers.” And Democratic presidential contender Hillary Rodham Clinton accused him of bullying union members.

One of Walker’s Republican rivals challenged the plan, too, saying it is the wrong message for the GOP to send to unionized workers. “Instead of treating all union members like they are the enemy,” said former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, “it’s time we invite them to give some of us in our party a try.”

Ferocious Wildfire Torches California Mountain Town

BY JANIE HAR
AND JUSTIN PRITCHARD
Associated Press

MIDDLETOWN, Calif. — Earlier this summer, this small mountain town north of San Francisco opened its modest high school to residents fleeing an unusually ferocious wildfire nearby.

Now it is Middletown itself that has been evacuated — and gutted — by another blaze that shocked firefighters with its strength and speed.

The town’s small cluster of shops and cafes was spared, but behind them erratic winds sent flames zigzagging down leafy streets, torching some houses and sparing others. On Monday, some residents returned to find their homes reduced to concrete foundations, chimney stacks and rubble.

One woman wept and embraced her mother as they stood near among blackened appliances and twisted metal where their family home used to be. Nearby, beige houses trimmed in white remained untouched.

“I’m in shock. I want to cry. I’m looking at my neighbors’ places, and they’re all gone, and I’m still here,” homeowner Jim Maurer said. “We’re just shaking our heads.”

Over the weekend, the blaze killed an elderly, disabled area resident who was trapped in her home.

The fire and another in the Gold Rush country of the Sierra Nevada foothills, about 120 miles to the southeast, are the worst of a dozen burning in the state. Between them, they have destroyed 535 homes and hundreds of other structures and displaced 23,000 people, Mark Ghilarducci, director of the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, told reporters.

Citing dry conditions from four years of drought, Ghilarducci called this summer’s fires some of the most volatile he’s seen in 30 years of emergency response work.

The fire that marauded through Middletown and other parts of rural Lake County, less than 100 miles north of San Francisco, was burning nearly unchecked, despite fire crews’ efforts.

Since starting Saturday, it has consumed more than 95 square miles and injured four firefighters. An unknown



MARCUS YAM/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

A home is destroyed in the path of the Valley Fire wildfire on Sept. 13 near Seigler Springs, Calif.

number of residents were unaccounted for. Some might be safe; emergency personnel and law enforcement planned to go to their last known locations once the danger subsides.

While the destruction of Middletown was not complete, it was widespread.

The town’s two-stoplight commercial strip was largely spared. Hardester’s Market & Hardware was open Monday — Grant Hardester, one of the owners, was running the lights on a generator and taking IOUs to regulars who had not evacuated.

“Just to be able to buy something has lifted people’s spirits and solved some problems,” Hardester while a customer loaded two shopping carts with gasoline cans, ice, paper plates and water.

It was on the streets behind Middletown’s shops and cafes where the capricious devastation unfolded.

On their rampage, flames destroyed some homes but left others standing. In many cases, firefighters made the difference. Sometimes it was simply the whims of the wind.

One two-story apartment complex of about 50 units was gutted, blackened cars with melted tires sitting near washers and driers and the skeletons of metal chairs. Yet a colorful play structure was untouched, and two lots away stood eight homes, behind a white picket fence.

“There was kind of a randomness of it because the wind was so erratic,” Cal Fire Chief Dave Shew said as he stood in the apartment complex’s ashes. “Some good firefighting activity saved structures; there just weren’t enough people to save all of them.”

About 15 miles to the northwest, the town of Cobb — population 1,700 — was badly damaged.

Adam Bailey returned home to survey the damage. He hoped to search for a relative’s engagement ring, but the ash was too hot. He lost his beloved Ford pickup, the first thing he ever took out a loan on, but his family was safe — and for that he was thankful.

Elsewhere, the fire damaged or destroyed landmarks.

It devastated Harbin Hot Springs, a clothing optional retreat in the mountains between Middletown and Cobb. The area also is home to a string of geothermal power sites known as The Geysers, which use underground steam to generate electricity. Five of the 14 plants were affected, including power lines and wooden towers which held cooling water, said Brett Kerr, spokesman for Calpine Corp. which runs the facilities.

Though the flames also spread into northern Napa County, but the region’s famous wine valley was not

threatened. Standing in the way were peaks as high as 4,300 feet.

California has seen about 6,000 wildfires this year — about 1,500 more than this time last year.

Lake County has been particularly hard-hit. In late July, a wildfire east of Clear Lake destroyed 43 homes as it spread across more than 100 square miles. It was that fire that saw Middletown’s high school serve as an evacuation shelter.

As firefighters drew close to surrounding the blaze, another fire erupted Aug. 9 several miles from the community of Lower Lake.

Jim Walsh was at the Napa County Fairgrounds on Monday morning sitting around a card table with other evacuees. It was the third time this summer he had to flee Lower Lake.

This time he left with clothing, camping gear, his dog and his drones.

“My house, I hope, is standing,” he said.

East of Fresno, California’s largest wildfire marched away from the Sierra Nevada’s Giant Sequoia trees, some of which are 3,000 years old, fire spokesman Dave Schmitt said. The fire, which was sparked by lightning July 31, has charred 211 square miles and was nearly 40 percent contained.

Police Seek Suspect In Slayings 300 Miles Apart

BY JEFF AMY
AND EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
Associated Press

CLEVELAND, Miss. — A college instructor is suspected in the fatal shootings of a woman he lived with on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and a Delta State University professor 300 miles away, police said Monday.

Terrified students and teachers hunkered down in classrooms for hours as the Delta State campus was put on lockdown that was lifted hours later.

Investigators were searching late Monday for Shannon Lamb, 45, as a suspect in the slayings of 41-year-old Amy Prentiss, who was found dead in the home she shared with Lamb in Gautier; and 39-year-old Ethan Schmidt, a history professor who was killed in his own office on campus in Cleveland, Mississippi.

Officers in the two cities said they had not uncovered a motive for either slaying.

Cleveland Police Chief Charles “Buster” Bingham said Lamb was considered armed and dangerous but was not believed to be on campus as of Monday evening, hours after Schmidt was slain.

Lamb received a doctorate in education from Delta State University in the spring of 2015, according to his resume posted on the university’s website. He started working there in 2009 and taught geography and education classes, and volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, according to the resume.

Delta State President Bill LaForge said Lamb was teaching two online classes this semester.

Mississippi Highway Patrol spokesman Johnny Poulos said investigators were searching for a black 2011 Dodge Avenger that they believe Lamb was driving.

The 3,500-student university in Cleveland, in Mississippi’s Delta region near the

Arkansas-Mississippi state line, was first put on lockdown mid-morning amid reports of an active shooter. Everyone on campus was told to take shelter, away from windows.

Charlie King was in a history class down the hall from where the shooting occurred.

“A few minutes into the class, we heard these popping noises and we all went completely silent,” he said.

Some people thought that it might be a desk or door closing or firecrackers, but King said he thought it sounded like gunshots. A few minutes later a police officer — gun drawn — burst into the windowless room and ordered everyone to get against the wall away from the door. Some people also hid in a storage closet, King said. The officer didn’t explain what was going on, but King said the students understood.

“We put two and two together,” he said. The professor gave the students chairs to throw if the shooter came in, said King’s friend, Christopher Walker Todd.

Eventually police ushered the students into another building and questioned them about what they’d seen and how many shots they heard.

Freshman Noah Joyner, 18, was in his dorm building when reports of an active shooter began to spread. He hunkered down in a bathroom and heard others desperate to get in.

“There were like people banging on the doors to have somebody let them in,” said Joyner, a swimmer at the college. “It was pretty terrifying.”

Charly Abraham was teaching a class of about 28 students at the university’s Delta Music Institute when he and the students received a message through the university’s alert system.

“Everybody’s phone just sort of went off at the same time,” Abraham said. Then a staff member came in and told them that the campus was on lockdown.

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Distribution starts October 23
- **Fall Care Care,**
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