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WEEKLY DIGEST
JUNE 21, 2019



JENNY TOSTE IS OUT AS CEO OF TV STATION VALLEYPBS

June 17, 2019 | Jody Murray

Jenny Toste, CEO of Fresno public television station KVPT since December, has been removed by the station's board. Toste's ouster was announced in a news release Friday from ValleyPBS. "The ValleyPBS board of directors voted to end Jenny Toste's contract with the station," the release says.

Karen Musson, who chairs the station's board, told GV Wire on Monday it was "difficult decision" to terminate Toste's contract. Beyond that, Musson declined to provide any details behind Toste's departure. Existing staff will handle Toste's duties for the time being, Musso said. As for the process of beginning a search for a new CEO, "we'll be moving through that in the next couple of weeks," Musso said.

In a text message to GV Wire on Monday, Toste would say only that "at this point, I don't have a statement." Toste started working for the ValleyPBS in early December. She came to the role from Fresno State, where she had worked for about four

"The ValleyPBS board of directors voted to end Jenny Toste's contract with the station." — ValleyPBS news release

years as social media coordinator for the university's communications office. Before that, she worked for nearly a decade as a TV reporter and news anchor for KSEE and KGPE.

At ValleyPBS, Toste replaced acting CEO Phyllis Brotherton, the station's chief operating officer who took the reins after CEO Phil Meyer resigned in November 2017. Meyer had held the job since January 2015; he cited family reasons for stepping down.

Toste Thanked for 'Her Passion for the Station'
Brotherton, meanwhile, retired in February of this

year after 19 years as the station's executive vice president and chief financial officer.

In a November interview with The Fresno Bee, Toste admitted she faced a learning curve with the ValleyPBS position but was confident she had the skills to lead the station. "The board is confident that I am smart enough to learn the rest, just as any person has to do in a new job," she said. In the statement from ValleyPBS, Musson thanked Toste "for her passion for the station over the past seven months. Our amazing staff will continue to execute the operations of the station in our service to the Valley."

"The board is confident that I am smart enough to learn the rest, just as any person has to do in a new job." — Jenny Toste



SEN. HURTADO ANNOUNCES \$15M FOR VALLEY DRINKING WATER

June 17, 2019 | GV Wire

Failing water systems throughout the southern San Joaquin Valley will get a \$15 million boost thanks to the efforts of state Sen. Melissa Hurtado, a Sanger Democrat. “Access to clean drinking water is one of the main reasons why I chose to run for office,” Hurtado said in a news release Monday. “One million-plus people don’t have access to safe, clean drinking water, and this issue disproportionately affects my community. ...”

Stratford Among Several Communities With Water Woes

Hurtado cited the plight of residents in the Kings County farming community of Stratford as an example of the Valley’s failing water systems. In August 2018, both of Stratford’s wells failed, leaving families and children without potable water. Until the wells were fixed, the Stratford Public Utility District handed out free bottled water. But residents still lacked water for bathing and flushing toilets. And schools had to bring in portable restrooms for students.

Hurtado Cites Leadership by Newsom, Atkins

“We could not have accomplished this alone,” Hurtado said. “The leadership from Gov. Gavin Newsom to Senate Leader Toni Atkins have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to uplift underrepresented communities. “Moreover, local community leaders and activists dedicated countless hours to elevating the issues to a state and federal level. It truly was an all-encompassing effort recognizing that an economy that leaves an entire region behind isn’t a sustainable economy, and it starts with our most basic human needs – access to clean drinking water.”

Projects That Will Be Funded

Here is how the funding is allocated:

- \$2.5 million for temporary water tanks for households in communities like Porterville and Stratford that have dry wells.
- \$3 million for the city of Sanger to repair a water tank and a well...

VALLEY CHILDREN’S AGAIN RANKS AMONG THE NATION’S BEST

June 18, 2019 | GV Wire

Valley Children’s Hospital received its most impressive score-card ever in the U.S. News & World Report’s Best Children’s Hospital list released Tuesday. The hospital is nationally ranked for 2019-20 in five pediatric specialties: **diabetes and endocrinology**, **gastroenterology** and **gastrointestinal surgery**, **neonatology**, **orthopedics**, and **urology**.

Click on the links above to see how Valley Children’s stacked up against the nation’s best pediatric hospitals in these five specialties.)

Rankings Highlight Top 50 Pediatric Hospitals

“These rankings are a testament to the highly specialized care that Valley Children’s provides in an environment designed just for kids, delivered by physicians and staff who have devoted their lives to getting and keeping kids well,” said Valley Children’s President and CEO Todd Suntrapak. The news...

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Valley Children’s Hospital

10-YEAR-OLD ‘EMOTIONAL’ AFTER CLIMBING EL CAPITAN

June 18, 2019 | AP News

A 10-year-old Colorado girl who appears to be the youngest ever to conquer the famous “nose” route of Yosemite National Park’s El Capitan said the experience was “really overwhelming, really emotional.” Selah Schneider of Glenwood Springs completed the challenging 3,000-foot climb last week with the help of her father and a family friend.

Selah and her father Mike Schneider say it took them five days last week with family friend Mark Regier to reach the top. Selah and her parent made the rounds of the morning national talk shows Wednesday. It was during an appearance on NBC’s “Today” that she described the accomplishment as “overwhelming.” In a video after the climb shown on “Today,” Selah said: “I want pizza. I’ve been dreaming about it forever.” According to **Outside magazine**, Selah is the youngest person to climb El Capitan’s nose route. According to Outside, Selah’s parents, both longtime climbers, first brought the child to Yosemite Valley...

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STATE

PG&E TO PAY \$1 BILLION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR WILDFIRE DAMAGE

June 19, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — A California utility agreed Tuesday to pay \$1 billion to 14 local governments to cover damages from a series of deadly wildfires caused by its downed power lines. The settlement is a sliver of the more than \$30 billion in potential damages Pacific Gas & Electric is facing in lawsuits filed by local governments, insurance companies and private property owners. More than half of the \$1 billion in the agreement would go to four governments impacted by a 2018 fire that killed 85 people and destroyed nearly 14,000 homes in Northern California.

Related Story: How California is Working to Reduce Wildfire Risk

A total of \$270 million would go to Paradise, which was mostly destroyed in the blaze. The town had 26,000 residents before the fire and now has less than 3,000. It has lost more than 90% of its tax revenue. “There is some relief and hope in knowing that we will have some financial stability,” Paradise Town Manager Lauren Gill said. “We can’t do disaster recovery and rebuild the town if we don’t have people to do it.” The settlement also covers a 2015 fire in Calaveras County and a series of 2017 fires in wine country.

Regulators Agreed to Let Utilities Temporarily Cut Electricity

PG&E filed for bankruptcy in January. The agreement would resolve claims from some local governments, but it still must be approved by a bankruptcy court. That likely won’t happen until lawsuits by insurance companies and private property owners are resolved. “The bankruptcy court approval is not trivial,” said Mike Dan-

ko, part of a group of attorneys who represent about 2,800 wildfire victims in a lawsuit against PG&E. Danko said they are “definitely not” close to resolving the lawsuit. PG&E spokesman Paul Doherty called the settlement “an important first step toward an orderly, fair and expeditious resolution of wildfire claims.” “We remain focused on supporting our customers and communities impacted by wildfires and helping them recover and rebuild,” he said. High winds knocking down power lines during hot, dry weather have been blamed for starting several of the state’s most destructive wildfires. Last month, regulators agreed to let utilities temporarily cut off electricity to possibly hundreds of thousands of customers during peak fire conditions to avoid starting more wildfires.

Related Story: California Approves Power Outages to Prevent More Wildfires

Wildfire Liabilities Could Force Rate Increases Later This Year

The outages could mean multiday blackouts for cities as large as San Francisco and San Jose, Northern California’s major power provider warned in a recent filing with the utilities commission. “Nobody who lives in the wildfire zone should consider themselves to have reliable electricity. They should prepare accordingly,” Mike Picker, president of the California Public Utilities Commission, told the Sacramento Press Club on Tuesday. California’s other two investor-owned utilities have also warned that wildfire liabilities could force rate increases later this year. State lawmakers are considering legislation that would set up a fund to help utility companies pay damages related to wildfires caused by...

“Nobody who lives in the wildfire zone should consider themselves to have reliable electricity. They should prepare accordingly.” — Mike Picker, president, California Public Utilities Commission

“There is some relief and hope in knowing that we will have some financial stability. We can’t do disaster recovery and rebuild the town if we don’t have people to do it.”

— Paradise Town Manager Lauren Gill

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AP File

NEWSOM CALLS TREATMENT OF NATIVE AMERICANS GENOCIDE

June 18, 2019 | AP News

Gov. Gavin Newsom formally apologized Tuesday for violence, mistreatment, and neglect inflicted on Native Americans throughout California’s history, saying it amounted to genocide and pushing the state to reckon with its dark past.

The Democratic governor met with tribal leaders at the future site of the California Indian Heritage Center, where he also announced the creation of a council to examine the state’s role in campaigns of extermination and exploitation. Throughout history, the California government was key to efforts to remove and kill Native Americans who lived on land that would become part of what is now the world’s fifth-largest economy. “Genocide. No other way to describe it, and that’s the way it needs to be described in the history books,” Newsom said. Throughout history, the California government was key to efforts to remove and kill Native Americans who...

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MORE BAD NEWS FOR ALMOND GROWERS: INDIA ENACTS 70% TARIFF

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June 18, 2019 | GV Wire

India is on President Donald Trump’s trade war hit list and that’s bad news for California’s almond growers. India has struck back against the United States by imposing tariffs on 28 products. Among them: almonds, apples, lentils, and walnuts.

The 70% tariffs went into effect Sunday. They are retaliation for Trump’s decision to revoke India’s trade privileges. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-California) said in a Twitter post that California exports more than \$650 million in almonds annually to India and Trump’s “actions are hurting” the state. India is also the second-largest buyer of U.S. apples, snapping up

\$156 million worth in 2018. The United States is the world’s largest walnut exporter, shipping more than **twice as many** pounds as No. 2 Mexico. More than 99% of U.S. walnuts are grown in **California’s Central Valley**.

Australian Capitalize on Chinese Almond Market
According to the Almond Alliance of California, the state’s 6,000 growers produce 100 percent of the commercial domestic almond supply and 80 percent of the world’s supply. Almonds have become the state’s most profitable crop, resulting in a huge expansion in acreage over the past 20 years. California almond orchards are expected to produce...

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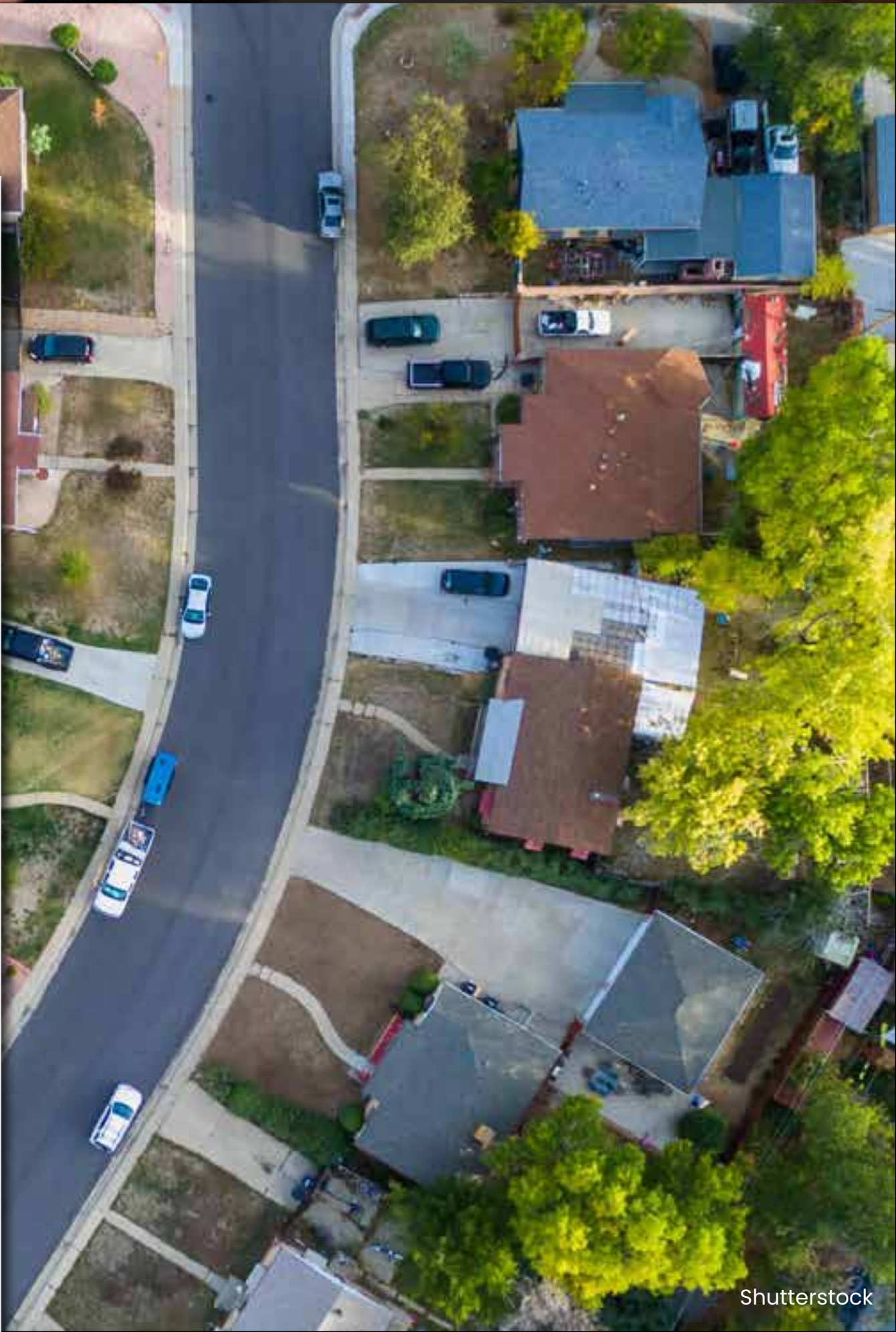
GOOGLE OFFERS \$1 BILLION TO BUILD HOUSING, FIGHT HOMELESSNESS

June 18, 2019 | GV Wire

Google plans to invest \$1 billion to build thousands of homes and fight homelessness in the San Francisco Bay Area, where skyrocketing housing prices have pushed people out of the market, the tech giant’s CEO announced Tuesday. **In a blog post**, CEO Sundar Pichai said the company will rezone about \$750 million worth of land owned the Google and currently zoned for office or commercial use. The company then can support development of at least 15,000 homes “at all income levels,” Pichai wrote.

“We hope this plays a role in addressing the chronic shortage of affordable housing options for long-time middle- and low-income residents,” the CEO wrote. The company also will establish a \$250 million fund that can provide incentives for developers toward building an additional 5,000 affordable homes in the Bay Area, Pichai said. Pichai said Google also will give \$50 million in grants to nonprofit organizations that...

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AP/Andrew Harnik

U.S. TRUMP COULD HAVE TOUGH TIME CARRYING OUT DEPORTATION THREAT

June 19, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump could have a tough time making good on his threat to deport millions of people living in the U.S. illegally. But maybe that wasn't his point. Trump's late-night messages Monday promised that starting next week his administration "will begin the process of removing the millions of illegal aliens who have illicitly found their way into the

United States. They will be removed as fast as they come in."

The "millions" in his tweets referred to the more than 1 million people in the United States with final deportation orders, meaning a judge has decided they be deported, according to an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to explain the president's tweets.

That was a pronouncement likely to excite his political base just as he was formally announcing his reelection bid Tuesday night. It also scared immigrants in the U.S. illegally — and could deter others from coming.

But it came at a cost. Trump blatantly exposed an upcoming enforcement operation, potentially jeopardizing the kind of sensitive effort that takes months to plan and relies on secrecy. The president's tweets put new, fresh demands on Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the agency in charge of removals, which is already overwhelmed, lacking staff, funding and detention space for its current work. And any massive round-up that includes deportation of families would be sure to spark outrage.

The tweets suggested the start of Trump's reelection campaign is likely to have much in common with his 2016 announcement, when he accused Mexico of sending rapists to the United States and pledged to build a wall and make Mexico pay for it. The rhetoric was widely denounced, yet the tough anti-immigration message struck a nerve with many Americans and ultimately helped carry Trump to victory.

Flow of Central American Migrants Rises Dramatically

At his rally Tuesday night in Orlando, Florida, he said millions of low-wage workers who come to the U.S. illegally are competing for opportunities against the most vulnerable Americans. Trump also claimed that schoolchildren across the country are being threatened by MS-13 gang members and blamed "Democratic policies." He said if Democratic officials "had to send their children to those overcrowded, overburdened schools, they would not tolerate it for one minute." Trump's tough talk hasn't led to a drop in border crossings since he took office. The flow of Central American migrants has risen dramatically during his administration. He recently dropped a threat to slap tariffs on Mexico after the country agreed to step up immigration enforcement efforts.

Related Story: Trump Threatens to Deport Millions Beginning Next Week

The "millions" in his tweets referred to the more than 1 million people in the United States with final deportation orders, meaning a judge has decided they be deported, according to an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity to explain the president's tweets. Pew Research Center has estimated there are about 10.5 million people in the U.S. illegally, with long-term residents outnumbering recent arrivals. The record for deportations over a full year is 419,384 in 2012, under the Obama administration.

"ICE is always working at 100 percent of its capacity. The president wants to create this illusion that he's let go of the reins that other administrations were holding but that's just not true." — John Sandweg, a former ICE head under Obama

Enforcement Sweeps Require Months of Planning
Some in Trump's administration believe decisive...

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June 20, 2019 | AP News

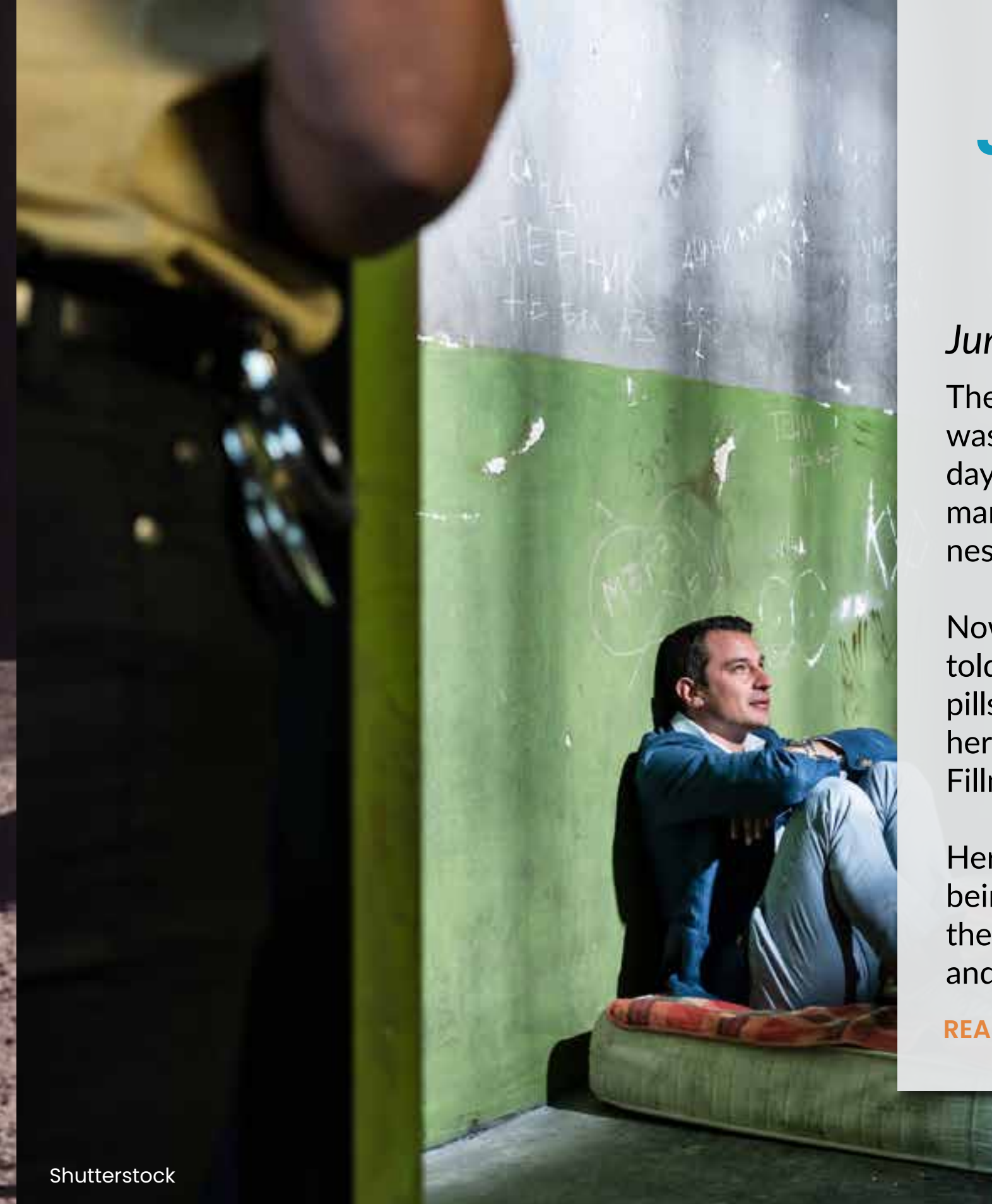
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Americans prefer a space program that focuses on potential asteroid impacts, scientific research and using robots to explore the cosmos over sending humans back to the moon or on to Mars, a poll shows.

The poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, released Thursday, one month before the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, lists asteroid and comet monitoring as the No. 1 desired objective for the U.S. space program. About two-thirds of Americans call that very or extremely important, and about a combined 9

in 10 say it's at least moderately important. The poll comes as the White House pushes to get astronauts back on the moon, but only about a quarter of Americans said moon or Mars exploration by astronauts should be among the space program's highest priorities. About another third called each of those moderately important.

Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on July 20, 1969, became the first humans to walk on another celestial body. In all, 12 NASA astronauts stepped on the moon. Jan Dizard, 78, a retired environmental studies professor living in Chico...

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INVESTIGATION: MANY US JAILS FAIL TO STOP INMATE SUICIDES

June 18, 2019 | AP News

The last time Tanna Jo Fillmore talked with her mother, she was in a Utah jail, angry and desperate. She'd called every day that week, begging for help. I need my medicine, she demanded. At 25, Fillmore had long struggled with mental illness, but medication had stabilized her.

Now she was locked up on a probation violation, and she told her mother the jail nurse was refusing to provide her pills. In their final conversation, Fillmore threatened to kill herself. And on Thanksgiving 2016, a day after that threat, Fillmore hanged herself in the Duchesne County Jail.

Her case is not isolated. Increasingly, troubling questions are being raised about the treatment of mentally ill inmates in the nation's 3,100 local jails, possible patterns of neglect — and whether better care could have saved lives. A joint...

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50 YEARS AFTER STONEWALL, LGBT RIGHTS ARE A WORK IN PROGRESS

June 17, 2019 | AP News

NEW YORK — They didn't set out to change history; they weren't the first LGBT Americans to mobilize against bias. Yet the June 1969 uprising by young gays, lesbians and transgender people in New York City, clashing with police near a bar called the Stonewall Inn, was a vital catalyst in expanding LGBT activism nationwide and abroad. This month's anniversary provides an opportune moment to ask: How has the movement fared over the past 50 years? What unfinished business remains?

From the perspective of veteran activists, the progress has been astounding. In 1969, every state but Illinois outlawed gay sex, psychiatric experts classified homosexuality as a mental disorder, and most gays stayed in the closet for fear of losing jobs and friends. Today, same-sex marriage is the law of the land in the U.S. and at least 25 other countries. LGBT Americans serve as governors, big-city mayors and...

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GV Wire Screenshot

WORLD

IS U.S. NEWS MEDIA COVERING UP CASUALTIES INFLICTED BY ISRAEL?

June 19, 2019 | GV Wire

Author Alison Weir remembers supporting Israel as a young person growing up in a military family. “I was sympathetic to Israel,” she said. “I had seen (the movie) ‘Exodus’ with Paul Newman and was aware of the Nazi atrocities.” At the time, Weir paid little attention to the country’s spiraling conflict with Palestinians. It’s a conflict that grew out of Israel’s founding as a nation and continues to this day. But she soon began to notice the coverage of the conflict by American media “was very one-sided.”

Founded Research Institute

It was a realization that would motivate her work as a researcher and writer. In 2001, she traveled to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where she said she found conditions that differed from what was being reported by U.S. media. The trip led to her founding a non-profit research institute focused on the Middle East conflict.

Her organization — If Americans Knew — was created “to provide information that is to a large degree missing from American press coverage of this critical region,” according to the institute’s website.

Her organization — If Americans Knew — was created “to provide information that is to a large degree missing from American press coverage of this critical region,” according to the institute’s website. Weir recently delivered a keynote presentation to members and guests of the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. She described significant under-reporting by U.S. media outlets of Palestinian casualties at the hands of Israeli forces.

Watch this video for insights on Weir’s findings. Further installments about Weir’s research will be published by GV Wire in the weeks ahead.

“Children were being shot, in many cases,” Weir told the group. “And yet, the news media — NPR, New York

Times, San Francisco Chronicle — was sort of obscuring that fact.” “After a while, I came to realize that this was the biggest cover-up I had ever seen,” she said. Weir is the author of “Against Our Better Judgement: The Hidden History of How the U.S. Was Used to Create Israel.” The book was published in 2014.

“After a while, I came to realize that this was the biggest cover-up I had ever seen.” — Alison Weir



WHALES FROM CHINESE AQUARIUM STARTING RETIREMENT IN ICELAND

June 20, 2019 | AP News

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — A pair of seasoned performers received a warm welcome Wednesday in Iceland, where the two beluga whales that previously lived at an aquarium in China will help populate a sanctuary for formerly captive marine mammals.

Conservationists celebrated when a plane from Shanghai carrying the whales, named Little Gray and Little White after the colors of their skin, touched down at Iceland's Keflavik International Airport. "The whales did well on the flight and are in good shape," logistic expert Sigurjon Sigurdsson said after the 12-year-old females were on the ground.

The whales, expected to reach 35 to 50 years of age, will be the first aquatic animals to inhabit the sanctuary for cetaceans off Iceland's southern coast. Their home will be a 344,445-square-foot sea pen at a pristine creek called Klettsvik, accessible by whale-watching boats.

After an 11-hour flight, the pair's tank was loaded onto a truck for a drive to a harbor and the last leg of their journey, a 30-minute boat ride to the Westman Islands archipelago. There, they are set to stay in a specially designed indoor pool for 40 days while caretakers increase their food intake to build up extra blubber for heat insulation. The whales...

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AP File

UN EXPERT URGES PROBE OF SAUDI PRINCE OVER KHASHOGGI KILLING

June 19, 2019 | AP News

GENEVA — An independent U.N. report into the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said Wednesday there is "credible evidence" to warrant further investigation into the possible role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and suggested sanctions on his personal assets.

The scathing probe is likely to further harden opinion against the crown prince in Washington and other Western capitals, where critics say an operation of this magnitude would have required the powerful prince's knowledge. Agnes Callamard, the special rapporteur for extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, said responsibility for Khashoggi's killing falls on Saudi Arabia.

"There has been no demonstration that the state itself of Saudi Arabia has accepted its responsibility for the killing," she told reporters after the release of her [101-page report](#). Khashoggi was killed, and believed to have been...

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BLACKOUT IN SOUTH AMERICA RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT POWER GRID

June 18, 2019 | AP News

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — The huge blackout that left tens of millions of people in the dark in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay over the weekend raised serious questions about the vulnerability of the power grid in South America and brought criticism down on Argentina's leader. President Mauricio Macri promised a thorough investigation into the cause of what he called an unprecedented outage. Energy officials said the findings would not be available for 10 to 15 days, and they had no immediate estimate of the economic damage from Sunday's 14-hour power failure.

"This is an extraordinary event that should have never happened," said Argentine Energy Secretary Gustavo Lopetegui. "It's very serious. We can't leave the whole country all of a sudden without electricity." He vowed: "There is zero chance that this will repeat itself. It can't repeat itself." While the precise cause has yet to be established, the blackout...

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