



Photographs by GINA FERRAZZI Los Angeles Times

OFFICER Perry Walters checks on Brad Weldon, who remained in Paradise, Calif., as the Camp fire burned.

Still on patrol in ghost town

The job changes for Paradise police after fire empties their city

By CINDY CHANG

PARADISE, Calif. — Policing a town empty of people and absent of crime was never part of Officer Perry Walters' training.

Before fire leveled Paradise, the calls that crackled over Walters' radio were familiar to every American cop — domestic violence, disturbing the peace, drugs, burglary, vandalism.

But then came the frantic battle to evacuate amid an apocalyptic inferno. Twice on the morning of Nov. 8, Walters was trapped with terrified residents as flames closed in around them.

Now, he patrols the streets in the eerie isolation of a zone still strictly off-limits to almost everyone, looking out for looters but not seeing a soul. Deprived of fa-



WALTERS spent Nov. 8 helping residents flee as the flames closed in. Now, he delivers supplies to a handful of holdouts and keeps an eye out for looters.

Lack of insurance hits home for victims

A young family's plight spotlights the difficulty of obtaining coverage in fire-prone areas. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

miliar landmarks, he sometimes overshoots a turn.

Always in the background, like an alarm that won't shut off, is the acrid odor of things that were not meant to burn.

Of the Paradise Police Department's 20 sworn officers, eight lost their homes. Walters' home, down the mountain, was unscathed.

He and the rest of the force became eyewitnesses for residents desperate to know about homes, neighbors, pets.

More often than not, the news was bad. Officers' cell-phones filled with photos of rubble that they snapped for residents who could not enter the fire zone but needed to see what had become of their homes.

Some officers found human remains, reduced to [See Paradise, A9]

State party boss is accused of crude behavior, sexual remarks

California Democratic staffers speak of unwanted touching, explicit comments and physical intimidation.

By MELANIE MASON



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO — Eric Bauman, the powerful chairman of the California Democratic Party, made crude sexual comments and engaged in unwanted touching or physical intimidation in professional settings, 10 party staff members and political activists said in interviews with The Times.

When presented with the allegations, Bauman said in a statement Wednesday that he planned to seek treatment for health issues and alcohol use.

"I deeply regret if my behavior has caused pain to any of the outstanding individuals with whom I've had the privilege to work. I appreciate the courage it took for these individuals to come forward to tell their stories," Bauman said.

"In the interest of allowing the CDP's independent investigation to move forward, I do not wish to respond to any of the specific allegations. However, I will use the time I am on leave to immediately seek medical intervention to address serious, ongoing health issues and to begin treatment for what I now realize is an issue with alcohol," he said.

"Leading the California Democratic Party to historic victories has been the honor of a lifetime, and I look forward to continuing this important work upon the conclusion of the investigation

CHAIRMAN Eric Bauman apologized and said he intends to seek treatment for alcohol use.

and when my health allows," Bauman, 59, said in his statement.

The allegations come after a tumultuous week in which Bauman was accused of unspecified misconduct and took a leave of absence.

In a letter last week calling for Bauman's resignation, Vice Chairman Daraka Larimore-Hall referred only to "a clear and escalating pattern of Chairman Bauman's horrific and dehumanizing behavior."

Bauman, who is gay, is a fixture in California and LGBTQ politics. A former [See Bauman, A8]

TRUMP IS TAKING A LOAD OF BAGGAGE TO G-20

The president's relationships with Putin and the Saudi crown prince will be on the global stage.

By ELI STOKOLS

BUENOS AIRES — President Trump's harsh insults and boorish behavior have dominated and divided one international gathering after another in recent months, leaving acrimony in his wake at a Group of 7 meeting in Quebec, a NATO summit in Brussels and a World War I centennial ceremony in Paris.

As he leaves Thursday for a Group of 20 economic summit in Buenos Aires, Trump carries with him controversies that could erupt involving one autocrat whom he will formally meet — Russian President Vladimir Putin — and another whom he will not — Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Trump also may find himself partly overshadowed for the first time. The de facto Saudi leader will be making his first appearance on the global stage since he was alleged to have ordered a gruesome assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, a political critic based in Virginia. Other world leaders must decide whether — and how — to deal with him.

Trump has staunchly defended the crown prince, saying "maybe he did and maybe he didn't" order the Oct. 2 slaying in Turkey, and dismissing calls in Congress to censure or sanction Riyadh by arguing arms sales outweigh human rights concerns. White House officials said Trump [See Trump, A4]

Putin blames Ukraine for clash

He says his counterpart orchestrated the naval confrontation off Crimea. Kiev calls Russia the aggressor. **WORLD, A3**

McCarthy's miscalculation

GOP leader faces reckoning over election wipeout

By MARK Z. BARABAK AND SARAH D. WIRE

WASHINGTON — When the House voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Kevin McCarthy trooped with other Republican lawmakers to a splashy Rose Garden celebration, smiling alongside President Trump as they celebrated the moment.

As majority leader, Mc-

Carthy had helped round up the votes to narrowly pass the hard-fought legislation, convincing 13 other California Republicans to go along, even though several faced tough reelection fights.

Fewer than half will be returning in January.

With the defeat Wednesday of Rep. David Valadao, who had survived repeated challenges in his Central Valley district, Republicans will hold just seven of the state's

53 House seats — the fewest in more than 70 years.

The Hanford Republican led on election night, but steadily lost ground as officials counted mail-in and other ballots. On Wednesday, when Fresno and Kings counties updated their tally, Democrat TJ Cox opened a 529-vote lead that effectively sealed his victory.

The GOP's losses, highlighting a terrible midterm [See McCarthy, A5]



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE Associated Press

DEMOCRATIC leader Nancy Pelosi won 203 votes among 239 incoming House members, an important step toward regaining the speakership in January.

Pelosi easily wins vote as Democrats' nominee for speaker

By JENNIFER HABERKORN

WASHINGTON — House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday easily won the support of a majority of next year's House Democrats to become the party's nominee for speaker, rebuffing attempts from a faction of rebel lawmakers who were pushing for new leadership.

Pelosi's real test of whether she can regain the gavel will come Jan. 3, when she will need the vast majority of Democrats to support her on the House floor for the final vote to elect a speaker.

The San Francisco congresswoman secured 203 votes from 239 participants, or about 85% of the caucus. Thirty-two Democrats voted no, three cast blank ballots, and one person was absent.

It marked a significant victory for Pelosi, and a prominent sign she will be able to reclaim the job she

Barbara Lee loses leadership bid

Progressive Oakland Democrat blames sexism and ageism after losing House post to a young New Yorker. **NATION, A6**

lost in 2011.

No candidate emerged to challenge Pelosi, leaving the anti-Pelosi coalition to fizzle. Pelosi also worked hard to court her critics. Before the vote, she struck a deal Wednesday with nine members of the so-called Problem Solvers caucus to change some House rules that they say will make it easier to bring bipartisan legislation to the House floor. The group had withheld their votes for Pelosi for speaker over the changes.

She has garnered the endorsements of dozens of liberal activist groups and other Democratic lawmakers. She has been holding [See Pelosi, A7]



IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

L.A. LEGALIZES SIDEWALK VENDING

City Councilman Curren Price gets a warm greeting from vendors gathered outside City Hall after the council's unanimous vote. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Mexicans angry at Kushner honor

The government is criticized for a plan to bestow the nation's highest award for foreigners on the president's son-in-law for his work updating NAFTA. **WORLD, A3**

Fed chief calms Wall Street

Stocks soar after Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome H. Powell says there is no "preset policy path" for future interest-rate increases. **BUSINESS, C1**

Weather
Heavy rain.
L.A. Basin: 63/51. **B6**

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