

NM NEWS & VIEWS FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2010
THIS IS THE WORLD WE LIVE IN!

Threat closes Santa Fe courthouse:

A phoned-in threat made against a Santa Fe District Court judge closed down the courthouse and a nearby school for the remainder of the day on Monday.

Around 2 p.m., police increased security at the District Court and nearby Carlos Gilbert Elementary School after an unidentified person called 911 and said a man was on his way to shoot a judge at the courthouse.

A second call was also placed to District Court Judge Michael Vigil's office. According to police, when a staff member picked up the phone a caller said "I'm coming to kill you," and hung up.

The Santa Fe sheriff's office says the call was made from a cell phone that had been disconnected. Disconnected phones can still call 911 and investigators are now tracking down information on who may have owned the phone and the location of the caller.

Parents of nearby Carlos Gilbert Elementary school waited outside until their children were released a half hour after the normal school day.

By 4:15 p.m., the lockdown was lifted at the courthouse and judges were escorted home by security detail.

Court will be open tomorrow but with increased security presence, police said.

Streets around courthouse back open
Threat made against judge:

The streets around the state district courthouse were reopened by 4 p.m. Monday after a threat against a judge closed the building and some nearby offices.

Sheriff Greg Solano said a call came into 911 at 1:10 p.m. making a general threat against a state district court judge. Some 20 minutes later, another call came into the office of state District Court Judge Michael Vigil at his courthouse office on Grant Avenue.

"The caller said they were coming to kill a judge," Solano said.

The courthouse was closed and visitors were kept inside as a precaution for over

an hour. By 4 p.m. the building was closed and all nearby streets reopened. The building would remain closed the rest of Monday and those with business in the building should call Tuesday and reschedule.

As a precaution, students at Carlos Gilbert Elementary School were escorted to buses by police and parents picked up students in the southwest parking lot - entering at Guadalupe and Catron Street.

A SWAT team was also dispatched until the situation was sorted out. Police officers were also sent to Wood Gormley Elementary School as a precaution.

The federal building and offices in and around the post office were also closed, another caller said.

More information will be posted as it becomes available.

Glenn Beck 8/28 rally: It's a matter of honor:

New York – In front of the Lincoln Memorial in June, a group of students caught up in a moment of spontaneous patriotism broke into song. But the US Park Police were quick to shush the members of the Young America's Foundation, saying singing is not allowed at the memorial. The song that was stifled? "The Star-Spangled Banner."

So much for freedom of speech.

At the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta this July, an official at the memorial to one of the greatest civil rights leaders in the world – my Uncle Martin – removed a bullhorn from the hands of Father Frank Pavone, an internationally recognized leader of the pro-life movement. We were a group more than 100 strong, in Atlanta to declare that abortion is the greatest violation of civil rights in our day. We brought a wreath to lay at Uncle Martin's grave while we prayed, but due to a King Center official's barricade at the gravesite, we weren't allowed. The National Park Service said that would constitute a demonstration.

So much for freedom of assembly.

Symbols of liberty Americans are hungry to reclaim the symbols of our liberty, hard won by an unlikely group of outnumbered, outgunned, underfunded patriots determined not to live in servitude to the British Empire. If we want to sing the national anthem at a memorial to the man who led this fledgling nation

out of slavery, and made my people free, we should be able to send our voices soaring to the heavens.

Glenn Beck's "Rally to Restore Honor" this Saturday will give us that chance, and that's why I feel it's important for me to be there.

Before the words were out of Mr. Beck's mouth announcing the Aug. 28 rally, The New York Times noted that it would be at the same place and 47 years to the day since my Uncle Martin gave his "I Have a Dream Speech." When asked why he chose that date in particular, Beck said he had not realized its significance, but in thinking about it, he saw it is an auspicious day to rally for the honor of the American people. He has said, and he's right, that Martin Luther King didn't speak only for African-Americans. He spoke for all Americans, and his words still ring true.

Other groups are planning rallies and demonstrations in Washington that day, and freedom of speech gives them the right to do so – and to criticize me for not jumping on their bandwagon. But Uncle Martin's legacy is big enough to go around.

A rally about character, not politics Though critics see it as partisan, Beck's rally is not a political event, per se. Instead, it is designed to be a refreshing exercise of freedom of speech.

The rally will be a celebration of who we are as a nation and a chance to stop for a moment, reflect, reorganize, and re-energize. It's a chance to think about character; both our character as a nation and our character as individuals.

Delineating ourselves as red state or blue, liberal or conservative, minority or majority, we have not quite reached the day when men and women are "judged not by the color of their skin but on the content of their character." We are still marching toward that day. As Uncle Martin said, "we cannot turn back."

The rally will also give America another chance to honor and thank the men and women in our armed forces for the dangers they face every day in our stead. Unless you have a loved one in Iraq or Afghanistan, it's too easy to forget that tens of thousands of Americans are far from the comforts of home, are directly in harm's way, facing an enemy who hates us precisely because we are free. And coming just days before the ninth anniversary of 9/11, the day that roused us from our complacency, we could use another wakeup call, one of our own devising.

When I join Beck and all gathered at the Lincoln Memorial this weekend, I will talk about my Uncle Martin and the America he envisioned. I will talk about

honor and character and sacrifice. I will be joined by those who represent the diversity of the human race.

On Saturday, Uncle Martin's dream of personhood and human dignity will resound across America. And the Park Police should consider themselves forewarned: As we stand in the symbolic shadow of the great American who signed the Emancipation Proclamation, we just might sing.

Dr. Alveda King is the director of African-American outreach for Priests for Life, and the founder of King for America.

Roger Clemens enters not guilty plea on charges he lied to Congress about drug use:

WASHINGTON - Seven-time Cy Young winner Roger Clemens pleaded not guilty Monday to charges of lying to Congress about whether he used steroids or human growth hormone.

When asked for a plea by U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton, the retired Major League Baseball pitcher said in a clear voice: "Not guilty, your honor."

Clemens and another of baseball's premier stars sullied by steroid accusations, all-time home run leader Barry Bonds, could both begin their day in court next spring, turning the spotlight back on major league baseball's long-running drug scandal just as it opens the 2011 season.

Wearing a dark jacket, brown pants and tie, Clemens appeared in federal court only a few blocks from where he swore under oath to a House committee in 2008 that he had not used performance-enhancing drugs.

Clemens, who pitched for the Boston Red Sox, Toronto Blue Jays, New York Yankees and Houston Astros, got into a van and left shortly after his plea without speaking to the throngs of reporters and television cameras waiting outside the E. Barrett Prettyman Courthouse.

Federal prosecutors didn't believe Clemens' testimony to Congress, and they subsequently charged him with making false statements, perjury and obstruction of Congress.

The 48-year-old baseball star had vowed all along to fight the charges.

After hearing Clemens' plea, Walton set an April 5 date for choosing a jury. That

would be four days after Opening Day of the 2011 major league baseball season and two weeks after the scheduled start of Bonds' trial on charges of lying to a federal grand jury when he said he never knowingly used performance-enhancing drugs.

Clemens was arraigned on three counts of making false statements, two counts of perjury and one count of obstruction of Congress.

If convicted, Clemens could face up to 30 years in prison and a \$1.5 million fine, though under U.S. sentencing guidelines, he would probably face no more than 15 to 21 months in prison.

Rough waters continue on Mid-Atlantic beaches; more expected though week as Earl approaches:

OCEAN CITY, N.J. - So much for a perfect finale to the summer vacation season.

On beaches from Maryland to New Jersey, rip currents and strong swells in the Atlantic Ocean associated with Hurricane Danielle meant another day of swimming restrictions Monday.

And it could get worse later in the week. A second hurricane, Earl, strengthened to a Category 4 storm packing winds near 135 mph and battered Puerto Rico on Monday. The storm is expected to zip up the coast, bringing at least more rough seas, and possibly tropical storm conditions, including heavy rain and strong wind to some areas just in time for Labor Day weekend.

Earl is on a path to possibly brush the coast of the U.S. later in the week, moving near North Carolina on Thursday and passing Maine on Saturday. It's too early to tell exactly where it will go.

On Monday, swimmers on the guarded beach of the family resort of Ocean City, N.J., were being told not to go into the water beyond waist-deep as violent waves pounded the beach.

And that was an improvement over the weekend's conditions, when lifeguards in shore communities in New Jersey pulled out scores of struggling swimmers.

On Saturday, it was so rough that even surf schools scrapped their lessons. And while Sunday was a bit better, boogie boards were still barred.

Not that beachgoers like 10-year-old Maggie DiInnocenzo, from Gilbertsville, Pa., were excited to try to ride the waves.

"When you try to swim on your boogie board, you hit your head on the ground," she said.

Her father, Gregg, keeping a watchful eye from his chair on the sand had two words he repeated every time she thought she'd venture into the water: "Be careful."

Officials were saying the same thing. A guard rode a WaveRunner parallel to the beach to make sure swimmers weren't going too far out and the beachside guards were not shy with their whistles.

Obama widens sanctions by freezing assets of North Korean individuals, firms and agencies:

WASHINGTON - The Obama administration on Monday widened the scope of U.S. financial penalties against North Korea, escalating pressure on the Pyongyang regime to give up its nuclear weapons.

The Treasury Department announced it is freezing the assets of several individuals, companies and organizations allegedly linked to Pyongyang's nuclear program or to management of a vast network of illicit economic activities such as narcotics trafficking and money laundering.

Targeted entities include one variously known as Office 39 or Bureau 39, believed to control organizations inside North Korea and abroad that raise money for senior North Korean leaders. The enigmatic office produces, smuggles and distributes narcotics, the Treasury Department said, and handles the import of luxury goods intended for Kim Jong Il, the top leader.

Treasury said that last year Office 39 was involved in a failed attempt to buy, through China, two Italian-made luxury yachts worth more than \$15 million for use by Kim.

In a report earlier this year, the U.S. Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute said Office 39 is involved in the manufacture and distribution of illegal drugs, the counterfeiting of U.S. currency, and the manufacture and distribution of counterfeit cigarettes.

"The crimes organized by Office 39 are committed beyond the borders of North Korea by the regime itself, not solely for the personal enrichment of the leadership, but to prop up its armed forces and to fund its military programs," the institute's report said.

Stuart Levey, the Treasury Department's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, told reporters that additional U.S. sanctions would be announced in the weeks ahead.

Is technology helping drunk drivers avoid arrest?

Albuquerque police are celebrating a dramatic drop in the number of drivers being arrested at DWI checkpoints. Police officials think drivers are finally learning the lesson about the dangers of drinking and driving.

However, technology may be helping drunk drivers stay one step ahead of police.

If you have a smart-phone, like a Droid or iPhone, there's a free app that you can download called PhantomAlert. If you've had some drinks and you decide to drive, PhantomAlert will tell you if there are any DWI checkpoints on the way home.

And if that's not enough, there are plenty of Twitter pages giving similar warnings.

Some believe this use of technology is a contributor to the recent drop in DWI checkpoint arrests.

"They use the phone for everything, to warn each other about everything," said Albuquerque driver Magda Apodaca.

"People are going to be using that to avoid the DWI checkpoints, and that could be why the number of arrests are down right now," said Albuquerque driver Carolyn Johnson.

The city gave Eyewitness News 4 some figures. We crunched them further, and we found out the number of DWI checkpoint arrests are down about two-thirds from ten years ago to where APD is arresting on average about eight drivers per checkpoint.

City Public Safety Director Darren White does not think social networking or phone apps are the reason for the drop.

"I think that happened with the advent of the cell phone," said White. "There may be some of that, but I think with the reductions that we're seeing, we're giving drunks way too much credit to be able to use technology to keep up with us."

White thinks New Mexico drivers are simple getting the hint after numerous high-profile fatal crashes and an aggressive DWI awareness campaign launched by Governor Bill Richardson.

White does not think all the drunks are checking their phones before leaving the bars.

"I'm not saying that doesn't happen," said White. "I'm just saying I don't think it's to the point where we're seeing these reductions across the board."

White says the number of alcohol-related crashed are down as well. And he says the bars are doing more to make sure people are not getting behind the wheel drunk.

Hit and run kills teen in Albuquerque:

Albuquerque police are still following leads in connection to a weekend hit and run death that killed a teenager.

Police say around 2 a.m. Sunday, a driver hit 17-year-old Kenneth Rutherford on Parsifal St., near Eubank and Candelaria NE, then drove off.

Rutherford died of his injuries.

Police are asking anyone with information to call them at (505) 242-COPS.

AP IMPACT: US Wasted Billions in Rebuilding Iraq:

A \$40 million prison sits in the desert north of Baghdad, empty. A \$165 million children's hospital goes unused in the south. A \$100 million waste water treatment system in Fallujah has cost three times more than projected, yet sewage still runs through the streets

As the U.S. draws down in Iraq, it is leaving behind hundreds of abandoned or incomplete projects. More than \$5 billion in American taxpayer funds has been wasted — more than 10 percent of the some \$50 billion the U.S. has spent on reconstruction in Iraq, according to audits from a U.S. watchdog agency.

That amount is likely an underestimate, based on an analysis of more than 300 reports by auditors with the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction. And it does not take into account security costs, which have run almost 17 percent for some projects.

There are success stories. Hundreds of police stations, border forts and government buildings have been built, Iraqi security forces have improved after years of training, and a deep water port at the southern oil hub of Umm Qasr has been restored.

Even completed projects for the most part fell far short of original goals, according to an Associated Press review of hundreds of audits and investigations and visits to several sites. And the verdict is still out on whether the program reached its goal of generating Iraqi good will toward the United States instead of the insurgents.

Col. Jon Christensen, who took over as commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region District this summer, said the federal agency has completed more than 4,800 projects and is rushing to finish 233 more. Some 595 projects have been terminated, mostly for security reasons.

Christensen acknowledged that mistakes have been made. But he said steps have been taken to fix them, and the success of the program will depend ultimately on the Iraqis — who have complained that they were not consulted on projects to start with.

"There's only so much we could do," Christensen said. "A lot of it comes down to them taking ownership of it."

The reconstruction program in Iraq has been troubled since its birth shortly after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. The U.S. was forced to scale back many projects even as they spiked in cost, sometimes to more than double or triple initial projections.

As part of the so-called surge strategy, the military in 2007 shifted its focus to protecting Iraqis and winning their trust. American soldiers found themselves hiring contractors to paint schools, refurbish pools and oversee neighborhood water distribution centers. The \$3.6 billion Commander's Emergency Response Program provided military units with ready cash for projects, and paid for Sunni fighters who agreed to turn against al-Qaida in Iraq for a monthly salary.

Brewer condemns State Department for mentioning Arizona law in human rights report to UN:

Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer demanded Friday that a reference to the state's controversial immigration law be removed from a State Department report to the United Nations' human rights commissioner.

The U.S. included its legal challenge to the law on a list of ways the federal government is protecting human rights.

In a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Brewer says it is "downright offensive" that a state law would be included in the report, which was drafted as part of a UN review of human rights in all member nations every four years.

"The idea of our own American government submitting the duly enacted laws of a state of the United States to 'review' by the United Nations is internationalism run amok and unconstitutional," Brewer wrote.

Arizona's law generally requires police officer enforcing other laws to investigate the immigration status of people they suspect are illegal immigrants.

Critics say it would lead officers to target Hispanics. Supporters, including Brewer, say the law prohibits racial profiling and other human rights abuses.

The U.S. Justice Department sued to block the measure, arguing federal law trumps the state's authority to enforce immigration laws.

A federal judge in July sided with the Justice Department and blocked enforcement of the law's most controversial provisions a day before it was scheduled to take effect.

In its report, the State Department does not specifically allege that Arizona's law would lead to racial profiling.

"A recent Arizona law, S.B. 1070, has generated significant attention and debate at home and around the world," the report says. "The issue is being addressed in a court action that argues that the federal government has the authority to set and enforce immigration law. That action is ongoing; parts of the law are currently enjoined."

A State Department spokesman had no immediate comment on Brewer's letter.

Two Men on United Flight from Chicago Arrested on 'Preparation of a Terrorist Attack' in Amsterdam
Suspects Had Been Cleared Sunday by TSA in Chicago, Birmingham Despite Security Concerns:

Two men taken off a Chicago-to-Amsterdam United Airlines flight in the Netherlands have been charged by Dutch police with "preparation of a terrorist

attack," U.S. law enforcement officials tell ABC News. Dutch police stopped two individuals suspected of preparing a terrorist attack.

U.S. officials said the two appeared to be travelling with what were termed "mock bombs" in their luggage. "This was almost certainly a dry run, a test," said one senior law enforcement official.

A spokesman for the Dutch public prosecutor, Ernst Koelman, confirmed the two men were arrested this morning and said "the investigation is ongoing." He said the arrests were made "at the request of American authorities."

The two were allowed to board the flight at O'Hare airport last night despite security concerns surrounding one of them, the officials said.

The men were identified as Ahmed Mohamed Nasser al Soofi, of Detroit, MI, and Hezem al Murisi, the officials said. A neighbor of al Soofi told ABC News he is from Yemen.

Airport security screeners in Birmingham, Alabama first stopped al Soofi and referred him to additional screening because of what officials said was his "bulky clothing."

In addition, officials said, al Soofi was found to be carrying \$7,000 in cash and a check of his luggage found a cell phone taped to a Pepto-Bismol bottle, three cell phones taped together, several watches taped together, a box cutter and three large knives. Officials said there was no indication of explosives and he and his luggage were cleared for the flight from Birmingham to Chicago O'Hare.

Once in Chicago, officials say they learned al Soofi checked his luggage on a flight to Washington's Dulles airport for connections on flights to Dubai and then Yemen, even though he did not board the flight himself.

Instead, officials say, al Soofi was joined by the second man, Al Murisi, and boarded the United flight from Chicago to Amsterdam.

When Customs and Border officials learned al Soofi was not on the flight from Dulles to Dubai, the plane was ordered to return to the gate so his luggage could be removed. Officials said additional screening found no evidence of explosives.

The two men were detained by Dutch authorities when the United flight landed in Amsterdam, according to the officials.

By Slim Margin, Voters Want Democrats to Win House and Senate; Split Evenly on Re-Electing Obama; Evangelicals Feel Differently:

With the mid-term election in November, Americans have a chance to return power to the Republican Party after two years of Democratic Party rule. However, a new survey by The Barna Group (Ventura, CA) suggests that if the election were held today, only a slim majority of voters would return the Democrats to a majority position in both the House and Senate.

In addition, voters are evenly divided as to whether they would return Barack Obama to the White House.

The various segments of the Christian population maintain divergent support levels for both Congress and the president. The religious segments of the voter population most firmly supportive of the Democrats and of President Obama are the Skeptics (i.e., atheists and agnostics) and people from non-Christian faiths.

Desired Majority in Congress

For the most part, Americans seem content to have the Democrats retain control of both houses of Congress. Among registered voters, 45% wanted Democrats to rule the House while 40% desired a Republican takeover. Regarding the future of the Senate, the numbers were almost identical: 45% preferred a Democratic majority versus 41% opting for a Republican majority. Keep in mind that the survey question asked which party the respondent wanted to dominate the House and the Senate; they were not asked about the party of the candidates for the House and Senate they planned to vote for in the district in which they live.

Several consistent patterns were evident. While men are evenly divided between a preference for Democrats and Republicans, women opted for a Democratic majority. Democrats were the preference of every age group through age 65; Republicans were a decisive preference among senior citizens. Other groups that lean toward Democratic rule included college graduates, singles who have never been married, residents of the Northeast and Midwest, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. Republicans were the favorite among whites and southerners. Residents of the western states were split between favoring a Democratic majority in the Senate and a Republican majority in the House.

Party identification provides little advantage for either party: similar proportions of each party's voters want their party to dominate both houses of Congress, while independent voters are evenly split. Democrats get a bit of an edge, however, because the number of people aligned with the Democratic Party (43%) substantially outnumbers those associated with the Republican Party (36%).

Ideology plays a significant role in these outcomes, as well. While Republicans are greatly favored by those who describe themselves as “mostly conservative,” such voters constitute only one-third of the electorate. In contrast, those who say they are usually somewhere in-between being conservative or liberal represent half of the electorate – and they favor the Democrats by a 2-to-1 ratio. The remaining 16% claims to be “mostly liberal” and favors the Democrats by an overwhelming margin.

People of Faith are Divided

People’s faith inclinations clearly influence their preferences in this year’s election in ways that reflect their ideological leanings. For instance, evangelicals are overwhelmingly conservative in their political views and fervently desire a Republican return to power in both chambers by about a 5-to-1 margin. Non-evangelical born again Christians, who are generally moderate with slight conservative tendencies, generally favor the Republicans taking over both houses. However, they are offset by notional Christians, a group that is moderate to slightly liberal, who prefer a Democratic majority in each chamber. Further compensation comes from the Democratic preference held by both the Skeptics (3-to-1 in favor of the Democrats) and Americans of non-Christian faiths (a 5-to-2 Democratic preference). Both the Skeptics and the adherents of non-Christian faiths are typically moderate or liberal in their perspectives.

President Obama is on the Bubble

When respondents were asked if they would be more likely to vote for or not vote for President Obama to be returned to the White House based on his performance in office so far, registered voters were equally split: 45% said they would vote for him and 45% said they would not. Another 5% said it depended who was running against him and the remaining 5% did not know.

The president’s support was very clearly divided along racial, ideological, and religious lines. While whites were substantially more likely to not support his re-election (a 19 point differential between those who would and those who wouldn’t), Mr. Obama had the support of huge margins of blacks (+79 percentage points), Hispanics (+27 points) and a more nominal preference among Asians (+9 points). Ideologically, Mr. Obama is robustly supported by liberals (+58 points) and moderates (+28 points), while soundly rejected by conservatives (-62 points).

In the religious realm, Mr. Obama’s most ardent supporters are Skeptics (67% would re-elect him today based on his performance); people aligned with non-Christian faiths (53% would re-elect him, 21% would not); and Catholics (47%

would, 42% would not). Catholics were the only Christian segment among whom a plurality backed the president.

Mr. Obama would not return to Washington if it were up to evangelicals (16% would support him, 77% would not); non-evangelical born again Christians (38% support, 51% do not); and Protestants (40% pro, 51% con). Individuals in the notional Christian category were evenly split. Among Protestants, people who attend mainline churches were evenly divided whereas those from non-mainline congregations were not prone to re-elect the president (39% would, 54% would not).

Overall, then, Mr. Obama would be supported by 42% of Americans who consider themselves to be Christian and by 64% of those who do not claim to be Christian.

Changes in Support Since 2008

Mr. Obama's current standing among the various faith groups has shifted since his election in 2008. If the election were held today, his support among evangelicals would actually have risen slightly, from 11% in 2008 to 16% now. Surprisingly, that makes evangelicals the only religious subgroup from which he has experienced increased support. (Of the various faith segments that Barna tracks, however, evangelicals remain the group that awards the president the lowest level of support, despite the minor uptick.)

In contrast, Mr. Obama's support from all born again Christians (including evangelicals) has dropped from 42% in 2008 to 34% today, reflecting the fact that the more moderate non-evangelical born again group has struggled with the president's performance. The president's backing has also slipped among Protestants (now 40%, down from 46%) as well as Catholics (currently 47%, down from 56%). An examination of the non-Christian faith groups shows that Mr. Obama's allegiance has dropped significantly among both the Skeptics (from 76% down to 67%) and those of other faith groups (from 62% down to 53%).

Overview

With the 2010 campaign ready to shift into high gear after Labor Day, it appears that the ideological rift that divided the nation in 2008 has grown even more severe, despite Mr. Obama's campaign promise to heal the wounds and knit the nation tighter. In the midst of the country's disparate political views and expectations it is also apparent that none of the religious segments that played big for the president in 2008 are as committed to him as they were two years ago, slippage that is affecting the hopes of the Democratic Party to retain both houses of Congress for the rest of Mr. Obama's first term. Mr. Obama still fares

well among the growing non-Christian population of the nation, but that strength is waning.

About the Research

This report is based upon telephone interviews conducted by The Barna Group with a random sample of 1,000 adults selected from across the continental United States, age 18 and older, August 16-22, 2010. The interviews included 125 among people using cell phones. The maximum margin of sampling error associated with the aggregate sample is ± 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The survey included interviews among 822 registered voters. The estimated maximum margin of sampling error associated with the sample of registered voters is ± 3.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Minimal statistical weighting was used to calibrate the aggregate sample to known population percentages in relation to several key demographic variables.

“Born again Christians” are defined as people who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who also indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. Respondents are not asked to describe themselves as “born again.”

“Evangelicals” meet the born again criteria (described above) plus seven other conditions. Those include saying their faith is very important in their life today; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; believing that Satan exists; believing that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works; believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Being classified as an evangelical is not dependent upon church attendance or the denominational affiliation of the church attended. Respondents were not asked to describe themselves as “evangelical.”

“Non-evangelical born again Christians” meet the born again criteria described above, but not the evangelical criteria.

“Notional Christians” consider themselves to be Christian but do not meet the born again criteria.

“Mainline Protestant” churches include those associated with the American Baptist, United Church of Christ, Episcopal, United Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Presbyterian Church in the USA denominations.

“Skeptics” refers to people who describe themselves as either atheist or agnostic.

What False Rumors About China’s Central Bank Chief Mean:

UPDATE: The headline on this posting has been changed to make clear that the rumors of defection discussed below have been debunked as false. The opinions posted are those of the contributor only.

Rumors have circulated in China that People’s Bank of China Gov. Zhou Xiaochuan has left the country. The rumors appear to have started following reports on Aug. 28 which cited Ming Pao, a Hong Kong-based news agency, saying that because of an approximately \$430 billion loss on U.S. Treasury bonds, the Chinese government may punish some individuals within the PBOC, including Zhou. Although Ming Pao on Aug. 30 published a report on its website indicating that the prior report was fabricated by a mainland news site that had attributed the false information to Ming Pao, rumors of Zhou’s defection have spread around China intensively, and Zhou’s name has been blocked from Internet search engines in China

STRATFOR has received no confirmation of the rumor, and reports by state-run Chinese media appeared to send strong indications that Zhou is in no trouble at the moment. However, the release of this rumor and its dispersion throughout the public is significant, particularly as the Communist Party of China is preparing for a leadership transition in 2012.

Chinese state-run media and official government websites have run several high-profile reports about Zhou, which should be seen as a move to refute the rumors. The PBOC website published two articles on its homepage reporting on Zhou’s meeting with visiting Japanese Financial Services Minister Shozaburo Jimi during the third China-Japan high-level economic dialogue as well as a meeting with an Italian delegation. Xinhua news agency reported that Zhou told the PBOC Party Committee Enlargement Meeting on Aug. 30 it should “continue to implement justice, and strengthen legislative work in financial system.” Prior to this news, Zhou appeared at the 2nd annual conference of the heads of the Chinese, Japanese and Korean central banks held on Aug. 3, and his most recent public appearance was Aug. 10 for China’s Financial System Anti-corruption Construction Exhibition.

Zhou is known to have lofty political ambitions and is believed to be a close ally to former Chinese President Jiang Zemin, as well as a core figure for Jiang’s “Shanghai Gang.” There has been no shortage of rumors about Zhou’s possible dismissal in the past five years, as he is believed to be associated with several high-level financial scandals. For example, Zhou was rumored to be under

"shuanggui," a form of house arrest administered by the Communist Party, during the massive crackdown of Shanghai Party Secretary Chen Liangyu in 2006, which was perceived in the country as a crackdown of the Shanghai Gang and part of Hu's effort to consolidate power ahead of the 2007 power transition. There was also a rumor that he might have been detained following the investigation and arrest of Wang Yi, the vice governor of the China Development Bank, along with several other officials in the financial circle. Currently, several financial scandals are still under investigation, and it is likely that Zhou, as PBOC governor and one of the most powerful economic players in the country, could be associated with some cases. Therefore, whether or not the rumor is true at this time, the leaking of this news is very likely to be associated with a power struggle within the Communist Party's economic hierarchy.

More than 3,000 Mexican federal police fired, commissioner says:

Mexico City, Mexico -- About 3,200 Mexican federal police have been fired since May for failing to do their work or being linked to corruption, Federal Police Commissioner Facundo Rosas said Monday.

Of those, 465 have been charged with crimes.

In addition, Rosas said at a news conference, another 1,020 officers face disciplinary proceedings for failing confidence exams.

The probe started in mid-May, said Marco Tulio Lopez of the federal police internal affairs department.

"Investigations of our department began many months ago and this is the result," federal police spokesman Ramon Salinas told CNN.

Among the officers who were fired, Rosas said, were officials in Ciudad Juarez who were publicly accused by fellow officers of corruption several weeks ago. In that incident, two groups of officers shoved and fought each other outside police headquarters.

The fired officers account for about 9 percent of the federal police force, which has about 34,500 officials.

None of the dismissed officers will be allowed to be rehired on police forces at the local, state or federal levels, Rosas said.

Record number in government anti-poverty programs:

WASHINGTON — Government anti-poverty programs that have grown to meet

the needs of recession victims now serve a record one in six Americans and are continuing to expand.

More than 50 million Americans are on Medicaid, the federal-state program aimed principally at the poor, a survey of state data by USA TODAY shows. That's up at least 17% since the recession began in December 2007.

POLITICS: Welfare agencies boost voter rolls

"Virtually every Medicaid director in the country would say that their current enrollment is the highest on record," says Vernon Smith of Health Management Associates, which surveys states for Kaiser Family Foundation.

The program has grown even before the new health care law adds about 16 million people, beginning in 2014. That has strained doctors. "Private physicians are already indicating that they're at their limit," says Dan Hawkins of the National Association of Community Health Centers.

More than 40 million people get food stamps, an increase of nearly 50% during the economic downturn, according to government data through May. The program has grown steadily for three years.

Caseloads have risen as more people become eligible. The economic stimulus law signed by President Obama last year also boosted benefits.

"This program has proven to be incredibly responsive and effective," says Ellin Vollinger of the Food Research and Action Center.

Close to 10 million receive unemployment insurance, nearly four times the number from 2007. Benefits have been extended by Congress eight times beyond the basic 26-week program, enabling the long-term unemployed to get up to 99 weeks of benefits. Caseloads peaked at nearly 12 million in January — "the highest numbers on record," says Christine Riordan of the National Employment Law Project, which advocates for low-wage workers.

More than 4.4 million people are on welfare, an 18% increase during the recession. The program has grown slower than others, causing Brookings Institution expert Ron Haskins to question its effectiveness in the recession.

As caseloads for all the programs have soared, so have costs. The federal price tag for Medicaid has jumped 36% in two years, to \$273 billion. Jobless benefits have soared from \$43 billion to \$160 billion. The food stamps program has risen 80%, to \$70 billion. Welfare is up 24%, to \$22 billion. Taken together, they cost more than Medicare.

The steady climb in safety-net program caseloads and costs has come as a result of two factors: The recession has boosted the number who qualify under existing rules. And the White House, Congress and states have expanded eligibility and benefits.

Conservatives fear expanded safety-net programs won't contract after the economy recovers. "They're much harder to unwind in the long term," says Michael Tanner of the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

Other anti-poverty experts say the record caseloads are a necessary response to economic hardship. "We should be there to support people when the economy can't," says LaDonna Pavetti of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal-leaning think tank.

State Fair parade marshal announced:

New Mexico State Fair officials announced on Monday that resident and veteran ABC newsman Sam Donaldson will be the Grand Marshal for this year's annual parade.

Donaldson, who owns a ranch in Hondo, accepted the honor graciously saying, "When outlanders ask me what's so great about my native state New Mexico I tell them three things: The landscape from desert to mountains, the people with several great cultures living and working together, and the opportunity to be who you want to be and live the way you want to live."

"Really, it doesn't get any better than that," said Donaldson.

This year's theme, "Everyday is a Holiday," will feature popular American holiday icons from the Saint Patrick's Day leprechaun to Santa Claus and is the largest parade in recent memory with 226 entries and over 4300 participants.

The parade takes place on Saturday, September 11, leaving the State Fairgrounds at 8:45 a.m., to head East on Central Avenue for a little over two miles.

NEWS MAKER OF THE DAY:

State Representative Nora Espanosa joined us this afternoon to talk about the 2010 Biblical World View Conference, which she attended last Wednesday in Albuquerque and the Glen Beck event that took place in Washington, D.C. this past Saturday (see above article). She talked about changing the course we're on, 'It's time to take a stand.' Mentioning the folks from China that attended the

BWV Conference, Nora said, 'You are cutting off your own roots. We need to be reflective of The Word, open your heart to what God is telling you. If God in The Bible could use a donkey,' then obviously He could use Glen Beck to call America back to Him! 'We must stand up NOW, this is the time, God calls us to be a light unto the nations, we're standing for the future of our great nation, filter everything through The Word Of God, Freedom, FREEdom, FREEDOM!' Nora exclaimed. 'Today is The Day, if you hear His Voice, This Is The Day, It's a moral crisis, not an economic one. We have not held the government accountable. This is about what is right and what is wrong. God goes by His People,' she stated, so let's stand and take action and see The Glory Of God!

Many Blessings,

Rev. Mark F. Tross

Ekklesia Outreach

<http://ekkleisiaoutreach.com>

<http://ekkleisiaoutreach.weebly.com>