

# AP NEWS: The Top 10 Stories of the Year

**NEW YORK (AP) --** The police killings of unarmed blacks in Ferguson, Missouri, and elsewhere - and the investigations and tumultuous protests they inspired - was the top news story of 2014, according to The Associated Press' annual poll of U.S. editors and news directors.

In a year crowded with dramatic and often wrenching news developments around the world, the No. 2 story was the devastating outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, followed by the conflict in Iraq and Syria fueled by the brutal actions of Islamic State militants.

Among the 85 voters casting ballots, first-place votes were spread among 15 different stories. The Ferguson entry received 22 first-place votes, Ebola 11 and the Islamic State story 12.

The voting was conducted before the announcement that the United States and Cuba were re-establishing diplomatic relations and Sony Pictures' decision to withdraw its film "The Interview" in the wake of computer hacking and threats.

Last year's top story was the glitch-plagued rollout of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, followed by the Boston Marathon bombing. The continuing saga of "Obamacare" made this year's Top 10 as well, coming in fifth.

The first AP top-stories poll was conducted in 1936, when editors chose the abdication of Britain's King Edward VIII.

Here are 2014's top 10 stories, in order:

**POLICE KILLINGS:**

Some witnesses said 18-year-old Michael Brown had his hands up in surrender; others said he was making a charge. But there was no dispute he was unarmed and shot dead by a white police officer in Ferguson. In New York City, another unarmed black, Eric Garner, was killed after a white officer put him in a chokehold during an arrest for unauthorized cigarette sales. After grand juries opted not to indict the officers, protests erupted across the country, punctuated by chants of "Hands up, don't shoot" and "I can't breathe." In both cases, federal officials launched investigations.

**EBOLA OUTBREAK:**

The first wave of Ebola deaths, early in the year, attracted little notice. By March, the World Health Organization was monitoring the outbreak. By midsummer, it was the worst Ebola epidemic on record, with a death toll now approaching 7,000, mostly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. A Liberian man with the disease died at a Dallas hospital, followed by a few other cases involving U.S. health workers, sparking worries about the readiness of the U.S. health system.

**ISLAMIC STATE:**

Militant fighters from the Islamic State group startled the world with rapid, brutal seizures of territory in Iraq and Syria. The U.S. and its allies responded with air strikes, hoping that Iraqi and Kurdish forces on the ground could retake captured areas. Revulsion toward Islamic State intensified as it broadcast videos of its

beheadings of several Western hostages.

**US ELECTIONS:** For months, political oddsmakers sought to calculate if Republicans had a chance to gain control of the U.S. Senate. It turned out there was no suspense - the GOP won 54 of the Senate's 100 seats, expanded its already strong majority in the House of Representatives, and gained at the state level, where Republicans now hold 31 governorships.

**OBAMACARE:** Millions more Americans signed up to be covered under President Obama's health care initiative, but controversy about "Obamacare" raged on. Criticism from Republicans in Congress was relentless, many GOP-governed states balked at participation, and opinion polls suggested most Americans remained skeptical about the program.

**MALAYSIA AIRLINES MYSTERY:**

En route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared on March 8 with 239 people on board. In the weeks that followed, aircraft, ships and searchers from two-dozen countries mobilized to look in vain for the wreckage on the Indian Ocean floor. To date, there's no consensus as to why the plane vanished.

**IMMIGRATION:**

Frustrated by an impasse in Congress, President Obama took executive actions in November to curb deportations for many immigrants residing in the U.S. illegally. GOP leaders in the House and Senate pledged efforts to block the president's

moves. Prospects for reform legislation were dimmed earlier in the year by the influx of unaccompanied Central American minors arriving at the U.S. border, causing shelter overloads and case backlogs.

**TURMOIL IN UKRAINE:**

A sometimes bloody revolt that toppled President Viktor Yanukovich in February triggered a chain of events that continued to roil Ukraine as the year drew to a close. Russia, worried that Ukraine would tilt increasingly toward the West, annexed the Crimean peninsula in March and backed an armed separatist insurgency in coal-rich eastern regions of Ukraine. The U.S. and its allies responded with sanctions against Russia.

**GAY MARRIAGE:** Due to a wave of federal court rulings, 19 more U.S. states began allowing same-sex marriages, raising the total to 35 states encompassing about 64 percent of the population. Given that one U.S. court of appeals bucked the trend by upholding state bans on gay marriage, there was widespread expectation that the U.S. Supreme Court will take up the issue and make a national ruling.

**VA SCANDAL:** The Department of Veterans Affairs became embroiled in a nationwide scandal over allegations of misconduct and cover-ups. Several senior officials were fired or forced to resign, including VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. At the heart of the scandal was the VA hospital in Phoenix; allegations surfaced that 40 veterans died while awaiting treatment there.



Todd Radigan poses with Sarah Gregg, who has been working at The Main St. Pub for over five years.

KATIE CLAUSEN / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

## MEET TODD RADIGAN OF MAIN STREET PUB

By Katie Clausen  
For the Plain Talk

For Todd Radigan, being part of the business community in Vermillion, raising a family in Vermillion, and the rich history of Vermillion are everything.

"I'm a lifer," Radigan says of his hometown. "That's what I tell everyone. "I'm just a true Vermillion lifer."

Radigan grew up on Vermillion's east side. He spent his childhood just as many Vermillion kids did playing and running free.

"I liked to play sports when I was younger," Radigan said. "That's what we did in the neighborhood."

A 1991 graduate of VHS, Radigan has made quite the splash around town over the years, but has now settled into a routine of overseeing The Pub from afar.

"I like to make this place as Irish as possible," Radigan said of the families' Irish heritage. "My Dad wanted to name the place O'Radigans Pub."

During his youth, Radigan watched his father, Jeff, open multiple businesses around town. Promoting eateries and venues across the city, the elder Radigan carried the family name like a torch, leaving Vermillion staples such as The Varsity, R-Pizza, The Prairie, and Whimps around town.

In the nineties, Radigan decided to open a bar and eatery in the heart of the Vermillion downtown district, and he brought Todd with him.

"My dad opened The Pub in '94, and I came on in 1997," Radigan said. "He owned it with Billy Wood and after he went off to do other things he wanted me to move on and I kind of stepped in."

It wasn't easy for Radigan, however, who was in his early twenties at the time. He was green, but willing to learn.

"I was 24 years old," Radigan said. "I didn't feel like the boss for the first four years."

During that time, Radigan and his father pushed through some of the skepticism that sometimes shrouds a new business in a small community.

"When I first got into this business, all the locals made fun of The Pub," Radigan said. "But I found a place where every single person is welcome and treated nicely. I still take that attitude very seriously today. Everyone is welcome."

Radigan continues to put his focus on hiring staff that maintain that quality of friendliness and family that is unique to the eateries' atmosphere.

"When I think of The Pub, I think of nice people," Radigan said. "That's what I think is important. Some of my staff have been here for 13 years, many of them over five years. I hire the friendliest staff."

Radigan also thinks of excellent food. The Pub has been serving large lunch crowds for years.

"Lunch is what I care about the most," Radigan said. "There's not a better tip than someone sticking their head in the kitchen and saying 'hey that was really good!'"

Being part of that lifelong Vermillion essence, Radigan appreciates being a business owner among downtown merchants.

"I like that any business you would call a competitor will still help you out," Radigan said. "We all do the same for everybody."

Despite running a successful business and having the world seemingly at his fingertips, Radigan began to slip into a murkier place during his young adulthood. He had his business and lots of rowdy friends, which also meant he had access to lots of alcohol and a party lifestyle. Struggling with alcoholism, Radigan needed to shape up or he risked losing a lot.

"Recovery is actually my favorite subject," Radigan said. "Anything about recovery, I like."

With the support of the community, Radigan was able to step away from the bar, and towards Alcoholics Anonymous, an organization he is greatly appreciative of.

"Vermillion has been good for my sobriety," Radigan said. "Sobriety is hard but there is so much support here."

Radigan has since added sobriety advocate to his resume. He often gets calls from people who are seeking help and recovery.

"I love AA meetings," Radigan said. "I had to go to some lengths to be good. I enjoy talking about it and maybe helping people."

Sobriety and being so public made Radigan nervous at first, but in true Vermillion spirit, community members came together and recognized the unique position he was in.

For an extended version of this story check out [www.plaintalk.net](http://www.plaintalk.net)

## STORIES

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"but he was a wonderful mentor and a wonderful example of how to be an attorney."

### No. 1 Miller, Jackson Positively Identified; 43-Year Cold Case Closed Spring, 2014

**ELK POINT** Skeletal remains found last fall in a car submerged in a Union County creek have been positively identified as belonging to Cheryl Miller and Pam Jackson.

The cause of the two girls' death was a car accident, said Attorney General Marty Jackley at press conference held Tuesday afternoon in the Union County Courthouse in Elk Point.

State and local law enforcement officials flanked Jackley, seated at a table. Sitting behind the men were family members of the two girls who disappeared approximately 43 years ago.

Miller and Jackson, both 17-years-old, were last seen in May 1971 driving in a 1960 Studebaker which was discovered in Brule Creek last September. The two girls had planned to attend a party held at a gravel pit located near the creek.

"This weekend we were informed and today we are announcing the positive identification that the remains found in the vehicle are those of Pam Jackson and Sherry Miller," Jackley said. "That's based upon some of the personal items that we found as well as the DNA testing that was done at the University of North Texas."

Jackley said the totality of the evidence collected when the Studebaker was discovered last September is consistent with a car accident. The forensic pathology and anthropology indicate that there is no type of injury that would be consistent

or caused by foul play or inappropriate conduct.

Clothing and shoes recovered from the vehicle, he noted, contained bones, which would be inconsistent with foul play. The Studebaker was also in third gear when it entered the creek.

"If there was foul play, typically it would be in neutral or a lower gear," Jackley said. The switch for the car's headlights indicated that they were on at the time of the accident.

He said witness statements, including those of three boys the girls met at a church parking lot earlier that evening, also compelled investigators to conclude that the girls' death was caused by an accident and not foul play.

"They (the boys) indicated that they had been followed by the girls, that at one point they had missed a turn, and then when they had looked back, the girls had vanished," Jackley said. "This would be consistent, when looking at all of this together, and especially with all of the new findings, of this being a car accident."

**Local man suspected**  
There was a time when local law enforcement believed the girls may have fallen victim to foul play.

In August 2004, investigators focused on the Kerwyn Lykken farm of rural Alcester. Armed with search warrants, authorities searched the Lykken farmhouse, and went through barns from top to bottom, digging up floors in some buildings.

David L. Lykken was 17 and residing at the farm at the time of the girls' disappearance.

The investigation eventually led to his indictment and arrest. Lykken is already serving a 227-year sentence in the South Dakota Penitentiary for kidnapping and rape.

Lykken was 52 at the time he was indicted Friday, June 29, 2007 on two counts of premeditated murder, two counts of felony murder and two counts of murder.

He was arrested Monday, July 2, 2007 at



The cold case involving the deaths of Cheryl Miller (left) and Pam Jackson was solved in the spring of 2014.

**FILE PHOTO**

the penitentiary where he has been incarcerated since 1990.

The indictment charged that Lykken murdered Cheryl Miller and Pamela Jackson on or about May 29, 1971.

A Union County grand jury charged Lykken with two counts of killing Miller and Jackson "with a premeditated design."

Two other counts charged Lykken with rape and murder of Miller and kidnapping and murder of Jackson.

The final two counts contained in the indictment charged Lykken with murdering Miller and Jackson by "evinced a depraved mind, regardless of human life, although without any premeditated design to effect the deaths" of the two girls.

Prosecutors were forced to drop the double-murder charges against Lykken, however, after problems were discovered with a key piece of evidence. His murder trial, scheduled for late March, 2008 in Elk Point, was cancelled.

A taped conversation of Lykken telling a fellow inmate in the South Dakota Penitentiary details of how he murdered Cheryl Miller and Pam Jackson was determined to be a hoax.

Larry Long, who was South Dakota attorney general at the time, agreed.

**Family statement**  
There was no indication that alcohol was a contributing factor to the accident. At 9:30 p.m. May 29, 1971, the two girls stopped at Dakota Hospital in Vermillion to visit Miller's grandmother. Shortly after

that, they met the boys in rural church's parking lot.

Jackley said citing a cause for the accident is highly speculative. He indicated that the Studebaker's worn tires may have contributed, but can't be ruled for certain as a cause.

The bridge over Brule Creek was built in 1970, and about a year old at the time of the accident. "They may have simply been not familiar with it, and missed it," Jackley said. There can be other factors involved in that, also."

The remains of the two girls are currently in Sioux Falls. "The DCI (Division of Criminal Investigation) will work with the forensic pathologist to provide the remains back to the family members," the attorney general said. "This has really been a tragedy for two families, a tragedy for a (high school) class, as well as all of South Dakota to some degree."

Jackley said family members of Jackson and Miller would not speak publicly about this latest, final development in the case of the two missing girls. Relatives of Miller prepared this statement, and asked the attorney general to read it:

"Our day has come through this journey for answers pertaining to our beloved sister, Sherry and dear friend, Pam. We will now be able to finish the last chapter of this journey, with the help of all our police forces, family and friends. Our family cannot thank you enough for the continued support you have given to us. We have now been able to carry out our mother's last wish. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

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