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Atlanta quarterback pleads guilty to federal charges, says he takes full responsibility



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Gonzales makes his exit

Attorney general's departure brings relief, vows to continue investigation



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales announced his resignation on Monday after months of controversy.

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INSIDE STORY

Area lawmakers say Gonzales' resignation is long overdue. Page A7

The president named Paul Clement, the solicitor general, as a temporary replacement. With less than 18 months remaining in office, there was no indication when Bush would name a successor — or how quickly or easily the Senate might confirm one.

Apart from the president, there were few Republican expressions

of regret following the departure of the nation's first Hispanic attorney general, a man once hailed as the embodiment of the American Dream.

"Our country needs a credible, effective attorney general who can work with Congress on critical issues," said Sen. John Sununu of New Hampshire, who last March was the first GOP lawmaker to call on Gonzales to step down. "Alberto Gonzales' resignation will finally allow a new attorney general to take on

Convicted offenders make easy targets

Activists, politicians don't want to take chances with new laws

BY LAUREN FITZPATRICK OF GATEHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

As if he were still 9 years old, Steven Levy recalls the kidnapping and brutal sexual assault of a childhood friend who was left for dead.

"Fortunately he did survive," Levy said of his friend, "but clearly it impacted me and the world that I lived in. I'm going to do anything I can to make sure we protect children."

As a councilor in the small Massachusetts city of Marlborough, Levy proposed an ordinance to bar dangerous sex offenders from living within 2,500 feet of a host of places where children gather. If passed, it would have limited sex offenders to about 5 percent of the city, mostly along highways and wetlands.

Levy had to settle for a 1,000-foot loop around parks, schools, day-care centers and homes for the elderly and mentally retarded, a compromise that skipped his own street. But he wanted Marlborough on the growing list of municipalities and states to act in the name of keeping children safe, even if it means outdoing neighbors and banishing registered sex offenders from their borders.

"It keeps them away from temptation," Levy said of offenders. "Yes, they have to

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Tightened sex offender laws have led to numerous lawsuits. Page A7

Some 'offenders' probably shouldn't be listed under that title. Page A7

CREEPING CLOSER



ADAM GERIK/JOURNAL STAR

PURCHASE THIS PHOTO AT PJSTAR.COM

Myra Hoerdemann of Peoria looks out over an encroaching Illinois River behind her Galena Road home with a Peoria police officer and her neighbor's property manager Monday evening. Hoerdemann said that the large fallen tree, down since June, has been drifting toward her home. "I've been here 45 years and I've fought this river like you wouldn't believe," she said. "It's probably going to tear my deck up."

Illinois River has risen above flood stages in many areas, thanks to northern Illinois rains

BY JACQUELINE KOCH OF THE JOURNAL STAR

CHILlicothe — When the Illinois River floods, the small stretch of beach in Betty McCloskey's backyard disappears.

If the river floods more, that won't be the River Beach Drive resident's only problem.

"We have trouble with our drains," she said. "Water will come up the concrete floors."

When it floods, her septic tank won't take any excess water, and she can't use

her washing machine, so she heads to a Laundromat.

"When it gets bad, water goes over my sea wall and crashes up against my back doors and windows," she said.

The river hasn't flooded that much yet, but heavy rains in northern Illinois have caused creeks and streams there to fill up and feed into Illinois River basins, said Chuck Schaffer, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Lincoln. Many areas in northern Illinois have experienced between 10 and 14 inches of rain this month.

"Now all that water is coming downstream," he said.

The river has risen above flood stages at banks in many towns, though it's expected to crest at those locations by the

end of this week. Peoria, Havana and Henry all have reported the river above flood stage; Beardstown is expected to rise above its flood stage later this week.

The river at Peoria is expected to crest today at 22.5 feet; the flood stage is 18 feet. The water levels caused the LST 325, docked just north of the Interstate 74 bridge, to postpone leaving Peoria for Quincy.

The ship will stay in Peoria until the river falls to a level that allows the ship to sail, and likely won't go upriver to Henry until Sunday, the ship's captain said Monday. The LST was expected to leave Peoria for Henry on Wednesday. With the delay, the ship won't open in

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Rising waters mean World War II vessel's stay in Peoria will have to be extended. Page A6

Chart shows water levels in central Illinois towns and when the river is expected to crest. Page A6

River flooding will have effect on area duck hunting clubs. Page D1

Hit-and-run suspect admits to drinking

Benson man changes his story after crash that injured teenager

BY MICHAEL SMOTHERS AND KEVIN SAMPIER OF THE JOURNAL STAR

EAST PEORIA — A Benson man admitted to police he'd been drinking and recanted his claim that he thought he'd hit a deer after his arrest for the weekend hit-and-run accident that critically injured a 16-year-old boy.

The youth, Samson Jones of Ravine Street, sustained head injuries when he was struck while riding his bicycle across South Main Street at Ravine during a rainstorm at 4:10 a.m. Saturday. He was listed in critical condition at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria on Monday.



MICHAEL JACKSON

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