

2017

Year in Review

MACAU DAILY TIMES
PERSON OF THE YEAR

Sulu Sou

Lawmaker

HONORABLE MENTIONS

- Albano Martins, Anima (Macau) President
- José Pereira Coutinho, Lawmaker
- Lionel Leong, Secretary
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Typhoon Hato



PERSON OF THE YEAR | SULU SOU

An inconvenient voice

To fear is useless, Sulu Sou said in an interview with Plataforma after being suspended from the Legislative Assembly (AL) earlier this month.

The eventful year of 2017 will forever be remembered by the young activist and lawmaker who defied the odds and was elected on September 17 to the AL by universal and direct suffrage in the most competitive legislative elections ever.

Twenty-three lists were vying for 14 seats (of 33) under harsh and sometimes absurd rules dictated by the Electoral Affairs Commission.

After a divisive internal struggle that augured a different ending, the pro-democratic group managed to regain a majority of the votes running on three separate tickets, and reinstated the three lawmakers they previously had before losing a seat in 2013.

Gaining 9,213 votes, Sulu Sou Ka Ho was among them becoming, at 26, the youngest legislator ever in the history of Macau. Moreover, after a fearless cam-

paign he became central to the New Macau Association comeback, especially captivating the new and the youngest voters.

On the day after the election, a modest Sou told reporters, "I owe this victory to Macau citizens and the strong team of New Macau Association."

Sulu Sou first entered the Legislative Assembly on October 23 and, standing, addressed the plenary, thus breaking a long tradition in the MSAR's legislative chamber where members speak seated.

On that day and on others that followed, young Sou, moderate and even solemn in his appearance yet standing resolutely by his ideals, questioned unfair house rules, called for full transparency in the commissions, and reintroduced political reform onto the agenda.

But an impending petty offense would put an abrupt halt to his mandate.

On December 4, the Legislative Assembly took an unprecedented decision and voted overwhelm-

ingly (28-4) to lift Sulu Sou's lawmaker immunity, paving the way for him to be prosecuted in court for "aggravated disobedience" regarding a protest over a government donation to Jinan University in 2016. If proven guilty, he could be jailed for up to two years. Any jail term of more than 30 days could see him disqualified as a legislator.

The trial is scheduled to begin on January 9 and is deemed to attract worldwide media attention over an arguable decision that puts the whole system at stake.

Sou's past as an inconvenient voice in conservative Macau caught up with him. Most notably, he was a prominent organizer of the "Withdrawal" demonstrations of May 20 and 27, 2014 against the compensation bill for retired high-ranking officials which brought to the streets tens of thousands of people – the largest rallies in Macau since June 1989.

As much as the authorities deny it, this is a case of political persecution to silence a promising pro-democracy advocate.

HONORABLE MENTION
ALBANO MARTINS

Animal crusader



ALBANO Martins continued his crusade against the city's dog racing facility in 2017, calling on international celebrities

to coerce the Macau (Yat Yuen) Canidrome into surrendering hundreds of greyhounds in its possession to local animal rights group Anima (Macau).

Martins has been instrumental for several years in leading the international campaign to cut the Canidrome's links with the outside world, including the severing of its greyhound supply from countries such as Australia and Ireland.

In 2017, he was able to rally legendary French actress Brigitte Bardot to the cause, as well as Queen band members Brian May and Roger Taylor, who pressured the Macau government to intervene.

In October, he rebutted allegations from Canidrome executive director Angela Leong that Anima (Macau) had an ulterior motive in wanting to acquire the greyhounds, and warned that her comment that "greyhounds are [meant] to serve humans" would alienate a Macau public increasingly interested in animal welfare.

Martins' confidence that the facility's closure was imminent did not waver throughout 2017. The Canidrome's concession is now widely expected to terminate in 2018, however the terms of its exit and the fate of the hundreds of greyhounds currently housed at the facility are yet to be finalized.

HONORABLE MENTION
JOSÉ PEREIRA COUTINHO

A resilient candidate



LAWMAKER José Pereira Coutinho was one of the highlighted figures of the year. Running once more for a seat at the Legis-

lative Assembly (AL), Pereira Coutinho saw his chances potentially jeopardized when his two sons were involved in a criminal case regarding drug trafficking.

The timing of the case matched with the kick-off of the formalizations and presentation of applications for lists running for the direct elections and was used by other lists to try to diminish the capacities of the lawmaker. The candidate was pushed to consider and to publically state several times that his seat at the AL was in danger.

Nevertheless, the legislator also had the opportunity to announce at a press conference held at the Macau Civil Servants Association (ATFPM) that the outcome of such a case would "not affect his work and duties as lawmaker and president of ATFPM."

Later on and during the election campaign in a televised debate, Pereira Coutinho was heavily criticized by candidate Song Pek Kei. The way Song addressed the issue was widely acknowledged by the community to be in a "rude manner," eventually turning-out in Coutinho's favor.

At the polling stations Coutinho gathered a total of 14,383 votes, being re-elected with ease and scoring better than in 2013.

More recently, he was the sole legislator to argue fiercely against the suspension of Sulu Sou's mandate.

HONORABLE MENTION
LIONEL LEONG

The lucky secretary



THE Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong is one of the figures of note in 2017. The solid performance of the economy

and the record-breaking recovery of the gaming industry after some two years of economic correction are factors that alone justify the mention.

In addition, during 2017 the Secretariat led by Leong managed to comply with most of the bills and requirements solicited by international organizations regarding money-laundering and terrorism financing prevention. He had initially prepared for and presented these measures during last year's policy address for the economy and finance sectors.

Leong had also already announced positive forecasts for the year's results, claiming that gross gaming revenue is expected to close the year with two-digit growth; a result that the Secretary for Economy and Finance said is stable and positive.

Also noteworthy are October's results, reaching a new high after the economic correction. Gross gaming revenue reached MOP26.7 billion, very close to the result achieved in the same month in 2011 when the industry generated MOP26.8 billion.

According to the announcement, the growth was achieved by the simultaneous increase in both the mass and VIP segments.

In addition, the secretary is hopeful that the current growth trend will continue throughout 2018, estimating that gaming revenue for 2018 will be even higher than this year.

HONORABLE MENTION
LORETO MIJARES JR

Filipino Hero



THE SAR has announced this month that Loreto Mijares Jr will receive the Honorable Title - Prestige award by the government in mid-January – making him the first Filipino non-resident to receive such an award.

The Filipino worker's heroic act was caught on video by his wife, which surfaced online and was also recognized by international media.

Mijares was dubbed was a "Filipino Hero," after he saved three local residents during Typhoon Hato, along with the assistance of the neighbourhood.

His courageous act has earned him plaques of appreciation and awards, which include an award from Manila-based recruitment agency, Ikon.

Also, Mijares has been nominated for the Philippines' "Bagong Bayani Awards," for his heroic act – a recognition given to Filipino workers outside the Philippines by President Rodrigo Duterte. The results will be announced in January.



THE EVENT OF THE YEAR | TYPHOON HATO

A city taken by storm

THE most severe typhoon in half a century swept into Macau on August 23 causing unprecedented loss of life and damage to infras-

tructure throughout the city. The Signal No.10 typhoon, the highest category in Macau's official storm index, killed 10 people, plunged the city into darkness and resul-

ted in a critical shortage of food and water not seen in generations.

Typhoon Hato struck initially in the early hours of the morning and brought with it

torrents of seawater that flooded the city and a number of underground car parks, leading to many of the fatalities.

Almost the entire city was plunged into darkness in the late afternoon as a power cable supplying electricity from Zhuhai was ruptured and storm clouds cast a dark shadow over Macau.

Though the general supply of utilities was restored to most

of the city within the first 24 hours, some neighborhoods were still without power and water several days later.

Macau locals stocked up on food and water in the immediate aftermath, emptying supermarket shelves. Unscrupulous individuals capitalized on the shortage, reportedly selling two small bottles of water for as much as MOP150.

Other residents were spotted illegally raiding fire hydrants for water, despite government warnings that it might lead to abnormal pressure demands on the system and that the water was not fit for consumption.

The role of Macau's Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau (SMG) was widely criticized by the public - specifically its failure to raise an appropriate and timely warning of Hato's severity. It was not the first time that a warning issued by the bureau had been inaccurate or unreliable.

The government was quick to respond to the criticism. On August 24, the chief executive forcibly removed SMG chief Fong Soi Kun from his post and suggested that an investigation into the former director would follow.

The government also announced compensation for the deceased, the injured and those with economic losses, and opened investigations into several elderly residents who had allegedly propagated rumors on social media about a government cover-up of further, unreported fatalities.

A second severe typhoon, Pakhar, struck Macau just a few days later, dealing another blow to the bewildered city still reeling from Hato.

THE CASE | HO CHIO MENG

The top prosecutor's downfall

WHO would imagine some years ago that the region's former top prosecutor, Ho Chio Meng, would be arrested in February 2016 and later sentenced to 21 years in jail, leaving the court pleading for an appeal? However unlikely it may have seemed, that is precisely what happened in July this year.

In addition to prison time, the Court of Final Appeal (TUI) ruled that Ho should pay around MOP75 million, either on his own or with others, to the Office of the Prosecutor General, and that around MOP12 million of his assets would be handed over to the administration.

Right after Judge Song Man Lei announced the final verdict, Ho said, "this

is an injustice. [...] I did not receive any money, I will appeal."

However, Ho's attempt to appeal was summarily rejected. The TUI president stated in September that the decision was final. This meant that Ho was sentenced without any right of appeal, in a situation that breaches fundamental rights inscribed in the Basic Law, according to many lawyers. This was one of the most recent episodes of similar situations.

First of many perplexing aspects of the case was the number of crimes Ho was accused of by the Public Prosecutions Office: no less than 1,536 crimes (Ho was not found guilty of approximately 80 of these charges). Lawyer Oriana Pun stepped in as defense lawyer.

A few days after the Ho's sentence was read, six defendants related to this case of the city's top former prosecutor were also convicted by the Court of First Instance. Ho's wife, brother and other relatives were among the individuals found guilty.

The prosecution argued repeatedly that Ho's case was evidence of the principle that every person is equal before the law, and the foundations of the rule of law shall not be shaken.

But, doubts remain; after the sentence was read, Oriana Pun, told the media that the evidence presented by the prosecution was "not sufficient to confirm the culpability of most the accusations." She also claimed that "appealing is a basic right."



JANUARY

Thousands of citizens demonstrated against the government's proposed fee hike for several services related to the Transport Bureau, especially those concerning vehicle removal and deposits when caught in violation of parking laws.

Former Prosecutor-General Ho Chio Meng continued to deny all charges laid against him during several court sessions held at the Court of Final Appeal. One of those sessions addressed the charges related to money laundering and false declarations of assets. Ho admitted to having made a "mistake" in failing to declare at least one of his bank accounts.



Uber Macau presented a review of 2016, stating that the average estimated vehicle arrival time decreased from 8.1 minutes at the beginning of 2016 to 4.4 minutes at the end of the year. According to Uber Macau's data, riders from 385 cities have taken an Uber ride in the territory. The company's general manager Trasy Lou Walsh (pictured) revealed talks with the government to achieve service legalization.

At the Legislative Assembly plenary, the director of the Labor Affairs Bureau, Wong Chi Hong, unveiled plans to raise the proportion of residents working in management positions in the gaming industry. Wong said that casino executives should be 85 percent from Macau at the end of the year.

FEBRUARY

Packed hotels during the Chinese New Year holiday helped the world's largest gambling market as it emerged from a two-year slump. The gaming industry is in the process of reinventing itself with more family-friendly resorts and attractions to draw recreational spenders and casual gamblers.



The government's plan to reduce the number of two-stroke engine vehicles in Macau hoped to gain the attention of owners of "about 30 percent of the total number of vehicles." The Environmental Protection Bureau announced a plan that aimed to remove a total of 9,575 two-wheel

vehicles that run on two-stroke engines from the region's roads.

The Legislative Assembly election, held in September, would have a bigger budget, Electoral Affairs Commission president Tong Hio Fong said after the commission's first meeting in February. Tong suggested that an increase of 20 percent in comparison to the last election in 2013



Kim Jong Nam, the older brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, was attacked by two women at Kuala Lumpur's airport and died on the way to the hospital. Kim was waiting for a flight to Macau. Starting from around 2001, he spent most of his time living quietly in Macau with his immediate family.

MARCH



The Tourist Police, a new force operating under the Public Security Police Force (PSP), commenced operations. In addition to the current duties of PSP officers, the force performs tourist support duties such as assisting with tourists' inquiries, dealing with complaints and disputes involving tourists, and implementing crowd control measures.

A group of architects and concerned locals joined an online petition to halt the planned demolition of around a dozen shipyards in Coloane's Lai Chi Vun district. Conducted due to governmental concerns over the sites' safety, the controversial demolitions prompted both cultural authorities and influential members of the public to intervene before they were halted.

The candidate favored by China's Communist leadership was chosen as Hong Kong's new leader, in the first such vote since huge pro-democracy protests erupted over the city's election system in 2014. A committee dominated by pro-Beijing elites selected Carrie Lam, the Hong Kong government's former No. 2 official, as the financial hub's chief executive.

The Commission Against Corruption released a new report highlighting several unlawful hiring practices at the Cultural Affairs

Bureau (IC). The report was issued just weeks after a leadership change at the IC, in which former president Ung Vai Meng quit unexpectedly and was replaced by Leung Hio Ming, one of the bureau's former vice presidents.



The United Kingdom filed for divorce from the European Union, overturning four decades of integration with its neighbors, demolishing the notion that EU expansion is inevitable and shaking the foundations of a bloc that is facing challenges to its identity. During the year, the consequences of this decision to EU-Macau bilateral relations were widely debated

APRIL

The Chief Executive said he is against any attempt by lawmakers to change the Land Law to accommodate the interests of private developers who claim that the non-development of land was due to the government's inaction.



Kenneth Leung, a Hong Kong lawmaker representing the Accountancy Functional Constituency, was denied entry into Macau. The denial was deemed unreasonable and bizarre, as he had just visited mainland China a few days prior.

Former New Macau Association leader Jason Chao announced the launch of his new election monitoring project, titled "Project Just Macau". The purpose of the project was to serve as a secure communication channel for residents to submit information and complaints on the Legislative Assembly elections.



A study on the gambling activities of Hong Kong residents showed that Macau's integrated resorts were the second choice for inhabitants of the neighboring SAR, with their first preference being casino ships.

MAY

The detailed results of the 2016 population by-census were released, showing accelerated population growth, coupled with continuous population aging over the past five years. The elderly population aged 65 and above increased to 59,383, a substantial growth of 48.6 percent five years ago.



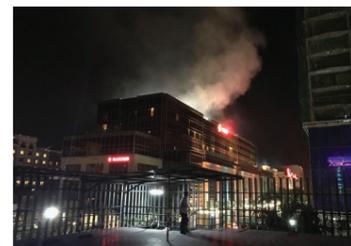
The government announces that it will require facial recognition and identification card checks at ATMs before Chinese UnionPay cardholders can withdraw cash, a stepped-up measure to curb money laundering in Macau. Holders of China UnionPay cards issued by banks in China must show mainland identification cards and have their identities verified through a facial recognition system for ATM cash withdrawals.

The Commission of Audit issued a report heavily criticizing the roadworks' coordination. The report specifically addresses the years of 2014 and 2015, noting that the number of complaints was very high due to several disruptions and hassles provoked by the frequent roadworks across the region.



Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the National People's Congress and the official responsible for overseeing Hong Kong and Macau affairs, said that patriotism is a key aspect of Macau development's during his visit to the territory.

JUNE



Local authorities announced plans to enhance casino security following an attack on a Manila casino hotel. A meeting was held between local authorities and representatives of gaming operators to discuss

how to react to severe safety incidents. The meeting occurred after an attack on Resorts World Manila where 37 patrons and employees died.

Vasco Fong resigned from the Office for Personal Data Protection's coordinator post. Fong's resignation was submitted to the chief executive due to "personal reasons." He had been leading the privacy watchdog since December 2014

Crown Resorts said its staff held in China were charged with gambling-related offenses, the most significant development in the case since the employees were rounded up by mainland authorities in October 2016.



Activist Scott Chiang was barred from entering Hong Kong and was forced to return on a ferry to Macau, after an immigration officer in the neighboring SAR told him that he had failed to meet the requirements for entry. Chiang claimed that the decision is linked to the visit of President Xi Jinping this week on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's handover.

JULY



Lawmaker Chan Meng Kam announced that he will not be a candidate in the Legislative Assembly direct election. Amid speculation regarding his possible appointment to the AL, Chan also confirmed that he would not become a lawmaker appointed by the Chief Executive. "If I am a lawmaker, I will become a directly elected lawmaker. Why should I be appointed by the government?" questioned Chan.

A Macau billionaire who wanted to build a United Nations center in Macau was convicted of paying more than USD1.7 million in bribes to U.N. ambassadors to get it done. The verdict was returned after a day of deliberations in Manhattan federal court against Ng Lap Seng, who was convicted of bribery, conspiracy and money laundering charges.



■ The region's former top prosecutor, Ho Chio Meng, would be convicted and sentenced to 21 years in jail, leaving the court pleading for an appeal. The Court of Final Appeal also ruled that Ho was liable to pay a large compensation to the Office of the Prosecutor General and around MOP12 million of his assets would be reverted to the administration.



■ A United Nations agency under the purview of UNESCO criticized the MSAR government over its handling of the preservation of the Historic Center of Macau. A World Heritage Site since 2005, the Historic Center of Macau was also one of the topics under discussion at the 41st session of the World Heritage Group in Poland.

AUGUST

■ Candidates and political analysts were criticizing the Electoral Affairs Commission for creating confusion between the definitions of "propaganda activities" and the rights of candidates to inform the public of their agenda



■ The Macau government and the Alibaba Group, the world's largest online marketplace, announced the formation of a strategic partnership, under which the MSAR will employ Alibaba's big data processing capabilities and cloud computing technology to enhance its public services. The agreement aims to further Macau's objective of becoming a smart city – a vision formalized in the introduction of Macau's first Five-Year Development Plan.

■ Lawmakers refused to grant the discretionary power to the chief executive to amend the rental adjustment rate during the article-by article analysis of a rental control mechanism. Nine

lawmakers had proposed the establishment of a rate based on a coefficient set by the chief executive according to factors like the consumer price index and housing market conditions.

■ The sentences of nine defendants related to the case of the city's top former prosecutor, Ho Chio Meng, were read at the Court of First Instance. Six defendants were found guilty, including Ho's wife, brother and other relatives.



■ Super-typhoon Hato struck Macau on the morning of August 23, leaving behind a trail of destruction and killing 10 people. Immediately after the typhoon struck, a water crisis occurred which saw much of the city left without a stable water supply. Following criticism from residents and lawmakers regarding the bureau's failure to raise typhoon signals to an appropriate level, the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau head, Fong Soi Kun, has resigned.

SEPTEMBER

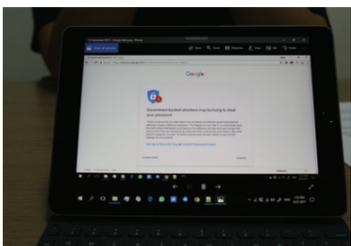
■ Typhoon Hato's passage through Macau caused damage amounting to MOP11.5 billion, Secretary for Economy and Finance Lionel Leong revealed. According to figures based on an initial estimation by the Statistics and Census Service, "there are many indirect losses related to suspension of activity, operations and break in sales.



■ Mak Soi Kun was the most voted candidate in the Legislative Assembly elections. Mak got 17,207 votes and his Macau-Guangdong Union managed to elect a second lawmaker, Zheng Anting. The other winner of the night was the pan-democrat side, with members and former members of the New Macau Association electing three lawmakers, namely Au Kam San and Ng Kuok Cheong, both veterans at the AL, and newcomer Sulu Sou. Pereira Coutinho kept his lawmaker post with 14,383 votes, but failed to see his number two, Leong Veng Chai, elected.



■ The director of the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA), Raymond Tam, was appointed as the new interim director of the Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau. Commenting on the fact that Tam does not have an academic background in weather related issues, the chief executive Chui Sai On said that there will be technicians at the SMG to support him. Chui praised Tam's managerial capabilities and said that his name was proposed as the new head of the DSPA by the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário.



■ Activist and pro-democrat Jason Chao said that he, along with other pro-democrat election candidates, received notifications from social media, email, and instant messaging service providers, including an alert from Google, about unauthorized login attempts. In a press conference, the activist said that Google warned them that "government hackers" may be trying to steal their passwords.

OCTOBER



■ The Times revealed first-hand that indirectly-elected lawmaker Chui Sai Cheong, brother of the Chief Executive, would be elected as vice-president of the Legislative Assembly when the new legislature convened for the first time. Ho Iat Seng was re-elected as president of the parliament.

■ Las Vegas Sands announced it would spend USD1.1 billion renovating its properties in Macau, including turning Sands Cotai Central into a London-themed resort. The property will be rebranded as the Londoner Macao and feature attractions tied to some of the English capital's most recognizable landmarks, the company said in a statement.



■ The Commission Against Corruption issued an investigation report on the Macau Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau's typhoon forecasting procedures. The report states that the bureau, when making typhoon forecasts and issuing warning signals for tropical cyclones, relied on the personal judgments and decisions of then-director Fong Soi Kun.



■ The 20th anniversary edition of the Lusofonia Festival broke attendance records. After four days of events and performances on and off stage, the conclusion was unanimous among several of the regular faces: this year's festival had attracted more people.

NOVEMBER

■ Macau, alongside seven other cities around the world, was officially designated a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy by the director-general of UNESCO, Irina Bokova. With this designation, Macau has become the third Chinese city to hold the prestigious position, joining Chengdu and Shunde, who had this title conferred upon them in 2010 and 2014 respectively.



■ As the new round of applications for public housing began, thousands rushed to the Housing Bureau headquarters queuing up for their turn to collect the forms and instruction leaflets that were being distributed. Large queues occurred despite the Bureau saying that there was no need to rush to collect the forms.

■ The Chief Executive, Chui Sai On, went to the Legislative Assembly to present the government's Policy Address for 2018. The increase in welfare support was the main topic of his presentation. During the debate with lawmakers, Chui's responsibility in the aftermath of Typhoon Hato was questioned.



■ Starting at the eighth position from the starting grid, British driver Daniel Ticktum was not one of the favorites to win the F3 race. Yet he won against all expectations after race leaders Sérgio Sette Câmara and Ferdinand Habsburg crashed out at the final corner. The Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix was marred by the death of rider Daniel Hegarty (pictured).

■ The Transport Bureau proposed new licensing to regulate the pre-booked transportation of passengers in light vehicles, taking into account an expected spike in traffic upon the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge.

DECEMBER



■ Felix and Eunice Kirwa were the great winners of this year's edition of the Macau International Marathon. The brother and sister won in both male and female categories, running the 42.195km respectively in 2:10:01 and 2:29:12, with both breaking course records.

■ Macau was included in a blacklist of 17 countries and regions which the European Union says are tax havens. The countries and regions included could potentially face sanctions for failing to bring their standards in line with the bloc, as the EU seeks to further step up its fight against opaque practices that facilitate tax avoidance by multinationals and individuals.



■ The Legislative Assembly has voted for the suspension of lawmaker Sulu Sou, allowing the continuation of the pending prosecution against him over alleged misconduct during a demonstration on May 15, 2016. Sou was charged last month for aggravated disobedience to the police authorities.

■ The 2nd International Film Festival and Awards Macao was held, screening more than 40 Asian and international films at the Macao Cultural Center. It opened with a regional premiere of family film "Paddington 2", followed by various competition segments and a star-studded ambassador line-up.

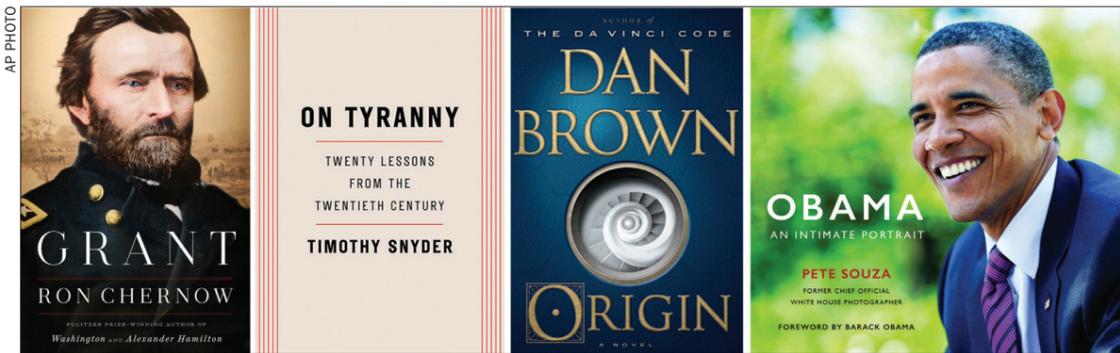
Politics shaped the year in books in 2017

FOR book readers in 2017, the choice was often between imagining the worst, hoping for the best or escaping entirely.

The most widely read works of the year ranged from Timothy Snyder's "On Tyranny," a guide to defending democracy, to Dan Brown's thriller "Origin" to the personal and political verse of Rupi Kaur. Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" and George Orwell's "1984" were dystopian tales from the past made newly relevant as warnings of horrors to come. Former White House photographer Pete Souza's "Obama: An Intimate Portrait" was, for admirers of Trump's predecessor, a bitter-sweet album of an administration out of office for less than a year but somehow from long ago.

"The usual comment that I get from people who bought the book is that it made them laugh and it made them weep," Souza told The Associated Press during a recent interview.

The headlines were chaotic, but the publishing business remained stable, if unexceptional. The recent trend of slight increases in print sales — up around 2 percent over 2016, according to NPD BookScan, which tracks around 85 percent of the market — and slowing e-book sales continued, while the number of independent bookstores was little changed even as online shopping has



devastated other physical retailers.

THE HANDMAID'S TALE

Thanks to Trump's election and the popular adaptation on Hulu, Atwood's novel from 1985 about a pitiless, patriarchal society was not only a best-seller, but a touchstone. When a Republican congressman from Arizona, Trent Franks, resigned amid reports that he was offering as much as USD5 million for an aide to conceive his child, critics saw a literary parallel. A Miami Herald headline read: "The strange case of surrogacy, sexual harassment and The Handmaid's Tale."

ON TYRANNY

Snyder's best-seller began as a Facebook posting just after Trump's election and became a reference work for the anti-Trump resistance. In a recent email interview, Snyder said he was most concerned about Trump's attacks on the media

and his threats against special counsel Robert Mueller, whose ouster would be "a big step towards the end of the rule of law." One antidote he recommends in "On Tyranny": "Get the screens out of your room and surround yourself with books." "What cheers me is that readers of 'On Tyranny' feel less alone and take actions in the world based on its lessons. My book is a way of organizing the chaos around us and finding ways to sensibly influence it," he told the AP. "But I think almost any reading — away from the Internet — helps us keep our calm and gives us words and ideas that help shield us from the daily barrage of bad news and help us find ways to communicate with one another in person."

THE SUN AND HER FLOWERS

Kaur's collection has sold some 400,000 copies, numbers rarely seen for poetry, or at least since her million-selling debut from

2016, "milk and honey." For her second book, Kaur had planned on focusing on "love and loss," she told The Associated Press during a recent telephone interview. But as she was working on the book in January, around the time of Trump's inauguration, she found herself "stopped in her tracks, completely." "Suddenly I couldn't write love poems," she said. "I found myself writing political pieces and suddenly this book went from two chapters to five. 'milk and honey' was like holding a mirror to yourself, while 'sun and her flowers' is turning the mirror around."

GRANT

One of the year's most anticipated nonfiction works, Ron Chernow's Ulysses Grant biography was about the victorious Civil War general and once-disparaged president, now more respected if only for his willingness to use armed force to defend blacks during Reconstruction. Readers could

turn to "Grant" for diversion or engagement, a 19th century life made contemporary in 2017 as Confederate monuments were taken down around the country. "Of course I had no idea as I was working on 'Grant' that the Civil War would be on the front page shortly before publication," Chernow wrote in a recent email to the AP. "In the last analysis, politics boils down to the stories that we tell ourselves about our past, and there are still two competing narratives about the causes and consequences of the Civil War. The past is prologue to everything that is happening today to the point that the term 'history' almost becomes a misnomer. It is still alive and active all around us."

THE HATE U GIVE

One of the year's top young adult novels was Angie Thomas' story of a black teen whose friend is shot and killed by a white police officer. In an email to the AP, Thomas said she was pleased that both black and non-black readers had related to the book. "Books can give a refuge and they can also give clearer understanding," she said. "Books create empathy by forcing us to see things from someone else's perspective and feel what they feel. I hope that, especially in these troubled times, more people pick up books about people who aren't like them. In some ways, it can be more informative than the news."

MDT/AP TOP 10 ALBUMS

SZA, Lamar, Swift dominate list



1. SZA, "Ctrl": As the beat of the opening track of SZA's debut album played at a concert this week in New York City, the entire venue passionately sang the first two minutes of the song "Supermodel," and the singer hadn't even showed her face onstage. And that's just it — SZA is the voice of this generation. The 28-year-old's "Ctrl" is a masterpiece about a girl navigating in life — dating, falling in love, dealing with dusty boys, self-doubt, acceptance and more. Her voice glides over each song nicely as she spits matter-of-fact lyrics

and even finds ways to reference the TV shows "Martin" and "Narcos," as well as "Forrest Gump," in the songs. "The Weekend" is her at the top of the game; "Broken Clocks" is just as addictive; and "Normal Girl" and "20 Something" prove that SZA is not one of those alternative R&B artists with one or two tricks up her sleeve.

2. Kendrick Lamar, "DAMN": To put out one epic album is impressive. Two? It's remarkable. BUT THREE? It's astonishing. There has not been a more consistent act in music in the last few years like Kendrick Lamar. Icon status is "DAMN." closer than we might think.

3. Taylor Swift, "Reputation": Don't be a hater — you know Taylor Swift knows how to craft perfect pop music. "Reputation" is exceptional, especially the songs "End Game," "Delicate" and "Dress," perfectly showing how Tay Tay continues to grow as an artist.

4. Jay-Z, "4:44": So, this SUPERSTAR with a super private wife and uber private life uncovered his most intimate thoughts and life moments — and people were moved by what he revealed. It wasn't just for the stuff that went on to dominate blogs and entertainment headlines. No, it was Jay's vulnerability, proving that honesty is what keeps artists relevant, long after they've transitioned from being the new hot thing.

5. Daniel Caesar, "Freudian": Listening to Daniel Caesar's debut album will make you want to fall in love. The Canadian newcomer brilliantly sings R&B songs that echo

D'Angelo and hit straight to the heart. "Freudian" is a beautiful work of art.

6. Sam Smith, "The Thrill of It All": Sam Smith's "Thrill" is a ride you don't want to get off.

7. St. Vincent, "MASSEDUCTION": St. Vincent's fifth album, full of electro pop, glam rock and techno sounds, is an adventurous album that deserves to be heard by the masses. Even when she slows things down — like on "New York" and the excellent "Happy Birthday, Johnny" — she's just as alluring.

8. Miguel, "War & Leisure": "I'm Luke Skywalker on these haters," a confident Miguel sings on "Sky Walker," the first single from his fourth album. And he's right — he's barely got competition when it comes to music. "War & Leisure" is just another grand album in his catalog.

9. H.E.R., "H.E.R.": Gabi Wilson, under her stage name H.E.R., shines brightly on her full-length debut album, with songs like "Focus," "U" and "Losing" showing that, like SZA, H.E.R. is also a groundbreaker in the alternative R&B movement.

10. Haim, "Something to Tell You": Who doesn't want to be part of the sister trio Haim? The rockers, who proved how outstanding they were on their 2013 debut album and at live concerts, keeps up the momentum on their sophomore release, "Something to Tell You," highlighted by Haim's harmonies.

MDT/AP TOP 10 FILMS

From maximalist cinema to crafty storytelling



1. "Call Me By Your Name" - It's a funny year for a love story as blissful as this. Much has already been said about the sensory wonders of Luca Guadagnino's wellspring of a movie. But nothing in 2017 bore such splendor and such genuine wisdom as "Call Me By Your Name." There are the performances, the doozy of a last shot and the unforgettable monologue delivered by Michael Stuhlbarg. Most of all, "Call Me By Your Name" is an exquisitely alive movie, calling you to lean into life. Also: Italian summers look nice. I could go for one of those.



2. "The Florida Project" - Speaking of vibrant movies. Sean Baker's latest and best is somehow both an affecting, thoughtful social drama and the most spirited movie of the year. Much of that is owed to its young star, Brooklynn Prince, whose performance is the equal of any in 2017, and her fictional mom, played by Bria Vinaite. More than most, Baker's films are fully engaged with the real world.



3. "Dunkirk" - An awesomely colossal, purely cinematic experience of sea, sand and sky — and, no, I'm not talking about "Baywatch." For maximalist cinema, nobody today is in the same league as Christopher Nolan. It's not one for character development, but in the film's sensory onslaught there's something mythical — and perhaps timely — about surviving to fight another day. (See also another fine Dunkirk-related movie from 2017: Lone Sherfig's under-seen "Their Finest Hour.")



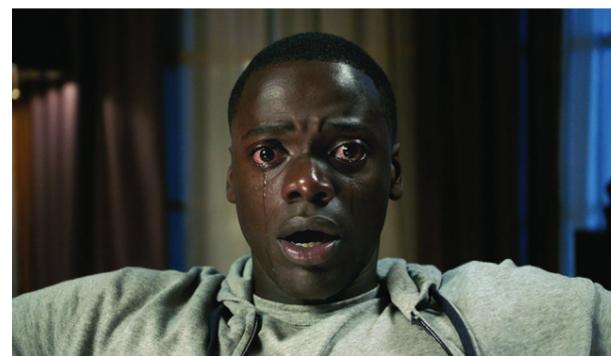
4. "Faces Places" - Hands down, the odd couple of the year was Agnes Varda and JR. One an 89-year-old trailblazing filmmaker of the French New Wave, the other a 33-year-old internationally renowned street artist, they're an almost too-cute pair. In this radiant documentary, they traverse a working-class French countryside in a van painted like a giant camera, pasting giant photos of the people they meet on any large surface they find. Seeking random encounters, they meet people, and through their art, ennoble them. It's that simple. In a cold year, "Faces Places" is a warm, inviting fire.



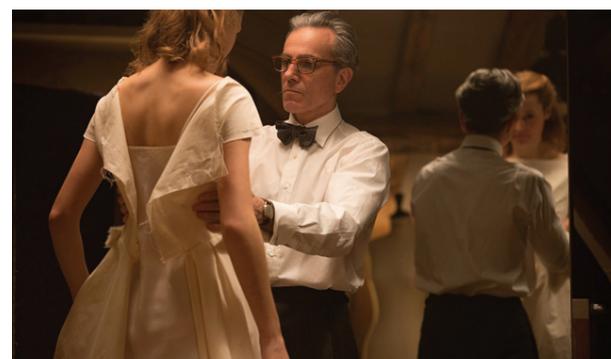
5. "Lady Bird" - Whereas most coming-of-age tales telescope into the lives of their adolescent protagonists, Greta Gerwig's solo directing debut is more widescreen. While still acutely feeling every hope and pain of 17-year-old Christine (Saoirse Ronan), Gerwig sees around her, too, particularly her parents (Laurie Metcalf, Tracy Letts). It will make a great double feature with 2012's "Frances Ha," which Gerwig co-wrote before we found out what a tremendous filmmaker she is, too.



6. "mother!" - What controversy? Darren Aronofsky's "mother!" is a thrilling and provocative riot. Don't be scared off by THAT scene because Jennifer Lawrence is excellent in the straightforward but riveting biblical allegory (that can also be about whatever you want — narcissistic artists, the subjugation of women, the environment).



7. "Get Out" - In a time where the future of the movies is so much questioned, nothing pointed the way forward like Jordan Peele's directorial debut. It's unquestionably a landmark movie in representing an African-American perspective in a way that has seldom, if ever, been seen before. But by seamlessly fusing genre with message — and finding droves eager to see it — "Get Out" was a reminder of a forgotten truism: Nothing makes a zeitgeist like a must-see movie.



8. "Phantom Thread" - For such a finely attired film, Paul Thomas Anderson's latest is funny. Its craft is mesmerizing and its couture is high, but don't let that fool you. This is a very down-to-earth movie about finding your own idiosyncratic love, and getting outside your own head enough to appreciate it.



9. "Logan Lucky" - Efforts to faithfully capture heartland America in 2017 were admittedly imperfect. Martin McDonagh's "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" was thrillingly performed and raged gloriously but had glaring blind spots. Steven Soderbergh's heist movie "Logan Lucky" delights in both dignifying and laughing at its slow-witted, folksy characters. But, man, is it fun. Movies this light on their feet don't come along much anymore.



10. "The Lost City of Z" - James Grey's drifting drama about the early 20th Century explorer Percy Fawcett, who sought a fabled civilization in South America, initially has the foreboding feel of "Apocalypse Now!" or "Fitzcarraldo." But instead of finding horror in the jungle, Fawcett finds transcendence in otherness.

Also excellent: "The Big Sick," "Lady Macbeth," "BPM (Beats Per Minute)," "Okja," "Abacus: Small Enough to Jail," "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2" and "Star Wars: The Last Jedi."

THE wave of sexual misconduct allegations that toppled Hollywood power brokers, politicians, media icons and many others was the top news story of 2017, according to The Associated Press' annual poll of U.S. editors and news directors.

The No. 2 story was Donald Trump's tumultuous first year as president. A year ago, Trump's unexpected victory over Hillary Clinton in the presidential election was a near-unanimous pick for the top news story of 2016.

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

Here are 2017's top 10 stories, in order:

AP POLL | TOP 10 NEWS STORIES

The year of #MeToo



1. Sexual misconduct: Scandals involving sexual misdeeds by prominent men are nothing new in America, but there's never been anything remotely like the deluge of allegations unleashed this year by women who were emboldened to speak out by the accusers who preceded them. Luminaries toppled from their perches included movie magnate Harvey Weinstein, media stars Bill O'Reilly, Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose, and several celebrity chefs and members of Congress.



2. Trump-First Year: The controversies started on Inauguration Day, with the new president challenged over his claims on the size of the crowd, and persisted throughout the year. Trump's approval ratings hovered around record-low territory, his base remained fiercely loyal, and his relentless tweeting — often in the early morning hours — provoked a striking mix of outrage, mockery and grateful enthusiasm.



3. Las Vegas mass shooting: A 64-year-old high-stakes video poker player, after amassing an arsenal of weapons, unleashed a barrage of gunfire from a high-rise casino-hotel that killed 58 people and injured hundreds among a crowd attending an open-air concert along the Las Vegas Strip. Weeks after the massacre, questions about the gunman's motives remained unanswered.



4. Hurricane onslaught: In a four-week span, hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria ravaged Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands. Harvey killed more than 80 people in Texas and caused an estimated USD150 billion in damage. Irma killed scores of people in the Caribbean and U.S., including 12 residents of a Florida nursing home that lost its air conditioning. Maria damaged more than 200,000 homes in Puerto Rico, caused lengthy power outages, and prompted an investigation into whether the official death toll of 64 was vastly undercounted.



5. North Korea: At times the taunts had a schoolyard flavor to them — a "dotard" versus "Little Rocket Man." But they came from two wor-

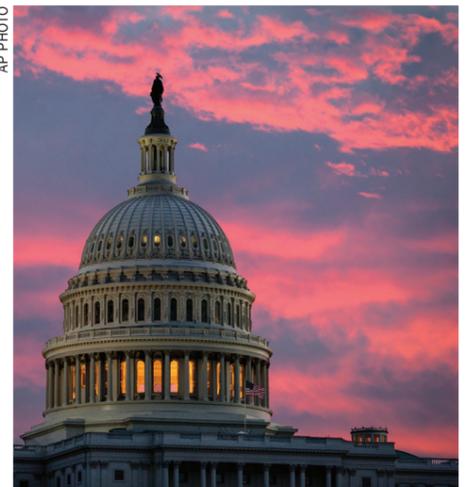
ld leaders with nuclear arms at their disposal — Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Fueling the tensions were North Korea's latest tests of a hydrogen bomb and of ballistic missiles that potentially could reach the U.S. mainland.



6. Trump-Russia probe: Trump fired FBI director James Comey, but a former FBI chief, Robert Mueller, was soon appointed to investigate potential coordination between Russia and Trump's election campaign. By mid-December, Mueller's team had brought federal charges against four people, including former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and former national security adviser Michael Flynn. Flynn pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI.



7. Obamacare: Despite repeated efforts, majority Republicans in Congress failed to repeal Barack Obama's health care law and replace it with new plan. At one point, a deciding vote against a GOP replacement bill was cast by Republican Sen. John McCain. But questions remained as to how Obama's plan would fare going forward without substantive help from the Trump administration.



8. Tax overhaul: Without a single Democratic vote, Republicans in Congress pushed through a sweeping \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul that would cut corporate taxes while producing mixed results for individuals. GOP lawmakers, backed by Trump, said the bill would have broad benefits by accelerating economic growth. Critics said consequences would include higher budget deficits and the potential loss of health care coverage for millions of Americans.



9. Worldwide terror attacks: The first big terror attack of 2017 came on New Year's Day — a gunman killing 39 at a nightclub in Istanbul. Subsequent targets of global terror included an Ariana Grande concert in England, a bike path in New York City and the historic La Rambla promenade in Barcelona. In October, a truck bombing in Somalia killed more than 500 people; in November, an attack on a crowded mosque in Egypt killed more than 300.



10. Islamic State: After lengthy assaults, an array of forces drove the Islamic State from its two main strongholds — the city of Mosul in Iraq, and its self-styled capital, Raqqa, in Syria. The defeats left the Islamic State without significant territory in either country, but affiliates elsewhere in the region, particularly in Egypt and Afghanistan, continued to operate.