

Columbine timeline

By The Denver Post

April 16 –

A timeline of events:

APRIL 20, 1999: Seniors Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold storm Columbine High School shooting four guns and carrying dozens of pipe bombs. They kill 12 classmates, one teacher and then themselves. They also wound 23 others in the worst school shooting in U.S. history.

APRIL 21: Jefferson County schools Superintendent Jane Hammond closes all district schools. Clement Park, just north of the Columbine, becomes the unofficial gathering place for mourners. Gov. Bill Owens declares a state of emergency. The Legislature abandons three gun-related bills, the Colorado Avalanche cancel the first of two playoff games, and the NRA announces it will drastically scale back its Denver convention next week.

APRIL 22: Authorities find a powerful 20-pound propane-tank bomb Harris and Klebold had planted in the school's kitchen. Officials later say if it had gone off, hundreds of people would have been killed.

APRIL 25: 70,000 mourners crowd a movie theater parking lot near Columbine for a communitywide memorial service attended by Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper; Gov. Owens and his wife; evangelist Billy Graham's son and Christian performing artists Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith.

APRIL 26: Officials learn three guns used in the massacre at Columbine High School were bought last year by Dylan Klebold's girlfriend shortly after her 18th birthday.

APRIL 29: The last of the funerals for those killed is held.

APRIL 30: Brian Rohrbough, whose son, Daniel, was murdered, takes down crosses erected at Clement Park for Harris and Klebold, saying it's inappropriate to honor the killers alongside the victims.

MAY 1: An estimated 12,000 placard-waving people rally at the state Capitol against gun violence and protest the National Rifle Association's annual meeting four blocks away.

MAY 2: A remembrance service for Columbine students, staff and parents is held at Red Rocks Amphitheatre.

MAY 3: Mark E. Manes, 22, surrenders to Jefferson County authorities to face a felony charge of selling a handgun to a minor. He admits selling a TEC-DC9 semiautomatic handgun to Harris and Klebold for \$500 in January, but denies any knowledge of their plans for the massacre. Columbine students head back to school for the first time since the massacre, finishing out the school year at nearby Chatfield High.

MAY 20: President Bill and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton meet with Columbine victims and families. Later in the day, they commemorate the one-month anniversary of the rampage before a crowd of 2,200 at Dakota Ridge High School. In Conyers, Ga., a 15-year-old student carries two guns into his suburban Atlanta high school and opens fire on his schoolmates. Six were wounded, none killed.

MAY 22: Columbine seniors graduate. There is a moment of silence for the graduates that had been killed on April 20.

MAY 26: The SHOUTS center - Students Helping Others Unite Together Socially - opens in the Ascot Theater on West Bowles Avenue. An owner of a video arcade at Denver International Airport removes five violent games in response to the Columbine massacre.

MAY 27: The family of victim Isaiah Shoels files a \$250 million wrongful-death lawsuit against the parents of the two killers.

May 28: Jefferson County District Court Judge Henry Nieto seals the autopsy reports of the 13 Columbine High victims and the two killers.

JUNE 1: Students return to Columbine to retrieve their belongings.

JUNE 2: Victim families receive letters of remorse from Klebold's parents.

JUNE 3: Work begins to repair Columbine High for the start of classes in August.

JUNE 4: Robyn Anderson admits on "Good Morning America" she bought three of the four guns used by Harris and Klebold, but denies knowledge of their deadly plan.

JUNE 15: Parents of slain Columbine students announce their desire to keep the school library closed forever. The library was the scene of most of the carnage; Harris and Klebold killed 10 students and themselves there.

JUNE 16: Authorities say the surveillance videotape recorded in Columbine High's cafeteria on April 20, enhanced by the FBI, doesn't substantiate the theory of a third gunman.

JUNE 17: Prosecutors file charges against Philip Joseph Duran, 22, who worked with the gunmen at a Blackjack Pizza store and introduced them to friend Mark Manes, who sold them the TEC-DC9. Duran is charged with unlawfully providing a handgun to minors and possessing a dangerous or illegal weapon.

JUNE 22: Rashad Williams, 15, a San Francisco high school track star, gives Columbine shooting victim Lance Kirklin \$18,000 he raised during a running event.

JULY 2: The Healing Fund announces it will distribute \$50,000 each to the families of the 12 students and one teacher slaying victims, and \$150,000 to the families of five severely injured students. Twenty-five others injured in the attack will receive \$10,000. Another \$1.1 million will go for outreach and other direct services for Columbine students and faculty, including \$150,000 already given to establish a youth center and \$50,000 given to the

Colorado Office of Victim Assistance. Ballistics tests confirm that "friendly fire" from police officers did not harm anyone at Columbine, authorities say

JULY 20: Columbine students and families return to school to decorate tiles that will be affixed to hallway walls.

AUG. 11: Jefferson County law-enforcement officers are "strongly encouraged" to establish a presence in schools as the new academic year starts, according to a letter sent from John Kiebusch, a division chief with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.

AUG: 16: Columbine students return to school. Freshly painted swastikas are found outside the school and in the bathrooms.

AUG: 18: Mark Manes agrees to plead guilty. It is the first criminal conviction stemming from the Columbine massacre.

AUG. 20 - Partially paralyzed student Richard Castaldo heads home from Craig Hospital. He is the last of the wounded students to leave the hospital.

AUG: 30: Gov. Owens sharply criticizes a recommendation from mental-health experts that the state seek \$5.5 million in federal funds to pay for counseling for anyone in Colorado affected by the shootings.

AUG. 31: The Healing Fund accepts its last donations, topping off the largest account established for the victims at \$4.4 million.

SEPT. 1: Jefferson County school officials tighten security and send reassuring memos to parents after five high schools receive another in a series of anonymous letters threatening violence.

SEPT. 10: Before the Columbine Rebels girls' softball team's first game of the season, the new Dave Sanders Memorial Softball Field is dedicated.

SEPT. 14: - Standing alongside the Rev. Al Sharpton in New York, the Shoels family accuses the Healing Fund of misappropriating funds and calls on the public to stop donating to the United Way.

SEPT. 15: Larry Gene Ashbrook, 47, enters a church service for teenagers at Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and opened fire before turning the gun on himself. Ashbrook killed seven people, wounded seven more and then took his own life.

SEPT. 22: An Internet magazine, Salon.com, publishes purported excerpts from Eric Harris' diary in which the Columbine High School killer calls for the extermination of mankind.

SEPT. 24: Howard Cornell, 60, the chief of security for Jefferson County schools, abruptly retires after splitting with other district officials over how best to safeguard students. Sheriff's spokesman Steve Davis says it looks unlikely that Cassie Bernall was ever asked by her killers whether she believed in God before they shot her. Patrick Ireland is named homecoming king.

SEPT. 26: Relatives and friends of slain students Daniel Rohrbough and Kyle Velasquez chop down two of the 15 trees recently planted by members of the West Bowles Community Church. The families contend that the two killers shouldn't be remembered alongside those they killed.

SEPT. 29: Gov. Owens announces the creation of a 14-member Columbine Review Commission to study law-enforcement's response to the tragedy and make recommendations aimed at preventing similar massacres.

OCT. 1: Celine Dion opens the new Pepsi Center with a concert, providing front-row seats and back-stage passes to Columbine victims and their families. She dedicates \$500,000 from the concert to helping the victims.

OCT. 4: The families of slain students Kelly Fleming and Daniel Rohrbough file a federal lawsuit claiming the school district violated their rights when it removed their commemorative art tiles painted with religious themes from Columbine.

OCT. 12: CBS News airs a portion of the surveillance videotape from the Columbine cafeteria. The sheriff's department had released the tape to other law enforcement agencies for training purposes. An Albuquerque TV crew copied it at a law enforcement training seminar and then fed it to CBS for nationwide viewing.

OCT. 15: Columbine teacher Patricia Nielson, who made the frantic 911 call from the school library on April 20, takes a leave of absence.

OCT. 17: The families of 20 Columbine students - including the Klebolds - file notices of intent to sue either the sheriff's department or school district over the massacre.

OCT. 19: A 17-year-old Columbine student is arrested on suspicion of threatening to "finish the job" started by his former classmates, Harris and Klebold.

OCT. 22: Carla Hochhalter, 48, the mother of partially paralyzed student Anne Marie Hochhalter, walks into an Englewood pawnshop, asks to look at a handgun and then shoots herself. Her suicide re-opens wounds for the entire community and causes a flood of calls to counseling hotlines.

OCT. 25: For the first time since the shootings, Eric Harris' parents, Wayne and Kathy Harris, meet with investigators. The Harris' agree to the interview only if some questions - such as whether Wayne found one of Eric's pipe bombs and detonated it in a field with him - are off-limits.

NOV. 2: Arthur Leon Thomas, 19, allegedly sent a threat over the Internet to Brenda Parker of Broomfield, who is a former girlfriend of Eric Harris.

NOV. 12: Mark Manes is sentenced to six years in prison for selling the semiautomatic handgun to Harris and Klebold.

NOV. 19: Garlin Newton completes his 700-mile Oklahoma-City-to-Columbine walk, carrying a cross in hopes of reviving prayer in schools. His arrival, though, is met by jeers from both students and motorists.

DEC. 4: The Columbine Rebels win the school's first statewide varsity football title. The season was dedicated to Matt Kechter, a junior-varsity lineman and one of the 12 students killed in April.

DEC. 13: Time magazine's cover story, "The Columbine Tapes," discloses details of three hours of suicide tapes left behind by Harris and Klebold. The tapes cause a furor not only because of the chilling words of the two killers, but because the sheriff's office allowed a reporter to see the tapes before they were shown to victims' families.

DEC. 15: Columbine junior Erin Walton receives an Internet message from Michael Ian Campbell, 18, of Florida. Campbell, using the screen name Soup81, threatens to "finish what begun" at Columbine and warns Walton to stay home from school the next day.

DEC. 16: Because of the threat, school officials end the semester two days early, canceling finals.

DEC. 17: FBI agents arrest Campbell at his home Cape Coral, Fla., home and seize his computer.

DEC. 22: Campbell appears in federal court in Florida and apologizes for the threat. He is ordered to undergo counseling at his own expense and appear in U.S. District Court in Denver on Jan. 11.

JAN. 5, 2000: Tom Mauser, father of victim Daniel Mauser, becomes a full-time lobbyist for the Colorado-based bipartisan gun-control group, Sane Alternatives to the Firearms Epidemic (SAFE). Mauser has taken a leave of absence from his job at the Colorado Department of Transportation to become director of political affairs for SAFE Colorado.

JAN. 7: Pueblo authorities confiscate a computer they believe a 15-year-old boy used to send a threatening message to a Littleton resident. The chat message appeared on New Year's Eve on the computer of a 20-year-old Colorado State University student who was home for the holidays.

JAN. 10: Arthur Leon Thomas, 19, of Houston, who was indicted on three counts of transmitting threats, appears in court in Denver. Thomas mailed a threat to Columbine High School and a threat to Jefferson County Sheriff John Stone on Sept. 30, according to the indictment. On Nov. 2, according to the indictment, he sent a threat over the Internet to Brenda Parker of Broomfield, who is a former girlfriend of Eric Harris.

JAN. 12: A temporary restraining order is issued barring Jefferson County Sheriff John Stone from further releasing a videotape made by Eric Harris regarding the April 20 rampage at Columbine High School.

JAN. 20: The Jefferson County school board votes 4-1 to support a plan to tear down the existing library at Columbine, build an atrium in its place and build a new library elsewhere at the school. Duran pleads not guilty to charges against him.

JAN. 21: Benefactor and local businesswoman Sharon Magness announced a pledge of \$250,000 to build a new library at Columbine High School.

JAN. 26: Robyn Anderson releases a statement about how she bought guns for Harris and Klebold, and how she wished there had been laws requiring background checks at the time of the purchase.

JAN. 27: Tom Mauser attends the president's State of the Union speech. Denver Mayor Wellington Webb unveils the latest version of the "Wall of Death" posterboard list, now bearing 3,094 names. The names belong to victims of gun violence in the nation's 100 largest cities since the April 20 massacre.

JAN. 31: The family of Isaiah Shoels settles in a suburb of Houston.

FEB. 9: Campbell pleads guilty to one felony count of communicating a threat across state lines. He rejects his attorney's defense of "Internet intoxication," calling it ridiculous.

FEB. 11: The Gov. Owens-endorsed HB 1272, by Rep. Dorothy Gotlieb, R-Denver, fails in the House. The bill would allow local police to enforce a federal law banning licensed gun dealers from selling guns to anyone between 18 and 20.

FEB. 14: Columbine students Stephanie Hart and Nick Kunselman are found shot to death inside a Subway Sandwich Shop in Littleton. Authorities reveal the number of bombs planted by Harris and Klebold are more than previously thought. Dave Sanders is posthumously honored with the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage at the annual ESPY awards in Las Vegas.

MAR. 3: Bill Tuthill, assistant county attorney for Jefferson County, announces the Sheriff's Office will not make public videotapes, diaries or lists made by Harris and Klebold until litigation over the materials concludes.

MAR. 7: John and Janet Elway meet with some of the families of the students injured or slain in the Columbine massacre. Gov. Bill Owens signs legislation to reauthorize the state's background check or gun purchases, or InstaCheck Program.

MAR. 11: Stonemasons and volunteers rebuild a staircase outside the library at Columbine.

MAR. 12: Dawn Anna, mother of victim Lauren Townsend, received the Sportswomen of Colorado's award for courage and inspiration.

MAR. 27: Jefferson County Undersheriff John Dunaway tells a special gubernatorial review commission that the Columbine report won't be released until late May.

MAR. 30: Lawyers for the victims of the Columbine massacre ask Pres. Clinton to establish a multimillion-dollar disaster fund to help survivors and the families of the 13 who were slain. Bruce Springsteen donates 50 seats at his concert as a fundraiser for HOPE, the organization trying to raise money for a new library at Columbine.

APR. 5: The SHOUTS teen center that opened in response to the Columbine shootings says it is likely to close after June 30 because funds for the center will be exhausted.

APR. 7: The White House announces it will be unable to provide disaster relief for the families of those killed and injured at Columbine High School. Gov. Bill Owens announces he will not join Pres. Clinton at an April 12 rally for stronger gun control.

APR. 10: The families of slain students Kelly Fleming and Daniel Rohrbough demanded release of the Jefferson County sheriff department's investigative report on the shooting and other related materials.

Denver Post librarians Regina Avila, Judi Acre and Jan Torpy compiled this chronology.