



Salend Singh (second from right) with his family including his wife and daughter outside of High Court yesterday after the jury find him not guilty to all four charges the government accused him off. [photo by AF]

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Salend Singh is a free man after jury acquits in sex trial

by Ausage Fausia
Samoa News Reporter

Tears of joy were seen in High Court yesterday afternoon when the jury delivered their verdict of “not guilty” to all four charges filed by the American Samoa government against Salend Singh, who is now a free man.

A six-member jury took over two hours to deliberate on their verdict, after hearing all evidence in the case during a 3-day trial. Singh was found not guilty to Count 1- attempted sodomy; Count 2- attempted deviate sexual assault; Count 3- attempted sexual abuse, and Count 4- kidnapping.

Singh’s attorney, Marcellus T. Uiagalelei hugged his client after the Court Clerk read out the verdict in open court, while Singh broke into tears when he heard the verdict. His wife, daughter and family members, who were also inside the courtroom hugged each other with tears of joy.

Before dismissing the jury, Acting Associate Justice Elvis. P. Patea thanked them for their service and wished them luck. Associate Judges Mamea Sala Jr and Paepae I. Faiai assisted on the bench.

“... the defendant is free to go”, Patea saif, before ordering the court to dismiss.

When asked for a comment outside of the courthouse of the verdict, Prosecutor Robert Morris said that he respected the jury’s verdict. Asked if he believes the government failed to prove every single element of the case, Morris responded, while continuing to walk away from Samoa News, “No comment. I respect the jury’s verdict.”

According to a statement from the Singh family, they thanked God for allowing the truth to be heard. They cited scripture from the Bible, saying, “Things that are impossible with men are possible with God.

“During our times of trial, this scripture has been the key motivation for us. We the family of Singh would like to thank all of our pastors, friends and family that continuously lifted us in prayers and prayed for justice to be served. And sincerest gratitude to our lawyer Mr. Uiagalelei for defending us well.”

CLOSING ARGUMENTS

Prosecutor Woodrow Pengelly reminded the jury that the government’s duty is to present all the evidence to prove its case, while their job is to weigh all the evidence and return with a guilty verdict on all four counts.

Reviewing evidence presented during the trial Pengelly said that the defense is not disputing the fact that the defendant offered a ride to the boy and drove him to school that morning.

What the defense is disputing, according to the government, is that the defendant’s vehicle didn’t got up to Mt. Logotala and the defendant never committed any of the actions alleged.

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STORM WATCH ISSUED

ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS CLOSED TODAY FOR STUDENTS

by Fili Sagapolutele
Samoa News Correspondent

Based on the latest weather data yesterday afternoon, National Weather Service in Tafuna was forecasting that the Tropical Storm 07F was to “come closer” today to American Samoa.

And because of the pending storm, the Education Department announced late yesterday afternoon that all public schools would again be closed today. However, all teachers are to report to their respective schools and secure your classroom. All other DOE personnel are to report to their respective divisions.

Around 3p.m. yesterday, the weather service issued a Tropical Storm Watch for American Samoa, as Tropical Disturbance 07F was upgraded to Tropical Storm 07F — which was “intensifying and slow moving” towards the Samoan islands.

By this morning, Friday, the storm will would “come very close to American Samoa,” Weather Service meteorologist Carol Baqui told Samoa News yesterday afternoon, at which time storm

winds will clock at about 40mph and “will increase further” when it comes close to the territory,

The Fiji Met Service in Suva, names cyclones in this region, but has not yet named it by 3p.m yesterday.

However, the weather office opted to issue the storm watch in advance, giving people time for any preparations, while it was still daylight, Baqui said in a telephone interview. Once the storm is named, the weather office will include the name in the next weather bulletin updating the storm situation.

She called on residents, “Not to panic, listen to local broadcasters for the latest update and always stay safe.”

During the tropical cyclone media workshop late last year, hosted by the Weather Office and the local Department of Homeland Security, one of the issue stressed by local authorities is for the public to listen to local broadcasters for

(Continued on page 11)

Second TCF escape for 2018 — two familiar faces are in the lineup

THEY WERE PART OF THE LAST MONTH’S GROUP OF 4 THAT ESCAPED

by Ausage Fausia
Samoa News reporter

Police are still searching for the two inmates who escaped from the Territorial Correctional Facility (TCF) in Tafuna on Monday, Feb. 5, 2018. This is the second time this year inmates have escaped from confinement — and two familiar faces are in the lineup.

In an interview with Police Commissioner yesterday morning, Le’i Sonny Thompson confirmed to Samoa News this incident.

“Police are still searching for the two inmates who escaped from TCF this week. Joe Togitogi and Joseph Iakopo escaped last Monday and they are still at large.

“Law enforcement is doing their very best searching for these inmates,” Le’i told Samoa News.

He said, “I don’t know what else to say about these two inmates. They were part of the four inmates who escaped from jail last month, and now they are out again.”

Le’i stated that DPS officials have already looked into this incident carefully and they reviewed the surveillance cameras inside the new prison, which confirmed how the two inmates managed to escape.

“We reviewed the tapes and it shows that the two inmates cut the rebar inside the new prison facility and escaped. We’ve come to the conclusion that we have to review the whole incident including reviewing the whole building itself. I think that there is more that’s needed to be done to make sure these types of incidents never happen in the future,” said the police commissioner.

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Trial for Paris attack suspect Abdeslam hints at deadly plan

PARIS (AP) — The weapons stockpile in his hideout and the Islamic State fighter covering his getaway with a spray of gunfire were signs of a deadly plot to come, a Belgian prosecutor argued Thursday in the trial of the man who was once Europe’s most wanted fugitive.

Salah Abdeslam refused to attend the final day of his trial in Brussels for a March 15, 2016, shootout with police that ultimately led to his capture.

He left his prison cell in France on Monday — the first public glimpse of the man linked to plots in Paris and Brussels that killed a total of 162 people. But Abdeslam refused to stand for the judge and told her he wouldn’t answer her questions.

“My silence is my defense,” he said Monday, flanked by masked officers in a heavily guarded courtroom.

On Thursday, the lawyer who once quit defending him in frustration pleaded his case once more.

The getaway shooting that left three police officers injured, Sven Mary argued, “was a spontaneous act, not a terrorist act,” and that the time to try the Nov. 13, 2015, attacks was in 2020 in Paris, not now in Brussels.

Abdeslam and Sofiane Ayari, a former IS fighter, are charged with attempted murder in a terrorist context and face 20 years in prison. Their lawyers said only the jihadi they left behind to die in the apartment fired on officers as they ran across the rooftops, broke into an apartment and escaped into the Brussels streets.

“We know that they were stockpiling weapons in preparation for terrorist attacks. So if they fled it was only because they had other plans,” Kathleen Grosjean, the prosecutor, said according to the public broadcaster RTBF .

Abdeslam and Ayari were captured on March 18, 2016, in Abdeslam’s home neighborhood of Molenbeek. Grainy video from that day showed him limping into a waiting police car, a gunshot wound to the leg.

Four days later, IS suicide bombers struck the Brussels metro and airport.

The trial in Brussels hinged on who fired a second weapon involved in the shootout: Ayari, Abdeslam or the dead jihadi, Mohamed Belkaid.

Mary said Abdeslam wasn’t responsible for either opening fire or for inciting the shooting.

“Nothing allows us to say that Salah Abdeslam provoked Belkaid into firing on the officers,” Mary said.

He also requested that the entire case be dismissed because court orders were written in French, and not in Dutch as required under Belgian law. Belgium is linguistically divided but Abdeslam is a native French speaker.

Hopes had been high that Abdeslam, who has refused to speak

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Child custody battle case from Missouri court spills over into territory

by Fili Sagapolutele
Samoa News Correspondent

A child custody battle case out of a Missouri court has spilled over to the territory when local police enforced a Missouri court order, which didn’t sit well with the High Court of American Samoa that has described the action as “disdainful”, according to court documents.

In a decision issued Wednesday, the local court raised concerns over the enforcement of an out of state order that didn’t comply with local laws, and gives persons the opportunity to contest the out-of-state order.

As a policy practice, Samoa News doesn’t report on child custody cases, but only in rare cases when off island jurisdictions become involved and other matters are in question. To protect all parties involved, Samoa News is not identifying the father and mother of the now two-year old child.

BACKGROUND

According to court documents, the father of the child involved had petitioned a Missouri court in March 2016 for divorce from his wife, who is a US national from American Samoa. The child — who was 9 months old at the time — and the mother left the US and arrived in the territory in February 2016.

It was in July 2017 the Missouri court issued the divorce decree along with an order awarding custody of the child to the father, who maintained residence in Missouri.

The father’s petition was served by certified mail to the mother, and a confirmation from the US Postal Service records indicates the delivery

of the certified mail along with a scanned image of the recipient’s signature, according to the High Court’s decision, which questions the validity of the signature.

On Jan. 23 of this year, local attorney Richard DeSaulles, accompanied by a female paralegal and three Department of Public Safety detectives, went to the mother’s home to deliver the Missouri divorce decree.

Later in the day, the mother met DeSaulles, the paralegal and a Child Protective Service official at the DPS office in Fagatogo. The mother’s ex-husband was there along with the couple’s young daughter.

“At the time, Mr. DeSaulles informed me that if I refused to surrender my daughter, criminal charges could be filed against me and I could go to jail,” the mother alleges in court documents. “He also said that I should be glad that my ex-husband had not filed criminal charges against me because otherwise I would already be in jail. No one present contradicted him.”

“Faced with the prospect of incarceration, I did not protest when the paralegal took my daughter away,” the mother further alleges.

According to Missouri court filings, the mother “did secret the child” — left without knowledge of the father — in February 2016 from the continental US to American Samoa, after telling her then-husband that she was going for a short stay in Utah, then California. However, the father discovered that the mother had allegedly “fled” to American Samoa.

The mother on the other hand, has disputed such claims, saying in a court affidavit that, she never told the then-husband, about going to Utah and then California. The mother claimed that she told the husband that she had lost her job and was returning with her daughter to American Samoa.

The mother also admitted in her affidavit of twice telling her then-husband, that he was not the biological father before the child was born. She further admitted of having an extra marital affair with another man, who is the child’s biological father.

The mother further alleges that she has never received a divorce petition from Missouri and she never signed to acknowledge a receipt of any mail from Missouri. She only became aware of the case when visited by DeSaulles and others.

The mother’s affidavit is included in her petition filed Jan. 26 this year, with the High Court challenging the Missouri court order to comply with local laws and to return her daughter to her custody.

“The seizure of the daughter from her mother’s care and custody was done under color of law, but with threat of arrest

and incarceration for non-compliance,” according to the petition. Additionally such action was lacking in due process; and there was no Order of the High Court authorizing the seizure.

In response, DeSaulles asked the court to dismiss the petition due to lack of subject matter jurisdiction and failure to state a claim. He disagrees with the petition’s argument that local law requires a foreign judgment to be filed with the High Court.

He argued that local law provides that a foreign judgment “may” be filed with the High Court.

However, a response from the petitioner, reiterated local law that calls for the registration of an out of state court order with the High Court.

In her petition, the mother asserts — among other things — the father removed the minor child in violation of local Uniform Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act (UEFJA); and the removal of the child was done without an order from the High Court.

HIGH COURT DECISION

Arguments were heard held Feb. 5, and presided over by Acting Associate Justice Elvis Patea and assistant by Associate Judges, Suapaia E.C. Pereira and Paepae Iosefa Faiai. And during a court hearing on Feb. 7, the court released its official written decision with a verbal order that the child be returned to the mother’s custody.

“We find that the Missouri custody order is not entitled to full faith and credit because it was not made consistent with” provisions of the federal Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA), the judges wrote in the 13-page decision.

They explained that under Missouri laws, the Missouri court lacked jurisdiction to make the child custody determination. Additionally under the jurisdictional provisions of the PKPA, the Missouri court lacked subject matter jurisdiction to make the child custody determination.

Furthermore, under the notice provision of the PKPA, the mother was not provided reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard because there is no evidence that she received the actual or legitimate constructive notice of divorce proceedings, she did not participate in them and she had no real opportunity to do so.

Finally, said the judges, under enforcement mechanisms of the UEFJA, the mother was denied the opportunity to contest the Missouri court order before law enforcement officials from “this territory were used to enforce” the order.

ENFORCEMENT OF COURT ORDER

The decision notes that the Uniform Law Commission drafted in 1997, the Uniform Child Jurisdiction and Enforce-

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An important message for TMO WINDOWS PLUS Customers:

Kindly make your way to our office this month (February) to take care of your outstanding past due invoices.

If you do not come in to settle your past due accounts within 30 days, I, Frank Gaisoa, will put your names and amounts owing on the local newspaper and air it on the local radio stations, especially the person still owing us from 2014.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Rotary Club of Pago Pago held their 1017-18 4-Way-Test Dinner for outstanding seniors from the 11 high schools across Tutuila and Manu'a this past Saturday night, Feb. 3, 2018,

[courtesy photo]

compiled by Samoa News staff

ROTARY CLUB'S 4-WAY-TEST BANQUET FOR SENIORS

Rotary Club of Pago Pago held their 1017-18 4-Way-Test Dinner for outstanding seniors from the 11 high schools across Tutuila and Manu'a this past Saturday night, Feb. 3, 2018,

Seniors from each school were nominated by their peers as the students who most exemplify the 4-Way-Test — the ethical blueprint for Rotarians.

Is it the Truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Is it beneficial to all concerned?

The well attended annual event was held at Sadie's by the Sea Goat Island Café.

PRIVATE DIALYSIS CLINIC SET TO OPEN IN TERRITORY

LBJ's Chronic Kidney Disease clinic (CKD), which officially opened Nov. 21, 2017, has clearly identified the kidney dialysis health crisis facing American Samoa.

Unofficial numbers indicate that by the year 2020, 160 more people will need dialysis treatment.

The LBJ dialysis clinic is currently filled and the hospital has no immediate plans to expand.

New dialysis patients have limited options; seek treatment off island or remain on island and die from lack of treatment.

This shortage of dialysis service has prompted a group of local business entrepreneurs, medical professionals and local investors to begin the process of setting up and operating a private dialysis clinic.

"Our primary goal is to help the victims of this chronic disease," said Chris Fisher, Managing Director of the new clinic.

Fisher, a 20 year seasoned professional in start up technology businesses in California, has strong local family connections in American Samoa. "Its important that local people have an ownership interest in the clinic," he added. "Local ownership inspires trust, family connections and a genuine stake in community health and preventive health. We want to work together with the CKD clinic to prevent dialysis and to serve patients who require dialysis."

The dialysis management group has tentatively identified a site location in the Ottoville area in order to make the clinic more accessible to patients on the West Side.

COC BOARD TO USE EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS TO BUILD ECONOMY

The 2018 American Samoa Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met for the first time this past Tuesday and, by all indications, have every intention of building a 21st century economy in American Samoa.

The new board officers are Paul Michael Young, Chairman; Kahleena Strachan, Vice Chairwoman, Tom Drabble, Treasurer; John Wasko, Secretary. Committees chairpersons are Genevieve Gregg, Tourism; Ella Gurr, Government and Legislation; Paul Michael Young, Economic Development and John Wasko, Education and Leadership.

Board members firmly established goals for the coming year. The chamber will play a more supportive and cooperative role in economic development by lending their expertise in data analysis, industry knowledge, marketing, communications and international commercial investment.

Consensus among the board was that both a community and government positive mindset

toward cooperative working agreements in areas such as immigration, licensing, taxation and economic development are keys to moving the economy forward.

Regular General Membership meetings are scheduled for the 4th Thursday of each month. Topics vital to business and government, such as the state of the banking industry, are designed to inform the business community and invite a climate conducive to new industry development.

For membership information please contact John Wasko at 733-0833 or email busy-corner@gmail.com

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#4 Ed's Valentine Special

"Fancy First Red South American Roses" set in a med. clear vase with Baby's Breath & accessories \$50.00 Half Dozen \$90.00 Dozen

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Any purchase from now until Friday, Feb 10, 2017 @ 12noon qualifies you to enter our RAFFLE Special Prizes: \$100 Gift Certificates give away.

Letter to the Editor

AIRPORT CUSTOMS INCIDENT: MONDAY, FEB. 5TH

Monday evening, February 5, Samoa News photojournalist/columnist Barry Markowitz had his camera gear, laptop, ipad, local cell phone, medical prescriptions, blood sugar testing supplies and his cpap breathing machine seized by American Samoa's Airport Customs for refusing to pay excise taxes on these items.

In an internal memo, Mr. Markowitz expressed to Samoa News management that he felt his US Constitutional 1st Amendment journalistic freedom rights were violated by both the demand for the tax and the seizure of his equipment.

Barry also expressed that the seizure of his medical supplies was in his view a violation of the American Disability Act.

Subsequent to this incident, Acting Director of Customs, Keith Gebauer, reached out to Mr. Markowitz, but as of publication, they had not met or communicated with each other.

Mr. Gebauer and Director of Commerce, Mr. Keniseli Lafaele sent the Samoa News the following letters via email about the incident. The first letter was received Feb. 07, 2018 from the director of Commerce, the second from "Acting" Customs Chief Mr. Keith Gebauer on Feb. 08, 2018. Samoa News formatted the letters only.

DOC DIRECTOR'S LETTER:

Dear Editor:

It is with the deepest sincerity that we apologize to our good friend, Mr. Barry Markowitz, for the events that occurred as he attempted to pass through American Samoa Customs on Monday evening. The incident was the result of a miscommunication between the Department of Commerce and the Customs Office, and should not be indicative of our efforts to promote tourism. Nor was it a reflection of our proud tradition of hospitality and congeniality.

Our appreciation to Mr. Markowitz cannot be overstated, nor can our regret for his mistreatment. A talented and distinguished journalist, Mr. Markowitz has been a long-time friend of American Samoa. He has been an invaluable advocate in promoting the territory to global businesses and travelers. As director of the Department of Commerce, I assisted him with his efforts to attend and provide coverage on the ceremony for Hawaiian Air's inaugural Airbus A330-200 service on the Honolulu to Pago Pago route. To this end, I wrote a letter to the executive leadership of Hawaiian Air on February 4th, supporting a request to provide Mr. Markowitz with a fully-covered round-trip flight so he could provide coverage on this significant event. Needless to say, we considered ourselves fortunate to have him in attendance.

Additionally, we appreciate the fine work of our local media, and reiterate our support in the unhindered freedom of press. Obviously, Customs agents do not have the power to circumvent first amendment rights, and efforts are being made to ensure that individual rights are respected and maintained. Relevant agencies are already determining appropriate policy adjustments to ensure that rights are protected and that visitors will be met with hospitality when entering the territory.

Again, we wish to convey our sincerest appreciation to Mr. Markowitz and to our media partners. In order to expand tourism and economic development in the territory, it is imperative that government agencies and media collaborate. In addition to our apology, we hope that Mr. Markowitz might find solace in the knowledge that the executive government is working diligently to ensure that relevant policies are in place to protect future travelers.

Keniseli Lafaele — Department of Commerce — Government of American Samoa

ACTING CHIEF OF CUSTOMS LETTER:

RE: Barry Marcowitz incident on February 5, 2018

Dear Editor,

I was made aware of the incident involving Mr. Marcowitz after the passengers were cleared on Monday's Hawaiian Air flight. At the time of notification, I confirmed that his property and other personal effects had been returned prior to him leaving the airport. On Tuesday morning, I was contacted by email and text message by a Director regarding the incident. I informed the Director that Mr. Marcowitz's property had been returned and that I would reach out to Mr. Marcowitz as well.

This is certainly not the first impression we wish any visitors to experience when they arrive into the Territory. The Customs Division has a responsibility to secure our borders and collect any excise or fees due but always in a manner that is professional, respectful and lawful. In this particular incident, it was an error on our part, and I wish to express our sincerest apologies for any difficulty and inconvenience Mr. Marcowitz experienced as result of our poor judgement. I take full responsibility for the actions of our Customs agents. We have addressed our internal issues at the Airport operation. Again, on behalf of the Customs Division, we extend our apologies to Mr. Marcowitz. We are available at his convenience, should he need any further explanation or assistance from us.

Respectfully, Keith Gebauer — "Acting" Chief of Customs



FONO BRIEFS

by Fili Sagapolutele

Samoa News Correspondent

The Fono will be taking a four-week mid session recess starting at the close of business today and will reconvene on Mar. 12, in order preserve legislative session days for the most efficient use, according to the Fono approved concurrent resolutions calling for the recess.

Both the Senate and House approved each other's concurrent resolution for the recess this week, although there are pending bills in both chambers including those sponsored by lawmakers as well as one important one from the Lolo Administration that would allow the formation of Limited Liability Company (LLC) entities in American Samoa.

The LLC, which is one of the revenue measures the administration submitted to the Fono last August, provides owners with advantages of corporate limited liability status and partnership tax treatment, and allows owners — both local and foreign — to register limited liability companies through the Treasury Department.

Samoa News is aware of at least three US based companies that are monitoring the outcome of this 115-page bill. Based on inquiries received by Samoa News, it appears that these companies are looking at setting up operations in the territory, if the bill is enacted into law.

Also approved this week by both chambers, is a Senate Concurrent Resolution, which expresses overwhelming gratitude and appreciation of the government and people of American Samoa to chairman, president and chief executive officer, Peter S. Ho and the Bank of Hawaii Corporation for:

- 47 years of service in the territory and contribution to the development of the local economy;
- for gifting to the American Samoa Government all Bank of Hawaii's assets in the territory, including two housing units, the Tafuna branch and its contents, and all assets contained in the Centennial Building first floor, along with newly installed ATM machines; and

- most importantly, manifesting and demonstrating your corporate character of placing people before profit by your commitment to remain indefinitely in the territory until a replacement bank was in place.

The non-binding resolution, sponsored by Sens. Nuanuaolefeagaiga Saoluaga T. Nua, Fa'amausili Mau Mau Jr., and Magalei Logovi'i, comes more than a month after the Territorial Bank of American Samoa was assigned a transit routing number by the American Bankers Association.

And this week, TBAS president Philip Ware said the bank is now at work setting up its "master account" with the Federal Reserve Bank, and this is the second step needed for the government owned bank to move forward with rolling out its services and products. (See yesterday's front page for details)

BoH and Ho have long promised the Lolo Administration that it would not fully close its local operations until TBAS is fully operational.

It remains unclear as to how long BoH will remain on island once TBAS is fully operational and this has been a big question from many customers who continue to maintain accounts at BoH.

However, industry officials estimated that it will take several months, because BoH will need to file a certain notice with federal regulators that it was ending businesses in American Samoa by closing down its Tafuna operation.

"And this process with federal regulators does take time as there is also a public comment period involved," said one industry official, who provided only background information on banking regulations. "In order words, if TBAS becomes fully operational, it doesn't mean, BoH will depart right away. There is a federal process to follow."

BoH is federally insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, which is one regulator that gets notification from BoH, according to the official.

Trump aims to reduce drug costs under Medicare

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will propose lowering prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries by allowing them to share in rebates that drug companies pay to insurers and middlemen, an administration official said Thursday.

A senior administration official outlined the plan on condition of anonymity ahead of the release of Trump's 2019 budget plan next week.

Pharmaceutical companies now pay rebates to insurers and pharmacy benefit managers to help their medications gain a bigger slice of the market.

Insurers apply savings from rebates to keep premiums more manageable.

Under Trump's proposal, seniors covered by Medicare's popular "Part D" prescription benefit would be able to share in the rebates for individual drugs that they purchase at the pharmacy.

Trump's budget would

also expand Medicare's "catastrophic" drug benefit so that many seniors with very high costs would not face copayments. Seniors with high drug bills are currently still responsible for 5 percent of the cost of their medications. With some new drugs costing \$100,000 a year or more, patient costs add up quickly.

The White House proposal would put Trump in the middle of a tug-of-war between drug companies on one side and insurers and pharmacy benefit managers on the other, with billions of dollars at stake.

Insurers and pharmacy benefit managers say the reason drug costs are so high is that drug companies are free to charge what the market will bear.

The pharmaceutical industry says middlemen are the problem, because they keep rebates paid by drug makers instead of passing them on to patients. Insurers counter that

rebates are passed on in the form of lower monthly premiums for everybody.

The drug industry lobbying group, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, had no immediate reaction.

The Trump administration's new proposals come on top of a long list of Medicare changes in the congressional budget deal. Medicare is the government's premier health insurance program, covering about 60 million seniors and disabled people.

Lawmakers would shift a greater share of Medicare drug costs to the pharmaceutical industry. They also want to eliminate the drug coverage gap known as the "doughnut hole" one year earlier than currently scheduled, in 2019 instead of 2020.

"On the whole, I think this is a good bill for people with Medicare," said Joe Baker, president of the Medicare Rights Center, said of the congressional legis-

(Continued on page 9)



Pacific Island News in Brief

compiled by Samoa News staff

SAMOA TARO BAN IN AMERICAN SAMOA LIFTED

American Samoa has lifted a ban on importing taro from neighboring Samoa.

Samoa Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi said he received a letter from American Samoa authorities informing him the ban, which started over concerns about a taro virus, was being lifted.

However, Tuilaepa said concerns were also raised over the dirty condition of taro arriving in the territory.

He has called on the Ministry of Agriculture and shipping corporations to check shipments before export to make sure the crops are fully cleaned and safe as well as meeting the quarantine requirements.

The taro import export ban from Talo exports from Samoa was banned in American Samoa since July last year.

[Source: RNZI]

FORMER HEAD OF STATE TO ADDRESS AUCKLAND CONFERENCE

Former Head of State, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi will be speaking

on a panel for the first of a three-part Pacific Law, Custom & Constitutionalism Conference series at the University of Auckland, next week.

In light of Samoa's recent public debates on Constitutional law reform in the areas of land law, law and religion, and traditional leadership, the dialogue will be focusing on these specific areas because of its relevance to Samoan and Pasifika communities in the Pacific.

The conference offers an opportunity for the New Zealand-based Pacific community and other New Zealanders interested in the connections between Pacific law, custom and constitutionalism, to dialogue with leading Pacific custom law experts and law professionals constitutions.

The Panel will also feature other prominent Samoans such as Judge Ida Malosi of the NZ District, Family & Youth Courts, Sister Vitolia Mo'a of S.M.S.M St Mary's Savalalo, Executive Director of le Siosiomaga Society Incorp. (O.L.S.S.I) Fiu Mata'ese Elisara La'ulu, and C.E.O of Samoa Law Reform Commission, Teleiai Dr. Lalotoa Mulitalo.

The conference is open to anyone who is interested in exploring Pacific law, custom and constitutionalism generally and the interface between law and Samoan traditional indigenous leadership and Samoan customary or indigenous land.

[Source: Samoa Observer]

PACIFIC LGBTQI GROUP USE SAMOAN HEAD-DRESS FOR NEW SHOW

A Pacific LGBTQI dance collective in New Zealand has come up with a concept that uses a Samoan cultural concept to tell their stories.

The group Fine Fatale has created a dance show titled Geish Tuiga as part of the annual Auckland Pride festivities happening this month.

Tuiga is a ceremonial head-dress from Samoa that certain families with rank and status are privileged to wear.

Creative director Mario Faumui said they have used that symbolism to illustrate empowering each individual to be the best they can be in a society where they continue to be misunderstood.

Mr Faumui said the dance moves consist of a merge of western pop culture fusing with

Pacific motifs.

"I guess for a community like us where we're kind of always pushed to the side or silenced, I guess this is kind of like our way to tell our story through silence and through our body and hands and touch on issues that we never get a chance to talk about because they kind of look at us as being like we're all good, they're the life of the party when there's actually more stuff under the surface," he said.

[Source: RNZI]

DEPUTY P.M. FIAME ASSURES PROTECTION OF CUSTOMARY LANDS

Deputy Prime Minister, Fiame Naomi Mataafa, has reassured the country – and Samoans all over the world – that Samoa's customary lands are safeguarded.

In doing so, the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment has again rejected claims there is a risk of Samoans losing their customary land. According to a statement from the Press Secretariat, Fiame said that under no circumstance would the traditional stakeholders lose ownership of their "inheritance."

She is convinced that the

Alienation of Customary Land Amendment Bill 2017, which she tabled in Parliament last week, reinforces the work the Government is doing to protect customary land.

She noted that it's been ten years since Government started eyeing customary lands and that the leasing of customary land is nothing new.

She is mindful, however, of concerns raised by a group who claims that the leasing of customary land will lead to loss of land ownership.

"Land in Samoan culture is regarded as an inheritance from God and connected intimately to the matai system," she said. "The fear is that if land is lost so will the matai system, hence also the culture of Samoa."

Fiame acknowledged that the complainants are of the opinion that promoting just the economic aspect of customary lands is contrary to Samoa's commitment to sustainable development.

"They fear that the environmental, social and cultural pillars of sustainable development will be ignored if economics takes the highest priority," she

(Continued on page 15)

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Syrian forces capture 2 members of Islamic State ‘Beatles’

WASHINGTON (AP) — The American-backed Syrian Democratic Forces captured two notorious British members of an Islamic State insurgent cell commonly dubbed “The Beatles” and known for beheading hostages, a U.S. military official said Thursday.

The official said that El Shafee Elsheikh and Alexandra Amon Kotey were captured in early January in eastern Syria. The two men are among four members of the IS cell that captured, tortured and beheaded more than two dozen hostages including American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, and American aid worker Peter Kassig. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details of the Syrian capture.

The State Department has imposed sanctions on both men. They are believed to be linked to the British terrorist known as Jihadi John, the masked IS militant who appeared in several videos depicting the graphic beheadings of Western hostages.

Their capture was first reported by the New York Times.

According to the U.S., Elsheikh traveled to Syria in 2012 and first joined al-Qaida’s branch there, and then later joined IS. The State Department, in imposing sanctions on Kotey last year, said he likely engaged in executions and torture, including electronic shock and waterboarding, and recruited several British nationals to IS.

According to military officials, the two men represent just a small portion of the hundreds of foreign-born IS terrorists from a number of nations that SDF fighters have captured or killed since October 2017.

U.S. officials did not provide any other details of the capture, but said the U.S. government with its coalition partners on the disposition of detainees held by the SDF. They said those discussions are private and no additional information would be given.

Sotloff was kidnapped in August 2013 after crossing into Syria from Turkey. He was killed on Sept. 2, 2014, and a video was distributed around the world documenting his death. Foley, another American journalist, had been killed a month earlier by the Islamic State. Kassig was an American aid worker captured by Islamic State militants in 2013 while delivering relief supplies to refugees in Syria.

S. Korea gets flexible with N. Korea sanctions for Olympics



FILE - In this Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2018, file photo, North Korea’s Mangyongbong-92, right, carrying North Korea’s members of art troupe is escorted as it approaches to Mukho Port in Donghae, South Korea. From smartphones to boat fuel, South Korea is wrestling how to balance international sanctions on North Korea with its desire to show the Olympic spirit as it welcomes hundreds of North Koreans to the country for the Winter Olympics.

(AP Photo/Lee Jin-man, File)

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — From smartphones to ship fuel, South Korea is wrestling how to balance international sanctions on North Korea with its desire to show the Olympic spirit as it welcomes hundreds of North Koreans for the Winter Games.

Spearheaded by the U.S., the international community has been imposing tougher sanctions designed to punish North Korea’s economy in an effort to rein in its nuclear program. But South Korea has been flexible with these rules as it accommodates the North Koreans to the Pyeongchang Games.

South Korea sent a chartered plane to bring North Korean skiers. It allowed North Korea to use a 9,700-ton ferry to transport more than 100 artists to perform at the Olympics and says it’s considering whether to accept the North’s request to supply fuel for the ship.

South Korea says the decisions were inevitable for the success of the games, which it sees as an opportunity to revive meaningful communication with the North after an extended period of animosity and diplomatic stalemate. But critics say South Korea is playing into the hands of North Korea as it tries to use the Olympics to poke holes in sanctions.

A look at some of the concessions South Korea has made as it greets the North for the Olympics:

THE PLANE

The Koreas agreed to open their conciliatory gestures over the Pyeongchang Games with joint practices and friendly competitions between their skiers at North Korea’s Masik winter resort.

But the Jan. 31 trip wasn’t official until less than two hours before the chartered Asiana Airlines flight carrying the South Korean skiers took off for the North’s Kalma Airport.

Seoul needed until the last

minute to persuade Washington to consider the flight an exception to sanctions announced by President Donald Trump’s administration in September that include banning vessels and aircraft that have visited North Korea from traveling to the United States within 180 days.

The South Koreans were accompanied by a 32-member North Korean delegation, including 10 athletes invited to participate for the Olympics, on their return flight the next day.

It was the first direct South Korean flight to North Korea since 2015, when South Korean labor unionists flew to Pyongyang for a goodwill soccer match.

THE FERRY

South Korea accepting North Korea’s offer to send its artists to the games by sea has triggered debate in the South, where conservatives saw the move as a sure-fire sign that the North is trying to use the Olympics to ease pressure against the country. The Mangyongbong-92 arrived at an eastern South Korean port Tuesday afternoon with 114 members of an art troupe that will perform in Gangneung on Thursday and Seoul on Feb. 11.

To allow the ship to travel to the South, Seoul treated it as an exception to sanctions. Critics say Seoul is sending the wrong message to North Korea and also the international community.

South Korea’s Unification Ministry said Wednesday that the government is reviewing whether to meet North Korea’s request to provide fuel to the ferry.

THE PHONES

The Pyeongchang Organizing Committee is refraining for now from giving out a premium smartphone to athletes from North Korea and Iran, not to step over the global sanc-

tions designed to pressure their governments from developing nuclear weapons.

Olympic sponsor Samsung Electronics donated 4,000 Galaxy Note 8 to all athletes and International Olympic Committee officials. The limited edition is not for sale but the Galaxy Note 8 phones are among the most expensive mobile devices in the market. Its price starts at about \$1,000.

But North Korean athletes won’t have the fun of taking selfies and filming their time in the South with the Samsung phone. The United Nations bans sending luxury items to North Korea or to North Korean nationals.

The IOC advised the Organizing Committee that North Koreans can use the Samsung phone during the games that start Friday and return them before their departure. But the organizer decided not to give out the devices, rather than risking violating sanctions.

Iran’s foreign ministry summoned South Korea’s envoy on Thursday to denounce the decision to deny its athletes cellphones, and warned that if Samsung did not apologize, “This will heavily affect relations with Samsung,” Iran state TV reported.

THE SISTER

North Korea informed the South on Wednesday that leader Kim Jong Un’s sister, an increasingly prominent figure in the country’s leadership, will be part of a high-level government delegation traveling for the Olympics. Kim Yo Jong, believed to be around 30, will be the first member of North Korea’s ruling family to visit South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

South Korea expressed delight that she’s coming, saying it shows North Korea’s sincerity for improving relations. The

(Continued on page 15)

BEACH ADVISORY



American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency
AS-EPA

Supporting efforts to clean our shores

Release Date: February 07, 2018
Contact: AS-EPA Water Program at (684) 633-2304
The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) advises the public that on February 06, 2018, the following recreational beaches tested positive for Enterococci bacteria levels that exceed American Samoa Water Quality Standards:

Amanave
Utumea West
Asili
Leone Pala
Nuuuli Pala Lagoon
Nuuuli Pala Spring
Avau
Fatumafuti
Fagaalu
Gataivai
Utulei - DDW
Fagatogo Stream Mouth
Fagasa-Fagalea
Fagasa-Fagatele

Alofau
Amouli
Aoa
Onenoa
Afono
Vatia
Aua Stream Mouth
Aua - A&M
Aua - Pouesi
Alega Beach
Alega Stream Mouth
Fagaitua
Masausi
Masefau

AS-EPA beach advisories inform the public about current water conditions. When a beach advisory is issued, it is because water samples indicate that the American Samoa Water Quality Standard for Enterococci has been exceeded. This advisory is in effect until further sampling and laboratory analyses indicate that Enterococci concentrations are within acceptable water quality standards.

The presence of Enterococci in the water indicates contamination by human and/or animal wastes. Swimming in water with high levels of Enterococci may cause stomach problems, skin rashes, and ear, eye, and wound infections. To reduce your risk: avoid swallowing beach water, be sure to rinse or towel off after a swim, and shower once at home. If you are ill, or think you may be ill, AS-EPA advises that you consult a physician before making any water contact in the beaches cited above.

Note: AS-EPA monitors the water quality of 44 recreational beaches on Tutuila, the wharf in Aunu’u, and five beaches on Manu’a. Tutuila advisories are issued weekly on Wednesdays. Aunu’u and Manu’a advisories are issued monthly. Advisories are issued when bacteria concentrations exceed levels determined safe for human exposure. Should you have any questions, please contact the AS-EPA Water Program at 633-2304.



ASDOE January 2018 Most Valuable Teachers of the Month

ASDOE January 2018 Most Valuable Teachers of the Month

American Samoa Department of Education Congratulates and Acknowledges the following teachers in their selection as the Most Valuable Teachers for their Respective School.

	TEACHER	SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL/ DEPARTMENT
1	Lusia Matulino	Aua Elementary School	K5
2	Rosa Silao	Sili’aga Elementary School	L-2
3	Tueni Tapani	Fagali’i Elementary School	L-1
4	Meipo Fiafia	Manulele Elementary School	ECE
5	Tailua Apaisa Fitiao	Matafao Elementary School	L-2
6	Vincent Meleisea	Tafuna Elementary School	SPED

American Samoa Department of Education recognizes your dedication and commitment to student success through your perfect attendance.

ASDOE January 2018 Perfect Attendance

NAME	SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL			
West Fualole	Afonotele Elementary	L-2	Gasolo Lafaele	Mt. Alava Elementary	L-7
Umaga Setefano	Afonotele Elementary	L-8	Afuola Suluia	Mt. Alava Elementary	L-8
Suafa'ase'e Nofaofono	Aua Elementary	ECE	West Cathy	Mt. Alava Elementary	SPED
Matulino Lusia	Aua Elementary	K5	Fa'i Alo	Pavaiai Elementary	ECE
Fa'agata Rozanna	Aua Elementary	L-6	Taliga Mele	Pavaiai Elementary	ECE
Lemalu Sarai F.	Aua Elementary	L-7	Taalafaaluaiaiga Leinati	Pavaiai Elementary	ECE
Rocha-Manini Kuuipo L.	Aua Elementary	L-7	Ioane Mesepa	Pavaiai Elementary	ECE
Scanlan-Fruean Trixie	Aua Elementary	L-8	Brown Tuaoitau	Pavaiai Elementary	ECE
Tapani Tueni	Fagali'i Elementary	L-1	Leleisiuao Talatufi	Pavaiai Elementary	ECE
Tuivaiti-Sufia Ilia L	Fagali'i Elementary	L-6	Mara Safuifatu	Pavaiai Elementary	K5
Satoa Luisa	Lupelele Elementary	ECE	Tutogi Lemele	Pavaiai Elementary	K5
Lotulelei Faaleagalealaimaota	Lupelele Elementary	K5	Sili Caylene	Pavaiai Elementary	K5
Tavita Ainoama	Lupelele Elementary	K5	Lang Tufanua	Pavaiai Elementary	L-1
Ulufale Nofo	Lupelele Elementary	K5	Tufele Elizabeth	Pavaiai Elementary	L-2
McKenzie Osana	Lupelele Elementary	L-1	Pula Tofoipupu	Pavaiai Elementary	L-2
Matu'u Poto	Lupelele Elementary	L-2	Fonotia Ropeta	Pavaiai Elementary	L-3
Miles Tina	Lupelele Elementary	L-3	Ioane Faith	Pavaiai Elementary	L-3
Otemai Angeline	Lupelele Elementary	L-3	Villarica Lilibeth	Pavaiai Elementary	L-4
Lealaimatafao Taufao	Lupelele Elementary	L-4	Vala Janet	Pavaiai Elementary	L-4
Letalu Asofaafetai	Lupelele Elementary	L-4	Faumuina Henipira	Pavaiai Elementary	L-5
Taai Vanila	Lupelele Elementary	L-4	Perez Sylvina	Pavaiai Elementary	L-5
Fuimaono Alexandria F.	Lupelele Elementary	L-5	Tuigamala Nancy	Pavaiai Elementary	L-6
Tanileu Manatua	Lupelele Elementary	L-5	Seti Tautala	Pavaiai Elementary	L-6
Martin Katherine	Lupelele Elementary	L-6	Malele Senetenari	Pavaiai Elementary	L-6
Leae Misipati K.	Lupelele Elementary	L-7	Eves Clarinette	Pavaiai Elementary	L-7
Tanielu Fanapovi	Lupelele Elementary	L-7	Tai Fogafoga	Pavaiai Elementary	L-8
Liua Faapopo	Lupelele Elementary	L8	Tupua Siupu	Pavaiai Elementary	SPED
Taape Pauline	Lupelele Elementary	SPED	Lavaka Veisinia	Pavaiai Elementary	SPED
Fiafia Meipo	Manulele Elementary	ECE	Suifili Taima	Pavaiai Elementary	SPED
Faamao Puatania	Manulele Elementary	K5	Fonoti Savannah	Pavaiai Elementary	SPED
Taliu Masina	Manulele Elementary	K5	Silao Rosa	Siliaga Elementary	L-2
Tuasivi Fiasoso	Manulele Elementary	K5	Tauese Cecilia	Siliaga Elementary	SPED
Vaimasanu'u Sesilia	Manulele Elementary	K5	Fuimaono Christina	Tafuna Elementary	K5
Fuimaono Agalelei	Manulele Elementary	L-1	Vaiotu Sarah	Tafuna Elementary	K5
Pulalasi Makerita	Manulele Elementary	L-1	Iti Claire	Tafuna Elementary	K5
Aki Tufi	Manulele Elementary	L-2	Sefo Valelia	Tafuna Elementary	L-1
Lauilefue Filemoni	Manulele Elementary	L-3	Ino Toaiva	Tafuna Elementary	L-1
Soonalote Karen T.	Manulele Elementary	L-4	Fauo'o Glory	Tafuna Elementary	L-1
Tuiasosopo Lucille	Manulele Elementary	L-5	Sionesini Keneti	Tafuna Elementary	L-2
Tagaloa Soloi	Manulele Elementary	L-6	Uale Faiai Daisy	Tafuna Elementary	L-2
Stowers Nellie	Manulele Elementary	L-7	Lualua New Year Poi	Tafuna Elementary	L-2
Tufele Jasmine	Manulele Elementary	L-7	SialegaMarieta	Tafuna Elementary	L-4
Lavatai Cameo	Manulele Elementary	L-8	Taala Naomi	Tafuna Elementary	L-4
Migo Faatamalii	Manulele Elementary	L-8	Falemalama Herbert	Tafuna Elementary	L-4
Padaca Edison	Manulele Elementary	L-8	O'Brien Desmond	Tafuna Elementary	L-5
Sene Miracle	Manulele Elementary	L-8	Moliga Shirley	Tafuna Elementary	L-5
Tautu Shute	Manulele Elementary	L-8	Matai Toe	Tafuna Elementary	L-6
Epati Amy	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Harrington Vi	Tafuna Elementary	L-6
Fa'apouli Fogasaua	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Manuma Paul	Tafuna Elementary	L-7
Faatupuinati Irene	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Timoteo Falanika	Tafuna Elementary	L-7
Fautaga Sulugia	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Alofaituli Konelio	Tafuna Elementary	L-8
Fetui Suikonesula	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Taufete'e Avaloa	Tafuna Elementary	L-8
Gutu Toese	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Josefo Steve	Tafuna Elementary	L-8
Hunt Ta'aloloiseuga	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Lefotu Dora	Tafuna Elementary	L-8
Logologo Jenny	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Atuatasi Lisah	Tafuna Elementary	SPED
Mamea Ane S.	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Tali Timoteo	Tafuna Elementary	SPED
McFall Wesley	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Potasi Jerilyn	Tafuna Elementary	SPED
Saleutogi Ana	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Faalemiga Malualagi	Tafuna Elementary	SPED
Save Neil	Manulele Elementary	SPED	Ioane Maria	Tafuna Elementary	SPED
Va'aali'i Avau	Matafao Elementary	L-1	Meleisea Vincent	Tafuna Elementary	SPED
Apaisa-Fitiao Tailua	Matafao Elementary	L-2	Siu Vaovasa	NVTHS	SPED
Moliga Taumaloto	Matafao Elementary	L-3	Maui Leleaga	NVTHS	SPED
Laolagi Malolefoua	Matafao Elementary	L-4	Love-Ili Dana	NVTHS	SPED
Si'a Tupou	Matafao Elementary	L-4	Luavasa Lilia	NVTHS	Business
Laupola Georgina	Matafao Elementary	L-5	Borja Evangeline	NVTHS	Business
Suluai Merwyden	Matafao Elementary	L-5	Pati Iosia	NVTHS	Electronics
Woo Ching Selita	Matafao Elementary	L-6	Borja Ronald	NVTHS	Drafting
Sualoa Fa'ai'ufono	Matafao Elementary	L-8	Jagon Kenneth	NVTHS	Bldg. & Constr.
Vaitautolu Fa'aiuifono	Matafao Elementary	L-8	Torres Arianne	NVTHS	FCS
Ioane Fa'apaia	Mt. Alava Elementary	ECE	Borres Ailen	NVTHS	Science
Alaelua Honey	Mt. Alava Elementary	L-3	Matagi Fesilafai	NVTHS	Math
Fetuoao Aumai	Mt. Alava Elementary	L-4	Shoulders Rosalee	NVTHS	Soc. Studies
Danielson Motusalaia	Mt. Alava Elementary	L-6	Faataitai Christian	NVTHS	Soc. Studies
			Tasi Talileleia	NVTHS	Soc. Studies



⊗ Rotary Club of Pago Pago held their 1017-18 4-Way-Test Dinner for outstanding seniors from the 11 high schools across Tutuila and Manu'a this past Saturday night, Feb. 3, 2018,

[courtesy photo]

REAL DEAL

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Continued from page 2

ment Act (UCCJEA), because the PKPA doesn't provide enforcement procedures or remedies. All 50 states have since adopted the UCCJEA, allowing courts in the US to apply the enforcement mechanism. The court also cited provisions of the UCCJEA when carrying out enforcement.

However, in American Samoa, the Fono has not yet adopted the UCCJEA and therefore, the court looked at enforcement mechanisms within the local UEFJA when enforcing the child custody order.

The judges noted that the mother has petitioned the High Court to compel the father to file the Missouri child custody order under the UEFJA for enforcement. However, the father came to American Samoa, "went to the mother's home with the police and involved our own social services to secure the child [and] this is the sort of self-help that this Court disdains."

According to the judges, PKPA was not enacted to "assist in this sort of self-help" and

"does not provide for any sort of enforcement mechanisms."

Until the Fono enacts a local UCCJEA, "any actions to enforce custody orders from out-of-state must be filed under our... UEFJA to allow for due process and to give persons the opportunity to contest the validity of a foreign judgment, order or decree," the judges wrote.

They pointed out that the PKPA was never intended to deprive the other parent of due process because it requires the other parent to have reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard. According to the judges there is a 30-day waiting period after an out-of-state order is filed with the High Court before enforcement of such order is carried out. However, since this was not done, the court finds that the mother "was denied her opportunity to contest the validity of the order as is her right under the UEFJA," the judges said and ordered the child be returned to the mother until an evidentiary hearing and a custody order from the High Court.



Trump...

Continued from page 4

lation. "This tilts toward getting a lot of good things done."

But his group opposes a provision that would raise premiums paid by the wealthiest retirees for coverage of outpatient services and prescription drugs. Here's a look at some of the major Medicare provisions in the budget deal that Republican leaders are trying to push through Congress. Democrats are split over the overall measure, but the Medicare provisions appear to have support from both parties:

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Originally, beneficiaries in the "doughnut hole" coverage gap were responsible for the full cost of their medications, but the Affordable Care Act passed under former President Barack Obama gradually closes the gap. The budget deal accelerates the timetable by one year, to 2019. Drug makers are already required to provide discounts to close the coverage gap, but the budget deal raises the level of company discounts,

which in turn lowers the government's costs. That should act as a brake on the monthly premiums paid by beneficiaries.

"In theory when Medicare spending goes down, premiums would go down, too," said Tricia Neuman, a Medicare expert with the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation.

The drug industry is criticizing the proposal, saying it will mainly benefit insurance companies that act as middlemen providing the benefit.

The coverage gap starts when beneficiaries hit \$3,750 in total drug costs.

CAPS REPEALED ON REHAB

The budget deal permanently repeals limits on therapy services commonly used by stroke patients and people recovering from major surgeries. Those services include physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. In previous years, Congress had routinely held off on applying the caps. Groups including AARP were

pressing for a full repeal. It takes effect this year.

HIGHER PREMIUMS FOR WEALTHIEST RETIREES

Premiums for outpatient coverage and prescription drugs would rise for about 1 million wealthy seniors with annual incomes of at least \$500,000 for an individual, or \$750,000 for a couple filing jointly. Premiums on the well-to-do is an idea that has bipartisan support among lawmakers, but advocates worry that Congress will ultimately start raising costs for middle-class seniors as well.

TELEMEDICINE AND CHRONIC CARE

The budget deal expands Medicare's ability to pay for telemedicine in a wide variety of situations, including for patients with stroke symptoms.

It also incorporates a bipartisan Senate bill that is intended to improve care coordination for patients with chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

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samoa news

Trial...

Continued from page 2

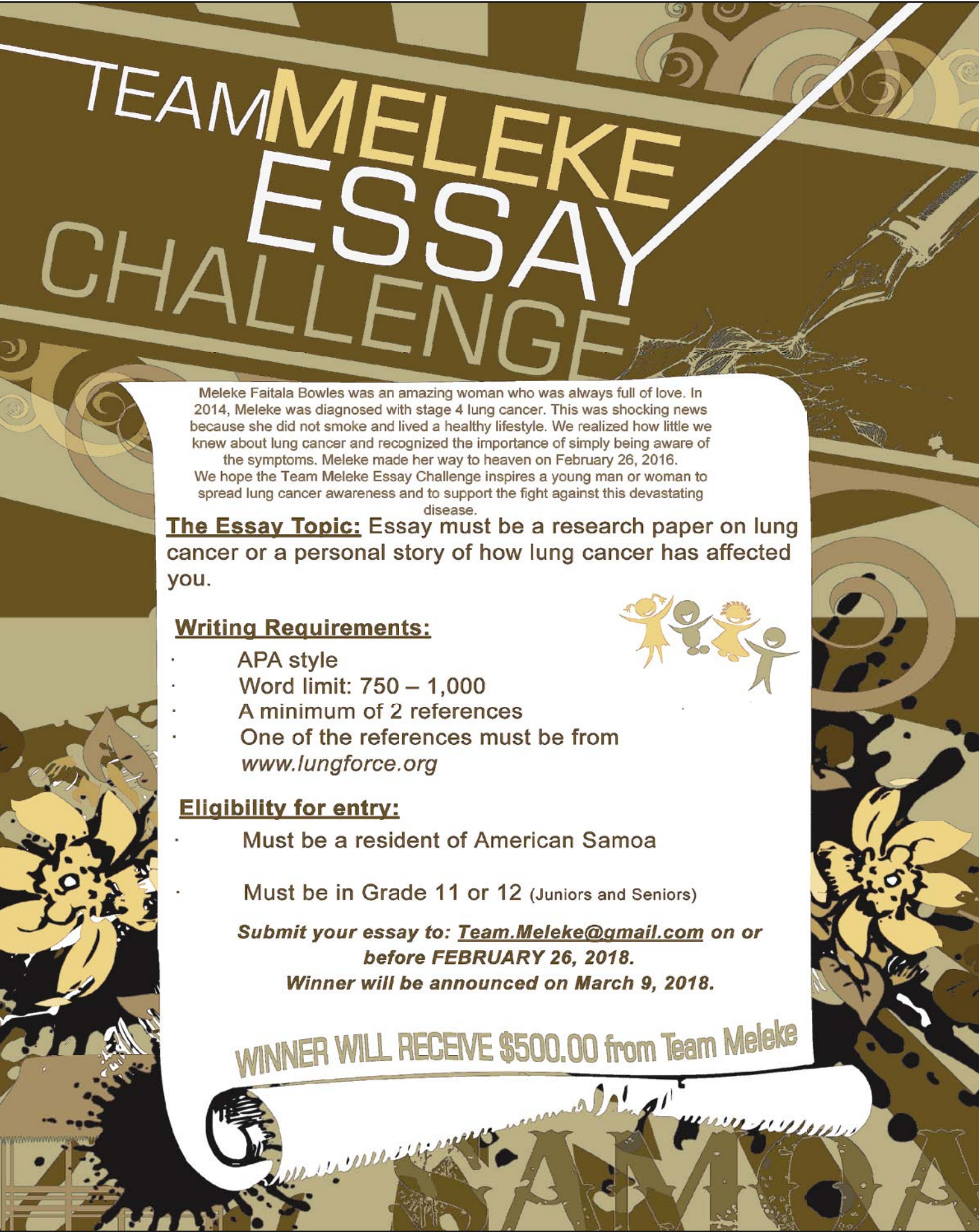
to an investigating judge in France, would shed light on the sprawling network of IS supporters who carried out the attacks in Paris and Brussels. His defiant refusal, however, came as less of a surprise than his decision to attend in the first place.

Abdeslam, who is in solitary confinement in France, has grown his hair and beard long in the fashion of many IS fighters. To his lawyer's apparent dismay, he told the judge he didn't recognize the authority of the court.

"I am tired," he said, looking straight ahead. For the entire day of testimony, his gaze didn't flag.

Authorities say Abdeslam was armed with a suicide belt that reportedly malfunctioned the night of Nov. 13, 2015. He fled Paris with the help of friends and spent four months on the run — with Ayari and others. Abdeslam's brother, Brahim, died in a suicide attack in Paris. Their childhood friend, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, was killed five days later in a police standoff outside the French capital. Ayari has said little, but denied that he had fired the Kalashnikov the pair escaped with. Instead, his lawyer, Isa Gultaslar, indicated Thursday that the IS fighter who was killed in the shootout had been the only man firing on the officers in the police raid, despite the usual stated wish of the group's combatants to die as "martyrs."

"One thing is clear, Mr. Ayari did not wish to die or cause even worse carnage," Gultaslar said. A lawyer for the police, Valerie Lefevre, said Ayari and Abdeslam both were members of the group that attacked Paris and Brussels.



TEAM MELEKE ESSAY CHALLENGE

Meleke Faitala Bowles was an amazing woman who was always full of love. In 2014, Meleke was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. This was shocking news because she did not smoke and lived a healthy lifestyle. We realized how little we knew about lung cancer and recognized the importance of simply being aware of the symptoms. Meleke made her way to heaven on February 26, 2016. We hope the Team Meleke Essay Challenge inspires a young man or woman to spread lung cancer awareness and to support the fight against this devastating disease.

The Essay Topic: Essay must be a research paper on lung cancer or a personal story of how lung cancer has affected you.

Writing Requirements:

- APA style
- Word limit: 750 – 1,000
- A minimum of 2 references
- One of the references must be from www.lungforce.org

Eligibility for entry:

- Must be a resident of American Samoa
- Must be in Grade 11 or 12 (Juniors and Seniors)

Submit your essay to: Team.Meleke@gmail.com on or before **FEBRUARY 26, 2018.**

Winner will be announced on March 9, 2018.

WINNER WILL RECEIVE \$500.00 from Team Meleke



IN THE COMMUNITY

(Courtesy Photos)



Jury deliberates in Baltimore police corruption case



In this October 2016 photo released by the Baltimore police, officers, Det. Evodio Hendrix, Det. Marcus Taylor, Sgt. Wayne Jenkins, Det. Jemell Rayam, Det. Maurice Ward, from left, are seen in Baltimore. Federal prosecutors and defense attorneys are set to make their closing arguments Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2018, in the trial of two Baltimore detectives, Marcus Taylor and Daniel Hersl, fighting racketeering and robbery charges. The case involves one of the worst U.S. police corruption scandals in recent memory.

(Baltimore Police Department/The Baltimore Sun via AP)

BALTIMORE (AP) — Jurors started deliberating Thursday in a case involving one of the worst U.S. police corruption scandals in recent memory after hearing nearly three weeks of testimony from drug dealers, a crooked bail bondsman and disgraced Baltimore detectives who detailed astonishing levels of police misconduct.

The two detectives on trial face robbery, extortion and racketeering charges that could land them up to life in prison if convicted. The trial in a federal courthouse has been dominated by testimony of four ex-detectives who worked alongside the defendants in an elite unit known as the Gun Trace Task Force.

Those former detectives pleaded guilty to corruption charges about their time on the squad, which was once praised as a group of hard-charging officers chipping away at the tide of illegal guns on city streets. They testified on behalf of the government in the hopes of shaving years off their prison sentences.

The former law enforcers testified that the unit was actually made up of uniformed thugs who broke into homes, stole cash, resold looted narcotics and lied under oath to cover their tracks. Wearing lockup jumpsuits, the ex-detectives admitted to everything from armed home invasions to

staging fictitious crime scenes and routinely defrauding their department with bogus overtime claims.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Leo Wise described the two detectives on trial as “hunters” who “preyed upon the weak and the vulnerable” when their rogue police unit wasn’t scouring the city trying to find large-scale drug dealers to rob. He said the evidence, which included calls recorded by the FBI that captured their voices, was “overwhelming.”

Defense attorney Jenifer Wicks delivered a fiery closing argument on behalf of Detective Marcus Taylor. She told jurors the government went to the “depths of the criminal underworld” to find a parade of “professional liars” as witnesses.

“It’s deplorable and it’s nauseating,” Wicks said, asserting there was insufficient evidence to convict Taylor of anything.

In a rebuttal, Wise said investigators did indeed tour the unsavory depths of Baltimore’s underworld - and it was there they found Taylor and Detective Daniel Hersl.

Hersl’s lead attorney, William Purpura, did not deny that his 48-year-old client took money — an act that “embarrassed” the city and the detective’s family — but that didn’t rise to charges of robbery or extortion.

He attacked the veracity of the four disgraced detectives, noting that they’ve admitted to lying for years to juries, judges, colleagues and their families.

“They want that ‘get out of jail free’ card,” Purpura said during his closing arguments.

The detectives on trial did not testify.

The out-of-control unit’s onetime supervisor, Sgt. Wayne Jenkins, also did not testify. Jenkins was portrayed as a wildly corrupt officer leading his unit on a tireless quest to shake down citizens and locate “monsters” - bigtime drug dealers with lots of loot to rob.

His subordinates testified that he occasionally posed as a federal agent, encouraged his officers to keep BB guns to plant as weapons, and kept duffel bags in his police car with grappling hooks, ski masks even a machete to ramp up their illegal activities.

In mid-November, a Philadelphia police officer became the ninth law enforcement agent indicted in the federal investigation. Prosecutors allege he conspired with task force member Jemell Rayam to sell heroin and cocaine seized in Baltimore.

It’s not clear when the ex-detectives who pleaded guilty will be sentenced by a federal judge.

Internet pioneer, songwriter John Perry Barlow dies at 70

John Perry Barlow, an internet activist and lyricist for the Grateful Dead, has died.

The digital-rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation said Barlow died early Wednesday in his sleep at home in San Francisco. He was 70.

The cause of death was not immediately known. Barlow had been battling a variety of debilitating illnesses since 2015, according to supporters who organized a benefit concert for him in October 2016.

Barlow co-founded the

EFF in 1990 to champion free expression and privacy online. In a 1996 manifesto, the “Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace,” he argued that the U.S. and other governments shouldn’t impose their sovereignty on the “global social space we are building.”

“He’s one of the very first people who recognized the internet was going to be important because it would help people connect in a way they couldn’t in the physical world,” said Cindy Cohn, the EFF’s

executive director.

Some of his policy views evolved over time, but he remained optimistic about the power of the internet to strengthen human connections as long as people weren’t silenced by meddling governments or monopolistic businesses.

“He stayed consistent to this core idea that we could make something beautiful, or something awful, and it was up to us,” Cohn said.

(Continued on page 14)

► Second...

Continued from page 1

Le'i said the escape of the four inmates from jail last month had caused him to make some changes to ensure inmates could not escape.

"The first escape happened when inmates walked through the front door and went outside because there were no police officers stationed there at the time.

Police officers were only going inside to do their normal check and go back. I then placed a police officer inside the front office, inside the new prison facility, so that he can be visible — unfortunately that was not the case — the inmates cut the rebar and escaped through the ceiling and outside they went," Le'i said. The Commish says that changes are again being made in the operations of TCF to prevent escapes. He said a police officer would be stationed in the cell block for every shift. As to the two escapees, he plans to have them locked up in the cell at the central police station in Fagatogo when they are recaptured.

Asked if the escaped prisoners are considered dangerous to the community, Le'i responded that whenever a prisoner escapes from jail, they should be considered a danger to the community.

The Commissioner is appealing to the public that if anyone in the community has any information that can lead to the capture of these inmates, please call 633-1111 or 699-9944. Public support and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Togitogi was scheduled to appear in High Court yesterday for sentencing, after he was convicted last November of escaping from confinement on Apr. 16, 2016, while serving a 5-year sentence for a 2015 second degree assault conviction. When his case was called, Assistant Attorney General Woodrow Pengelly appeared for the government, while Public Defender Doug Fiaui representing Togitogi informed

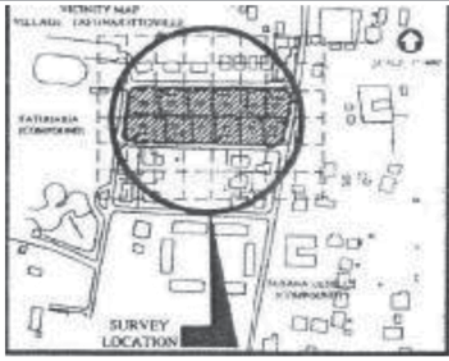
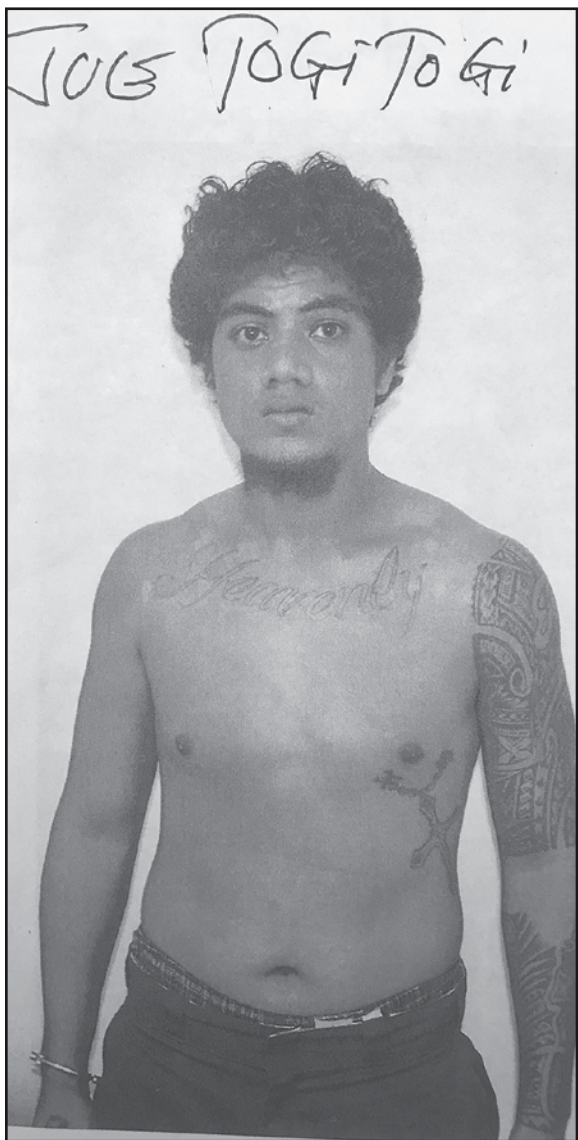
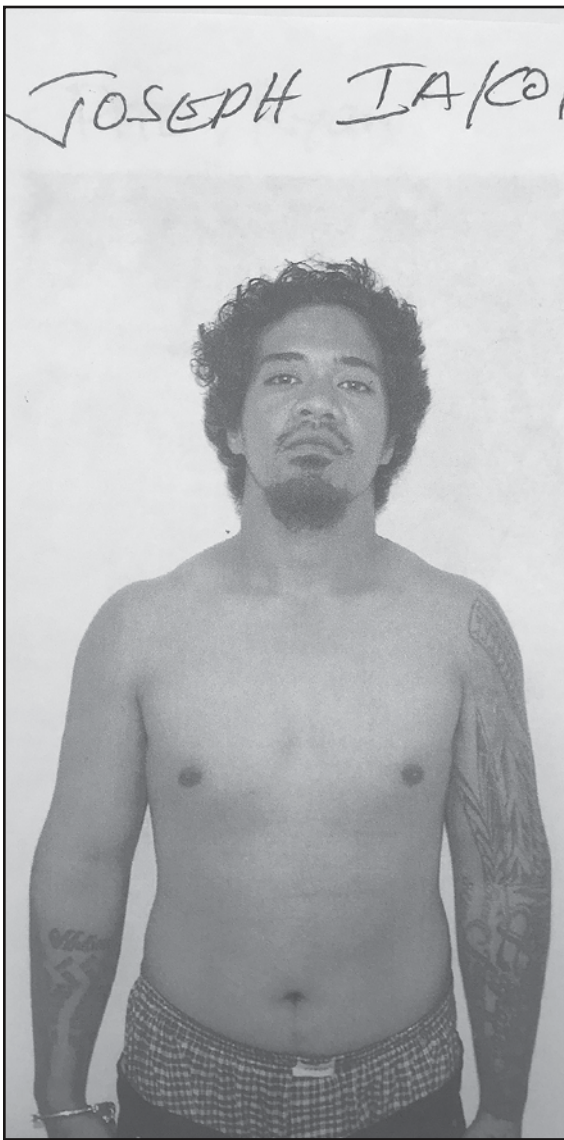
the court that his client was not present.

When asked by Acting Associate Justice Elvis P. Patea to explain why Togitogi was not present, Pengelly stated that Togitogi had escaped from TCF on Monday, Feb. 5, 2018.

"What happened ... is that law enforcement is actively searching for the defendant. The government will ask the court to continue this case, and the government is in the process of filing new charges for the two new escape incidents against the defendant," he said and asked the court for a 3-week continuance. Fiaui did not object to the government's request.

The court granted the request and re-scheduled the sentencing for Togitogi to Mar. 1, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. — given that he is back in custody by then.

Iakopo was sentenced in 2014 to 16 years in jail after he was convicted of 14 burglaries involving six stores, a church, two restaurants and five homes.



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► Storm...

Continued from page 11

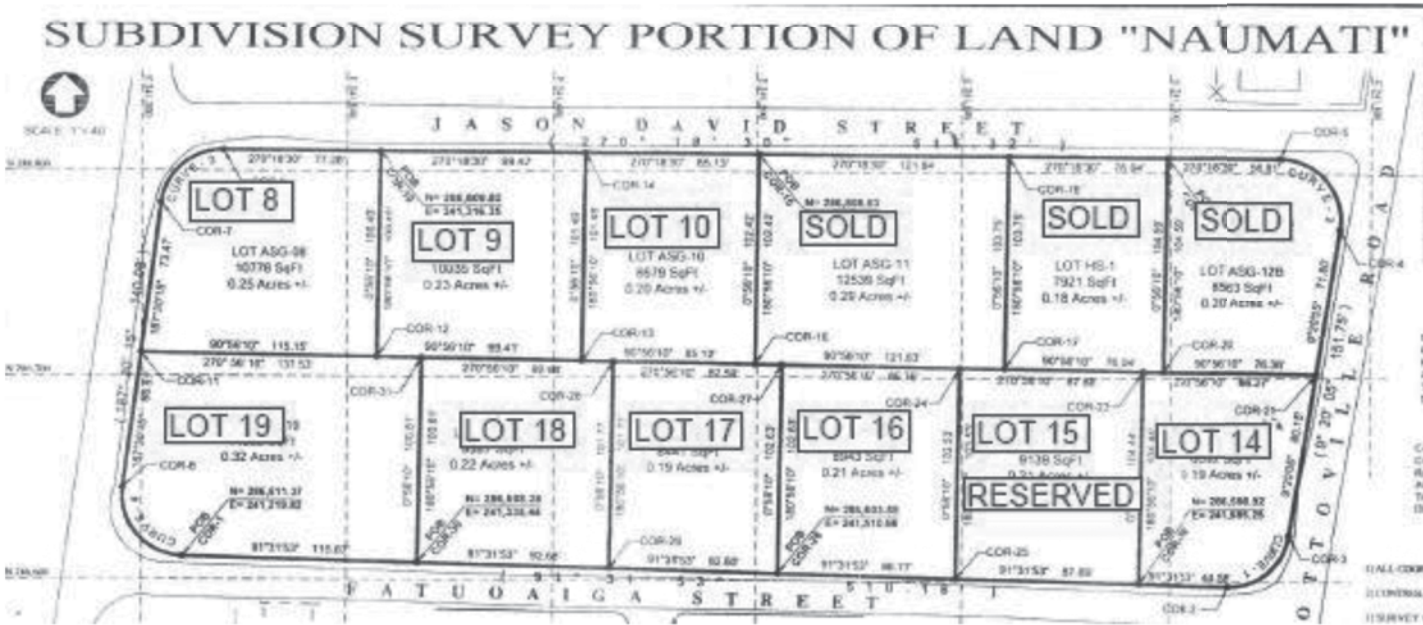
the latest information, not those out of Samoa, because of the different in terminology used by American Samoa and Samoa in issuing their weather statements.

The public is advised to take necessary precautions when driving due to hazardous driving conditions and flooded roadways.

In a statement reiterating the storm watch, the local Department of Homeland Security also outlined preparedness for local residents.

Report any weather related incident to the Police at 911/633-1111 or to the EOC at 699-3800/6990411.

Samoa News will update this story online as new information comes in from local authorities.



With military parade, Kim Jong Un thumbs nose at US



In this image made from video by North Korea's KRT, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, attends a military parade in Pyongyang, North Korea Thursday, Feb. 8, 2018. North Korea held a massive military parade highlighted by intercontinental ballistic missiles in its capital on Thursday, just one day before South Korea hosts the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. (KRT via AP Video)

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un presided over an extravagant military parade in Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square on Thursday, grabbing the spotlight on the eve of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in South Korea to thumb his nose at Washington while making a point of showing off his new-found restraint toward

Seoul. The parade itself had been anticipated for weeks. North Korea announced last month that it would hold a big event to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of its military. But instead of broadcasting the morning event live, North Korean television aired an edited version later in the day,

giving it a somewhat lower profile than expected. The parade was also shorter and featured fewer missiles than the previous one, which was held in April last year and unveiled five new kinds of missiles — surprising analysts and generating headlines worldwide. This time, Kim fine-tuned his more fiery rhetoric toward

(Continued on page 15)

Salend...

Continued from page 1

“If this is what they claimed — that the defendant’s vehicle with the victim inside never went up to Mt. Logotala, why did the little boy memorize the vehicle’s plate number and report it to police, if he knew that the driver was nice to him and offered him a ride and gave him \$2,” Pengelly told the jury.

“The little boy was seen by his teacher crying that morning; and he was also seen by his fellow students crying that morning. Why was it this little boy got upset and looked sad that day, if that was the last day of school, and everyone is looking forward to the end of school season?”

Of the victim’s Santa Claus hat, Pengelly told the jury that according to the evidence the government presented in court, the hat the victim wore that morning when he was picked up by the defendant in his vehicle, was the same hat the police found at the secure area on top of Mt. Logotala — and also the same hat the defendant testified he didn’t see the alleged victim wear.

About the \$2 the victim claimed the defendant gave him that morning, Pengelly told the jury that’s the reason the defendant gave the money to the victim — to calm him down.

In defense of his client, Singh’s attorney, Marcellus T. Uiagalelei told the jurors, “No good deed goes unpunished is the theme for today.”

He stated, “This case will ultimately come down to whom you are willing to believe — the government’s version of the story or my client’s version of the story.”

Uiagalelei said the government’s story is based mostly on an account of a witness, who told different versions of the story to his teacher, to police officers and to the jury; based on the testimony of a young police officer who back in Dec. 2015 was a trainee, but also based on the evidence the government claimed they found, but made no effort to show to prove their claim.

“Their version of the story is based on their appeal to your emotions as human beings, selling to you a story of a bad and mean old man who tried to harm a young child — but my

client’s version ... makes more sense and is much more believable than what was sold to you by the government,” he told the jurors.

Uiagalelei then reviewed his client’s version of the story and compared it to the government’s version of the story that they want the jurors to believe.

He hammered home the “inconsistent pieces of evidence” the government presented during the trial for example pointing to the victim’s testimony when he said in his own words that when they got in front of the CCCAS church in Iliili, the defendant opened his pants and exposed himself to him while he was driving; and he tried to get out of the vehicle but he could not.

Yet in his written statement to police, Uiagalelei said it shows no evidence that the victim told these things to police when he was questioned on the day of the alleged incident.

The victim also stated in his testimony that he was really scared and terrified when the defendant forced him to touch his private parts, which caused him to run down the mountain, but when the defendant’s vehicle come back and offered him a ride, he got back inside the vehicle.

About the mysterious Santa Claus hat, Uiagalelei told the jurors that if it was evidence in this case, the government should have presented it during the trial — but it wasn’t presented.

“Did this hat really belong to the victim? We don’t know — nothing was done by police to make sure the hat belonged to the victim. All we have is an assumption from the government made by a young police officer, who was a trainee at the time, of the alleged offense, because the lead investigator is no longer working as a police officer,” Uiagalelei told the jurors.

“So - the government is failed to prove this case. Their burden in this case is to prove all elements of these charges to you beyond a reasonable doubt, and because they failed, I ask you to acquit my client for all of these charges,” the defense attorney concluded.

And they did.

Dad who tried to attack Nassar doesn’t want donations

CHARLOTTE, Mich. (AP) — A man who tried to attack former sports doctor Larry Nassar in a Michigan courtroom is thanking people who donated \$31,000 online but says he doesn’t want the money.

Randy Margraves says refunds are available. After March 9, any money in the GoFundMe account will be donated to groups that help victims of physical abuse.

Margraves had no role in the GoFundMe effort. He thanked fellow members of the Interna-

tional Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Margraves’ three daughters said they were sexually assaulted by Nassar, the former Michigan State University doctor who molested gymnasts and other females with his hands.

Margraves last week appeared in court in Eaton County, Michigan, and tried to attack Nassar, but sheriff’s deputies stopped him. He apologized to the judge and said he lost control.



American Samoa Government OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT

INVITATION FOR BIDS IFB-010-2018

Issuance Date: February 2, 2018

Closing Date: February 13, 2018

No later than 2:00p.m. (local time)

1. INVITATION

Sealed bids are invited from qualified firms to provide “Utulei, Su’igaula and Faga’alu Park Shoreline Protection” for the Office of Parks and Recreation.

2. RECEIPT & OPENING OF BIDS

Sealed bids will be received by the Chief Procurement Officer, American Samoa Government, Tafuna, American Samoa 96799, until 2:00 p.m. (local time), **Friday, February 13, 2018** at which time and place the sealed bids will be publicly opened and read.

3. MANDATORY PRE-BID MEETING

A **MANDATORY** Pre-Bid Meeting for all contractors will be held on February 9, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. at the Department of Procurement-Conference Room. Bids will not be accepted from bidders who are not present at the pre-bid meeting.

4. CONTRACT DOCUMENTS

Electronic copies of contract documents, including Plans and Scope of Work can be examined or obtained from the Office of Procurement during regular business hours free of charge.

5. The American Samoa Government reserves the right not to accept the lowest or any bid.

6. The American Samoa Government reserves the right to waive any informality in bidding as may be in the best interest of American Samoa Government.

DR. ORETA MAPU CRICHTON
Chief Procurement Officer

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House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wis., center, leaves the podium as he turns toward Rep. Mac Thornberry, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, left, after a news conference, Thursday, Feb. 8, 2018, on Capitol Hill in Washington. The Republican-led Congress on Thursday was rounding up support for a bipartisan budget bill that would put the government on track for annual deficits topping \$1 trillion, a gap last seen toward the end of Obama's first term.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

Budget plan's \$1 trillion deficit sours some Republicans

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans rode the tea party wave to power eight years ago on a message of fiscal responsibility and attacking budget deficits, and kept at it during President Barack Obama's two terms. That was then.

The Republican-led Congress on Thursday was rounding up support for a bipartisan budget bill that would put the government on track for annual deficits topping \$1 trillion, a gap last seen toward the end of Obama's first term.

The projection for massive budget deficits has split Republicans. Dedicated fiscal conservatives criticized the plan while others accepted it as a necessary compromise to shore up military spending and keep the government running after a short-lived shutdown last month.

"I think the spending in this is reckless and irresponsible," said Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., a conservative who is backed by the tea party.

Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., said the budget agreement was "doubling down on the irresponsible mentality in Congress of spend now, pay later. To say I am discouraged by the outcome of these negotiations would be an understatement."

Corker voted for the recent Republican tax cut after raising similar concerns in the weeks leading up to the vote.

Republicans are pinning their long-term hopes on their \$1.5 trillion tax cut, which they say eventually will stimulate enough economic growth to help reduce the deficit. GOP leaders were using that argument and a desire to boost military spending to sell the

budget plan. Congress needs to approve a spending bill by midnight Thursday to avoid a partial government shutdown.

Many in the GOP ranks were willing to sign on despite the soaring deficit.

"It all comes down to one thing — economic growth. That's where you take care of the debt and deficit," said Rep. Dennis Ross, R-Fla.

Republicans supporting the package include defense hawks who say military readiness has been harmed by years of automatic budget cuts known as sequestration. The budget bill boosts defense spending by \$165 billion over two years.

"If you vote no, you're voting against fixing the military," said Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Conservative angst about the growing deficit was valid, he said, "but you are not going to fix them by cutting our military or by failing to provide the equipment that our troops need."

Other lawmakers cited the need to keep the government running and boost domestic spending on infrastructure and programs such as community health centers. The budget plan also was drawing support from Republicans representing states that would benefit from \$89 billion in aid to speed recovery from last year's hurricanes and wildfires. Still, some Republican lawmakers and conservative activists worried that the deal reinforces the notion that congressional Republicans are not delivering on their promises to slash spending and reduce the size of government.

Continued from page 10

Internet...

Barlow was born in rural Sublette County, Wyoming, in 1947 and raised near Pinedale, where his parents were ranchers and his father a state senator.

Barlow has said he grew up as a devout Mormon before leaping into the counterculture of the 1960s. He befriended Bob Weir, one of the Grateful Dead's founding members, when they were boarding school classmates at the Fountain Valley School in Colorado. Barlow graduated from Wesleyan University in 1969.

He later returned to Wyoming, where he ran the family cattle ranch for nearly two decades and dabbled in Republican politics. It was as a rancher in the 1980s that he first began exploring the web's early social networks.

"He saw very clearly that it was a way for those who had previously been disempowered

to have a voice and to have agency, be able to express themselves and connect with kindred spirits," said software entrepreneur and EFF co-founder Mitch Kapor.

Kapor and Barlow began collaborating after both were sought out by FBI agents trying to investigate computer crimes.

"They didn't know what they were doing," Kapor said of the agents. "Men with guns, who aren't competent, is very scary."

The duo partnered with another software entrepreneur, John Gilmore, to create the EFF, which hired lawyers and sought to raise awareness about the importance of protecting civil liberties online. Although Barlow wasn't trained in computer science, his charm, oratory skills and big philosophical visions helped propel the cause forward, Kapor said.



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PUBLIC JOB POSTING

Position Title	PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST	Posting Date	January 30, 2018
Department	Procurement	Deadline	February 12, 2018, 4:00 pm
Division	Support Services	Pay Rate	\$14.06/hr - \$15.38/h4
Position Type	Career Service (12 months probation)	Job Grade/Status	H/5/B-H/7/B, Non-Exempt
Reports To	Procurement Supervisor		

Major Duties & Responsibilities

The Procurement Specialist is responsible for managing, administering, and maintaining contracts for ASPA. This position is responsible for assuring compliance with ASPA Contract Policy, drafting initial agreements as needed, reviewing and processing contracts from draft to final agreement, and maintaining a centralized contract database. The Procurement Specialist is also responsible for resolving any existing contract conflicts, serving as a liaison between internal and external parties during contract development and negotiation stages, performing legal research, and reviewing and making recommendations on outside contracts proposed to be entered into by ASPA. This position is also responsible for:

- Managing vendor relationships and overseeing order placement (including raw materials).
- Tracking overall spending and improving bidding processes.
- Performing price negotiations, purchase order creations, order tracking and management, and price dispute resolutions.
- Finding quality goods or services at an acceptable price that meets ASPA's needs.
- Soliciting bids to procure a variety of required goods and services.
- Assisting with contract termination procedures.
- Performing basic analyses for firm fixed-price or similar contracts.
- Participating as a team member on an acquisition management review team or on an equivalent assignment.
- Conducting basic procurement procedures and techniques; performing commonly used contract methods and types related to pre-award, post-award and/or price/cost analysis functions to perform well-defined and precedent contract actions.
- Analyzing business practices and market conditions to evaluate bid responsiveness, contractor responsibility, and contractor performance.
- Presenting factual information; composing memoranda, minutes, and reports; drafting contract provisions and supporting documents.
- Soliciting sources of supply and analyzing prices, discount rates, delivery dates, transportation charges, previous performance, commitments and indications of financial responsibility, and recommending the most advantageous offer.
- Assigning work in terms of objectives, priorities and deadlines and providing additional assistance with new or unusual assignments.
- Planning and carrying out recurring work using established procedures, conferring with the supervisor or higher-level specialists as necessary on technical problems.
- Reviewing purchase orders, contracts, change orders, addendums etc. for accuracy and for compliance with the ASPA procurement rules.
- Renewing, preparing, authorizing, and/or recommending contract extensions, approving and verifying invoices and contract pay applications to be paid.
- Analyzing and maintaining up-to-date knowledge of market trends, pricing availability, capacity, technology and supplier capability relative to products and parts.

Minimum Requirements

Education	Bachelor's degree preferred and/or paralegal certification by diploma from accredited institution.
Experience	Three to five years experience in contract draft, review and/or administration is preferred. Additional experience including legal research with a focus on corporate and contract work is a plus.
Knowledge, Skills & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Must be proficient in Windows and MS Office Programs, including Word, Excel and Access.Must be detail oriented, organized, have an ability to work independently and to multi-taskMust possess knowledge of organizational documents and have ability to perform legal research.Must be personable, responsive, able to interact with attorneys and work with various other people in the Network including Senior Leaders, Department Directors and Administrators, as well as third parties.

Qualified applicants: Please submit a completed ASPA Employment Application with a copy of your resume to ASPA (address listed above) by the deadline. Please attach copies of credentials and transcripts. Candidates selected for hire must pass examinations (when applicable), pre-employment clearances & test negative on employment drug test. ASPA reserves the right to waive education and experience requirements as necessary.

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► Pacific...

Continued from page 5

said, noting that almost 90% of Samoa’s communal land mass remains idle and undeveloped.

And the amendments contained in the Alienation of Customary Land Amendment Bill 2017, tabled in Parliament, addresses these concerns.

“The amendments,” reiterated the Deputy Prime Minister “is for the protection of Samoa’s inheritance, our customary lands.”

She reassured that the amendments are also designed to strengthen the provisions relating to leasing and licensing of customary land.

[Source: Samoa Observer]
TOP CHEF’S NEW ROLE TO ADDRESS OBESITY IN PACIFIC

Celebrity chef Robert Oliver has been appointed to a special Fiji-based UN role on healthy living.

Mr Oliver is the new Advocate for Food, Sustainable Development and Wellbeing with the United Nations Development Programme in Fiji.

The role was created after a study by the World Health Organisation placed Pacific countries in the top ten nations for youth obesity rates.

Obesity leads to non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

The appointment is recognition not only of Mr Oliver’s passion for Pacific cuisine but his knowledge of how good nutrition can play a role in reducing the risk of NCDs, the Samoa Observer reported.

[Source: RNZI]
NEW ZEALAND P.M. HEADING TO SAMOA

New Zealand’s Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, is poised to make her first official trip to Samoa in March.

The plan was confirmed by New Zealand’s High Commissioner, David Nicholson, during the local celebration of Waitangi Day on Tuesday night.

According to the New Zealand High Commissioner, the New Zealand Prime Minister will be heading here with a vested interest in a programme that will focus on themes such as climate change, gender issues, youth and multilateralism.

He said Ms. Ardern has a strong interest in Samoa as her father was based here in Samoa as the New Zealand Police Liaison Officer for the South Pacific from 2009 to 2013.

“Ross Ardern he is currently the High Commissioner of Niue. He has recently been appointed as Tokelau’s administrator and he will be coming here quite a

bit,” said Mr. Nicholson.

“So her father and mother have lived here for three years and so we understand that she has a strong interest in this country.”

The New Zealand High Commissioner added that he is looking forward to Prime Minister Ardern’s visit.

“My personal observations is we’re seeing a generational change in politics in New Zealand,” he said.

“That’s an age change so people like me who are at the end of the baby boomers are moving out and the new generation is moving in and I think younger people have a different world view that looks at collective benefit than individual competition.

“I think you are seeing that in the ability to donate time to go to Waitangi, she was there for five days along with some of her ministers and demonstrating the ability to spend the time on a relationship, one that has had grievances, positives and negatives in it.

[Source: Samoa Observer]
SAMOA GOVT TO REQUIRE NEWSPAPERS TO REGISTER WITH MINISTRY

The Samoan government is putting into practice a 25 year old law which requires newspapers and printing firms to register with the Justice Ministry.

The Samoa Observer reports, CEO of the Justice Ministry, Papali’i John Taimalelagi, saying a “lapse” had been uncovered during a routine review of acts under his mandate.

The Newspapers and Printers Act 1993 drew condemnation from local and international media organisations and practitioners when it was first introduced in Parliament.

It was widely seen as a tool being used by then Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana and the Human Rights Protection Party to curb criticism from the media.

The biggest complaint by media was the requirement in the act for publishers to reveal names of sources under an order of the court.

Papali’i has written to all newspapers “circulating in Samoa” advising of the new requirement.

New Zealand and Australian based newspapers could be required to register under the decree.

Papali’i has given March 1 as the deadline for registration.

[Source: RNZI]

► With...

Continued from page 12

Washington.

Addressing tens of thousands of troops and civilians assembled on the square below him, Kim said the parade marks North Korea’s emergence as a “global military power” despite facing the “worst sanctions.” He called for his military to maintain a high level of combat readiness against the United States and its followers to keep them from infringing upon “the republic’s sacred dignity and autonomy even by 0.001 millimeters.”

He made no mention of the Olympics in the parts of his speech that were broadcast. It was unclear whether the North showed the entirety of his speech during the recorded coverage of the parade.

The tone was in line with Kim’s bigger strategy of late.

He has been making a major diplomatic push toward South Korea since he announced a last-minute proposal to send a delegation of athletes, officials and entertainers to the Pyeongchang games during his annual New Year’s address.

The moves have been generally welcomed in the South.

Even as the missiles

were rolling by his viewing stand, South Korean officials announced that Kim’s younger sister, due to attend Friday’s opening ceremony, will have a luncheon with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. That in itself is a major breakthrough for the Koreans. Kim Yo Jong is one of Kim Jong Un’s closest confidants and she will be the first member of the Kim family to visit the South.

Overshadowing most of the unease over the parade, South Korean television networks have focused on groups of North Korean musicians practicing for congratulatory concerts during the games, and a welcoming ceremony for the North’s competitors at the athletes’ village. With cameras filming it all, young South Korean men did a breakdance and an all-female North Korean band played songs recognizable on either side of the Demilitarized Zone.

Kim’s two-pronged strategy has put the United States in an odd position.

Vice President Mike Pence arrived in South Korea on Thursday vowing to send a strong message to the North that it must abandon its nuclear

weapons. But that message may seem a bit off key to many South Koreans who are more open to see the North’s recent moves as a positive step, though by no means a final solution, and are at times vociferously wary of American meddling.

Though possibly best known for their legions of goose-stepping troops, North Korean military parades are the country’s primary means of showing off its most recent advances in military technology — sometimes with aspirational mock-ups.

Kim, dressed in a long black winter coat, was shown walking on a red carpet with his wife at the beginning of the event, which began with thousands of goose-stepping troops lined up in Kim Il Sung Square to form giant slogans. Virtually all foreign media were excluded from the event.

Though fewer in number, all of the basic components were brought out again on Thursday.

One of the North’s ICBMs — the Hwasong-15 — was wheeled out along with a variety of other missiles, including a Hwasong-12 midrange missile, which the North flew over Japan twice last year.

► South Korea...

Continued from page 6

North Korean delegation will also include Kim Yong Nam, the country’s nominal head of state, and Choe Hwi, chairman of the country’s National Sports Guidance Committee.

South Korean media had speculated North Korea would create another sanctions-related headache by insisting on sending its senior officials via the U.S.-boycotted Air Koryo. However,

North Korea informed the South on Thursday that the delegation including Kim Yo Jong will arrive on a private jet on Friday hours ahead of the Olympics’ opening ceremony.

Neither Kim Yo Jong nor Kim Yong Nam are among the North Korean officials black-listed under U.N. sanctions. However, the U.S. Treasury Department last year included

Kim Yo Jong on its list of black-listed officials over her position as vice director of the ruling Workers’ Party’s Propaganda and Agitation Department.

The U.N. committee monitoring sanctions against North Korea has proposed granting an exemption for Choe, who has been on the U.N. sanctions blacklist since June last year.

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Following more than 30 years, our family business continues to invest in the same core values that sparked the union between Samoa Florist and our Miss American Samoa-Miss South Pacific. Your heart of gold became a woman of strength, faith and perseverance. Your humility gave strength to those whose lives you've touched and brought courage to those who lacked conviction. You have been a blessing to our family, and our community. You will be dearly missed by all.

Our family in her honor pays tribute to a phenomenal woman and a precious gift to American Samoa. You have fought the good fight, you have finished the race, and you have kept your faith. Rest in Love Miss American Samoa-Miss South Pacific Juliette Spencer Sword.

Love,

*The Liu Family
3BEVS Corporation &
LeFonuea Enterprises*

