



Members of the Football Federations of American Samoa (FFAS), Fano and Terry Shimasaki, along with Amio Luvu and Sandra Fruean with their EMS friend Ilalio – as they came out to support the ongoing 2018 OFC Champions League Qualifiers, hosted by FFAS at their Pago Soccer Stadium. Coverage of the 2018 Qualifier is sponsored by Congresswoman Aumua Amata. (Read full story in tomorrow's Samoa News)

[photo: TG]



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\$1.00

Three arrested for alleged involvement in a counterfeit food stamp scheme

DEFENDANTS INCLUDE 2 DHSS EMPLOYEES AND AN ASIAN BUSINESS OWNER

by Ausage Fausia
Samoa News Reporter

Two employees of the Department of Human and Social Services (DHSS) and a vendor of the American Samoa Nutrition Assistance Program (ASNAP) have been arrested in connection with a case involving food stamp fraud. The three defendants made their initial appearances in District Court last Friday.

The two DHSS employees are Jane Vasa and Vincent Toeava, and the vendor is Liren Zhang, a.k.a Kevin.

Another business owner is named as a party in the affidavit of support obtained by Samoa News but he is yet to be arrested or charged and it is unknown at this time if he will be.

District Court Judge Fiti Sunia set bail at \$450,000 each for Toeava and Kevin, and \$10,000 for Vasa. All three are currently in custody at the TCF, unable to post bond.

Vasa is being charged with one count of criminal fraud, a class C felony punishable by up to 7 years in jail or a fine of up to \$5,000 or both.

Specifics on the charges against Toeava and Kevin could not be obtained as of press time.

According to the government's case, DPS Commissioner Le'i S. Thompson assigned Captain Pierre R.G. Clemens of the DPS Internal Affairs Section to investigate the issue on Jan. 15, 2018.

According to the affidavit, the matter was brought to the DHSS Director Muavaefaatasi John Suisala's attention on Jan.

4, 2018 by the ASNAP Acting Assistant Director following her quick review of what caused the depletion of ASNAP funds for the first quarter of fiscal year 2018 (Q1 2018).

It was reported that the ANZ Bank redeemed \$667,555 more during the first quarter of 2018 than what ASNAP issued to its recipients.

In a review that followed, conducted by the DHSS and ASNAP management team, it was discovered that excessively high amounts of counterfeit ASNAP food coupons were redeemed by three ASNAP authorized retailers during this period.

Of the three retailers, two are owned by the same person while the third is owned by the individual, who as previously noted — has not been arrested or charged to date.

Two of the three retailers owned by defendant Kevin are: "JFL Malae Store" and "Fast By Food Mart".

Court documents state that police discovered during a preliminary review of redeemed coupons in Q1 2018 by ANZ Bank that the counterfeits bore the same serial numbers and were in \$10 denominations only, and were stamped for deposit by the same three retailers.

(Samoa News points out that the activities referred to occurred last year, when the late Taeaoafua Meki Solomona held the post of DHSS director. Taeaoafua passed away on Dec. 11, 2017, while at work, at his DHSS office.)

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OCEAN STAR IN NU'UULI BURNS DOWN



Pictured are fire trucks from the DPS Fire Bureau, along with police officers on the main road fronting Ocean Star store in Nu'uuli where a heavy cloud of smoke is seen. The store caught fire early yesterday morning, causing a major traffic jam, in both directions - heading west and into town. Those heading into town from the west side, claimed to have been stuck in traffic for more than an hour.

Department of Public Safety/Fire Bureau has an ongoing investigation into the cause of the fire. No one was injured.

An eyewitness at the scene told Samoa News that the fire is believed to have started from the back of the store, which opened at 5a.m. The eyewitness further stated the fire started after 5:30a.m. The store's doors were closed and the Fire Bureau was immediately contacted for assistance.

Those who work at the store, rushed outside to remove the gas tanks and relocate them away from the store. They were assisted by neighbors, who rushed out to lend a helping hand.

A police unit promptly arrived not long thereafter, followed by fire trucks. Others at the scene told Samoa News that police and fire response was fast. Samoa News learned from others at the scene that the inside of the store was completely damaged by the fire.

[photo: Leua Aiono Frost]



Philippine volcano spreads lava almost 2 miles from crater

LEGAZPI, Philippines (AP) — Lava fountaining regularly from the Philippines' most active volcano has flowed up to 3 kilometers (1.86 miles) from the crater in a dazzling but increasingly dangerous eruption.

Mount Mayon has spewed lava up to 600 meters (2,000 feet) high at times Tuesday and early Wednesday and its ash plumes stretched up to 5 kilometers (3 miles) above the crater. Lava flows in two gulches had advanced down the volcano's slopes more than a kilometer (.6 miles) and pyroclastic flows — superheated gas and volcanic debris — had reached 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the crater in one area, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said Wednesday morning.

An explosion from the crater at nightfall Tuesday was capped by one of the most massive lava displays since Mayon started erupting more than a week ago. Authorities on Monday expanded the no-go zone to 8 kilometers (5 miles) from the crater and have warned a violent eruption may occur in hours or days, characterized by more rumblings and pyroclastic flows that will vaporize everything in their path.

At least 56,217 people were taking shelter in 46 evacuation camps Tuesday and army

troops and police were helping others leave the danger zone.

Authorities, however, struggled to prevent villagers from sneaking back to check on their homes and farms and to watch a popular cockfight in Albay's Santo Domingo town despite the risks and police patrols and checkpoints.

In a sign of desperation, Cedric Daep, a provincial disaster response official, told a news conference that he has recommended electricity and water supplies be cut within the no-go zones to discourage residents from returning.

"If pyroclastic flows hit people, there is no chance for life," Daep said. "Let us not violate the natural law, avoid the prohibited zone, because if you violate, the punishment is the death penalty."

Volcanic ash has darkened the skies over nearby villages in coconut-growing Albay province, where Mayon lies.

More than 30,000 ash masks, along with food, water and medicine, have been sent to the region, but officials have warned that relief supplies may run out by mid-February if the eruption continues and new supplies don't arrive in time.

Mayon has long been popular with climbers and tourists but has erupted about 50 times in the last 500 years, sometimes violently.



Members of the ASG Revenue Task Force during a hearing this week before the House Ways and Means committee to discuss two of the administration's revenue measures that were introduced in the House last week. See story for details.

[photo: AF]

ASG revenue measures still being debated in the House

TWO FAIPULE WANT TO MAKE CHANGES, THE REST DON'T

by Ausage Fausia
Samoa News Reporter

A motion by two faipule to allow one amendment to the House version of the Administration's revenue measure to increase the miscellaneous excise tax rate was denied by the House Ways and Means Committee during a brief discussion Monday.

Committee chairman, Lavea

Fatulegae Palepoi Mauga told the committee that adding amendments to the administration bill will make it hard for the governor to sign.

After a long hearing on Monday with members of the ASG Revenue Task Force, Rep. Vui Florence Saulo and Rep. Vesi Talalelei Fautanu Jr. introduced their amendments for the bill during committee discussion, although other lawmakers wanted to pass the bill without any changes.

Vui asked the committee to earmark 0.5% for road repairs while Vesi wanted to earmark another 0.5% for the hospital. Vui told the committee that roads are one of the most essential developments for the island, and because there is lack of funding to continue with road repairs, she wants to make sure there is funding for it.

Rep. Vaetasi Tuumolimoli Saena Moliga interrupted and advised the committee to stop trying to add more amendments to the Administration bill, as it will make their work harder. He said if there is a need in each district, each lawmaker can introduce their own bill with a source of funding to fulfill the needs within their districts.

Vui disagreed and told the committee this is why their districts voted them in, so they can find ways to better the lives of the people and help the government.

"This is our only chance with this administration bill. We're not trying to ignore what the government leaders are asking us to do, we're trying to do something good to help our people who are suffering day and night due to bad road conditions, so please, look ahead for the betterment of our people and don't just say whatever you want to say," said Vui.

Vesi, on the other hand, told the committee this is their only chance to jump in and make amendments.

"We're asking for only 0.5%

from this bill to help with our hospital, because once this bill is passed and gone, we will never have another chance to make amendments in the future. We're talking about the need to upgrade our hospital, the need to have more doctors and those specialists from off island to help our people with their health conditions, but we cannot afford to do all those things if we don't have the funds," said Vesi.

Rep. Kitara Vaiau told the committee the reason why there's a lot of problems in government right now, is because the Treasurer and his department are not doing their job, and there is no control on government spending.

After the committee's brief discussion, the majority of the lawmakers voted on the motion to report the bill to the floor for second reading, without any amendments.

BEER TAX

The four members of the ASG Revenue Task Force who appeared before the House Ways and Means Committee were ASG Treasurer Ueligitone Tonumaip'e'a; Deputy Treasurer Keith Gebauer; Budget Director Cathy Saelua; and Deputy AG Lorelei Meredith.

When questioned by faipule, the witnesses said ASG needs additional revenues to operate and provide critical public services such as medical and police services.

The flat rate for the beer tax was once again explained by Tonumaip'e'a, as the best way to levy the tax, which in its new form basically means 35-cents per can.

When asked by the committee about how much the government is estimated to collect with the proposed change, Tonumaip'e'a said it all depends on the volume coming in. Under the current taxing system, the Treasurer said ASG collects about \$1.5 million just for beer alone. So if the volume of

(Continued on page 5)



Employment Opportunity in Banking

ANZ Guam, Inc dba ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank is hiring and establishing a list of candidates for the following full time position:

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This employment opportunity is open to all qualified candidates, individuals with disabilities, and military veterans who are willing, able and available to perform the job, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex and citizenship.

If this is an opportunity that interests you, all resumes are to be received before Sunday, January 28, 2018 to kathy.manipol-mcdonald@anz.com. All resumes will be handled confidentially and confidential calls may be made directly to Kathy Manipol-McDonald, Head of HR at 671.479.9023.

WE ARE AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



COURT REPORT

by Fili Sagapolutele

Samoa News Correspondent

FA'AILI TAUFUSI MATA'U

A 41-year old drug defendant — who was asleep at a bus stop in Tafuna before he was detained by police for possession of crystal methamphetamine and marijuana — has entered into a plea agreement with the government and sentencing is set for next month.

Fa'a'ili Taufusi Mata'u, a.k.a 'Whistle' is charged with one count each of unlawful possession of a controlled substance — methamphetamine and marijuana — both felonies. Mata'u appeared in High Court on Monday for his change of plea hearing.

Under the plea agreement, the government amended the two original charges down to a Class D - still felonies - with each count punishable by up to 5 years imprisonment, up to a \$5,000 fine, or both.

For his guilty plea, the defendant admitted that on or around Oct. 29, 2017, he was in possession of methamphetamine and marijuana. According to information announced in court, the guilty pleas for both counts relate to the quantity of meth and marijuana in the defendant's possession at the time of

his arrest.

Responding to questions from Chief Justice Michael Kruse, the defendant said he doesn't know or recall the amount — or quantity — of meth and marijuana that was in his possession when he was arrested by police. The defendant acknowledged that he was sleeping at a bus stop when he was detained.

According to court documents, police found various items in a container which was in the defendant's possession. The items included 4 plastic baggies with white powder-like residue; 1 1/4 clear plastic baggie white powder-like residue; 1 small baggie containing crystalline substance; 1 medium clear plastic baggie with powder-like residue; 1 medium plastic baggie containing crystalline substance; 1 MC orange rolling paper, and 1 hand-rolled cigarette.

A body search of Mata'u netted a clear blue tip pipe with a bulb inside his right pocket. The glass pipe contained what appeared to be white powder-like residue. Inside the defendant's left pants pocket, cops allegedly found a small clear container with what appeared to be a green leafy substance.

The items tested positive for both methamphetamine and marijuana.

Mata'u, who remains in custody unable to post bail, will be sentenced on Feb. 26th.

TUNA TALIPOPE LEPOU SUITULAGA

Also scheduled for sentencing Feb. 26th is Tuna Tali-pope Lepou Suitulaga, who was initially charged with first degree burglary but under a plea agreement, the defendant pled guilt on Monday to an amended count of second degree burglary, which is still a felony, for unlawful entry to commit the crime of stealing.

Under the plea agreement, the 22-year old defendant admitted that around Aug. 5, 2017 he removed a screen wire off a window at Siliaga Elementary School and entered into a room where he stole a computer that belonged to someone else.

Asked by Kruse about what he did with the computer, Suitulaga said nothing, adding that it was turned over to police. Suitulaga remains in custody, unable to post bail.

For these two cases — Mata'u and Suitulaga — Kruse was assisted on the bench by Associate Judges Fa'amausili P. Pomele and Muasau T. Tofili.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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FOR SALE

EXECUTIVE HOUSE AND 0.229 ACRES OF LAND

This house and land are located in Pava'ia'i. The house has 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 bathrooms, a modern kitchen, large living and dining area, family room and a two-car garage. The property is fenced. The house is offered for sale with the following items included:

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The Level 3 MC Armor bullet proof vest is appropriate gear for territorial law enforcement. It ventilates well, and gives user option of wear under uniform or undercover.

The company (www.mcarmor.com) also supplies stronger Level 4 & 5 protection for SWAT teams and active duty combat.

[photo: Barry Markowitz, 1/23/18, 3pm]

US pulled multiple ways in Syria as Islamic State recedes

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the last few years, the United States could neatly sum its objective in Syria in a single, uncontroversial bullet point: fighting the Islamic State group. Now that the extremists have been squeezed from all but the last bits of their former territory, the Trump administration is struggling to define the boundaries of its mission, and how and when America’s lengthy engagement will end.

A crisis between the U.S. and Turkey, triggered by the latter’s new military offensive in Syria, has laid bare how a dizzying array of alliances in Syria is growing even more convoluted in the absence of IS as a major force. Either the Americans must abandon the Kurds who fought alongside them in Syria, or a profound rift with a NATO ally appears all but inevitable.

Although Turkey has long been incensed by U.S. military support for Syrian Kurdish fighters, calling them terrorists, the U.S. could make a compelling case while the Kurds spearheaded the anti-IS fight. As IS recedes as an immediate threat, the legs of that argument are falling away, fueling growing Turkish outrage that even the Trump administration acknowledges has some merit.

“This is a tough circle to square. It’s the ultimate in heavy diplomatic lifting,” said Frederic Hof, who oversaw Syria policy in the Obama administration’s first term and is now at the Atlantic Council.

The Islamic State’s retreat also has forced the U.S. to stretch thinner its legal rationale for operating in Syria. Doing so has raised delicate questions about whether Congress and the American people have truly signed off on a mandate for Syria that goes far beyond killing terrorists.

Senior Trump administration officials said they need no additional authorization to be in Syria because IS remains a serious and persistent threat, requiring a continued U.S. presence to ensure it doesn’t regroup and again imperil Syria’s future. To keep IS on its heels, America’s military, diplomats and aid workers will work to stabilize the country and restore basic services in areas freed from IS control, while trying anew to engineer a political solution to the intractable civil war whose chaos IS so effectively exploited.

Such arguments create another problem, especially for a president often eager to claim successes: Trump cannot declare victory of any sort against IS in Syria without empowering those who argue IS’ defeat means the U.S. has no business staying in Syria.

Small pockets of IS fighters

still active in eastern Syria back up the U.S. justification — for now. On Tuesday, American airstrikes killed up to 150 IS fighters at a command center in the area known as the Middle Euphrates River Valley, the U.S.-led coalition said. The U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces — comprised largely of Kurdish fighters — helped.

The U.S. sees another threat in al-Qaida’s potential resurgence. It also wants to stem Iran’s growing influence in Syria and Russia’s support for Syrian President Bashar Assad. With Moscow’s help, Assad’s forces have moved into territory once held by Washington-backed rebels. The Trump administration’s messaging Tuesday highlighted Syria’s combustible mix of conundrums for the United States. In Asia, Defense Secretary James Mattis chastised Turkey for its offensive against the Kurds. And Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in Paris and U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley at the United Nations renewed accusations of Russian complicity in chemical weapons use, following claims of a new attack this week outside Damascus.

“Whoever conducted the attacks, Russia ultimately bears responsibility for the victims,” Tillerson said at a meeting designed to ensure accountability for chemical weapons strikes. He noted Russia has twice vetoed U.N. Security Council resolutions to allow inspection teams to prolong and expand probes of alleged chemical attacks.

Trying to explain America’s Syria policy last week, Tillerson said the U.S. would retain a military presence there for the foreseeable future to prevent IS or al-Qaida from regaining territory. He cited another objective, too: assisting with reconstruction projects to encourage Syrians to reject Assad.

Turkey’s angst about growing Kurdish strength near its border boiled over in recent days with the Turks launching a military operation against Afrin, a Kurdish-held enclave in northern Syria.

Turkey considers Syrian Kurdish forces to be intrinsically linked to the PKK, an insurgency the Turks have battled for decades. The U.S. concurs that PKK fighters are terrorists, but insists that its Kurdish partners in Syria are unconnected to that group.

Turkey and the Kurds, who led the offensive to retake the former IS capital of Raqqa, feel entitled to U.S. support. So the Trump administration has tried to split the difference, acknowledging Turkey’s security concerns while urging “restraint.” That balance hasn’t quelled the situation.

Amata Welcomes Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Authorization and End of Shutdown

Washington, D.C. — Tuesday, January 23, 2018 — Congresswoman Aumua Amata welcomed Congressional action authorizing the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for six years, and ending the unnecessary government shutdown late Monday.

Congresswoman Amata is pleased that CHIP, a priority which helps ensure access to medical care for many children in American Samoa, is no longer dependent on short term authorization, but in place for the traditional six years. President Trump signed the bill into law immediately Monday night.

“Authorization of CHIP for six years is great news for American Samoa, and I’m

pleased the unnecessary government shutdown ended quickly,” said Aumua Amata. “The Children’s Health Insurance Program helps make sure health care services are available to many children. Once again, we can count on this important plan being available to take care of needs and help keep children healthy.”

Congress had previously extended the program in late December 2017 for several months as part of a short-term government funding bill. Instead of repeating the temporary fix, this time the House passed a full renewal of the CHIP program. A Friday vote in the Senate initially defeated the House-passed CHIP reauthorization and shut down the

government, but Congress voted again on Monday.

This time, it passed, once again funding the government for several weeks and sending CHIP to the President’s desk to be signed into law for the next six years.

“It’s good to see this priority for our children completed for the next six years, along with the end of a government shutdown that simply should not have happened at all,” concluded Congresswoman Amata. “I was deeply disappointed by Friday’s Senate vote to shut down the government, but I’m glad it was short-lived and Congress has renewed CHIP, which puts this essential program back on track for years to come.”



Turkish Army soldiers form a convoy of armoured personnel carriers near the border with Syria, in the outskirts of Hassa, Turkey, Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018. Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has announced that a second Turkish soldier has been killed in action in Turkey’s military offensive on a Kurdish-held enclave in northern Syria.

(Caglar Ozturk/DHA-Depo Photos via AP)

► Three...

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Based on the court affidavit, it was suspected that Toeava (Taeaoafua’s son-in-law) who works as a DHSS ASNAP Retailer/ Redemption Officer — tasked with monitoring ASNAP retailer compliance and reconcile Food Stamp coupons redeemed from the bank — “may be involved in the foregoing fraudulent scheme.”

Internal inquiries disclosed that coupons issued in FY 2017 and redeemed in October 2017 had been altered to benefit ‘JFL Malae Store’ and ‘Fast By Food Mart’.

The total value of the coupons involved amounted to \$94,126 of which most were altered and an audit is currently being conducted to ascertain the actual amount.

According to police records, it was posited that the counterfeits could easily be made using a copier machine.

The two important things

to have to produce counterfeit food coupons is a printout from the Talofa system of food coupons on a plain sheet of paper, and the special coupon paper — both are stored and secured in a vault at the ASNAP Issuance Office.

The special coupon paper has a built-in watermark that highlights the word “VOID” when copies are made using a copier machine; hence the need to have the food coupons printed on plain white paper.

During the course of the investigation, police were able to interview others pertaining to the case.

One witness, a DHSS employee, alleges that it was sometime during October 2016 that Toeava approached her and attempted to coax her into giving him blank Food Stamp printing paper under the pretext of ‘using it to generate capital’ for the purpose of starting a

business wherein she would be partner.

The witness told the police she refused the offer, basically citing it was illegal for her to do so. But Toeava persisted and after the witness refused to accommodate his request for the next 2-3 days, Toeava eventually gave up.

Kevin was also questioned by police, and told them that it was sometime in May 2017 that he spoke to the late DHSS director Taeaoafua Meki Solomona at his office about a WIC-related problem. According to Kevin, he was a close friend of “Meki Solomona”.

According to the government, Kevin started a car rental business (Malae Rental) with two vehicles in 2016; and it was during the May 2017 meeting that according to Kevin, Solomona asked him how business was going and he told him that his car rental business was not

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DoH doctors and nurses are serving the community, says director

by Fili Sagapolutele
Samoa News Correspondent

Health Director Motusa Tuileama Nua informed a Senate committee hearing last week that DoH is looking at sending a team to StarKist Samoa to help with the process of issuing health cards, in an effort to alleviate the overcrowding of the DoH clinic at Fagaalu, as there are other members of the community that use the clinic for health cards and physical tests. (See Samoa News Jan. 17th edition for details).

He also noted that DoH doctors and nurses are serving well at the department's health clinics in Tafuna — despite the public's complaints about the long wait time.

StarKist Samoa has expressed appreciation to government directors, including Motusa, for their willingness to help cannery workers fulfill legal requirements, for which employment at the cannery is contingent.

Motusa met Jan. 13th with StarKist Samoa official Taotasi Archie Soliai to explore ways to help with the issuance of health cards for cannery workers. It's unclear when the DoH will send a team to assist cannery workers at the Atu'u plant, but Motusa is looking at conducting a clinic between 4p.m to 6p.m. or even the weekend.

Responding to Samoa News inquiries, Taotasi said Starkist Samoa "appreciates the willingness and supportive efforts" of ASG directors, such as the Health director, "to help the cannery employees fulfill their legal requirements so they can continue their employment."

"Our meeting [with DoH] was very productive and we look forward to further collaboration with director Motusa and his DoH Team towards this shared goal," Taotasi said this week. Starkist Samoa resumed full production on Jan. 15th following a three week end-of-the-year shutdown. "We need all employees back at work as soon as possible," said Taotasi, who didn't immediately respond to follow up questions on how many cannery employees are still waiting for their health cards. One of the issues raised

by Motusa during the Senate hearing is the shortage of physicians at DoH. And this issue has been cited by lawmakers as the reason why the Fagaalu clinic is only open three times a week for health card services, with one physician assigned to Fagaalu.

According to the director, DoH has only eight physicians — five of whom are assigned to Primary Care, while one physician, DoH chief public health officer Tamasoali'i Dr. Joseph Tufa, who is based at the Fagaalu clinic, serves members of the public in need of a physical, and those needing health cards. The other two physicians are assigned to the Well Baby Program at the Tafuna clinic and the DoH Behavior Health. According to Motusa, there is one physician assigned to Manu'a for the clinics at Tau and Ofu islands.

He said DoH is looking at bringing on board five more physicians with a doctor recently arriving from Fiji and it will take about two weeks to process said physician for employment, as there are required background checks that need to be conducted before the doctor can start working at Primary Care.

Regarding concerns raised by the public over long waits at the Tafuna clinic, Motusa said one of the physicians, who is an off island contract doctor, is on leave for two months. He explained that all physicians currently at the Tafuna clinic work together in serving the community.

He explained that any patient who shows up at Tafuna will be served, as the doctors do their job to ensure that no one is turned away or leaves without being seen. And during lunch time, a physician or nursing staff member must be on duty to serve the public. If there are two doctors on duty, one works while the other takes lunch.

If 4p.m. closing time comes around and there are still members of the public waiting, physicians and nurses continue their work until all patients are served and this is allowed by the federal grantor, he said, adding that there are only 32 nurses at DoH.

Report: Conflicting California mudslide warnings issued

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (AP) — In the days before mudslides devastated California neighborhoods, officials released conflicting evacuation orders that left some hard-hit neighborhoods out of the warning zone, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office had posted on its website and on Facebook a list of voluntary and mandatory evacuation areas for the coastal town of Montecito, the Los Angeles Times reported.

A separate map on the county's website showed a larger voluntary evacuation zone that included homes not covered by the sheriff's list.

Of the 21 people killed in the mudslide, at least a dozen lived in areas that were covered by the county's evacuation map but not included in the Sher-

iff's Office warnings, according to records reviewed by the newspaper.

County officials acknowledged the discrepancy while emphasizing the many other measures taken to warn residents of the approaching storm — including emails, social media alerts, press releases and deputies going door to door in some areas.

"Regrettably, however, also 30 hours prior to the storms arrival, I approved a press release and Facebook that had discrepancies with the western boundary of our intended voluntary evacuation area," Robert Lewin, San Barbara County's director of the Office of Emergency Management, said in a statement.

The county issued both mandatory and voluntary evacuation warnings 30 hours

before the storm through an alerting system, county spokeswoman Gina DePinto said in a statement.

People were urged to go to an interactive map that accurately provided the locations of the evacuation areas and it received tens of thousands of views, she said.

In addition, the county sent out about 226,000 text and email messages and telephone calls, DePinto said.

Officials emphasized that all those who died were in a voluntary or mandatory evacuation zone and that the warnings probably saved more lives.

Questions remain about whether a broader evacuation warning would have made a difference. Officials estimated that only 15 percent of the residents in the mandatory evacuation

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AMERICAN SAMOA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Department of Agriculture Community and Natural Resources (ACNR)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Position Title: HEALTH AND FITNESS SPECIALIST
Employment Status: Full Time 12 months (Career Service)

General Description:

The ACNR Health and Fitness Specialist will work with ACNR Extension professionals to develop and deliver a variety of health fitness and program-specific physical fitness activities and promote an active, healthy lifestyle in the community. In addition, he/she will oversee the operation of the ASCC-ACNR Wellness Exercise Center to orient, assess, instruct, educate, and direct clients and visitors in a path that will correctly lead them to a healthier lifestyle. He/she will also be responsible for the Center scheduling, purchase requisitions, inventory, data, assessments, inquiries, maintenance, and reporting.

Job Duties and Responsibilities:

- Oversee the operation of the Wellness Center including, but not limited to, open/closing, schedules, purchase requisition, inventory, data, client recruitment and retention, assessments, attendance, reassessments, data collection, maintenance, and reporting.
- Supervise and oversee the correct use and operation of equipment and apparatus within the Center.
- Develop and deliver program-specific physical activities and actively promote and coordinate approved wellness activities and programs to increase adoption of healthy, active lifestyles in the community. Lead various exercise session requests for tours and outreach programs.
- Prepare and submit an updated plan of work and schedule and all biweekly, monthly, and annual reports for the Center.
- Enforce and document compliance on the part of the exercise facility and program as well as its clients to all legal and pre-exercise waivers and questionnaires and other health and safety requirements.
- Work with clients to assess physical health needs to ensure safe and effective exercise regime and conduct regular assessments to monitor progress and prescribe appropriate exercise programming.
- Develop a Wellness Program that can incorporate ASCC-ACNR as a team and that will implement interventions.
- Perform other relevant duties as assigned by supervisor or Director of ACNR.

Minimum Requirements:

- Bachelor degree in Health, Fitness, or related field.
- At least one year of experience in community-based promotion of active, healthy living; leading group exercise sessions; fitness assessments; and providing professional service to individuals to meet their health and fitness needs.
- Shows competence to properly operate and maintain fitness equipment.
- ACSM (American College of Sports Medicine), NASM (National Academy of Sports Medicine), NSCA (National Strength and Conditioning Academy) AFAA (Aerobics Fitness Association of America), or any NCCA- National Commission Certifying Agency recognized certification. Current CPR/AED and First Aid.

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Application Deadline: January 26, 2018 no later than 4:00pm.

Applications are available from American Samoa Community College, Human Resources Office at 699-9155 Ext. 403/335/436 or by emailing Silaulelei Saofaigaalii at s.saofaigaalii@amsamoa.edu or ascchumanresources@amsamoa.edu.

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ASG...

Continued from page 2

imported beer increases, revenue collections will go up as well.

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The Administration points out that the current rate has not been changed for many years and is in need of updating and adjusting to address new economic realities.

The current 5% tax would be increased from 5 to 8% with 75% of the revenues going to

the General Fund.

One million shall be appropriated for student financial aid and the remaining amount shall be earmarked for repairs and renovations of all public school facilities. The governor informed Fono leaders that without the increase of these revenues, American Samoa will continue to fall behind in proper funding for schools and education of our youth.



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Classmate: Girl tortured with siblings was bullied, frail



FILE - These undated photos provided by the Riverside County Sheriff's Department show David Allen Turpin, left, and Louise Anna Turpin. More than \$120,000 has been donated to help 13 siblings in California who authorities say were kept chained to beds for months by their parents, the Turpins, and starved so much that their growth was stunted.

(Riverside County Sheriff's Department via AP, file)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The oldest of the 13 California siblings who authorities said were imprisoned by their parents was frail, smelly and picked on as a grade school student in Texas, one of her classmates said in a heart-wrenching Facebook post.

The now-29-year-old woman was rescued with her starving brothers and sisters from their home in Perris, California, on Jan. 14. Neighbors and relatives said they were unaware of the children's treatment until authorities arrested the parents and revealed what they found inside.

Taha Muntajibuddin attended kindergarten through third grade with her in Fort Worth, Texas. After learning of the case, he shared on Facebook his "overwhelming sense of guilt and shame" over how she was treated.

Muntajibuddin, a pediatrics resident doctor in Houston who confirmed his post to The Associated Press, described her as "a frail girl, had pin-straight hair with bangs, and often wore the same purple outfit."

He wrote that it was jarring to learn that the girl, who was teased in school for being smelly, "quite literally had to sit in her own waste because she was chained to her bed."

"It is nothing but sobering to know that the person who

sat across from you at the lunch table went home to squalor and filth while you went home to a warm meal and a bedtime story," he wrote.

The post has elicited a strong reaction, with some condemning Muntajibuddin for his behavior as a child. Others praised him for addressing it.

Muntajibuddin said in an interview Tuesday that he was surprised by the reaction.

"It was just meant to be an honest lesson: take it or leave it," he said.

The AP is not naming the siblings because of the severity of abuse allegations, which are still under investigation. The AP also has not been able to talk to the children, including the 29-year-old, or anyone who can speak on their behalf.

Crowley Independent School District spokesman Anthony Kirchner confirmed Muntajibuddin and the victim attended the same school.

Kirchner said he was unable to confirm when she enrolled or when she left school, or whether any of her younger siblings attended, because districts are only required to keep elementary student records for five years.

Another classmate, Stephanie Hernandez, told the AP in a Facebook message that the girl was quiet and always wore dirt-stained jeans that were too

small. Hernandez said she often was bullied.

"I remember someone kind of slung her around like a rag doll," said Hernandez, a registered nurse in Mansfield, Texas.

Sheriff's deputies arrested David Turpin, 57, and Louise Turpin, 49, after their 17-year-old daughter climbed out a window and called 911. Authorities found the siblings, ages 2 to 29, in the family's filthy California home, three of whom were shackled to beds and all except the youngest child malnourished. The couple has pleaded not guilty to torture and other charges. The Riverside University Health System Foundation, which is collecting money for the siblings, so far has received 1,500 donations totaling \$120,000, spokeswoman Kim Trone. People from across the world also have been sending toys, blankets and clothing, she said.

About 20 people, including nurses and psychologists, have offered to take the seven adult siblings and six minors and keep them together, said Mary Parks, a spokeswoman for the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services.

"People from around the country are offering to foster them and adopt them," she said.

The siblings were all taken to hospitals, but Parks said she could not discuss their conditions. The agency typically seeks to place children with a relative and keep siblings together, she said.

Muntajibuddin said he is hopeful his former classmate can recover and live an enriched life. He said despite being bullied by her peers, she "was still one of the most pleasant people I have had the opportunity to meet. She had this whimsical optimism to her that couldn't be dampened, couldn't be doused no matter what anybody threw at her."

He said he has learned from his experience and hopes others do, too. "The resounding lesson here is a simple one, something that we're taught from the very beginning," Muntajibuddin wrote. "Be nice."

A look at some deadly US school shootings of years past

Authorities say a boy opened fire with a gun at a rural Kentucky high school Tuesday, fatally shooting two students and wounding several others. Here's a look at some recent U.S. school shootings, and some of the deadliest of years past:

— Dec. 7, 2017: Two students at Aztec High School in New Mexico were killed by a gunman disguised as a student. Police said the shooter later

killed himself.


— Sept. 13, 2017: A 15-year-old boy was killed at Freeman High School in Rockford, Washington, and three female students were wounded when authorities say another 15-year-old boy opened fire with a handgun. A suspect was arrested.

— April 10, 2017: A gunman opened fire in the special education classroom of his estranged wife at North Park Elementary

School in San Bernardino, California, killing her and an 8-year-old boy, and wounding another child. The gunman then fatally shot himself.

— Sept. 28, 2016: A 6-year-old boy was fatally shot on the playground of Townville Elementary School in South Carolina by a 14-year-old boy who had just killed his father, authorities said. Another child and a teacher were struck by

(Continued on page 10)



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ACE HARDWARE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

▶ Three...

Continued from page 4

doing too well because Samoan customers keep damaging his cars.

(Samoa News identifies Taeaoafua as Solomona in Kevin's statement, as the defendant does not refer to the late DHSS director, using his matai title.)

Solomona allegedly then told Kevin he needed his help because 'Mama' (Solomona's wife) wanted to start a rental car business.

According to Kevin's statement to police, Solomona told him that in order for a rental car business to be successful, a Samoan has to own it to 'discourage' customers from breaking the cars.

Kevin said 'okay' and claims that Solomona referred him to his son-in-law, Toeava. Kevin claims Solomona called his son-in-law and told him to meet Kevin at the Food Stamp parking lot where the two discussed the matter and came to the agreement that Kevin would turn over his business, along with his rental cars to 'Mama', and 'Mama' would get her own business license relating to the business.

She did so under the name 'Meki Tavita & Mikaele Rental'.

Included in the terms of the agreement was that after one year of being in operation, Kevin would be given 40% ownership and by Christmas 2017, 'Mama' would pay Kevin \$8,000 for one of the vehicles and \$10,000 for the other.

Not long after ownership of the business was transferred to 'Mama', Kevin said Solomona called him and told him they needed three more vehicles for the business. In response, Kevin took out a loan and bought three vehicles totaling \$39,000

Kevin told police that sometime in September 2017, Toeava walked in to his store in Vailoa with several food coupons, and showed him food stamps with name(s)/ stamp(s) of other retailers. Kevin said Toeava told him to help 'white-out' the names and stamp the name of his business over it and deposit the coupons for redemption, and when the coupons are redeemed, they would split the money '50-50'.

Kevin said he was not comfortable with the proposition, but Toeava told him not to worry about it, 'Papa Meki' would be notified.

Kevin said he then felt at ease and went along with the fraudulent scheme and they proceeded to alter thousands of dollars (\$86,854.00 in \$10 denominations) worth of food stamp coupons.

When Kevin took the food stamp coupons to ANZ Bank to deposit, he said the bank refused to redeem the coupons because of the alterations made to it. He said he then called Toeava who told him to wait at the bank, he was on his way.

According to Kevin, Toeava arrived and walked into the bank with what appeared to be a letter in hand. While Toeava was in the bank, Kevin said he waited outside.

Moments later, he said, Toeava exited the bank and told him to get the redemption for the coupons, all of which totaled \$86,854.00.

The letter that Toeava furnished, according to the police report, was a forgery because he didn't have the authority to generate one, according to DHSS Director Muavaefaatasi.

Furthermore, the letter was drafted and furnished in the absence of a DHSS letter head, and the ASNP Assistant Director told police she had no knowledge of the letter.

The letter, noted in the court affidavit, states in part that Kevin's businesses are approved "after our profound investigation in terms of examining the code bar below the coupons... please accept coupons from these vendors only."

The contact person listed on the letter is Toeava.

Since this time, Toeava has been giving thousands of dollars in food stamps to Kevin every two weeks, according to the affidavit.

The affidavit also notes that sometime around the last week of September 2017, the vault in the Food Stamp Issuance Office was renovated.

Prior to renovation, employees relocated its contents including Food Stamp coupon papers to a storage room on the second floor. In the process, based on police reports, 7- 8 unopened cases of Food Stamp coupon papers were alleged to have sustained mold and water damage to the outside of the boxes and were loaded on the DHSS truck to be burned.

According to the court affidavit, it was reported that Toeava was in the area of the truck that contained said boxes. Each case contained four reams and each ream consists of 500 sheets of food stamp coupon papers, bringing the total to 2,000 sheets per box.

Samoa News will report later this week more on the case against Kevin, Toeava and Vasa, as well as the third retailer's role — the one that was not arrested.

▶ Report...

Continued from page 5

zone left the area.

Authorities lifted some evacuation orders and advisories on the western edge of Montecito starting at midday Tuesday. Utilities may still be out and a "boil water" notice remains in

effect, officials said.

Large swaths of the hillside enclave remain evacuated as crews continue to remove mud and boulders and rebuild drainage pipes and power lines.



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HEALTH SURVEY 2018

The Department of Human and Social Services and the Department of Health are working together to conduct a very important survey in the community.

This entails surveying a selection of adults ages 18 and older from each county. Adults will be selected based upon a random sample of electric meters of households throughout the island.

Representatives in blue will be out to identify electric meters, collect vitals signs and other information that relate to general and mental health.

By taking this survey, you are helping to paint a picture of health for our people.

If you are selected to participate, please help us to address the health needs of American Samoa by consenting to take part in the survey. For more information contact DHSS at 633-1157 or DOH at 633-1602.

Surveyors will be revisiting villages throughout the island



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Pacific Community
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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TRAINING WORKSHOP BEING HELD

Attendees of the Statistics and Sustainable Tourism Training Workshop for stakeholders and government agencies being held Jan. 23-24 at the Tradewinds Hotel. The workshop is hosted by the Fiji-based South Pacific Tourism Organization (STPO) in partnership with the American Samoa Visitors Bureau.

Conducted by STPO's Manager for Research and Statistics, the training provides participants with knowledge/skills on basic tourism statistics compilations and related classifications, concepts and definitions, according to the latest United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Standards.

This is also an excellent opportunity to join forces and support American Samoa in its efforts to develop sustainable tourism products through a scoping mission to carry out consultation with key government agencies including the American Samoa Visitor Bureau, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, Agriculture, Meteorological Services, local Homeland Security, as well as non-government stakeholders and others to identify opportunities, challenges and map out priorities for the sector.

Additionally, it provides an opportunity to raise awareness of tourism stakeholders on what Sustainable Tourism is, what benefits can be harnessed, what activities can be promoted for the International Year of Sustainable Tourism and define a way forward for the country and also for SPTO and how it can best provide the required support.





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By the end of the training, the participants/compilers will be able to compile and disseminate, at minimum, monthly, quarterly, and annual Visitor Arrivals data for American Samoa that conforms to the international standards, according to the Visitors Bureau.

Furthermore, the participants should also have a better understanding of sustainable tourism development and how to apply sustainable best practices on the ground.

American Samoa is one of the founding members of SPTO.

[photo: courtesy]

Indonesian troops show off snake-handling skills for Mattis



— U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis got an up-close look at Indonesian commandos — including soldiers walking on fire and breaking bricks with their heads.

The commandos performed for Mattis at the conclusion of a two-day visit in which Mattis expressed interest in closer U.S. contacts with Indonesia special forces.

With music as a backdrop, Mattis looked on in silence as the commandos demonstrated their hostage-rescue skills, snake-handling and hand-to-hand combat training.

Afterward, Mattis was flying to Hanoi for his first visit to Vietnam.



China tries to quell protests over failed investment scheme

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese authorities are struggling to quell protests following the collapse of an investment scheme police say took as much as \$4.7 billion from millions of depositors. The implosion of Qianbao.com adds to a string of failures of Chinese financial ventures blamed on fraud or mismanagement that have prompted protests and complaints of official indifference to the suffering of small investors. In a separate case, the founder of an online lender was sentenced in September to life in prison on charges he defrauded investors of \$7.7 billion. On Monday, hundreds of people marched in freezing weather in the eastern city of Nanjing in Jiangsu province, where Qianbao was founded in 2012, shouting for the government to take action. A video shot by a demonstrator showed police carrying some people away while others shouted, “The Jiangsu government is beating people!”

“Don’t organize and don’t participate in illegal activities,” the official Xinhua News Agency told readers in a report on Qianbao.com.

Depositors protested in Nanjing on Dec. 12 after they lost access to online accounts, according to Zhan Jianfu, an employee of an auto dealership in the western city of Mianyang. He said he invested several hundred thousand yuan (tens of thousands of dollars) in Qianbao.

“We failed to get a response and some of the investors were intercepted and beaten up,” Zhan said in a telephone interview.

Qianbao had as many as 200 million registered users, according to Chinese news reports. The founder, Zhang Xiaolei — dubbed “China’s most notorious swindler” by one newspaper — turned himself in Dec. 26 to Nanjing police, who are leading the investigation.

Unlike some legitimate Chinese investment vehicles that spun out of control, police and news reports describe Qianbao as a brazenly fraudulent Ponzi scheme. The company, which moved to Shanghai in 2015, promised returns of up to 60 percent a year. Depositors were paid what Qianbao said were wages for simple tasks such as watching online ads.

Some of the 30 billion yuan (\$4.7 billion) raised from depositors was used to buy businesses including a soccer team and a producer of glycerine, but only 20 of the more than 70 companies Qianbao said it owned really existed, according to a statement by Nanjing police. Profits were too small to pay such high returns, so Qianbao used money from new deposi-

tors. The newspaper Huanqiu reported that in an interview Saturday while in police custody, Zhang “made it clear Qianbao’s collapse was due to his own greed,” but said reckless investors also had to accept the consequences. “The two sides used each other in a frenzy of chasing fame and fortune,” the newspaper wrote. Photos released by Xinhua show the balding, bespectacled Zhang in handcuffs and a blue vest as he talked to investigators.

Ambitious investment companies have flourished as Chinese authorities allowed an informal finance industry to grow over the past decade to support entrepreneurs who can get scant credit from the state-owned banking system.



In this April 25, 2015, photo, fans of the Nanjing Qianbao soccer team hold their team’s banner before a match in Nanjing in eastern China’s Jiangsu province. The soccer club is invested by part of Qianbao. Chinese authorities are struggling to quell protests following the collapse of an investment scheme police say took as much as \$4.7 billion from millions of depositors. On Monday, Jan. 22, 2018, hundreds of people marched in freezing weather in Nanjing, where Qianbao was founded in 2012, shouting for the government to take action.

(Chinatopix via AP)

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IN THE COMMUNITY

(Photos: Evaga)



CORRECTS NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED - Police escort a person, second from right, out of the Marshall County High School after shooting there, Tuesday, Jan 23, 2018, in Benton, Ky. Gov. Matt Bevin said two people were killed and 19 injured in the shooting. (Dominico Caporali via AP)

▶ **A look...**

Continued from page 6

bullets but survived. The teen was charged with murder.

— Sept 8, 2016: A 14-year-old girl died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after shooting and wounding another female student at Alpine High School in West Texas.

— Dec. 14, 2012. A 20-year-old gunman killed 20 first-grade children and six educators inside Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, and then killed himself. He also fatally shot his mother before entering the school.

Feb. 27, 2012: Three students were killed and two wounded in a shooting that started in a school cafeteria in Chardon, Ohio, as students waited for buses to other schools. Police charged a suspect,

17 at the time, as an adult.

— April 16, 2007: Twenty-three-year-old Seung-Hui Cho fatally shot 32 people in a dorm and a classroom at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, and then killed himself.

— April 20, 1999: Students Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, opened fire at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, killing 12 classmates and a teacher and wounding 26 others before killing themselves in the school's library.

— Dec. 1, 1997: Three students were killed and five wounded at a high school in West Paducah, Kentucky. Michael Carneal, then 14, later pleaded guilty but mentally ill to murder and is serving life in prison.

Court challenge seeks to block vast California pot farms



FILE - In this Oct. 15, 2017, file photo, Marcos Morales, co-founder of pot company Legion of Bloom, walks through his farm of ready-to-harvest marijuana plants in Glen Ellen, Calif. An alliance of California marijuana growers is trying to block state rules that they fear could open the way for vast farms that would strangle smaller cultivators. (AP Photo/Paul Elias, File)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An alliance of California marijuana growers filed a lawsuit Tuesday to block state rules that they fear could open the way for vast farms that would drive smaller cultivators out of business or send them into the black market.

The lawsuit, filed in Sacramento County Superior Court by the California Growers Association, comes just weeks after the nation's most populous state began allowing legal pot sales. It argues that state regulations would allow busi-

nesses to acquire an unlimited number of certain growing licenses, creating the potential for large operations that would have a "devastating effect" on smaller operations. It says those rules conflict with state law that intended the new pot market to be built around small- and medium-sized growers during its early years.

"Approving large cultivation operations in 2018 will significantly reduce the ability of small and medium cultivators to compete economically

in the regulated market," the lawsuit said. It also warned that smaller growers pushed out of the market could turn to illegal sales, undercutting the effort to establish a new legal marketplace in the state.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture, which issues cannabis cultivator licenses, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. The lawsuit asks the court to block the state from issuing licenses that could be used to create vast pot farms.

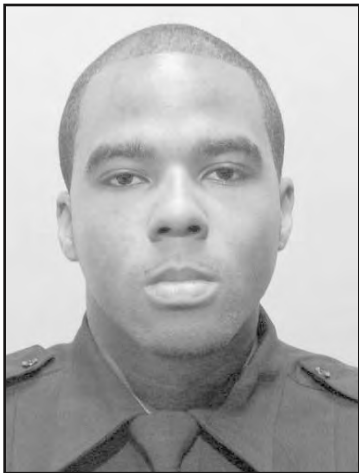
It wasn't immediately clear if any business had attempted to accumulate multiple licenses to establish a huge pot farm.

The state kicked off legal recreational sales on Jan. 1, part of a sprawling plan to transform California's long-standing medical and illegal markets into a multibillion-dollar regulated economy, the nation's largest legal pot market.

So far it has been a bumpy rollout.

Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco are among the cities that embraced legal sales, but others have banned them. There have been complaints about hefty tax rates.

Prosecutor: Elite police unit made up of rogue officers



FILE - This undated file photo provided by the Baltimore Police Department shows Detective Marcus Taylor. A jury has been selected in the trial of Taylor and a fellow police officer charged in one of the largest scandals in the Baltimore Police Department's history. Taylor has pleaded not guilty to charges of racketeering and robbery that he allegedly committed while he was a member of a disbanded police unit called the Gun Trace Task Force.

(Baltimore Police Department via AP, File)

BALTIMORE (AP) — A federal prosecutor described an elite Baltimore police unit as a “perfect storm” of rogue officers in opening statements Tuesday at the trial of two detectives charged in one of the largest scandals in the city police force’s history.

“They were, simply put, both cops and robbers at the same time,” said Leo Wise, one of the assistant U.S. attorneys tasked with prosecuting the Gun Trace Task Force.

Members of the disbanded unit of the Baltimore Police Department are accused of extortion and robberies, falsifying evidence, reselling seized drugs and habitually defrauding their department with bogus overtime claims.

Detectives Daniel Hersl and Marcus Taylor are two of eight indicted members of the once-

lauded unit, which was tasked with getting illegal guns off the streets of a city plagued by violent crime. They have pleaded not guilty to racketeering and robbery charges.

Six other indicted Baltimore officers — all task force members — have pleaded guilty in recent months. Four of them will testify as witnesses for the government during the trial, according to Wise. All of the indicted Baltimore officers have been in jail since their arrests last year.

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

Maurice Ward, one of the indicted Baltimore detectives who have pleaded guilty, began his testimony Tuesday, detailing brazen robberies and other instances of rampant corruption during his time on the force. He described tactics including hiding tracking devices on the cars of robbery targets and routine “door pops” — driving fast at a group of people and then chasing after those who ran to search them for narcotics or cash. He alleged that Gun Trace Task Force supervisor Sgt. Wayne Jenkins — who allegedly kept duffel bags at the ready stuffed with tools to pry open safes along with black ski masks and other gear — randomly quizzed people he stopped for the names of top drug dealers in order to target them for future robberies. He recounted unchecked profiling of suspects and searching people’s properties and vehicles with no probable cause.

Hersl’s defense attorney, William Purpura, is not denying that his 48-year-old client took money — which he described as an act that “embarrassed” the city and the detective’s family — but that the evidence will show it didn’t rise to charges of

robbery or extortion.

“It was a crime of theft, a crime of the moment,” Purpura told jurors, asserting Hersl’s 17-year career as a Baltimore officer was dominated by legitimate police work. He claims these thefts took place on a “few occasions,” asserting that federal prosecutors were essentially “overcharging” his client.

Purpura also attacked the credibility of the officers’ alleged victims, asserting they were drug dealers.

Taylor’s lawyer, Jennifer Wicks, told jurors that the witnesses the government will call during the trial have made “a career of lying” to investigators, juries and others. She called for jurors to examine their motivations and biases, particularly the indicted officers cooperating with the government.

“The evidence will show you couldn’t believe them before, and you can’t believe them now,” Hinds said, arguing that she believes jurors should find Taylor not guilty of all charges against him.

But Wise said the government will show a clear pattern of corruption that lasted years, even before the indicted officers were assigned to the elite gun recovery unit.

“It was a unit made up of detectives who had already gone rogue,” Wise said.

Wise doesn’t dispute that the indicted officers did some legitimate police work, but that they were motivated by greed and broke the law over and over to enrich themselves. He held up the badges and service weapons that once belonged to Hersl and Taylor, saying they were powerful things that could be “used for evil” by those entrusted with them.

Twelve jurors and four alternates were picked from a statewide pool on Monday, the trial’s opening day. The trial is expected to last up to four weeks, according to U.S. District Court Judge Catherine Blake.

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- Must have excellent communication skills.

Application forms are to be picked up from the Front Desk at Tradewinds Hotel and to be submitted no later than January 31, 2018 with a resume, copies of certificates and at least three (3) references. All applications are to be submitted to:

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Asian shares mostly lower on jitters over trade tensions

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mostly lower on Wednesday, as Japan’s benchmark took a rest from a spate of recent jumps. Worries over a resurgence of trade tensions overshadowed regional markets.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan’s benchmark Nikkei 225 slipped 0.6 percent to 23,989.08, while Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index lost 0.4 percent to 32,807.73. The Shanghai Composite index also fell 0.4 percent, to 3,531.75. South Korea’s Kospi clawed back early losses to add 0.1 percent at 2,539.41. Aus-

tralia’s S&P/ASX 200 added 0.4 percent to 6,059.30. Shares were lower in Southeast Asia and Taiwan.

WALL STREET: The Standard & Poor’s 500 index added 0.2 percent to 2,839.13 while the Dow Jones industrial average was flat at 26,210.81. The tech-heavy Nasdaq composite jumped 0.7 percent to 7,460.29. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks rose 0.3 percent, to 1,610.71.

TECHNOLOGY RALLY: On Wall Street, Netflix, which said it picked up 8.3 million subscribers in the fourth quarter,

soared \$22.71, or 10 percent, to \$250.29. Facebook rose \$3.98, or 2.1 percent, to \$189.35 and Google’s parent company Alphabet gained \$12.01, or 1 percent, to \$1,176.17. Online retailer Amazon climbed \$35.23, or 2.7 percent, to \$1,362.54.

THE QUOTE: “The leads for Asia markets remain positive, though after the record run seen on Tuesday, one would not be surprised with some profit-taking in play,” says Jingyi Pan, market strategist at IG in Singapore.



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- Learn strategies to prevent falls at home;
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Module 3: Pain and Symptom Management/Managing Difficult Behaviors

- Understand the World Health Organization (WHO) approach to pain management;
- Learn non-pharmacological approaches to managing difficult behaviors; and
- Improve communication with persons who have dementia.

Module 4: Activities of Daily Living Part 1

- Learn importance of proper hygiene;
- Increase confidence in performing activities of daily living; and
- Competence in giving a bed bath.

Module 5: Activities of Daily Living Part 2

- Understand the importance of oral care and dental hygiene;
- Learn dietary recommendations for chronic diseases; and
- Describe strategies to stimulate appetite for disabled/elderly with poor appetite.

Module 6: Wound care and Bedsore Prevention/Common Medical Problems

- Increase knowledge on prevention of bed sores;
- Learn signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke; and
- Understand common medical problems affecting the disabled/elderly.

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- Describe stress management strategies;
- Recognition of caregiver burnout; and
- Increase knowledge of resources available for disabled and elderly caregivers in American Samoa.



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HOW TO APPLY: Email or contact PYCD Office 699-7923 for an Application. All Completed Applications must be submitted to the office in hard copy or by email to info@pycd.com on or before Friday, January 26, 2018. For more information, please contact PYCD Executive Director, Kathryn McCutchan.



In this Jan. 18, 2018, photo, FBI Chief of Staff Jim Rybicki, left, returns after a break to his interview by a joint investigation of the House Judiciary and Oversight Committees on Capitol Hill in Washington. FBI Director Christopher Wray says his chief of staff is leaving for a private sector job. Rybicki notified him last month of his decision.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

Under criticism from Trump, FBI director shakes up staff

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Christopher Wray is making changes to his senior leadership team, as President Donald Trump has continued to attack the bureau for perceived biases against him and has been calling for a shakeup at the top. Officials said Tuesday that Wray, who started the job in August, is replacing two top aides who were promoted into their roles by his predecessor James Comey. Such changes are not unusual when a new director takes change, but they are notable amid Trump’s public pressure on Wray to get rid of officials who were confidantes of Comey, who was fired

by the president in May. The Justice Department confirmed that Dana Boente, the outgoing U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia who has also been acting as head of the department’s national security division, will become the FBI’s general counsel. He replaces James A. Baker, an ally of Comey’s who was reassigned in December. Wray said his chief of staff, Jim Rybicki, notified him last month of his decision to take a job in the private sector. Zachary Harmon, a former Justice Department official who also worked with Wray in private practice, will be taking

Rybicki’s place. Trump’s blistering attacks on the FBI have proven a tough challenge for Wray in his first months on the job as he tries to make changes while maintaining public confidence and restoring bureau morale. Wray, a Trump nominee, has faced relentless criticism from Republicans over perceived political bias in special counsel Robert Mueller’s probe of possible Trump campaign ties to Russia during the 2016 presidential election, as well as in the handling a year earlier of an FBI investigation of Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server.

ICE agent arrested after Kansas TV anchor goes to police

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — An agent with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is facing federal charges after a Wichita television news anchor told local police that he was sending her sensitive law enforcement material and text messages that were sexual in nature, newly released court documents show.

KAKE-TV Anchor Deb Farris was interviewed by the Wichita Police Department in March during which officers photographed about 185 screen shots of text messages between her and ICE Agent Andrew J. Pleviak, according to a probable cause affidavit. Farris also told police she was contemplating applying for a protection from stalking order, but had not yet done so. It is not clear if authorities are still investigating the alleged harassment. Farris told The Associated Press on Tuesday that Pleviak first came to her asking to be her source, saying he had all kinds of information she would need for future stories.

“Then all of a sudden it turned inappropriate and he was texting me things that made me uncomfortable and I got scared,” she said, adding she contacted the Wichita Police Department who advised her to put up security cameras and make a police report. She then agreed to be interviewed by police. The probable cause affidavit was made public Monday after authorities filed in court the executed search warrant that was sent to Apple Computer Inc. Apple granted authorities access to Pleviak’s iCloud storage account that contained information he had allegedly deleted from his government-issued cellphone. Federal prosecutors indicted Pleviak in July with two counts of exceeding authorized access to a government computer for accessing information from the National Crime Information Center and one count of destruction of records in a federal investigation. He was jailed after allegedly violating his bond conditions and now faces a competency hearing on Feb. 5. It is unclear whether he is still employed with ICE.

ICE emailed a statement saying all Department of Homeland Security employees are held “to the highest standards of behavior and ethics,” but declined to comment on his employment. Pleviak’s defense attorney, Stephen Ariagno, declined to comment.

Journalists typically go to great lengths to shield sources who provide confidential information.

“It is a shame if the only way she could stop him was going to

the police to out him in terms of being someone who provided confidential government information. It is a shame, but the larger issue here is her safety,” said Pam Fine, a journalism professor at the University of Kansas. The case had not been reported by the media until The Associated Press on Monday found the search warrant case during a routine check of new court filings. The indictment against Pleviak did not identify him as an ICE agent, and it had scant details of the nature of the charges against him.

KAKE News Editor Anthony Maisel said the station did not report the story at the time because they were concerned for Farris’ safety and did not want to antagonize him.

“There is a difference between being a source and providing information for the good of the public and for a source to go off the rails and become a threat,” Maisel said. “What people tell us is in confidence and we don’t share that information with anybody. But if that source became an unstable source, certainly we would look out for the welfare of our reporters.” Homeland Security Investigations Agent Brian Beach wrote in his probable cause affidavit supporting the search warrant that Pleviak provided Farris in November 2016 with copies of computerized criminal history reports for suspects. He was responding to text messages from Farris on two murder cases being investigated in Wichita involving immigrants in the country illegally.

“We never used a single thing he gave — nothing was really relevant,” Farris said.

Two days after Wichita police interviewed Farris, Pleviak’s supervisor ordered him to immediately relinquish his government-issued iPhone according to the affidavit. Beach’s affidavit also cited a September email in which Pleviak allegedly admitted remotely deleting information from the phone. When prosecutors sought in October to revoke his bond they alleged Pleviak had been released from an inpatient substance abuse program for violations of rules and concerns he could be a risk to female residents of the program. The petition noted his wife had also reported he was trying to obtain a firearm and that he had been arrested in October by Wichita police, but court records do not show any other publicly-filed state charges. In a separate case filed in 2014, an international college student from Kenya who overstayed his visa sued Pleviak and others for violently attacking him at ICE’s office in Wichita.

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Cold Drinks

Philadelphia wants safe injection sites to help opioid fight

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Philadelphia wants to become the first U.S. city to allow supervised drug injection sites as a way to combat the opioid epidemic, officials announced Tuesday, saying they are seeking outside operators to establish one or more in the city.

Public Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley said the sites could be “a life-saving strategy and a pathway to treatment,” and would be just one piece of the city’s overall plan to fight the epidemic.

“No one here condones or supports illegal drug use in any way,” Farley said. “We want people saddled with drug addiction to get help.”

Safe injection sites are locations where people can shoot up under the supervision of a doctor or nurse who can administer an overdose antidote if necessary. Critics have argued the sites may undermine prevention and treatment, and seem to fly in the face of laws aimed at stopping use of deadly illicit drugs.

Philadelphia has the highest opioid death rate of any large U.S. city. More than 1,200 people fatally overdosed in Philadelphia in 2017, one-third more than 2016.

The city hopes to hear from operators interested in setting up the injection sites — which they are calling comprehensive user engagement sites — where the city would provide outreach services.

Other cities have proposed similar safe havens. No U.S. city has established such a site, though Seattle has set aside \$1.3 million to create a safe injection site there. Injection sites are operating in Canada and Europe.

Officials from Philadelphia visited Seattle and safe injection sites in Vancouver, where Farley said they have reduced overdose deaths, the spread of diseases like HIV and hepatitis C, and created safer neighborhoods that are free of used-needle litter.

It’s not clear how the federal government would respond if Philadelphia gets a safe-injection site. The U.S. Department of Justice declined to comment on the plan. Nearly three months ago, President Donald Trump declared the U.S. opioid crisis a public health emergency.

Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross said he was initially dead-set against injection sites but now is keeping an open mind if they can truly save lives. He said he still has a lot of questions about how it all would work but added: “We cannot just throw our hands up and say, ‘That’s not my problem.’”

Mayor Jim Kenney wasn’t at the news conference but Farley said the Democrat supports the recommendation.

Philadelphia City Councilwoman Helen Gym called the plan “bold, brave, and lifesaving.”

“This crisis requires us to think differently and comprehensively about how to reach everybody impacted by the opioid crisis,” the Democrat said.

Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro said sanctioning such sites presents public safety concerns and changes in state and federal law would have to be made in order for them to operate legally. The Democrat also expressed doubt that the sites are an effective path to treatment.

“There is no safe way to inject heroin, fentanyl and carfentanyl,” he said in a statement. “These are dangerous drugs with devastating consequences.”

House Speaker Mike Turzai, who is running for the Republican nomination to challenge Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf, called Philadelphia’s safe injection plan misguided and a violation of federal law.

FILE - This July 31, 2017, file photo shows discarded syringes in an open-air heroin market that has thrived for decades, slated for cleanup along train tracks a few miles outside the heart of Philadelphia. Philadelphia wants to become the first U.S. city to allow supervised drug injection sites as a way to combat the opioid epidemic, city officials announced Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018, saying they would seek outside operators to establish one or more safe injection sites.

(AP Photo/Matt Rourke, File)

Court in Vietnam starts 2nd embezzlement trial of executive



Dinh Manh Thang, center, is led into a courtroom by police in Hanoi, Vietnam, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2018. The court put on trial a former oil executive Germany accused Vietnamese agents of kidnapping from a Berlin park for alleged embezzlement. Thang is accused of embezzling \$222,000 from a property project. Thang is the brother of Dinh La Thang, a former Politburo member of the ruling Communist Party and former chairman of state energy giant PetroVietnam, who was sentenced to 13 years in prison on Monday for mismanagement. (An Dang/Vietnam News Agency via AP)

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — The embezzlement trial began Wednesday for a former executive at Vietnam’s state oil giant who Germany said was kidnapped from there by Vietnamese agents last year.

Trinh Xuan Thanh was the former chairman of state energy giant PetroVietnam’s

construction arm and is accused of embezzling \$622,000 from a property project, the official Vietnam News Agency quoted the indictment as saying. The offense carries the death penalty. He is among eight defendants all accused of embezzlement in the trial expected to last two weeks. Foreign media were not given access to the trial.

Thanh, 51, was sentenced to life in prison on Monday for embezzlement involving a thermo power plant in the country’s highest profile case during an ongoing corruption crackdown. Among 22 defendants convicted in the case that concluded on Monday was former high-ranking government member Dinh La Thang, a former chairman of PetroVietnam. Thanh was the first former Politburo member to face prosecution in decades and received a 13-year prison sentence.



LBJ TROPICAL MEDICAL CENTER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Job Title: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CFO)
Department: Finance
Reports to: CEO
Salary Range: \$ 70,000.00 - \$ 85,000.00
Employment Status: Contract Specialist

Summary:
The American Samoa Medical Center Authority ASMC is currently seeking a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to join our management team responsible for the implementation of the American Samoa Medical Center Authority’s healthcare improvement plans. The chosen candidate will be responsible for taking on a leadership role in financial decision-making that affects our healthcare institution, and will provide strategic financial input to senior management. While keenly overseeing the overall accounting process, the successful CFO will play a key role in developing and implementing financial procedures to improve and maintain the financial health of the LBJ Tropical Medical Center.

- Essential Duties and Responsibilities:**
- Execute the financial strategy of the American Samoa Medical Center Authority aim to advance and improve the quality of its healthcare delivery system
 - Manage financial controls and accounting procedures to ensure that all financial transactions are fully captured and properly reflected in all of American Samoa Medical Center’s financials
 - Ensure full transparency over the financial performance of the American Samoa Medical Center Authority (LBJ Tropical Medical Center).
 - Provide advice on how to increase revenue and reduce costs to the CEO and subsequently to the Board of Directors
 - Propose action plans to ensure that annual financial objectives are attained
 - Support the CEO with the preparation of monthly, annual financial plans, and the annual budget plan.
 - Prepare monthly, quarterly, and annual financial reports for the review of the CEO and the Board of Directors
 - Maintain speed and accuracy of billings and client payments
 - Maintain the level of Accounts Payable complaint with industry standards to maintain the financial integrity of the American Samoa Medical Center Authority
 - Ensure prompt and full collection of all Accounts Receivable setting the AR accumulation threshold to less than 30 days
 - Prepare and submit Medicare Cost Annually in a timely manner

- Minimum Qualifications/Requirements**
- Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting, Finance or related field (MBA preferred)
 - Professional accounting designation (CA, CMA, or CPA)
 - 10+ years’ experience in a senior financial managerial position with at least five (5) years in hospital or healthcare financial management
 - Advanced computer skills, including proficiency in MS Office and Microsoft Dynamics CL financial reporting software
 - Exceptional communication skills
 - Results-oriented, strategic thinker and planner

Compensation Range:

- The assigned range for the Chief Financial Officer Position is \$ 70,000.00 - \$85,000.00 and the final salary will be determined based on qualifications and years of practical experience.

Duration for Application Solicitation:
The Deadline for filing applications will be **January 31, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.** All applications are to be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer to undergo the standard vetting process with applications meeting the standard requirements transmitted to the Board for Directors for its review and decision.

Gay couple sues US for denying citizenship to 1 twin son



Sixteen-month-old Ethan Dvash-Banks, left, and his twin brother, Aiden, play in the living room of their apartment Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018, in Los Angeles. The toddler twins share almost everything: the same toys, the same nursery, the clothes and the same parents. Everything but a toothbrush and U.S. citizenship. Ethan became a plaintiff in a federal lawsuit against the U.S. State Department that seeks the same rights his brother has as a citizen.

(AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Ethan and Aiden Dvash-Banks are toddler twins who share almost everything: the same toys, the same nursery, the same clothes and the same parents. Everything but a toothbrush and U.S. citizenship.

To remedy what their parents, a gay married couple, view as an injustice, Ethan Dvash-Banks became a plaintiff at the

tender age of 16 months in a federal lawsuit against the U.S. State Department that seeks the same rights his brother has as an American citizen.

“What we’re trying to do is pursue justice for Ethan,” said Elad Dvash-Banks, his biological dad, “and correct a wrong that the State Department is continuing to pursue that might affect other couples.”

The lawsuit was one of two filed Monday by an LGBTQ immigrant rights group that said the State Department is discriminating against same-sex binational couples by denying their children citizenship at birth. The cases filed in Los Angeles and Washington by Immigration Equality said the children of a U.S. citizen who marries abroad are entitled to U.S. citi-

zenship at birth no matter where they are born and even if the other parent is a foreigner.

The State Department said it doesn’t comment on pending litigation, but pointed to guidance on its website that says there must be a biological connection to a U.S. citizen to become a citizen at birth.

Aaron Morris, executive director of Immigration Equality, said the State Department is wrongly applying a policy for children born out of wedlock to married same-sex couples.

“If a mother and father walk into a consulate and have a marriage certificate and birth certificate, they’re never asked any questions about the biology of the child,” said Aaron Morris, executive director of Immigration Equality. “But the converse is also true and every same-sex couple will be asked that.”

The other case filed Monday involves two women, one from the U.S., and one from Italy, who met in New York, wed in London and each gave birth to a son. The State Department didn’t recognize the couple’s marriage, the lawsuit said, and only granted citizenship to the boy whose biological mother was born and raised in the U.S.

Citizenship issues frequently arise with births overseas — even for heterosexual U.S. citizens — and particularly with the use of artificial insemination and surrogates, said immigration lawyer Ally Bolour, who is not involved in the lawsuit. The Supreme Court’s rejection

in 2013 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which had barred the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages, opened the door to the potentially ground-breaking challenges now being brought, he said.

“This is an absolutely fascinating, cutting edge area of law that stems from (DOMA) being overturned,” Bolour said. “It was just a matter of time for this issue to be decided by the courts.”

Andrew Dvash-Banks was studying in Israel when he met his future husband, Elad, an Israeli citizen. Because they couldn’t marry at the time in the U.S. or in Israel, they moved to Canada, where they wed in 2010. Each boy was conceived with donor eggs and the sperm from a different father, but born by the same surrogate mother in September 2016.

Everything seemed fine until the couple brought their cranky infants to the American consulate in Toronto a few months later to apply for citizenship and the woman at the counter began asking probing questions they found shocking and humiliating.

The consular official told them she had discretion to require a DNA test to show who the biological father was of each boy and without those tests neither son would get citizenship. The men knew that Andrew was Aiden’s biological father and Elad was Ethan’s but they had kept it a secret and hadn’t planned on telling anyone.

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