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'Fat Leonard' affected Joint Chiefs pick

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — When the Pentagon last chose a new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, it was rattled by a last-minute surprise: A corrupt defense contractor known as “Fat Leonard” confided to federal agents that he had an unsavory past with one of the finalists to become the nation’s top military officer.

Leonard Glenn Francis, a maritime tycoon who had recently pleaded guilty to bribing Navy officers, told authorities in early 2015 that he had paid for opulent dinners and other favors for Adm. Samuel Locklear, then-commander of U.S. military forces in the Pacific, according to previously undisclosed documents and six people familiar with the case.

Francis also shared with investigators several photographs of him drinking and socializing with Locklear, who was one of four contenders to head the Joint Chiefs. Some photos were from a banquet in Singapore that Francis had hosted for the admiral and other Navy officers that featured prostitutes as entertainment, according to the documents and people familiar

with the case.

Locklear told The Washington Post that he was at the party but was unaware of any prostitutes, and he said he had limited contact with Francis over the years. After separate investigations, the Justice Department declined to press charges, and the Navy cleared the four-star admiral of wrongdoing. But his association with the 350-pound contractor helped sink his chances to lead the Joint Chiefs, other documents show.

Now retired, Locklear is the highest-ranking officer known to have been investigated in what has become the worst corruption scandal in Navy history.

The Justice Department has filed criminal charges against 29 defendants who worked for the Navy or Francis’ company, Glenn Defense Marine Asia. But those represent only a fraction of the people swept up in the scandal.

Separately, the Justice Department has provided the Navy with dossiers on 550 people who had contact with Francis — including about 60 admirals — to determine whether they violated military law or ethics rules.

The Navy has publicly identified only 11 individuals who have been charged under military law or who committed misconduct.

Francis’ Singapore-based company held lucrative contracts to resupply Navy vessels in the Pacific for more than a quarter-century. He has confessed to swindling the Navy out of \$35 million and bribing scores of officers.

He is in federal custody while awaiting sentencing. One of his attorneys, Ethan Posner, declined to comment.

On Jan. 15, 2015, Francis pleaded guilty in federal court in San Diego and agreed to cooperate with investigators.

Francis said that on Oct. 9, 2003, he invited Locklear and two dozen officers — this time without their wives — for a seven-course dinner on the 70th floor of the Swissotel Stamford, according to documents obtained by The Washington Post.

Francis later told federal agents as the dinner was winding down, he escorted Locklear to a hotel room, according to two of the people familiar with the investigation but not authorized to speak publicly about it.

Waiting inside, on a king-size

bed, was a Chinese prostitute whom the contractor had hired and selected for the admiral, according to the account Francis gave the agents.

In a letter to The Post, Locklear confirmed attending the dinner, which he said included “some dancing, lots of picture taking, and nothing inappropriate.” He said he was the first to leave and headed directly back to the Nimitz.

In an April 27, 2015, memo, Adm. John Richardson — now the Navy’s top admiral — acknowledged that Locklear’s acceptance of the two meals would normally violate federal ethics rules, which forbid taking gifts worth more than \$20 from contractors. But Richardson cleared Locklear of wrongdoing, concluding in his memo that “it would be inappropriate to substantiate allegations of misconduct ... in regards to these dinners, or any other matters.”

About a week later, the White House chose someone else to lead the Joint Chiefs: Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, who still holds the job. The following month, Locklear retired from the military.

Lack of flight time bigger issue than pay for Navy pilots

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

Navy pilots would rather have more time in the cockpit than cash bonuses designed to keep them in uniform, according to the chief of naval personnel.

Feedback from the fleet shows that not enough flight time, lack of warfighting focus and poor work-life balance are the three biggest reasons why aviators leave the service, Vice Adm. Robert Burke wrote in the March issue of the U.S. Naval Institute’s Proceedings Magazine.

The Navy is short of strike fighter, elec-

tronic attack and helicopter mine countermeasure pilots, Burke told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February. The service is offering some aviators up to \$175,000 to stay; however, Burke believes it will take more than that to solve retention issues.

“Money was not the primary driver for most aviators to leave,” Burke wrote in an article titled, “We are on the Road to Aviation Retention.” It responded to claims that the Navy lacked foresight and funding to stop pilots from leaving for lucrative commercial aviation jobs.

Tight budgets have meant reduced flight

hours for pilots in recent years, especially in fixed-wing tactical aviation, but the Navy is trying to increase readiness rates for F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, Burke wrote.

“Pilots want to spend more time in the cockpit, and increased numbers of ready aircraft are now beginning to provide more flight time and improve fleet readiness,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Navy has implemented a “Career Intermission Program” that allows sailors to take up to a three-year break to pursue personal interests, Burke wrote.

Old ordnance found in S. Korea

BY MARCUS FICHTL
Stars and Stripes

POCHEON, South Korea — U.S. and South Korean forces discovered seven pieces of ordnance, including a mortar and a sabot penetrating round, at a village outside Rodriguez Live Fire Range during an unprecedented cleanup operation last week, Army officials said.

The four-day cleanup, which wrapped up Friday, was in response to a series of incidents of stray rounds and fires at the training range that raised concerns and protests from local residents.

Then-Eighth Army commander Lt. Gen. Thomas Vandal apologized during a November town hall meeting in Pocheon, vowing to improve safety at the range, which is near the border with North

Korea.

“There’s a total of seven (sites) that were reported by the people of Pocheon as suspected (unexploded ordnance) areas,” Capt. Derek Whipkey, commander of the 718th Explosive Ordnance Company, told Stars and Stripes at the excavation site Thursday.

The soldiers from the 11th Engineer Battalion and 718th EOD assisted their South Korean counterparts in clearing the first two sites near a cattle farm about 2 miles from the range, using ground-penetrating radar to map the locations and confirm any Korean hits.

“To my knowledge, nothing like this has ever been conducted here in any recent history,” Whipkey said of the use of U.S. assets to dispose of ordnance outside the range.

Eighth Army spokeswoman

Christina Wright also said they brought in experts from the U.S. Army Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center to use computers to model potential faults at the range and minimize the amount of future stray rounds.

“Sixteen-foot berms have been constructed behind .50 [caliber] targets, and all targets that were previously up on the mountain have been removed to ensure no vehicle can fire at them,” she said.

Whipkey said they won’t know how old the discovered pieces are or where they are from until forensics are complete, but he noted the materials found were heavily corroded and degraded.

The cleanup effort will continue at five more sites, but Whipkey said no timeline has been set.

Army air brigade back in Europe

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — A U.S.-based air defense artillery brigade has formally begun its mission in Germany, marking the first deployment of such a unit to Europe since the post-Cold War drawdown.

The arrival of the National Guard’s South Carolina-based 678th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, billed as the only integrated fires brigade in the Army, is part of a broader effort to bolster one of the military’s lingering capability gaps in Europe.

“Back in the 1990s, decisions were made to downsize and there was not much of a need for SHORAD (Short Range Air Defense),” 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Commander Col. David Shank said during a ceremony last week marking the 678th’s Europe mission. However, during the past few years the Army has sought to rebuild short-range air defense capabilities, and Europe and the Pacific have been areas of focus in light of concerns about a more aggressive Russia and North Korea.

“Fast forward to today and what does that mean? We have stinger teams, Avenger batteries ... and why we are here today, the 678th ADA BDE,” Shank said in a statement.

In 2017, the Army determined that it needed to do more to address the demand for more air defense in Europe. In connection with those concerns, the Army is expected to send more air defense units to Europe in the coming years.

The 678th Air Defense Artillery Brigade’s rotation to Europe will last nine months.

Why America’s 2 best fighter jets can’t talk to each other

Bloomberg

With the F-22 Raptor and the F-35 Lightning II, the U.S. has fielded two of the world’s most sophisticated, maneuverable and stealthy fighter jets. They both function as airborne shepherds of America’s flock of older combat aircraft, using their state-of-the-art systems to communicate threats and targets on the ground and in the air.

Unfortunately, they have a difficult time communicating with each other.

The F-22, originally designed as an air superiority fighter, dates to the mid-1980s and was created to dispense near-invisible lethality against Soviet targets before the enemy knew it was there. The plane’s requirements for maximum stealth extended to its communications systems, since they can betray an aircraft’s location. But budget considerations and initial

optimism about a post-Cold War world cut short its production. In 2009, then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates ended the program.

That’s where the problem begins. Had the Air Force gotten all the F-22s it wanted — more than double the 183 or so it has — integration of its systems with another fleet of “fifth-generation” fighters wouldn’t have been as critical. The F-22’s Intra-Flight Data Link is a much older system than the Tactical Link 16 system used on the newer F-35. While the F-22’s IFDL protocol can receive data from the F-35 and other allied aircraft, such as the F-16 and Eurofighter Typhoon, it can’t transmit the vast array of situational data it collects.

Both the Raptor and Lightning II are known as “fifth-generation” aircraft because of their stealth, sensors and other

capabilities. Jets such as the Air Force’s F-15 and F-16 and the Navy’s F/A-18 are “fourth-generation.” Russia and China also are fielding and refining their fifth-generation fighters, the Su-57 and J-31, respectively.

When it comes to talking to each other, the F-22 and F-35 pilots currently must use secure voice links. This temporary fix has worked in training and simulated combat, said Billie Flynn, an F-35 test pilot at Lockheed Martin.

“We’re always working on ways to improve connectivity wherever the mission requires additional information sharing,” an Air Force spokesman, Maj. Ken Scholz, said in an email.

Still, the Air Force doesn’t plan to fix the communications problem until 2023, when the F-22 fleet is scheduled to get the same Tac Link 16 system F-35s currently have.

Ky., Okla. teachers protest over pay issues

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The state Capitol in Kentucky filled with teachers protesting pension changes Monday, and thousands of Oklahoma educators walked out of classrooms in the latest evidence of teacher rebellion in Republican-led states over education cuts.

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin signed legislation last week granting teachers' pay raises of about \$6,100, or 15 to 18 percent. But some educators say that isn't good enough and walked out.

The demonstrations were inspired by West Virginia, where teachers walked out for nine days earlier this year and won a 5 percent increase in pay. Teachers in Arizona are now considering a strike over their demands for a 20 percent salary increase.

Many Oklahoma schools, including the three largest districts — Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Edmond — are closed Monday to honor the walkout. Some schools are

offering free meals to students aged 18 or younger while various churches, faith organizations and charitable agencies are providing free day care services.

Oklahoma ranks 47th among states and the District of Columbia in public school revenue per student, nearly \$3,000 below the national average, while its average teacher salary of \$45,276 ranks 49th, according to the most recent statistics from the National Education Association.

In Frankfort, Ky., teachers and other school employees gathered outside the Kentucky Education Association a couple of blocks from the Capitol, chanting "Stop the war on public education."

Kentucky teachers chanting "We won't back down" crammed into the Capitol, filling the Rotunda and hallways near the House and Senate chambers. Schools across the state were closed due either to spring break or to allow teachers and other school employees to attend the rally.

The rally is happening after hundreds

of teachers called in sick Friday to protest last-minute changes to their pension system.

Republican lawmakers in Kentucky passed a pension overhaul Thursday that preserves benefits for most workers but cuts them for new teachers. Opponents objected that the pension changes were inserted into an unrelated bill without a chance for public input and worry that the changes will discourage young people from joining the teaching profession.

Republican Gov. Matt Bevin has not yet signed the bill but last week tweeted his support, saying public workers owe "a deep debt of gratitude" to lawmakers who voted to pass it.

During Monday's rally, some teachers, angry at lawmakers who supported the bill, chanted "Vote them out."

Melissa Wash, a first-grade teacher from Gallatin County who has been teaching for 19 years, said she voted for Bevin, but now plans to become a Democrat.

Data from SUV show that deadly wreck may have been intentional

Associated Press

MENDOCINO, Calif. — An SUV carrying a large, free-spirited family from Washington state accelerated straight off a scenic California cliff, and authorities said the deadly wreck may have been intentional.

Information pulled from the vehicle's software shows it was stopped at a flat, dirt pull-off area before it sped off the steep cliff and plunged 100 feet, said Capt. Greg Baarts, with the California Highway Patrol Northern Division. Speaking at an evening news conference Sunday night, Baarts said the electronic information combined with the lack of skid marks or signs the driver braked led authorities to believe the crash was purposeful.

Five members of the Hart family were found dead. The search continued for three more children believed to have been in the vehicle when it went over an overlook and landed on rocks in the Pacific Ocean below.

Known as the Hart Tribe, the multiracial family of two married women — Sarah and Jennifer Hart — and six adopted children often took spontaneous road trips to camp and hike and traveled to festivals and other events, offering hugs and promoting unity.

Authorities don't know exactly when the wreck took place. A passing motorist discovered the vehicle on March 26, three days after social service authorities in Washing-

ton state opened an investigation apparently prompted by a neighbor's complaint that the children were being deprived of food.

Sarah Hart pleaded guilty in 2011 to a domestic assault charge in Douglas County, Minn., telling authorities "she let her anger get out of control" while spanking her 6-year-old adopted daughter, court records show.

The two women, both 38, were found dead inside the SUV, while three of their children — Markis Hart, 19; Jeremiah Hart, 14; and Abigail Hart, 14 — were discovered outside the vehicle. Searchers were looking for Hannah Hart, 16; Sierra Hart, 12; and Devonte Hart, 15.

Two weeks ago, Bruce and Dana DeKalb, next-door neighbors of the Harts in Woodland, Wash., called state Child Protective Services because Devonte had been coming over to their house almost every day for a week, asking for food. Social service authorities opened an investigation, and a caseworker went to the house on March 23 but didn't find anyone home. The agency had no prior history with the family, said Norah West, a spokeswoman with the Washington Department of Social and Health Services.

On Thursday, authorities in Washington state combed through the family's home for information to shed light on why the family left and other circumstances related to the trip, KGW-TV reported.

More snow for storm-battered Northeast states

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A fast-moving spring snowstorm swept through parts of the Northeast, spreading a wintry mix that made for a slow and slushy commute to start the workweek.

The storm stretched from Ohio to coastal southern New England early Monday and was expected to drop 2 to 6 inches of snow on parts of the area, while other areas saw accumulation only on grassy surfaces. A winter weather advisory was in effect in New York, and a steady snow forced the Yankees to postpone their scheduled 1:05 p.m. home opener against Tampa Bay.

Some school districts closed for the day, and others opted for a delayed opening. In the New York City area, LaGuardia, Kennedy and Newark Liberty airports all reported some flight disruptions.

The storm was forecast to move off the coast later in the day, giving way to gradually warming temperatures and melting.

Monday's snowstorm was the fifth to move through the area after four nor'easters in March.

Anti-apartheid activist Winnie Mandela dies

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, prominent anti-apartheid activist and the ex-wife of Nelson Mandela, died in a hospital on Monday after a long illness, her family said Monday. She was 81.

"She succumbed peacefully in the early hours of Monday afternoon surrounded by her family and loved ones," the family said in a statement.

Madikizela-Mandela was married to Mandela from 1958 to 1996. Mandela, who died in 2013, was imprisoned throughout most of their marriage, and Madikizela-Mandela's own activism against white minority rule led to her being imprisoned for months and placed under house arrest for years.

"She kept the memory of her

imprisoned husband Nelson Mandela alive during his years on Robben Island and helped give the struggle for justice in South Africa one of its most recognizable faces," the family said.

However, Madikizela-Mandela's political activism was marred by her conviction in 1991 for kidnapping and assault, for which she was fined. She faced these allegations again during the 1997 hearings before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a panel that investigated apartheid-era crimes.

As a parliamentarian after South Africa's first all-race elections, she was convicted of fraud.

Madikizela-Mandela had been in and out of hospital since the start of the year, according to her family.

Chinese space lab makes re-entry over South Pacific

Associated Press

BEIJING — China's defunct Tiangong 1 space station mostly burned up on re-entry into the atmosphere over the central South Pacific on Monday, Chinese space authorities said.

The experimental space laboratory re-entered around 8:15 a.m. Beijing time, the China Manned Space Engineering Office said.

Scientists monitoring the craft's disintegrating orbit forecast the craft would mostly burn up and would pose only the slightest of risks to people. Analysis from the Beijing Aerospace Control Center showed it had mostly burned up.

Brad Tucker, an astrophysicist at Australian National University, said Tiangong 1 has "been tumbling and spinning for a while, which means that when it really starts to come down, it's less predictable about what happens to it." He likened it to an airplane landing, saying it's more difficult to predict where a plane that is "shaking around and moving" will

land than one that is smoothly descending.

Launched in 2011, Tiangong 1 was China's first space station, serving as an experimental platform for bigger projects, such as the Tiangong 2 launched in September 2016 and a future permanent Chinese space station.

Two crews of Chinese astronauts lived on the station while testing docking procedures and other operations. Its last crew departed in 2013 and contact with it was cut in 2016.

Since then, it has orbited gradually closer and closer to Earth on its own while being monitored.

Earlier forecasts had said only about 10 percent of the 8.5-ton spacecraft would likely survive re-entry, mainly its heavier components such as its engines.

China's foreign and defense ministries said the country had relayed information about Tiangong 1's return to Earth to the United Nations' space agency and others.

Trump wants Senate to use 'Nuclear Option' on border bill

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump demanded Monday that Congress pass new border legislation using the "Nuclear Option if necessary" to muscle it through the Senate.

Trump tweeted that the U.S. must build a border wall, but argued that "Democrats want No Borders, hence drugs and crime!" He also said that a deal to help "Dreamer" immigrants is "dead because the Democrats didn't care or act."

Trump has previously called for the "nuclear option" — changing Senate rules to end the filibuster. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has dismissed that option in the past, saying Republicans will welcome the filibuster when they return to being the Senate minority.

The White House did not immediately answer questions about Trump's tweets. The \$1.3 trillion funding package Congress passed last month included \$1.6 billion in border wall spending. But much of that money can be used only to repair existing segments, not build new sections. Congress also put restrictions on the types of barriers that can be built.

Trump began tweeting over the weekend on immigration from Florida, threatening to pull out of a free trade agreement with Mexico unless it does more to stop people from crossing into the U.S. He claimed they're coming to take advantage of protections granted certain immigrants.

He said Mexico must "stop the big drug and people flows, or I will stop their cash cow, NAFTA. NEED WALL!" The U.S., Canada and Mexico are participating in tense negotiations over the North American Free Trade Agreement at Trump's insistence. Trump says NAFTA is bad for the U.S.

"Mexico has got to help us

at the border," Trump, holding his wife's hand, told reporters before the couple attended Easter services at an Episcopal church near his Palm Beach, Fla., home.

Former President Barack Obama created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program to provide temporary protection and work permits to hundreds of thousands of immigrants who are living in the U.S. illegally after being brought here as children. Trump ended the program last year, but gave Congress six months to pass legislation enshrining it. A deal has so far proved elusive, and Trump has blamed Democrats.

The Department of Homeland Security is not issuing new permits, though existing ones can be renewed.

Proposed DACA deals crafted by lawmakers and rejected by Trump also were not open to new participants.

Trump did not explain what he meant when questioned by reporters as he entered the Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea with the first lady and his daughter Tiffany.

Trump, when addressing reporters briefly before entering the church, again blamed Democrats for failing to protect the "Dreamers."

The president's tweets came after Fox News' "Fox & Friends" reported early Sunday on what it said is a group of 1,200 immigrants, mostly from Honduras, headed to the U.S. The segment was a follow-up to a report by BuzzFeed News on hundreds of Central Americans making their way through Mexico in hopes that American authorities will grant them asylum or be absent when they attempt to cross the border.

The Fox headline was "Caravan of illegal immigrants headed to U.S." The president is known to watch the cable TV program in the morning.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Exhibit explores dark side of clock industry

CT BRISTOL — A clock museum in Bristol is kicking off its season with an exhibit exploring the dark side of the clock industry.

Opening day for the American Clock and Watch Museum is Saturday. The museum has one of the largest collections of American clocks and watches, with some 6,000 timepieces.

The first exhibit of the year is titled: "Scandals and Scoundrels: Tales from the Dark Side of the Clock & Watch Industries."

Man in custody for Purple Heart thefts

OK CHANDLER — Authorities in Oklahoma said a man accused of stealing Purple Heart medals and other items worth \$250,000 was taken into custody in Virginia.

Authorities said Jonathan Bartlett Robertson, 49, was apprehended Saturday in Richmond, Va., following an hourlong pursuit. Officials said Robertson was driving a vehicle that had been reported stolen in Shawnee, Okla.

The Lincoln County Sheriff's Office said the stolen items include TV's, an ATV, four trailers, guns, collector's items, expensive sound equipment, Purple Heart medals and a casket.

Waterfront makeover on lake nears end

IN EAST CHICAGO — A 25-foot-tall beach ball sculpture is among the new additions that a northwestern Indiana city is adding to its Lake Michigan waterfront.

It is part of a \$15.5 million transformation of East Chi-

cago's marina and lakefront that also includes a permanent stage on the beach, a new harbor walk and umbrella sculptures. New piers at the marina will offer cable television and Wi-Fi, new social spaces for boaters and a site for personal watercraft and kayak rentals.

The (Northwest Indiana) Times reported city officials expect to finish many of the improvements by May and complete others over the summer.

Jury decides for haunted house owners

OH DELAWARE — A jury has decided the owners of a popular haunted house in suburban Columbus should receive \$229,000 from a school district that wants the property for a bus turnaround.

The Columbus Dispatch reported a Delaware County jury spent around two hours deciding how much Buckeye Valley Local School District should pay Angie and Brent Stooksbury for their Haunted Hoorah in Ashley.

The district went to court to acquire the property through eminent domain. The couple sought more than \$300,000 for the home they acquired at a 2013 sheriff's sale for \$11,000. The district wanted to pay \$100,000.

1893 letter stolen from restaurant

GA SAVANNAH — The owner of a restaurant in Georgia's oldest city said a piece of its historic memorabilia was snatched by a thief on St. Patrick's Day.

The Crystal Beer Parlor in downtown Savannah has walls covered in artifacts from the city's past. Among them was a letter written in 1893 describing the St. Patrick's Day banquet menu at Savannah's

DeSoto Hotel.

The Savannah Morning News reported restaurant workers noticed the framed letter was missing March 18 — the day after Savannah celebrated St. Patrick's Day.

Owner John Nichols said the culprit "was probably drunk and just did it on a whim." He said he won't press charges if the letter is returned.

Dad buys comics to honor soldier-son

MI HOUGHTON — A man whose son died in the U.S. Army has honored him by buying comic books for customers at an Upper Peninsula shop.

The Daily Mining Gazette said the man wants to stay anonymous. He told the newspaper that it was a "good way" to honor his son, who died two days before Christmas and was a big fan of Superman. His grave marker says "Man of Steel."

Shana Porteen, the owner of Black Ice Comics, said the man paid for comic books that were awaiting pickup at the Houghton store.

Cops: Mom left toddler in car that was towed

NJ FORT LEE — Authorities said a New Jersey mother who left her sleeping toddler alone in an illegally parked car that was later towed is facing criminal charges.

Fort Lee police said Yuqing Jiang, 46, told them she had gone to her bank to make a deposit before it closed. She left her sleeping 2-year-old daughter in the parked vehicle, then returned to find it and her daughter missing.

Jiang called 911 and learned the car was towed to a facility near the bank. Police found the toddler asleep in the back of the

towed vehicle, but she wasn't in a car seat.

Jiang was charged with abuse, abandonment, cruelty and neglect of a child.

Victim's widow calls card sale 'creepy'

MA BOSTON — The prison identification card of Boston gangster James "Whitey" Bulger sold at auction for more than \$11,000, drawing condemnation from the widow of one of the crime boss' victims as well as a victim's rights advocate.

Lelands.com said the badge was sold to an anonymous private collector.

Mary Callahan, whose husband, John Callahan, was killed on Bulger's orders in 1982, told the Boston Herald the sale was "creepy."

Andy Kahan, a victims-rights advocate for the city of Houston, decried that the sale of so-called "murderabilia" is a burgeoning business.

Squirrels a problem on San Diego coast

CA SAN DIEGO — There are way too many squirrels on the north San Diego County coast, and they've lost their fear of humans.

State Parks and Recreation natural resources officer Darren Smith told The San Diego Union-Tribune the problem is people feeding the squirrels.

Trash also provides a ready source of meals for the squirrels.

Smith said a good example is Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, where food and trash are not allowed and there are only a few squirrels.

But there's an overpopulation of squirrels on a nearby beach where people bring food.

From wire reports

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Irish top Bulldogs on last-second three

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Arike Ogunbowale put an exclamation point on a thrilling women's college basketball season.

Her off-balance three-pointer in the title game capped a record comeback by Notre Dame and an incredible weekend for the sport. The Final Four got started with two stirring overtime games — the first time that's happened. The weekend ended with a historic championship game that left the sellout crowd amazed.

"Phenomenal for women's basketball. Three exciting games. I hope the ratings reflect it," Notre Dame coach Muffet McGraw said after the 61-58 win Sunday night. "The crowd was tremendous tonight. Everybody came back. Just an incredible job by Columbus and the local community. Great support for women's basketball and definitely one of the best Final Fours since 2001, right?"

That was the only other time McGraw and the Irish cut down the nets. It's been even longer since a title game came down to a last-second shot. Ogunbowale's three-pointer was just

the second last-second shot that won a championship game. North Carolina great Charlotte Smith made a three-pointer at the buzzer in 1994 that lifted the Tar Heels to an improbable one-point win over Louisiana Tech.

This Final Four belonged to Ogunbowale and the Irish.

The junior guard floated in a Three-pointer from the corner with 0.1 seconds left, lifting Notre Dame to its second women's basketball title with a thrilling comeback victory over Mississippi State.

"It just felt right," said Ogunbowale, who scored 16 of her 18 points in the second half. "I practice late-game all the time. ... I just ran to Jackie and said, 'Throw it to me, throw it to me.'"

It was the second straight game that she hit a shot in the final second to carry the Irish. Her jumper with one second remaining in overtime knocked off previously unbeaten UConn in the semifinals Friday.

Her winner Friday came in front of former NBA great Kobe Bryant. The two had a Twitter exchange after that shot. He tweeted again at her

on Sunday night after her championship-winner.

"Wow!" Bryant wrote, using the hashtags #lifecomplete and #MambaMentality

The huge crowds weren't just at the Final Four this weekend. Indiana won the WNIT championship in front of record-setting crowd of 13,007 on Saturday.

"Columbus has been a fantastic host. They've been incredible at all the events. The games have been incredible. The fans have been fantastic," women's basketball committee chair Rhonda Bennett said. "You can't go anywhere without people talking about the women's Final Four and supporting our game."

They had a lot to enjoy, especially Irish fans.

Ogunbowale's shot capped the biggest comeback in NCAA championship history. They rallied from a 15-point deficit in the third quarter and were down five in the final 1:58. Marina Mabrey hit a Three-pointer from the wing and Young had a shot in the lane to tie it.

The title came 17 years to the day after Notre Dame (35-3) won its only other champion-

ship in 2001 on Easter.

"It's Easter Sunday, and all the Catholics were praying for us," said McGraw, who was wearing floral shoes in honor of the holiday.

When the final buzzer sounded, a wild celebration started with the Irish faithful who were part of the sellout crowd. McGraw's team had fallen short four times in seven years in the title game, losing in 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015. Many of the Notre Dame alums who were on teams that had fallen just short of winning a title were there to enjoy it, including Natalie Achonwa, Natalie Novosel and Becca Bruszewski

This version of McGraw's squad refused to lose, and the run was even more improbable because the Irish lost four players over the season to ACL injuries.

"There's been so many great teams and so many players here with us celebrating in the locker room just now, all the former players," McGraw said. "And we talked about how we've done it for all of them that weren't able to finish the job. So this team is really special just because of their personality."

Mississippi State heartbroken after title loss

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Mississippi State coach Vic Schaefer walked away from the team's locker room with one arm around the shoulder of his weeping daughter Blair and the other arm draped over guard Morgan William. Both players were inconsolable after losing the national championship to Notre Dame on a desperation three-pointer with 0.1 seconds left.

The Bulldogs got oh so close again but couldn't finish it off. On their second straight trip to the national title game, they built a big lead Sunday night, but allowed the Irish to come roaring back in the second half. Arike Ogunbowale, who beat UConn with a last-second shot in overtime on Friday night, provided the heroics again for Notre Dame in the 61-58 victory.

Blair Schaefer, William and fellow seniors Roshunda Johnson and Victoria Vivians all cried softly as they tried to answer

questions from reporters after the game. They'll leave Starkville without a national championship after winning dramatic semifinal games in both seasons. Last year they ended UConn's 111-game winning streak in the semi before falling to South Carolina in the title game.

Vic Schaefer's voice broke with emotion when he talked about his team, which finished 37-2.

"This is the toughest, most resilient team I've ever seen," he said. "Their competitive fire and competitive spirit is second to none."

The Bulldogs took advantage of a litany of Notre Dame turnovers to take a 30-17 lead at the half. It looked like 6-foot-7 center Teaira McCowan and Vivians, the Bulldogs first-team All-American, were on their way to another big night. They led by as many 15 points in the third quarter before the Irish, who looked anemic in the first half, started climbing back into it.

"We were right there," Mississippi State guard Jazzmun Holmes said, "and we couldn't finish it up."

Mississippi State still led by five on a Johnson three-pointer with just under two minutes left. Then Marina Mabrey hit a three-pointer for Notre Dame, and Jackie Young hit a jumper to tie the score at 58 with 45 seconds left. McCowan missed an easy layup, and the teams traded turnovers as the clock ticked down, setting up another big moment for Ogunbowale.

"We didn't get two stops when we needed to get stops," Blair Schaefer said. "They obviously executed on offense and got two big buckets and the game was tied."

Her father took every bit of the blame. "You're up five with 1:40 (left), it's my job to get them home, and I didn't get them home," he said. "I'll wear that maybe for the rest of my career."

Vivians had 21 points for the Bulldogs, and McCowan 18 points and 17 rebounds.

Angels' Ohtani victorious in pitching debut

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Shohei Ohtani could exhale, at last having made it through a whirlwind week and not one, but two separate debuts in the big leagues.

He got his first career hit, then three days later earned a win on the mound. Souvenir balls for each occasion.

Impressing manager Mike Scioscia with both his poise and repertoire, the two-way star from Japan won his major league pitching debut. He threw three-hit ball for six innings and led the Los Angeles Angels past the Oakland Athletics 7-4 on Sunday.

"Personally I feel like I got off to a good start and obviously the team went 3-1 on the first road trip, so I'm very happy with the results," Ohtani said through a translator.

After being the designated hitter in the opener, he expected to be far more nervous to pitch. It didn't show.

Reaching the upper 90s (mph) with his fastball and keeping the A's guessing with a nifty splitter, Ohtani struck out six and retired 14 of his final 15 batters.

He didn't hit while pitching, as Albert

Pujols was the DH and went 0-for-5.

Ohtani (1-0) pounded his glove following a 1-2-3 shutdown fifth. He walked one, and the only damage against him came on Matt Chapman's three-run homer in the second.

The 23-year-old righty briefly removed his cap and looked to the sky after the drive, then went back to work and blanked the A's the rest of the way.

"After that three-run shot, Scioscia came up to me and said I'm doing fine," Ohtani said.

Ohtani began the season-opening series by hitting a single on the first pitch he saw as a big leaguer, part of a 1-for-5 day at the plate. He capped the set by posting his first win.

Not too shabby, considering he struggled in spring training with his arm and bat. He went 0-1 with a 27.00 ERA in a pair of Cactus League outings and wound up pitching against minor leaguers on back fields, and also had trouble making contact with his swing.

"He showed really good command today

and was able to move the ball in and out, up and down, and we had a hard time getting consistent contact off of him," Chapman said.

Ohtani received ample support from the Los Angeles lineup.

Mike Trout hit a tying double in the fifth and Justin Upton followed with a go-ahead sacrifice fly. The Angels added insurance in the seventh, getting Andrelton Simmons' two-run single and an RBI single from Kole Calhoun.

Ohtani began the game with four straight outs — fanning three — before allowing consecutive singles to Matt Joyce and Stephen Piscotty that set up Chapman's first home run of 2018.

"He used everything," Scioscia said. "Outside of maybe one stretch of three hitters in the second inning, that's about as well as you could pitch. ... Shohei has shown great poise in everything he's done — the way he's practiced, the adjustments he's made at the plate when he's swinging the bat. I think that's going to be one of his strengths moving on."

Roundup

Astros prevail behind Cole's 11-strikeout effort

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Gerrit Cole struck out 11 over seven innings in his Houston debut, and the defending champion Astros finished a solid opening weekend with a 8-2 victory over Texas.

The hard-throwing right-hander, acquired in an off-season trade after he was the opening day starter for Pittsburgh last year, allowed two hits to help the Astros take three of four from their state rivals.

Carlos Correa doubled home two runs in the seventh, and AL MVP Jose Altuve had three hits to finish 9-for-16 in the series. Evan Gattis had three hits and three RBIs, including a pair of run-scoring doubles.

Blue Jays 7, Yankees 4: Justin Smoak hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning and a go-ahead grand slam in the eighth to rally host Toronto past New York.

After connecting off re-

liever Tommy Kahnle in the seventh, Smoak brought the crowd of 29,091 to its feet with his second career slam, a drive against David Robertson (0-1). Smoak went 3-for-4 with a walk and six RBIs as Toronto gained a series split, winning the final two games.

Nationals 6, Reds 5: Bryce Harper hit two home runs, leadoff man Adam Eaton capped his big opening series with a two-run drive and visiting Washington beat Cincinnati for a three-game sweep under new manager Dave Martinez.

The Nationals are 3-0 for the fourth time in their history. They last swept an opening series in 2014.

Dodgers 9, Giants 0: Cody Bellinger hit the Dodgers' first home run of the season and Rich Hill threw six spotless innings as host Los Angeles gained a series split with rival San Francisco.

All four games in the season-opening set were shutouts.

Mariners 5, Indians 4: Dee Gordon and Mitch Haniger homered, Mike Leake pitched seven strong innings and Seattle topped visiting Cleveland.

Edwin Encarnacion went deep twice for the Indians, his 29th career multihomer game.

Twins 7, Orioles 0: Jose Berrios pitched a three-hitter for his first career complete game, and Minnesota got two home runs from Brian Dozier in a rout of host Baltimore.

Miguel Sano and Eduardo Escobar also connected for the Twins, who won two of three in the season-opening series.

Cardinals 5, Mets 1: Paul DeJong had the first multihomer game of his big league career, Luke Weaver held host New York to one run in five innings and St. Louis avoided an opening three-game sweep.

DeJong hit .285 with 25 home runs and 65 RBIs as a rookie last year, earning a \$26 million, six-year contract.

Red Sox 2, Rays 1: Hector

Velazquez continued a season-opening stretch of strong starting pitching by visiting Boston, working into the sixth inning.

The first four Red Sox starters — Chris Sale, David Price, Rick Porcello and Velazquez — combined to give up two runs over 24 innings. The defending AL East champions won three of four at Tropicana Field under new manager Alex Cora.

Marlins 6, Cubs 0: Dillon Peters threw six scoreless innings, Brian Anderson hit a three-run double to highlight a five-run fifth and host Miami split its opening four-game series with Chicago.

Pirates 1-8, Tigers 0-6: Josh Harrison, Starling Marte and David Freese homered as visiting Pittsburgh completed a doubleheader sweep of Detroit.

The Pirates won the opener behind six no-hit innings from Trevor Williams (1-0), then took control of the second game with five runs in the fifth off Buck Farmer (0-1)

NBA roundup

Spurs shut down Rockets

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — LaMarcus Aldridge had 23 points and 14 rebounds and Rudy Gay added 21 points as the San Antonio Spurs held Houston to its lowest-scoring game of the season, beating the Rockets 100-83 on Sunday.

The Spurs remained fourth in the Western Conference after preventing a season sweep by the Rockets. Houston owns the NBA's best record.

San Antonio outscored Houston 19-8 to open the fourth quarter in taking a 94-74 lead with 5 minutes remaining. Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni opted to take his starters out two minutes later.

The Rockets were without injured Chris Paul and the Spurs were without Kawhi Leonard, who has played in only nine games this season.

James Harden scored 25 points for Houston on 8-of-19 shooting. He also had eight assists, but battled foul trouble before exiting with five fouls. Eric Gordon added 18 points for the Rockets.

Nuggets 128, Bucks 125 (OT): Nikola Jokic had 35 points and 13 rebounds, Jamal Murray scored 18 of his 27 points after the third quarter and host Denver rallied from eight down in the final minute of regulation to beat Milwaukee in overtime.

The Nuggets (42-35) moved within a game of eighth-place New Orleans, which lost its fourth straight Sunday, and 1½ games of Minnesota, which also lost. Two of Denver's last five games are against the Timberwolves, and it holds the tiebreaker on the Pelicans.

Jabari Parker scored 35 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, both season highs, and Eric Bledsoe had 31 points for Milwaukee (41-36). The Bucks' magic number for clinching a playoff spot in the Eastern Conference remains at two.

Cavaliers 98, Mavericks 87: LeBron James struggled before extending his record double-digit scoring streak to 868 games and Cleveland had a rough time with visiting Dallas before putting away the lottery-bound Mavericks.

James had 16 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists, his 17th triple-double this season and No. 72 of his career.

Trail Blazers 113, Grizzlies 98: Damian Lillard had 27 points and nine assists, and host Portland held off a late run by Memphis.

The Trail Blazers clinched their fifth straight playoff spot earlier in the evening when Utah won at Minnesota.

Warriors 117, Suns 107: Kevin Durant had 29 points, 11 rebounds and eight as-

sists, and Golden State overcame a sloppy start to hand visiting Phoenix its franchise-record 15th consecutive loss.

Hours before the game, the Warriors received encouraging word on injured guard Pat McCaw, who was released from a Sacramento hospital with a bruised lumbar spine following a terrifying fall during Saturday's game against the Kings.

Thunder 109, Pelicans 104: At New Orleans, Russell Westbrook had a triple-double to lead Oklahoma City.

Westbrook finished with 26 points, 15 rebounds and 13 assists. Paul George scored Oklahoma City's first 11 points in the second quarter and finished with 27. Carmelo Anthony added 16 and Steven Adams had 14.

76ers 119, Hornets 102: Ben Simmons had 20 points and 15 assists as Philadelphia kept up its passing prowess to beat host Charlotte.

The Sixers set a team record with its ninth straight game of 30 or more assists — they had 36 on their 48 baskets.

Pistons 108, Nets 96: Reggie Jackson scored 29 points, Stanley Johnson had 17 and Detroit preserved its slim playoff hopes with a victory over host Brooklyn.

Detroit, playing its third straight game without injured All-Star forward Blake Griffin, avoided elimination from postseason contention for at least one game.

The Pistons are four games behind Miami — which holds the eighth and last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference — with five games remaining for each team.

Pacers 111, Clippers 104: Victor Oladipo scored 30 points, Myles Turner added 24 and visiting Indiana rallied for its fifth straight victory.

Oladipo shot 11 of 17 from the field and had 12 assists for the playoff-bound Pacers, who have won four in a row over the Clippers.

Jazz 121, Timberwolves 97: Ricky Rubio scored 23 points, including a season-high 5-for-6 shooting on three-pointers, and Donovan Mitchell added 21 points for visiting Utah.

Bulls 113, Wizards 94: Rookie Lauri Markkanen scored 23 points and connected on 5 of 8 three-pointers to lead host Chicago.

Kings 84, Lakers 83: Buddy Hield scored 19 points to help visiting Sacramento to snap a four-game losing streak.

Hawks 94, Magic 88: Tyler Dorsey scored 19 points, including back-to-back baskets after Orlando trimmed host Atlanta's lead to five points late in a matchup of the Eastern Conference's worst records.

NHL roundup

Capitals beat Pens, clinch Metropolitan

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Philipp Grubauer made 36 saves and the Washington Capitals celebrated star Alex Ovechkin's 1,000th career regular season game by clinching their third straight division title with a 3-1 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday.

Ovechkin was held without a point but it hardly mattered. T.J. Oshie, Dmitry Orlov and Tom Wilson scored for Washington while Grubauer kept the NHL's best power play in check as the Capitals assured themselves home-ice advantage through the first two rounds of the postseason.

The Penguins have ended each of the last two regular seasons as the division runner-up to Washington. And each time the Penguins have used a second-round playoff series victory over the Capitals as a springboard to the Stanley Cup.

Devils 2, Canadiens 1: Taylor Hall scored a short-handed goal late in the third period to lift visiting New Jersey.

The Devils increased their lead to seven points on Florida for the last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

Predators 4, Lightning 1: Filip Forsberg had two goals and an assist to lead visiting Nashville past Tampa Bay.

Craig Smith and Ryan Johansen also scored to help Nashville move closer to clinching the Presidents' Trophy with the league's best record.

The Lightning fell to 5-6-0 in their past 11 games and sit two points behind Boston for the top spot in the Eastern Conference.

Flyers 4, Bruins 3 (OT): Claude Giroux scored his second goal with 1:21 left in overtime and host Philadelphia recovered from blowing a late lead to inch closer to the playoffs after a one-year absence.

The Flyers opened an eight-point lead over idle Florida, the last team that can overtake it for a playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

Patrice Bergeron tied it with 3.8 seconds left in regulation for the Bruins. With the goaltender pulled, Bergeron got his 30th goal on a feed from Brad Marchand after the Flyers twice failed to clear the puck.

Ducks 4, Avalanche 3 (OT): Ondrej Kase scored 1:34 into overtime to cap host Anaheim's comeback from a two-goal deficit.

Andrew Cogliano had a goal and an assist, and Adam Henrique and Ryan Kesler also scored for the Ducks, who moved into third place in the Pacific Division.