

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Floridians flee as Irma aims at Tampa

Associated Press

MIAMI — With the window closing fast for anyone wanting to escape, Hurricane Irma hurtled toward Florida with 125 mph winds Saturday on a shifting course that took it away from Miami and instead threatened the first direct hit on the Tampa area from a major hurricane in nearly a century.

That represented a significant turn in the forecast, which for days had made it look as if the Miami metropolitan area of 6 million people was going to get slammed head-on by the Big One.

“You don’t want to play with this thing,” Sen. Marco Rubio warned during a visit to the Miami-Dade Emergency Operations Center. “People will die from this.”

Forecasters predicted Irma’s center would blow ashore Sunday in the perilously low-lying Florida Keys, then hit southwestern Florida, move up the state’s Gulf Coast and plow into the Tampa Bay area.

The storm center, itself, is expected to miss Miami, but the metro area still will get pounded with life-threatening hurricane winds, National Hurricane Center spokesman Dennis Feltgen said.

Tampa has not been struck by a major hurricane since 1921, when its population was about 10,000, Feltgen said. Now the

area has about 3 million people and encompasses two of Florida’s biggest cities: Tampa and St. Petersburg.

With the new forecast, Pinellas County, home to St. Petersburg, ordered 260,000 people to leave.

The overnight change in course was frustrating and frightening to Tampa Bay residents who awoke to the news, including Jeff Beerbohm, 52, an entrepreneur who planned on riding out the storm in his high-rise condo in downtown St. Petersburg.

He grouched about days of predictions that Irma would run up the state’s east coast, only to be undone by a last-minute change.

“As usual, the weatherman, I don’t know why they’re paid,” he said.

As the storm closed in on the Sunshine State, it raked Cuba and left more than 20 people dead in its wake across the Caribbean after ravaging such resort islands as St. Martin, St. Barts, St. Thomas, Barbuda and Antigua.

Irma weakened slightly in the morning but was expected to pick up strength again before slamming Florida.

On Saturday morning, the hurricane’s outer bands blew into South Florida as residents scrambled to leave. Damaging winds were moving into areas including Key Biscayne and Coral Gables, and gusts up to 56

mph were reported off Miami.

Already, Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez said 19,000 homes in the county were without power before midday, including his own.

In Key West, Carol Walterson Stroud, 60, sought refuge in a senior center with her husband, granddaughter and dog. The streets were nearly empty, shops were boarded up and the wind began to gust.

“Tonight, I’m sweating,” she said. “Tonight, I’m scared to death.”

In one of the biggest evacuations ever ordered in the U.S., about 6.3 million people in Florida — more than one-fourth of the state’s population — were warned to leave, and 540,000 were directed to clear out from the Georgia coast. Authorities opened hundreds of shelters for people who did not leave. Hotels as far away as Atlanta filled up with evacuees.

Gas shortages and gridlock plagued the evacuations, turning normally simple trips into tests of will. Parts of interstates 75 and 95 north were bumper-to-bumper, while very few cars drove in the southbound lanes.

“If you are planning to leave and do not leave tonight, you will have to ride out this extremely dangerous storm at your own risk,” Florida Gov. Rick Scott said Friday. He urged everybody in the Keys to get out.

SpaceX launches Pentagon’s autonomous space drone

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — In the Pentagon’s vast arsenal there is little quite like it: a super-secret space drone that looks like a miniature version of the space shuttle, but orbits the Earth for months, even years, at a time. Doing what? The Air Force won’t say.

On the tarmac, the X-37B, as it is called, looks tiny, standing not much taller than a person. Its wingspan measures less than 15 feet, and it weighs in at just 11,000 pounds. But over the course of six flights, it has proved to be a rugged, robotic spacecraft, spending a total of nearly six years probing the hard environment of the high frontier.

On Thursday, after a successful morning launch at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida, the X-37B headed yet again to the

vital real estate known as low Earth orbit, home to the International Space Station and all sorts of military and commercial satellites. The mission is slated to last 270 days, but the Air Force warned in a statement that “the actual duration depends on test objectives, on-orbit vehicle performance and conditions at the landing facility.”

In other words, there’s no telling how long the thing will be up there.

There’s also no telling what the spaceplane will be doing.

On a fact sheet, the Air Force says that “the primary objectives of the X-37B are twofold: reusable spacecraft technologies for America’s future in space and operating experiments which can be returned to, and examined, on Earth.”

On this flight, the Air Force will say only that the mission is to carry small satellites, to “demonstrate greater opportunities for rapid space access and on-orbit testing of emerging space technologies.” The service also said it would test experimental electronics in a weightless environment.

But at a time when space is becoming a contested environment, having an orbiting spaceplane with the potential to keep a lookout on weather, the enemy or satellites, all while testing new technologies, could be highly beneficial.

The mission also is significant because it marked the first time SpaceX has been chosen to launch for the Air Force — a coup for the California firm started in 2002 by tech entrepreneur Elon Musk.

Senator demands Pentagon probe of Navy misconduct case

USA Today

WASHINGTON — Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand on Friday called out Navy leadership for its slow response to suspected drunken sexual misconduct at a Pentagon Christmas party involving an aide to the service's top officer, demanding an independent review of the case by the Department of Defense Inspector General.

Navy Cmdr. Chris Servello, who had been Adm. John Richardson's spokesman, was accused by junior officers and a civilian of sexual misconduct while he wore a Santa Claus outfit at an office Christmas party inside the Pentagon in 2016, USA Today reported Thursday. Servello was allowed to keep his post for nine months despite written warnings from an investigator that he was a sexual predator, and the recommendation that he be reassigned immediately to a post in which he didn't supervise other officers, an investigation by the paper found.

Gillibrand took direct aim at Richardson and other senior

leaders for not acting faster and more forcefully.

"I am extremely troubled that it appears senior Navy leadership turned a blind eye to this unacceptable behavior to show favor to a trusted aide to the detriment of not only the subjects of his unwanted advances but the entire Pentagon community who knew of this alleged abusive behavior yet saw no immediate action by their leaders," Gillibrand wrote to Pentagon Inspector General Glenn Fine. "Failure of leadership in an instance such as this, if accurate, would directly undermine good order and discipline. It is essential we answer the question of who knew what, when, and why no action was taken to remove the alleged offender (even temporarily) from such an important, public position."

Richardson, in a statement on Thursday, said that he had followed the recommendations of prosecutors "to the letter," firing Servello from his staff and reassigning him to a non-supervisory post. He added that he had followed legal advice to safeguard the rights of Servello

and the officers and civilians who had alleged assault and harassment.

Yet Richardson had received that same advice — firing Servello from his job as his spokesman and moving him to a post with no supervisory responsibilities and dedicated oversight — after an initial investigation was filed Dec. 21, according to documents obtained by USA Today.

Servello also issued a statement, saying he had cooperated with Navy investigators and pointed out that no criminal charges were filed in the case. He expressed regret for his poor judgment, noted that he had received administrative discipline and that his career will be unlikely to recover.

Gillibrand, in her letter, said the response from top Navy leadership to the Servello case appeared inadequate.

"The reactions of senior Navy leadership seem incongruent to Cdr. Servello's reported inappropriate behavior and warrant an independent, impartial party to fully examine the handling of this case," she wrote.

Air Force pilot killed in Nevada crash

The (Annapolis, Md.) Capital

An Air Force pilot from Annapolis, Md., died Wednesday when his plane crashed during a training flight in Nevada.

Lt. Col. Eric Schultz was flying an unspecified aircraft about 6 p.m. over the Nevada Test and Training Range, approximately 100 miles northwest of Nellis Air Force Base, a spokeswoman at the air base said Friday.

The aircraft was assigned to Air Force Materiel Command, which leads development of new combat technologies for the service.

Maj. Christina Sukach, a spokeswoman for the 99th Air Base Wing, said Schultz died as a result of injuries sustained in the accident. The crash remains under investigation, and additional details were not immediately available.

"Our immediate concern is for the family of Lt. Col. Schultz," she wrote in an email.

Schultz is a 1991 Annapolis High School graduate, and the son of Linda and Larry Schultz, of Annapolis. They traveled to Nevada on Wednesday to be with their son's wife and other members of the family.

A former civilian test pilot, Eric Schultz held multiple graduate degrees when he joined the Air Force in 2001. He went on to be an experienced flight training officer and was the 29th pilot to qualify to fly the F-35 fighter jet in 2011.

His crash was one of two Air Force crashes near Nellis on Wednesday. Two A-10C Thunderbolt II jets assigned to the 57th Wing crashed on the test range about 8 p.m.

An Air Force spokeswoman at Nellis said the pilots ejected safely. The aircraft were on a routine training mission at the time of the crash.

Texas base celebrates centennials for 3 squadrons

Abilene (Texas) Reporter-News

It was a celebration of centennials Friday when Dyess Air Force Base's 7th Bomb Wing had a 100th anniversary celebration honoring three on-base squadrons that have each served for a full century this year.

The 9th Bomb Squadron, the 28th Bomb Squadron and the 436th Training Squadron were honored with a celebration of their collective history, heritage displays featuring aircraft and squadron memorabilia, and a "piano burn," which is ... well, exactly what it sounds like.

The latter perhaps needs

some explanation, something Capt. Ryan Combes of the 28th Bomb Squadron provided.

"The first side of it was in between World War I and World War II," he said. "The Royal Air Force, basically all of the dukes' and earls' sons, were killed off in World War I. So to replenish the pilots in the RAF, they took from the common folk."

Leadership apparently decided that the men didn't possess "gentlemanly skills," so they dictated that once per week, every pilot would do an hour of piano playing at the club, Combes said.

"And so the story goes that

the wing commander, at the time, of one of these bases, shut down the bar at the officers' club," Combes said. "And in protest, all of the lieutenants pulled the piano outside and set it on fire."

Combes said that the anniversary of the 9th and 28th, both founded in June 1917, represented an extremely important milestone, "especially from a heritage standpoint."

"What we wanted to do today was bring out the rest of the base and basically link what they do for us today ... to the past, the fact that their predecessors helped us," he said.

Coalition suspends monitoring of ISIS convoy

BY CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

IRBIL, Iraq — The U.S.-led coalition withdrew its aircraft monitoring a stranded 11-bus Islamic State convoy of militants and their families on Friday morning, as Syrian pro-regime forces advanced past the stopped vehicles in the country's eastern desert, military officials said.

Aircraft had been monitoring the situation for more than a week to prevent ISIS fighters from slipping into extremist-held territory to the east along the Iraqi frontier, and warplanes had been picking off fighters venturing away from the buses and vehicles coming from ISIS territory to rescue them.

The coalition aircraft were pulled from the airspace “to ensure safe deconfliction of efforts to defeat ISIS,” according to an Operation Inherent Resolve release. The move was made at the request of Russian officials during an assault on Deir al-Zour, where Syrian pro-regime forces broke a three-year ISIS siege earlier this week.

The U.S. and Russia have broadly maintained a special “deconfliction line” to communicate the locations of U.S. and Russian air and ground forces in Syria since 2015.

Friday's move by the Syrian regime could create an opening for ISIS fighters to flee or to be escorted to safety, rather than left as sitting ducks for coalition aircraft. Syrian President

Bashar Assad's backers in Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group had promised the convoy safe passage, though it claimed its responsibility was over once the buses left Syrian government-held territory.

Under the Hezbollah-brokered deal last week that upset coalition and Iraqi officials, about 300 ISIS fighters and as many women and children were loaded onto 17 buses heading from Syria's Lebanese border, through government-held territory, bound for ISIS-controlled areas to the east.

The U.S.-led coalition vowed to prevent the convoy from reaching the Iraqi border, where ISIS controls a pocket along the Euphrates River with

about 8,000 fighters. Airstrikes cratered the road and disabled a bridge ahead of the buses, forcing six to head back to Syrian government-held areas near Palmyra.

The remaining 11, supplied occasionally with food and water from the Syrian regime, had been stuck in the desert, where morale was running thin, and the militants were observed fist-fighting by the coalition's eyes in the sky.

Some Syrian opposition activists and Iraqi officials had feared that the militants had been rescued in civilian vehicles and taken to the border areas, but coalition officials denied it and said they would maintain a watch over the buses.

Syrian army, US-armed fighters race for control of eastern Syria

Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-backed Syrian fighters launched an offensive against Islamic State in eastern Syria along the border with Iraq on Saturday, bringing them into a race with government forces marching in the same direction against the extremists in their last major holdout in the war-torn country.

The dueling battles for Deir el-Zour highlight the importance of the oil-rich eastern province, which has become the latest epicenter of the international war against ISIS, raising concerns of an eventual clash between the two sides.

The U.S.-trained Deir el-Zour Military Council said it was calling its operation Jazeera Storm, after the familiar name for northeast Syria. The Military Council is a part of the predominantly-Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces, which enjoys broad U.S. military support. The SDF is the U.S.'s primary ally in the fight against ISIS in Syria.

The race to reach the Iraqi border will shape future regional dynamics, determining whether the United States or Russia and Iran will have more influence in the strategic area once the extremist group is defeated.

Iran has been one of President Bashar Assad's strongest backers since the crisis began in March 2011 and has sent thou-

sands of Iranian-backed fighters and advisers to fight against insurgent groups trying to remove him from power.

The U.S.-backed fighters are up against a huge challenge to reach Deir el-Zour, especially while they are still fighting to liberate Raqqa from ISIS. Three months into the battle, they have liberated around 60 percent of the city, and much more difficult urban fighting still lies ahead.

This week, Syrian troops and their Iranian-backed allies reached Deir el-Zour, breaking a nearly 3-year-old ISIS siege on government-held parts of the city in a major breakthrough in their offensive against the militant group. In a victory statement, the Syrian military said Deir el-Zour will be used as a launching pad to liberate the remaining ISIS-held areas along the border with Iraq.

The troops' arrival to Deir el-Zour city brings Syrian forces and their allies a step closer to controlling the oil-rich eastern province and its capital bordering Iraq, a major boost for Tehran's growing influence in the area. The region has some of Syria's largest oil fields, whose revenue is vital to the state's dried coffers.

Syria's military command announced Saturday they had captured the province's Taym oil field from ISIS militants.

Iraq steps up strikes on ISIS-held Hawija

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi air force and the U.S.-led coalition have stepped up a campaign of airstrikes on the Islamic State-held town of Hawija ahead of a planned ground assault there, according to Iraq's minister of defense Saturday.

Iraqi forces are pushing ISIS out of the remaining pockets of territory the group holds in the country after forces backed by the U.S.-led coalition retook Iraq's second largest city of Mosul in July.

“There are large operations underway ahead of the liberation of Hawija and surrounding areas,” Iraqi Defense Minister Erfan al-Hayali told The Associated Press, explaining that his forces were working closely with Iraqi Kurdish forces known as the Peshmerga as well as the coalition.

Last month, the Iraqi military command overseeing the ISIS fight declared victory in Tal Afar, west of Mosul and announced Hawija, 150 miles north of Baghdad, would be the next battle against the extremists.

The stepped-up coalition strikes are targeting ISIS territory in western Anbar as well as Hawija, said U.S. Army Colonel Ryan Dillon, coalition spokesman.

“Coming off of their victory in Tal Afar (Iraqi security forces) will use a lot of the same techniques,” Dillon said. “Simultaneous attacks proved to be very successful as did operations ahead of time to let civilians know what to do.”

Trump signs aid, debt bill

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress on Friday sent President Donald Trump a massive package of \$15.3 billion in disaster aid linked to an increase in the nation's borrowing authority that angered conservative Republicans, who hissed and booed administration officials dispatched to Capitol Hill to defend it.

Hours later, Trump signed the measure into law.

The House voted 316-90 for the measure that would refill depleted emergency accounts as Florida braces for the impact of Hurricane Irma and Texas picks up the pieces after the devastation of the Harvey storm. All 90 votes in opposition were cast by Republicans, many of whom seethed after Trump cut the disaster-and-debt deal with Democratic leaders with no offsetting budget cuts.

The legislation also funds the government through Dec. 8.

In a closed-door meeting before the vote, more than a dozen Republicans stood up and complained about Trump cutting a deal with Democratic leaders Sen. Chuck Schumer, of New York, and Rep. Nancy Pelosi,

of California, instead of GOP leaders trying to deliver on the president's agenda.

Budget chief Mick Mulvaney, a former tea party congressman from South Carolina who took a hard line against debt increases during his House tenure, and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin faced a rough time in pleading for votes.

Mnuchin elicited hisses when he told the meeting of House Republicans to "vote for the debt ceiling for me," said Rep. Mark Walker, R-N.C.

Republicans were in disbelief after Mnuchin argued that the debt ceiling shouldn't be a political issue in the future, said Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C.

Mulvaney was booed when he stepped to the microphone, though lawmakers said it was good-natured. He defended the deal and Trump.

But Mulvaney further upset Republicans when he wouldn't promise spending cuts as part of a future debt-limit vote.

Trump on Wednesday had cut a deal with Schumer and Pelosi to increase the debt limit for three months, rather than the long-term approach preferred

by the GOP leaders that would have resolved the issue through next year's midterms. Conservatives disliked both options. Voting on the debt limit is politically toxic for Republicans, and the deal will make the GOP vote twice ahead of next year's midterm elections.

Fiscal conservatives have clamored for deep cuts in spending in exchange for any increase in the government's borrowing authority. The storm-relief measure had widespread support, but the linkage with the debt ceiling left many Republicans frustrated.

"Are we doing anything on fiscal sanity? No," said tea party Rep. Dave Brat, R-Va. "And so Mick (Mulvaney) came over today, the Treasury secretary came over today, and we said, 'Do you have a plan for fiscal sanity going forward?' No. Crickets. So that's the frustration."

Democratic votes are invariably needed to increase the debt limit — and avert a potential market-quaking default on government obligations — and Schumer and Pelosi successfully pressed to waive the debt limit through Dec. 8.

Singer Troy Gentry killed in helo crash

Associated Press

LUMBERTON, N.J. — A helicopter carrying singer Troy Gentry, of the award-winning country music duo Montgomery Gentry, crashed Friday, killing Gentry and the pilot.

The crash occurred in a wooded area as the helicopter approached the Flying W Airport in Medford, N.J., hours before Montgomery Gentry was due to perform at a resort housed at the airport, authorities said.

"Troy Gentry's family wishes to acknowledge all of the kind thoughts and prayers, and asks for privacy at this time," the band's website said.

Gentry, 50, was from Kentucky.

Police got a call about 1 p.m. regarding a helicopter that was in distress, said Joel Bewley, a spokesman for the Burlington County prosecutor's office. The helicopter crashed as emergency crews arrived at the scene.

Crews removed Gentry, who was a passenger, from the wreckage, but he was pronounced dead at a hospital, Medford police Chief Richard Meder said.

US calls for Monday vote on N. Korea sanctions

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — The United States called for a vote Monday on a U.N. resolution that would impose the toughest sanctions on North Korea, a move that could lead to a showdown with the country's biggest trading partner, China, and its neighbor, Russia.

The Trump administration adopted a new approach with this resolution, circulating a draft Tuesday and setting a vote six days later. With previous sanctions resolutions, the U.S. spent weeks and sometimes months negotiating the text with China and then presenting a resolution to the rest of the Security Council for a vote.

Several diplomats said the U.S. demand for a speedy council vote was aimed at putting maximum pressure on China and reflected Washington's escalating concern over North Korea's latest nuclear test and its recent ballistic missile launch over Japan.

Britain's U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, who backs new sanctions, said Thurs-

day the U.S. proposals to ban all oil imports and textile exports, and prohibit North Koreans from working overseas, which helps fund and fuel the country's nuclear and missile programs, are "a proportionate response" to its "illegal and reckless behavior."

The proposed U.S. sanctions would also freeze all foreign financial assets of the government and its leader, Kim Jong Un. The U.S. draft also identified nine ships that have carried out activities prohibited by previous U.N. resolutions and would authorize any U.N. member state to stop these vessels on the high seas without their consent and use "all necessary measures" — which in U.N. language includes force — to carry out an inspection and direct the vessel to a port.

The diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because discussions on the resolution have been private, said all 15 Security Council members discussed the draft on Friday, and both China and Russia

appeared willing to negotiate.

Beijing and Moscow have called for a resolution that focuses on a political solution and have proposed a freeze-for-freeze that would halt North Korean nuclear and missile tests in exchange for the U.S. and South Korea halting their joint military exercises.

A brief statement from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations late Friday said: "This evening, the United States informed the U.N. Security Council that it intends to call a meeting to vote on a draft resolution to establish additional sanctions on North Korea on Monday, September 11."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who called the nuclear risk in North Korea the most dangerous crisis in the world today, told reporters Tuesday that "the unity of the Security Council is absolutely crucial." He explained that only a united council can provide the pressure needed to enable successful negotiations to take place to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Guinness records include long-tailed cat

NY NEW YORK — A long-tailed cat, an octogenarian bodybuilder and a 5-inch long eyelash are included in the latest edition of Guinness World Records.

The 2018 version of the chronicle of extraordinary feats and features was released Thursday.

The honorees include a cat from Ferndale, Mich., named Cygnus that boasts a tail that stretches more than 17 inches. It set the world record for longest tail on a domestic cat.

A Chinese woman has set the record for world's longest eyelash, at nearly five inches.

An 83-year-old great-grandfather from Los Angeles has been named the world's oldest bodybuilder.

This is the 63rd edition of the Guinness book.

Officials designing giant, glowing potato

ID KETCHUM — Idaho officials plan to replace a 6-ton potato replica used for advertising with one that glows in the dark.

The Capital Press reported Idaho Potato Commission officials announced plans for the new potato last month and added that it will also be lighter and leaner than the Great Big Idaho Potato Truck's current Russet Burbank potato replica. The potato truck is used to promote the Idaho brand and has toured 7,200 cities in six years.

Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO Frank Muir said by making the new model 2 feet narrower, the potato truck will be able to operate without wide-load restrictions. Officials intended to make the new model look almost identical to the current one and keep it at 27 feet long.

Woman's tires slashed for 'rude' parking job

GA MILTON — After a woman's tires were slashed, police in a Georgia town are looking for a suspect who they believe did it.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that, according to a Milton police report, a 32-year-old woman reported Aug. 18 that she returned to her car parked along a road and found a tire had been slashed. A note had been left on her car that said, "parking like this is rude, you (expletive)."

The report said the suspect had slashed the back passenger-side tire of the woman's white 2017 GMC Terrain, and a tire on the U-Haul trailer attached to the vehicle was punctured.

Fort buys muskets used by redcoats in 1777

NY TICONDEROGA — Fort Ticonderoga has acquired three rare British muskets carried by redcoats at the northern New York stronghold 240 years ago.

Officials at the historic site on Lake Champlain said the guns were carried by soldiers in Britain's 53rd Regiment, part of Gen. John Burgoyne's army that was advancing toward Albany in the summer of 1777.

The fort's curator said the muskets are marked with numbers and letters that indicate they were used by redcoats who had captured the fortification 240 years ago. The guns had previously been loaned to the fort's museum and now are part of its vast collection of 18th century military armaments.

The 53rd Regiment was at Ticonderoga on Sept. 18, 1777, when American soldiers raided the British camp.

Baked goods eaten during masked burglary

OH BURTON — Authorities have identified a suspect in an Ohio county fair burglary who took a bite out of best-of-show baked goods during the heist.

The Plain Dealer reported, according to officials, whoever broke into an exhibit at the Geauga County Fair last week has a masked face, soft fur and walks on four legs.

Wanted posters are on display for a raccoon or raccoons that left paw prints on baked goods judged to be the best in show among the more than 1,000 entries submitted at the 195-year-old fair.

Fair Board Director Paul Harris says the raccoon took "a little sample here and a little sample there" from seven of the 11 best-of-show entries.

Dozens screened after beer found at game

NJ RANDOLPH — Dozens of students were detained and ordered to undergo blood and urine testing after a can of beer was discovered at a New Jersey high school football game.

Randolph Superintendent Jennifer Fano said in a letter that the can was found Friday night near a student section of the bleachers at Randolph High School.

Parents were called after dozens of students were pulled from the stands to be screened for alcohol. Students who refused would face suspension under school district policy.

Fano said investigators are reviewing video posted on social media of students drinking before the game.

Fano apologized to the students who tested negative. She

said the school board would pay for the cost of testing for those students.

Stolen identity revealed through Ancestry.com

PA PITTSBURGH — A Pennsylvania man who assumed the identity of a baby who died in Texas in 1972 was sentenced to more than two years in federal prison after the baby's aunt discovered the ruse on Ancestry.com.

Jon Vincent, 45, of Lansdale, was sentenced Thursday after pleading guilty in May to Social Security fraud and aggravated identify theft.

Prosecutors said Vincent escaped from a Texas halfway house in 1996 and stole Nathan Laskoski's identity after searching a cemetery for a similar birthdate.

Laskoski's aunt was doing an Ancestry.com search when she found a leaf on the family tree linking him to her dead nephew.

Vandals blamed for new carvings at state park

MI CASS CITY — Authorities are seeking help from the public identifying vandals who carved images into rock at Sanilac Petroglyphs State Park in Michigan.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources said rock that includes the Sanilac Petroglyphs was vandalized with three images earlier this year. The original carvings were made hundreds of years ago and are sacred to Native American tribes.

The vandalism at the park includes images that appear to be mushrooms and a cat.

Sandra Clark, director of the Michigan History Center, said in a statement the vandalism is a "disrespectful act."

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Judge blocks suspension of Dallas' Elliott

Associated Press

A federal judge blocked Dallas Cowboys star Ezekiel Elliott's six-game suspension over a domestic violence case Friday, setting the stage for a potentially lengthy legal fight with the NFL.

Last year's league rushing leader was already cleared to play in the opener against the New York Giants on Sunday night before the ruling by U.S. District Judge Amos Mazzant.

Mazzant agreed with players' union lawyers that Elliott didn't receive a "fundamentally fair" hearing in his appeal and he granted the NFL Players' Association request for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction blocking the league's punishment.

Elliott was suspended by Commissioner Roger Goodell in August after the league concluded he had several physical confrontations last summer with Tiffany Thompson, a former girlfriend. Prosecutors in Ohio didn't pursue the case, citing conflicting evidence.

The 22-year-old Elliott denied Thompson's allegations in sworn testimony during an appeal hearing last week. He

also attended the hearing for a restraining order earlier this week in Sherman, about 65 miles north of Dallas.

Arbitrator Harold Henderson turned down Elliott's appeal of the suspension the same day as the hearing in federal court. Henderson ruled that the NFL complied with its personal conduct policy in punishing Elliott and rejected any claims that Elliott's attorneys presented new evidence at the appeal.

Mazzant ruled that Henderson's decision not to allow Goodell and Thompson to testify helped Elliott's case in meeting the standard for an injunction to be issued.

"Their absence effectively deprived Elliott of any chance to have a fundamentally fair hearing," Mazzant wrote.

The union blasted NFL owners in its reaction to Mazzant's ruling.

"Commissioner discipline will continue to be a distraction from our game for one reason: because NFL owners have refused to collectively bargain a fair and transparent process that exists in other sports," the union said. "This 'imposed' system remains problematic for players and the game, but as

the honest and honorable testimony of a few NFL employees recently revealed, it also demonstrates the continued lack of integrity within their own league office."

After Henderson's ruling, the NFL filed a lawsuit asking a federal court in New York to enforce Elliott's suspension. The Southern District of New York falls under the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which last year backed Goodell's four-game suspension of New England quarterback Tom Brady in the "Deflategate" case.

The union had sued in federal court on behalf of Elliott last week before Henderson ruled, saying the appeal hearing was "fundamentally unfair" because the running back was prevented from confronting his accuser in the Ohio case.

NFLPA attorney Jeffrey Kessler reiterated most of the union's arguments before Mazzant, who pressed league attorney Daniel Nash for answers on the claim from Elliott's legal team that a co-lead investigator who questioned Thompson's credibility was left out of a key meeting with Goodell during the yearlong probe.

According to the letter Elliott

received informing him of the suspension last month, the NFL believed he used "physical force" three times in a span of five days in a Columbus, Ohio, apartment last July resulting in injuries to Thompson's face, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, wrists, hips and knees.

Prosecutors in Columbus decided about a year ago not to pursue the case in the city where Elliott starred for Ohio State, but the NFL kept the investigation open. The league said its conclusions were based on photographs, text messages and other electronic evidence.

The NFL stiffened penalties in domestic cases three years after the league was sharply criticized for its handling of the domestic case involving former Baltimore running back Ray Rice.

Elliott rushed for 1,631 yards as a rookie to help the Cowboys to the best record in the NFC at 13-3. He was a full practice participant throughout training camp but played in just one preseason game, same as a year ago when Elliott missed significant time at camp because of a hamstring injury.

Titans rookie Davis eager to prove his value to team

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Corey Davis has been busy recovering first from an ankle surgery, then an injured hamstring. The first wide receiver selected in the NFL Draft at No. 5 overall has watched lots of practices, paying close attention on the sidelines and in meetings.

Now he's ready to show what he can do in the NFL.

"I want to prove my worth in any way possible," Davis said. "Like I've said over and over, I want to go out there and compete, compete with the best of them. So it's tough sitting out. But that's just what happened. I don't question God.

"And when my opportunity

comes, I'm going to make the best of it."

The Titans have been very cautious with the rookie they slotted into the starting lineup the first time he stepped on the field this offseason, even if he was limited until the final minicamp in June. He missed the first day of training camp before signing his rookie contract and practiced until pulling up in a passing drill after feeling his hamstring straining Aug. 3.

Davis returned to practice Aug. 29, yet the Titans didn't risk the wide receiver's hamstring and kept him out of the preseason finale in Kansas City.

That means Davis will make

his NFL debut Sunday in the season opener against the Oakland Raiders. Coach Mike Mularkey said there won't be a count on how much Davis plays. The plan right now is to put Davis in specific situations and see how the rookie handles that.

"Corey is a guy that's going to have to get his feet wet," Mularkey said. "And the sooner he can, the better he'll be."

Tennessee made Davis the first wide receiver drafted in April after he became the only player in Football Bowl Subdivision history with 300 catches, 5,000 yards and 50 touchdowns. His 5,285 yards receiving also set an FBS mark. He finished an All-American senior sea-

son at Western Michigan with 97 catches, 1,500 yards and 19 TDs.

At 6-foot-3, 209 pounds, Davis gives Marcus Mariota a very big target. The quarterback said Wednesday he's had enough time with Davis to build the chemistry they need together. Mariota also credited Davis with making his job easy, as well.

"He's a great player, creates a lot of separation with his route-running," Mariota said. "He makes it easy for us to know where we're expecting him to come out of his routes. I think for us we're going to expect a lot out of him, and I hope he's up to the challenge."

College football roundup

Oklahoma State routs South Alabama

Associated Press

MOBILE, Ala. — Mason Rudolph became Oklahoma State's most prolific passer with another impressive stat line. The defense was awfully good, too.

Rudolph passed for 335 yards and three touchdowns, ran for a score and, oh by the way, broke the 11th-ranked Cowboys' career passing mark in a 44-7 victory over South Alabama on Friday night.

Getting that record, he said, "was cool" but not that big of a deal personally.

"That's not even one of the goals on my goal sheet," Rudolph said. "Getting the Big 12 title is the ultimate goal, and it's going to take a lot more of these performances to get there."

He and the Cowboys (2-0) are off to a pretty good start.

Rudolph topped Brandon Weeden's mark of 9,260 yards late in the second quarter and finished the night with 9,352. He completed 25 of 38 passes for the Cowboys before heading to the sideline late in the third

quarter. The 6-foot-5 senior has accounted for eight touchdowns in two games.

Rudolph and the team's other leaders helped ensure the Cowboys didn't have a letdown against a heavy underdog on a night generally reserved for high school ball.

"It can happen," coach Mike Gundy said. "You can come here and guys can lose focus. It's happened to us before. The leadership that he provides and a few other guys prevent that from happening most of the time."

Oklahoma State's defense throttled the Sun Belt Conference's Jaguars (0-2), who lost starting quarterback Cole Garvin to a sprained right ankle after one series.

The Cowboys outgained South Alabama 505-175 in total yards and carried a shutout into the final five minutes.

"They just out-executed us," South Alabama coach Joey Jones said. "Their quarterback was tremendous. They made a lot of big plays and completed

a bunch of third-down throws. When you play a team like that, you can't afford to not execute."

Rudolph completed a 66-yard touchdown pass on a short slant pass-and-run to James Washington and connected on scoring strikes of 4 and 20 yards to Marcell Ateman.

"Surprisingly, they were really in a run-prevention defense most of the night and allowed us to throw the ball pretty successfully," Gundy said.

Justin Phillips scored on a 25-yard interception return off a deflection by lineman Darion Daniels.

Purdue 44, Ohio 21: At West Lafayette, Ind., David Blough led his team on a 24-0 first-half run and the Boilermakers pulled away for a 44-21 victory over the Bobcats for coach Jeff Brohm's first program victory.

Sophomore Elijah Sindelar started at quarterback and helped Purdue (1-1) take a 10-7 lead. But Blough took over with 11:07 remaining in the second quarter and produced 24 points

in four possessions, including a 62-yard touchdown pass to Cole Herdman and a 31-yarder to Anthony Mahoungou.

Blough had six completions in seven attempts for 172 yards in the first half. He added a 5-yard TD pass to Jackson Anthrop in the third and finished 11-for-13 passing for 235 yards and three scores.

Tario Fuller led Purdue with 16 rushes for 142 yards and his first career touchdown. He had just eight carries for 29 yards last week against No. 17 Louisville.

The Bobcats (1-1), who opened the season with a 59-0 victory against Hampton, closed to within 10-7 on A.J. Ouellette's 4-yard run with 27 seconds left in the first quarter, but the second quarter was all Purdue. The Boilermakers ran 35 first-half plays for 360 yards.

A crowd of 45,633 attended Purdue's first night game with the new permanent lights.

Nadal moves into US Open men's final against Anderson

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Rafael Nadal went into his U.S. Open semi-final against Juan Martin del Potro with a relatively simple game plan: Stay away from the big guy's flat, fearsome forehand and instead go after his weaker backhand.

Nadal tried that strategy just long enough to drop the opening set. Once he scrapped it on the fly, everything changed, and it didn't take long for him to power into the final.

Closing in on a third title at Flushing Meadows and 16th Grand Slam championship overall, Nadal overcame a so-so start with an overwhelming performance the rest of the way Friday night, taking nine games in a row during one stretch to beat 2009 champion

del Potro 4-6, 6-0, 6-3, 6-2.

"I was wrong in the way that I was trying to play, no? ... I started to understand a little bit better what I needed to do to try to be a little bit more unpredictable, because he was waiting for me in his backhand side," Nadal said. "He only had to cover 60 percent of the court most of the time."

Once the Spanish lefty started hitting more forehands down the line to the righty del Potro's backhand, Nadal explained, "I was more unpredictable, and he was more in trouble, because he didn't know where to go."

His opponent's take? "He played so smart from the second set until the end of the match," del Potro said. "He was dominant."

No. 1 Nadal will be a significant favorite Sunday against

No. 32 Kevin Anderson of South Africa, who beat Pablo Carreno Busta 4-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-4 to become the lowest-ranked U.S. Open finalist since the ATP's computer rankings began in 1973. The 6-foot-8 Anderson, who won an NCAA doubles title at the University of Illinois, is equipped with a big serve, certainly, but he only once had even been a quarterfinalist at a major until this week. He's also lost all four previous matches against Nadal.

Plus there's this: Nadal looked as good as ever over the last three sets against del Potro, further confirmation of his return to the height of his powers. Nadal is again healthy and capable of excellence, after wrist and knee injuries dulled his effectiveness in 2015 and 2016 — the first seasons since

2004 in which he not only failed to win a Grand Slam trophy but didn't even make a final.

"It's been an amazing season, of course," Nadal said, "after a couple of years with some troubles, injuries, tough moments."

He reached the Australian Open final in January, losing to Roger Federer, then claimed his record 10th French Open championship in June.

When Nadal's uncle and coach, Toni, was asked to describe his nephew's year, this was the reply: "It's easy to describe it. He has played really good."

Well, then. Save for that first set Friday, in which Nadal had nine winners and 10 unforced errors, he barely missed his targets. The numbers the rest of the way: 36 winners, 10 unforced errors.

Indians win franchise-record 16th straight

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Over two hours before the game's first pitch, the mood inside the clubhouse of baseball's hottest team is almost fraternity-house loose.

Championship-level chill.

In one corner, All-Star short-stop Francisco Lindor smiles while peeling off his backpack and tosses it in his cubicle before cracking a joke at the expense of rookie center fielder Bradley Zimmer. Across the room, Jay Bruce rearranges a few boxes that the outfielder hasn't had time to unpack since arriving in a trade from New York while reliever Joe Smith and starter Josh Tomlin argue over who has the higher average fastball velocity.

There's music, laughter, video games and no signs of stress.

Yeah, these are indeed good times for the Cleveland Indians, who haven't lost in more

than two weeks — and act as if they won't lose again.

With a win-today-and-forget-yesterday attitude that has filtered down from manager Terry Francona, the Indians, who came up one win short of a World Series title last season, are on the most impressive run since the franchise was founded in 1901.

On Friday night, they extended their team-record winning streak to 16 with a 5-0 victory over the Baltimore Orioles, the latest team flattened by this runaway, run-scoring, run-stopping machine.

Cleveland joined the "Moneyball" 2002 Oakland Athletics (20) and the 1977 Kansas City Royals (16) as the only teams to win 16 straight since the expansion era began in 1961.

The Indians, who just completed the first 11-0 road trip since the Cincinnati Reds did it in 1957, are entering rarefied air and are now just five wins

from matching the record of 21 straight held by the 1935 Chicago Cubs.

"Nobody in here is really talking about it," said superstar-on-deck Lindor, who seems to get a big hit or make a dazzling play each game. "Everyone else is talking about it, but we're not."

There's plenty to discuss when considering what the Indians have accomplished during their torrid streak:

- Outscored opponents 114-28 while posting five of their baseball-best 17 shutouts.

- Trailed in just two of 144 innings, taking the lead in each of the 16 games.

- Swept a three-game series at Yankee Stadium for the first time since 1989, a four-game series in Detroit for the first time ever and two doubleheaders in three days.

- Became the first team since the '35 Cubs to post winning streaks of at least 14 games in consecutive seasons.

- Done it all without All-Star reliever Andrew Miller, outfielder Michael Brantley and Jason Kipnis, three of their best players who are sidelined by injuries.

Francona has been hesitant to say much about the streak, not wanting it to become something his players are focused on trying to maintain.

"I don't think anybody's getting caught up (in the streak)," Francona said. "We're keeping an eye on that pretty close and they're doing a good job."

Surely it will end at some point, and when it does the Indians will resume chasing their first Series championship since 1948.

"My high school baseball coach texted me the other day, because we went 14-0 that year," Francona said. "But we ran out of games because the season was over."

His Indians are far from done.

MLB roundup

Athletics rally in ninth to halt Astros' streak at seven

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Jed Lowrie singled home the winning run in the ninth inning after Boog Powell's tying home run, and the Oakland Athletics snapped the AL West-leading Houston Astros' seven-game winning streak with a 9-8 win Friday night.

Houston's Josh Reddick hit a go-ahead double with two outs in the ninth inning after an earlier two-run homer and another run-scoring double, but the typically sharp Astros bullpen couldn't come through in the bottom half. Lowrie notched his second game-ending hit this season and fifth of his career facing Ken Giles (1-3).

Marcus Semien hit a tying grand slam in the seventh for Oakland.

Padres 10, Diamondbacks 6: Host Arizona's team-record 13-game winning streak ended

when Manuel Margot drove in four runs that led San Diego.

Rockies 5, Dodgers 4: DJ LeMahieu doubled home the go-ahead run and visiting Colorado sent NL West-leading Los Angeles to its eighth straight loss.

The Dodgers still own the best record in baseball at 92-49.

Mariners 4, Angels 3: Ben Gamel hit a three-run homer to give his team an early lead, Mike Leake overcame first-inning problems to pitch six solid innings, and host Seattle snapped a three-game losing streak.

Nationals 11, Phillies 10: Michael A. Taylor raced for an inside-the-park grand slam when center fielder Odubel Herrera misplayed his line drive, and Washington eliminated visiting Philadelphia from postseason contention.

Red Sox 9, Rays 3: Drew Pomeranz did not allow a hit until the fifth inning and gave up two runs over six and Mookie Betts hit a three-run homer for host Boston.

Brewers 2, Cubs 0: Ryan Braun hit his 300th homer and Jimmy Nelson combined with three relievers on a five-hitter as Milwaukee beat Chicago in the first regular-season Friday night game at Wrigley Field.

Rangers 11, Yankees 5: At Arlington, Texas, Martin Perez won his seventh straight start after playoff-hopeful Texas rallied from an early four-run deficit and beat AL wild card-leading New York.

Tigers 5, Blue Jays 4: Third baseman Jeimer Candelario started the franchise's first triple play in 16 years, Nicholas Castellanos slugged his third career grand slam and Detroit beat host Toronto.

Twins 8, Royals 5: Eddie Rosario homered and drove in four runs, helping visiting Minnesota beat Kansas City.

Cardinals 4, Pirates 1: Luke Weaver pitched shutout ball into the sixth inning and also drove in a run, helping host St. Louis improve its postseason hopes.

Mets 5, Reds 1: Jose Reyes homered twice, Seth Lugo pitched six shutout innings and New York beat visiting Cincinnati for its third straight win.

Giants 9, White Sox 2: Pablo Sandoval snapped his 0-for-39 skid with a three-run homer, and Matt Moore pitched host San Francisco past Chicago in an interleague game between last-place teams.

Marlins 7, Braves 1: Jose Urena allowed three hits in 6¹/₃ innings and added his first career RBI to stop Miami's five-game skid.