

Legalization Of Marijuana Brings Complications

SEATTLE (AP) — People openly lit joints under the Space Needle and on Seattle's sidewalks — then blew the smoke at TV news cameras. To those looking to “get baked,” the city's police department suggested pizza and a “Lord of the Rings” movie marathon.

What, exactly, is going on in Washington state? Marijuana possession became legal under state law Thursday, the day a measure approved by voters to regulate marijuana like alcohol took effect. It prompted midnight celebrations from pot activists who say the war on drugs has failed.

But as the dawn of legalization arrives, Washington and Colorado, where a similar law passed last month, now face some genuinely complicated dilemmas: How on Earth do you go about creating a functioning legal-weed market? How do you ensure adults the freedom to use pot responsibly, or not so responsibly, while keeping it away from teenagers?

And perhaps most pressingly, will the Justice Department just stand by while the states issue licenses to the growers, processors and sellers of a substance that, under federal law, remains very much illegal?

NATO Moves Toward Deployment Near Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — As fears grow in the West that Syrian President Bashar Assad will unleash chemical weapons as an act of desperation, NATO moved forward Thursday with its plan to place Patriot missiles and troops along Syria's border with Turkey to protect against potential attacks.

Assad's regime blasted the move as “psychological warfare,” saying the new deployment would not deter it from seeking victory over rebels it views as terrorists.

The missile deployment sends a clear message to Assad that consequences will follow if he uses chemical weapons or strikes NATO member Turkey, which backs the rebels seeking his ouster. But its limited scope also reflects the low appetite in Western capitals for direct military intervention in the civil war.

The U.S. and many European and Arab countries called for Assad to step down early in the uprising but have struggled to make that happen. Russia and China have protected Assad from censure by the U.N. Security Council, and the presence of extremists among the rebels makes the U.S. and others nervous about arming them.

In Dublin, Ireland, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton joined Russia's foreign minister and the U.N. peace envoy to the Arab country for three-way talks that suggested Washington and Moscow were working toward a common strategy as the Assad regime weakens.

Police In Iowa Search Area After Bodies Found

EVANSDALE, Iowa (AP) — Investigators scoured a rural wildlife area in northeastern Iowa for clues Thursday after hunters found dead bodies believed to be those of two young cousins who vanished in July.

Even as they waited for confirmation of the bodies' identities, agents involved in the kidnapping investigation of Lyric Cook and Elizabeth Collins searched for possible evidence near the Seven Bridges Wildlife Area. One of the girls' mothers and community members appeared to be resigned to the tragic news that the bodies were the girls, which would shift the case to a death investigation.

“We are all grieving. We hurt for the families and believe me it touches the community deeply because it is a small community,” said Jeff Rasanen, pastor of the Faith Assembly of God Church in Evansdale. “It's a sad time. We were just praying for a much better outcome.”

Bremer County Sheriff Dewey Hildebrandt said officers from his agency, the FBI, the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation and Black Hawk County were processing the area where hunters found the bodies Wednesday afternoon. He said more information about the investigation would be released at a news conference Thursday afternoon. News photographs from the scene showed teams of officers looking in ditches along roads, fields and woods.

The county-owned wildlife area is popular for hunting and fishing and is intersected by the Wapsipinicon River. It is about 25 miles from Evansdale, the town of 4,700 people where 10-year-old Lyric and 8-year-old Elizabeth disappeared July 13 while riding their bikes.

Apple CEO: Line Of Macs To Be Made In U.S.

NEW YORK (AP) — Apple CEO Tim Cook says the company will move production of one of its existing lines of Mac computers to the United States next year.

Industry watchers said the announcement is both a cunning public-relations move and a harbinger of more manufacturing jobs moving back to the U.S. as wages rise in China.

Cook made the comments in part of an interview taped for NBC's “Rock Center,” but aired Thursday morning on “Today” and posted on the network's website.

In a separate interview with Bloomberg Businessweek, he said that the company will spend \$100 million in 2013 to move production of the line to the U.S. from China.

“This doesn't mean that Apple will do it ourselves, but we'll be working with people and we'll be investing our money,” Cook told Bloomberg.

Software Founder McAfee Denied Asylum

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Software company founder John McAfee was hospitalized Thursday after being denied political asylum in Guatemala and his lawyers said they were making a last-ditch effort to keep him from being flown back to Belize for questioning about the killing of a fellow American expatriate.

McAfee told The Associated Press that he had suffered chest pains overnight but didn't believe he had suffered a heart attack. A government doctor who examined him agreed, saying McAfee's heart rhythm and blood pressure were normal, and he appeared to be suffering from high stress.

McAfee was moved from an immigration center to a police-run hospital Thursday afternoon after Guatemalan authorities said McAfee's request for asylum had been denied. They did not explain why. Shortly after the decision was announced, McAfee issued a plea on his blog for the public to petition Guatemalan President Otto Perez Molina to let him stay.

“Please email the President of Guatemala and beg him to allow the court system to proceed, to determine my status in Guatemala, and please support the political asylum that I am asking for,” the post read.

McAfee's legal team said they were preparing to appeal the denial of asylum to the country's constitutional court, a process that could give McAfee perhaps another day or two in Guatemala. The court would have to issue a decision within 48 hours. McAfee also began complaining of chest pain, prompting authorities to prepare to move him from the immigration center where he had been held overnight.

Egypt

BY MAGGIE MICHAEL AND AYA BATRAWY
 Associated Press

CAIRO — An angry Mohammed Morsi refused Thursday to call off a referendum on a disputed constitution that has sparked Egypt's worst political crisis in two years, drawing chants of “topple the regime!” from protesters who waved their shoes in contempt.

The Egyptian president's uncompromising stand came a night after thousands of his supporters and opponents fought pitched battles outside his Cairo palace, leaving at least six dead and 700 injured.

Speaking in a nationally televised address, Morsi accused some in the opposition of serving remnants of Hosni Mubarak's authoritarian regime and vowed he would never tolerate anyone working for the overthrow of his “legitimate” government.

That brought shouts of “the people want to topple the regime!” from the crowd of 30,000 Morsi opponents — the same chant used in the protests that brought down Mubarak.

Morsi also invited the opposition to a



Morsi

“comprehensive and productive” dialogue starting Saturday at his presidential palace, but gave no sign that he might offer any meaningful concessions.

The opposition has already refused to engage Morsi unless he first rescinds decrees giving him nearly unrestricted powers and shelves the draft constitution hurriedly adopted by his Islamist allies in a marathon session last week.

Morsi said the referendum on the disputed charter would go ahead as scheduled on Dec. 15. He also refused to rescind the Nov. 22 decrees.

Reading from prepared notes, Morsi frequently broke off to improvise. He wore a black tie in mourning for the six people killed in Wednesday's clashes.

From Washington, President Barack Obama called Morsi to express “deep concern” about the deaths and injuries of protesters in Egypt, according to a White House statement.

Obama Seeks To Put Personal Touch On Cliff Talks

BY DAVID ESPO AND KEN THOMAS
 Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — President Barack Obama, trying to put a personal touch on “fiscal cliff” negotiations, visited a northern Virginia family's basement apartment Thursday to press his hard line on tax rate increases for the wealthy.

“We're in the midst of the Christmas season,” Obama said, sitting at a table in the Santana family's Falls Church home. “I think the American people are counting on this getting solved. The closer it gets to the brink, the more stress there is going to be.”

Obama and lawmakers have until the end of the year to avert across-the-board spending cuts and tax increases. The president reiterated the firm stance he has taken in recent days, warning that he's willing to let that economy-rattling double whammy take effect if Republicans don't drop their opposition to higher tax rates for the wealthy.

“Just to be clear, I'm not going to sign any package that somehow prevents the top rate from going up for the folks in the top 2 percent,” Obama said. “But I do remain optimistic that we can get something done that is good for families like this one and is good for the American economy.”

The president's quick trip — just a 15 minute drive from the White House — was part of an effort to rally public support for his tax proposals. The family whose home he visited is one of many



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT

President Obama speaks about the importance of extending income tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans and 97 percent of small businesses at a middle class family home in Falls Church, Virginia, Thursday.

that shared their stories online, at the White House's urging, of how they would be hurt if their taxes went up at the end of the year. The president will also travel to Detroit on Monday.

Obama and House Speaker John Boehner spoke on the phone Wednesday, their first known conversation in nearly a week. Neither side provided details of the call, but the White House said the lines of communication with Capitol Hill Republicans were open and there had been multiple con-

versations between staff.

Unless the president and Republicans reach a deal, George W. Bush-era tax rates will expire on all income earners on Jan. 1. Obama wants to continue them for 98 percent of Americans, while letting them expire on the upper income earners.

If Republicans try to block that effort, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said, the administration will “absolutely” let the country go over the fiscal cliff.

The size of the problem is so

large it can't be solved without rates going up,” he told CNBC on Wednesday.

Geithner drew a fierce response from Republicans. Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah called his statement “stunning and irresponsible.” He added, “Going over the fiscal cliff will put our economy, jobs, people's paychecks and retirement at risk, but that is what the White House wants, according to Secretary Geithner, if they don't get their way.”

Leading Conservative DeMint Resigning Senate Seat

BY DONNA CASSATA
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Jim DeMint, patron saint of the tea party and a would-be Republican kingmaker, announced suddenly Thursday he would resign his South Carolina seat to head Washington's conservative Heritage Foundation think tank, a shift that reverberated through a soul-searching GOP.

Just two years into a second, six-year term, DeMint said he would step down on Jan. 1 to helm Heritage while continuing the conservative fight. The 61-year-old lawmaker, known to hurry home to South Carolina nearly every weekend, had signaled that this term would be his last, but his abrupt announcement shocked even his closest Republican colleagues.

“When he told me this morning, I about fell off my couch,”

said South Carolina's other senator, Republican Lindsey Graham. “I didn't see this coming.”

Prizing ideology over electability, DeMint sometimes infuriated fellow Republicans, picking sides in GOP primaries with decidedly mixed results. He had no patience for centrist Republicans, pushing the party to the right while bankrolling candidates with millions from his political action committee, the Senate Conservatives Fund.

In 2010, candidates he ardently supported cost the GOP eminently winnable seats. This year, DeMint had better success.

“One of the most rewarding things I've done in the Senate is work with the grassroots to help elect a new generation of leaders who have the courage to fight for the principles of freedom that make this country so great,” DeMint said in his statement announcing his departure. “I'm con-

fident these senators will continue the legacy of conservative leaders before them.”

DeMint also has sometimes been a thorn in the GOP side on legislation, just this week criticizing House Speaker John Boehner's “fiscal cliff” counteroffer to President Barack Obama that would raise tax revenue \$800 billion as crushing for American jobs.

DeMint's departure creates an opening for a new generation of hard-charging conservatives in the Senate — Rand Paul of Kentucky, Mike Lee of Utah and soon-to-be Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas. The strong conservative element is pitted against the establishment as the Republican Party tries to

figure out its next moves after this year's defeat in the presidential race and the loss of congressional seats.

Shocked Senate Republicans were too courteous to say good riddance to DeMint, but a few made it clear that there were still hard feelings over the senator's political moves.

“I won,” Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said tersely when asked about DeMint backing her Republican primary rival Joe Miller in 2010, forcing her to run as a write-in candidate.

Democrats pointed out that they increased their numbers in this year's elections and will hold a 55-45 edge in the Senate next year.

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OBITUARIES

Michael Hento

Michael Hento, 53, of Avon died Thursday, Dec. 6, 2012, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton.

Funeral services are pending under the care of Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton.

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