

NATION/WORD DIGEST

Palin Legal Defense Fund Was Illegal

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — An investigator for the Alaska Personnel Board says a legal defense fund set up for Sarah Palin when she was governor was illegal.

Investigator Timothy Petuenos said Thursday the Alaska Fund Trust inappropriately used the word "official" on its website, wrongly implying Palin's endorsement as governor.

Palin's attorney says she will return the funds. Petuenos, however, found the 2008 GOP vice presidential nominee acted in good faith and relied on the advice of lawyers when setting up the fund.

A preliminary, confidential report also implicating Palin was issued last July, less than two weeks after she announced she was resigning. In announcing her resignation, Palin cited the toll of the ethics probes as one of the reasons she was stepping down.

Chicago Will Fight If Court Strikes Gun Ban

CHICAGO (AP) — If the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down Chicago's handgun ban, the city will likely do what Washington, D.C., did when its own ban was overturned two years ago.

D.C. put in place all sorts of regulations and restrictions to make it tougher to buy guns and easier for police to know who has them. And since the D.C. ban was lifted, just over 800 guns have been registered there.

Chicago Mayor Richard Daley won't say specifically what plans he has in mind if the Supreme Court rules against the city next week. But many say that a ruling favorable to gun rights advocates will lead to a new round of legislation — and lawsuits.

Daley told The Associated Press recently that the city won't just "roll over" if the high court rules against it.

Thorpe's Son Seeks Return Of Remains

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A son of Jim Thorpe is suing the Pennsylvania town that bears his father's name over the remains of the Native American often called the 20th century's greatest athlete.

Jack Thorpe of Shawnee, Okla., filed the lawsuit Thursday under a federal law designed to return Native American artifacts to their tribal homelands.

Jim Thorpe is a native Oklahoman who was a member of the Sac and Fox tribe. He won the decathlon and pentathlon in the 1912 Olympics and played professional football and baseball.

The Pocono Mountains town of Mauch (MAW) Chunk, Pa., made an odd 1950s deal with his third wife to bring his remains there. It then renamed itself Jim Thorpe and built a monument to the athlete.

Jack Thorpe wants the remains returned to Oklahoma.

Small Amount Of Adults Meet Salt Guidelines

ATLANTA (AP) — A new government report shows that only a small fraction of U.S. adults are meeting strict limits on salt consumption.

Most adults should be eating less than a teaspoon of salt each day to prevent high blood pressure, stroke and other problems. The report says only one in 18 meet that goal.

Health officials say 70 percent of adults need to be stingy with salt. That includes people with high blood pressure, African-Americans and anyone over 40.

The research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was released Thursday.

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Army Of Under Sea Robots At Work On Gulf Oil Spill

BY LISA LEFF AND RAMIT PLUSHNICK-MASTI
Associated Press Writers

NEW ORLEANS — They're like Superman, but underwater: able to withstand 5,000 pounds of subsea pressure, lift up to a ton, take 3D video images and transfer hydraulic power to other equipment.

Submersible robots can do what no person ever could, and they're serving an important role in the fight to stop the oil gushing from the blown-out well in the Gulf of Mexico.

A subcity of underwater robots is busily working 5,000 feet below the surface to help contain the leak that has gushed millions of gallons of oil into the water since the Deepwater Horizon blew up April 20, killing 11 workers.

Anyone who has watched online video of the crude spewing from the seafloor has seen their work — the cameras that provide the feeds are attached to the robots as they maneuver around the spill site.

They also made news this week when one bumped into a cap that has been collecting some of the oil, forcing BP to remove it for about 10 hours and leaving the flow into the Gulf unchecked. But there's been only one other problem in two months, despite the robots' busy task.

"They are very active and they are playing a very vital role in everything we do," BP

spokesman Mark Salt said. "People can't be down there."

"Pilots" operate the robots from comfortable-looking, La-Z-Boy-type chairs. On the left armrest of each is a joystick that moves the robot's mechanical arm. On the right, is the joystick that maneuvers the machine through the water. In front of the pilot are 11 monitors, DVD video recorders and a sonar screen.

"It's the most fun job in the world," said Jeffrey Harris of Oceaneering International Inc., which is providing about 14 robots to work on the Gulf spill. The joysticks resemble the ones used in fighter jets and, he joked, they're "a little more sophisticated than your Gameboy."

The most popular remotely operated vehicle — or ROV — being used in the project is the Millennium, an 11.5-foot-long, 8,000-pound, rectangular, foam-topped device with human-like arms that has the added benefit of wrists that can rotate continuously like a drill.

"It's like a construction worker," Harris said. "But it's got a lot more whistles and bells than a construction worker."

The devices using fiber optic technology are what allow the oil industry to drill and remove oil and natural gas from thousands of feet under the water. While a human cannot work in underwater pressures of more than 1,000 feet, these robots have been able to operate in depths of up to 18,000 feet — and

for unlimited time, as long as parts don't fail.

Robots have been part of offshore drilling since the 1980s, said Andrew Bowen, director of the National Deep Submergence Facility at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The technology was first developed by the U.S. Department of Defense to examine downed Soviet submarines.

Since then, the technology has advanced greatly, with the ROVs moving from relatively simple, basketball-shaped devices to the massive boxes of today.

But in 30 years in the industry, Bowen said, he's never seen them used quite like this.

They're helping to hook up fluid connectors, hoses and plumbing; install newly developed oil recovery systems; and build the relief wells that are considered the best hope of stopping the gusher.

Bowen and other scientists also have submersibles monitoring oil flow, gathering data on the ecosystem and sea life and surveying the underwater plume of dispersed oil.

The challenge now is getting the robots to perform new tasks in real time, without the benefit of prior testing or tweaking.

Said Bowen: "It is going to require a range of new techniques and technologies developed and tested and put into service so we are far better prepared to respond in case, heaven forbid, where we are confronted again with a situation like this."

Republicans Kill Senate
Jobless Aid Measure

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Republicans on Thursday defeated Democrats' showcase election-year jobs bill, including an extension of weekly unemployment benefits for millions of people out of work more than six months.

The 57-41 vote fell three votes short of the 60 required to crack a GOP filibuster, delivering a major blow to President Barack Obama and Democrats facing big losses of House and Senate seats in the fall election.

The rejected bill would also have provided \$16 billion in new aid to states, preserving the jobs of thousands of state and local government workers and providing what White House officials called an insurance policy against a double-dip recession. It also included dozens of tax breaks sought by business lobby-

ists, and tax increases on domestically produced oil and on investment fund managers.

The demise of the bill means that unemployment benefits will phase out for more than 200,000 people a week. Governors who had been counting on federal aid will now have to consider a fresh round of budget cuts, tax hikes and layoffs of state workers.

The bill has been sharply pared back after weeks of negotiations with GOP moderates Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine. The most recent version, unveiled Wednesday night, contained new cuts to food stamps and pared back the state aid provision to allow Democrats to claim the measure was fully paid for except for the unemployment insurance extension.

Snowe said the measure was drafted too broadly and would have ensnared businesses that aren't abusing the system.

The 'Energizer General'
Is Back Running A War

BY KIMBERLY DOZIER AND
ANNE FLAHERTY
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Army Gen. David Petraeus has already turned around a struggling U.S. war once. President Barack Obama is betting he can do it again.

The professional four-star general with an outsized reputation hasn't been chosen as Afghanistan war commander to bring a bold new strategy to the effort. Instead, he is seen as the officer best able to make the current strategy work — and to end the squabbling between diplomats and military leaders that broke into the open and consumed Gen. Stanley McChrystal's career.


If McChrystal's staff resembled a locker room-style boy's club, Petraeus, a Princeton Ph.D., is known for running his team more like a graduate seminar.

But he can set a ferocious pace.

"He is the Energizer general," says retired U.S. Army Col. Peter Mansoor, who was Petraeus' executive officer in Iraq in 2007 and 2008. "But what he'll need is someone on his staff to make him pace himself. That was my job."

Mansoor said: "His natural instinct is to run himself into the ground." Petraeus, 57, rises early for long runs, outgunning officers half his age, and responds to e-mails in the middle of the night. The intensity has sometimes shown. Petraeus briefly collapsed during Senate testimony last week, apparently from dehydration.

He is seen as able to pick up the counterinsurgency battle plan exactly where McChrystal is leaving off. Petraeus was McChrystal's boss as head of U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla., where he was already keeping tabs on the campaign, with frequent visits to Afghanistan, neighboring Pakistan and Washington.



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