

Afghan force extended

U.N. Security Council also voices 'concern' over violence. — International, 6A



Ranger Boats revving up

Marion County firm stalled by economy now expanding, hiring 115. — Business, 1D

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In the news

■ **Brenda Guthrie** said her 8-year-old son was horrified to witness his pet turtle, donated to the Gulfarium in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., after the red-eared slider outgrew the family's home aquarium, being eaten by an alligator immediately after workers placed the turtle in an exhibit.

■ **Brett Huntley Keel**, 23, has been charged in Long Beach, Miss., with aggravated domestic assault after police say he hit his mother in the face and head with an iron while she slept on the couch.

■ **Francesco Isolabella**, a lawyer for Marion True, a former antiquity curator for the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles who was accused of conspiring to illicitly traffic in ancient artifacts from Italy, said the case against True has been dismissed after a Roman judge said the statute of limitations had expired.

■ **Daniel Collins** of Collins, Mo., was in critical condition at a Kansas City hospital after the construction worker was swept more than a mile through a sewer-system pipe.

■ **Michael Nutter**, mayor of Philadelphia, has abolished the Philadelphia Clerk of Quarter Sessions Office, a 3-centuries-old office responsible for maintaining court records, staffing courtrooms and collecting bail money and fines in criminal cases, and said the move was "one more tangible piece of proof that government can be reformed."

■ **Melissa Jackson**, one of two New York City emergency medical technicians accused of failing to help a dying pregnant woman, has been charged with official misconduct, a misdemeanor.

■ **President Barack Obama** urged Congress to extend an educational tax credit, worth as much as \$2,500 per student, that is set to expire at the end of this year, saying, "We've got to make sure that in good times or bad, our families can invest in their children's future and in the future of our country."

■ **Jake Loftis**, 22, and Samuel Adams, 26, were charged in Kingston, Tenn., with indecent exposure and vandalism after police say the two former employees of Tiger Haven ran nude through the big cat refuge and exposed themselves to co-workers, allegations the two dispute, saying they just drank beer and got naked on a front porch.

■ **Sen. Lisa Murkowski**, who lost Alaska's GOP primary to Tea Party-backed Joe Miller, has made her write-in candidacy official, filing papers with the state to be eligible for next month's election.

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK
Today Sunny and pleasant.
High 76, light northwest winds.
Tonight Clear and cool.
Low 47.



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Land sale at Wilson is the end of a line

Family pulling up plantation stakes

PAUL P. QUINN
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE
WILSON — Lee Wilson & Co., which at one time was one of the largest plantations in the South, is about to be sold, and for the first time in more than 100 years, it will not be owned by a Wilson.

Two employees of the company, both of whom asked not to be named, told the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* on Wednesday that they were informed last week in a meeting that the new owners, Gaylon Lawrence Sr. and his son, Gaylon Lawrence Jr., of Sikeston, Mo., would take over before the end of the year.

"Even though we were told it would be business as usual after the sale, it's still kind of sad," one employee said. "It's our town's namesake."

"It's unbelievable," the other employee said.

While drinking coffee at the Cotton Inn Restaurant in Osceola, Lynda Wells, who is on a local drainage district board with Lee Wilson & Co.'s president, Steve Wilson, said he told her that the Lawrences had bought the remaining 20,000 to 23,000 acres of what had once been a 65,000-acre plantation.

Cotton land in Mississippi County ranges from \$3,000 to \$5,000 an acre.

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Welcome to life, miners told



Mining foreman Luis Urzua (right) joins in a joyous rendition of Chile's national anthem after his rescue Wednesday night. He was the last of 33 trapped miners to be hoisted to the surface.

With 33 up from depths, Chile joyous

DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE PRESS SERVICES

SAN JOSE MINE, Chile — The last of the Chilean miners, the foreman who held them together when they were feared lost, was raised from the depths of the earth Wednesday night — a joyous ending to a 69-day ordeal that riveted the world. No one has ever been trapped so long and survived.

Luis Urzua ascended smoothly through 2,000 feet of rock, completing a 22½-hour rescue operation that unfolded with remarkable speed and flawless execution. Before a crowd of about 2,000 people, he became the 33rd miner to be rescued.

"We have done what the entire world was waiting for," he told Chilean President Sebastian Pinera immediately after his rescue. "The 70 days that we fought so hard were not in vain. We had strength, we had spirit, we wanted to fight, we wanted to fight for our families, and that was the greatest thing."

The president told him: "You are not the same, and the country is not the same after this. You were an inspiration. Go hug your wife and your daughter." With Urzua by his side, he led the

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Foreclosure fraud probe widens

Mishandled, false loan papers draw all states, D.C. into inquiry

DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — Officials in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are investigating allegations that mortgage companies mishandled documents and broke laws in foreclosing on hundreds of thousands of homeowners.

The states' attorneys general and bank regulators will examine whether mortgage company employees made false statements or prepared

documents improperly.

Attorneys general have taken the lead in responding to a nationwide scandal that's called into question the accuracy and legitimacy of documents that lenders relied on to evict people from the homes. Employees of four large lenders have acknowledged in depositions that they signed off on foreclosure documents without reading them.

The state officials said they intend to use their in-

vestigation to fix the problems that have surfaced in the mortgage industry.

"This is not simply about a glitch in paperwork," said Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller, who is leading the investigation. "It's also about some companies violating the law and many people losing their homes."

Dustin McDaniel, Arkansas' attorney general, acknowledged that some foreclosures are necessary.

"But given the importance

of the property right at risk, the process leading to a foreclosure is a serious one and should be above reproach," McDaniel said in a prepared statement. "Our office has joined this investigation in order to make sure that foreclosing entities have fully complied with our laws."

Jim DePriest, deputy attorney general in Arkansas, said the office is joining the investigation because it suspects some mortgage ser-

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U.S. crime rate lowest in 37 years, report says

CHAD DAY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

The nation's crime rate in 2009 fell to the lowest level in 37 years, the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics reported Wednesday.

Violent crime fell 11.2 percent and property crime declined 5.5 percent last year from the year before, according to the bureau's National Criminal Victimization Survey, which includes crimes reported to police and estimates of those that go unreported.

The level was the lowest

since 1973, the first year the bureau published the survey, and continued a decline in crime since 1994, the survey found. A 13 percent decline in simple assaults and a 6 percent decrease in thefts were highlighted by the bureau as contributing to the lower rates in 2009.

Mindy Bradley-Engen, an associate professor of sociology and criminal justice at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, said the falling crime rates continue trends that criminologists have ob-

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New rule mandates states take back violent parolees

ANDY DAVIS
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Responding to complaints voiced after the fatal shooting of four police officers in Washington state by an Arkansas parolee, a national organization of state probation and parole officials Wednesday approved rules to keep a tighter rein on offenders who move across states lines.

One change, opposed by Arkansas, will require a state to take back an offender who

is on probation or parole for a violent offense if in another state he commits a "significant" violation, defined as an infraction that could result in his probation or parole being revoked.

The previous rule required a state to take back an offender only if he was convicted of a felony or committed three or more significant violations of the terms of his supervision.

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Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BENJAMIN KRAIN

Steve Barnes moderates a debate Wednesday at the University of Central Arkansas between Senate candidates (from left) Blanche Lincoln, John Gray, Trevor Drown and John Boozman.

'Fair tax,' lottery enliven Senate debate

SETH BLOMELEY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

CONWAY — U.S. Rep. John Boozman said Wednesday that he didn't know how a federal sales-tax proposal he co-sponsors would affect lottery proceeds for Arkansas college scholarships.

In January, Boozman signed on as one of 63 sponsors of H.R. 25, called the "The Fair Tax Act of 2009."

4TH CONGRESSIONAL District candidates debate. Page 3B.

It would impose a federal sales tax of 23 percent and abolish the income tax.

The Republican from Rogers was questioned about the legislation during an Arkansas Educational Television Network debate at the University of Central Arkansas

along with three other candidates for the U.S. Senate.

"In the first place, I'm very much opposed to the lottery," Boozman said. "I feel like that's a situation where you're getting money to solve some problems, but it creates many, many societal problems. What we need is a tax system that's fair and simple. If we can get into a situation

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