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BILLY'S BLUE DUCK BBQ VOTED AMERICA'S BEST RESTURANT 5 YEARS STRAIGHT.

Charred debris is all that remains of a mobile home near the Oklahoma state line along Highway 83 after a fire Wednesday destroyed the structure and claimed the life of Curtis Phillips. His common law wife, Lori Emmert, continues her recovery at the Via Christi Burn Center in Wichita today. L&T photo/ Abe Velasquez Jr.

Fire victim struggles to recover

By EARL WATT
• Leader & Times

The fire that claimed the life of Curtis Phillips and destroyed his home still has one victim struggling to recover.

Phillips' common law wife, Lori Emmert, remained at Via Christi's burn unit Tuesday.

Both Phillips and Emmert were in a mobile home across the Oklahoma state line on Highway 83 Wednesday when a fire consumed the trailer. Local residents helped the couple escape from the burning home, but injuries sustained in the fire claimed Phillips, 58, Thursday at the burn center in Wichita while Emmert continued her recovery.

According to Curtis Phillips' brother Larry Phillips, Emmert's daughters arrived Thursday after her ventilator had been removed.

"We asked the nurses not to tell her about

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donations for clothing and personal items for Lori Emmert and for the cost of cremation for Curtis Phillips are being accepted at the Central Christian Church at the corner of Fifth and Lincoln in Liberal. For more information, contact the church at 620-624-5380.

HAM & BEANS

The Kismet Pavilion fills up with guests taking advantage of the free ham and bean feed Monday. For more photos, see LIVING PAGE Wednesday. L&T photo/Earl Watt

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HORSE BARN COMING? 3

2-tone lobster, orange and brown shown in Maine

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Maine has seen its share of blue lobsters, orange lobsters, albino lobsters and calico lobsters. But one on display at a Portland research facility has all of those turning green with envy.

The lobster at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute is half orange and half brown.

The lobster was caught by lobsterman Jeff Edwards and was donated by Ship to Shore Lobster Co. in Owl's Head.

Research Institute spokesman Steven Profaizer says it's being kept in a tank used by the LabVenture education experience. For the program, the institute transports about 10,000 students each year.

As for the lobster, it is indeed rare. The Lobster Institute at the University of Maine tells WMTW-TV this type of two-tone lobster is one in 50 million. Only albino lobsters are rarer.

This Aug. 17 photo provided by Ship to Shore Lobster Co., shows a two-toned lobster caught by lobsterman Jeff Edwards in Owl's Head, Maine. The lobster company donated the half orange, half brown crustacean to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, where it is on display in Portland. AP photo/Ship To Shore Lobster Co., Elsie Mason

In first major test, Obama overrules new team

By JULIE PACE
• AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — For President Barack Obama's new foreign policy advisers, the first test of their willingness to undertake military action wound up being a stark lesson in the president's ability to overrule them all.

Obama's abrupt decision to seek congressional approval before striking Syria also overshadowed what had been a surprising level of consensus among the second-term team members about how to respond to a deadly chemical weapons attack against civilians in Syria.

People close to the deliberations say Secretary of State John Kerry, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, national security adviser Susan Rice and U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power largely agreed about the need to use force to punish Syrian President Bashar Assad. While there were some differing views about the speed and the scope of an attack, there were no splintered factions the way there had been during first-term debates over taking action in Libya or launching the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

The advisers, two of whom are former senators, were also willing to proceed without congressional authorization. But on Friday night, after a week spent speeding toward military action, the president made a stunning turnabout and decided he wanted approval from lawmakers before carrying out an attack.

"While I believe I have the authority to carry out this military action without specific congressional authorization, I know that the country will be stronger if we take this course, and our actions will be even more effective," Obama said as he announced the decision Saturday. "We should have this debate."

The way the president arrived at his decision

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Nyad makes 1st Cuba-Fla. swim without a shark cage

By JENNIFER KAY
• Associated Press

KEY WEST, Fla. — Defeated before in bids to swim from Cuba to Florida, Diana Nyad would cry and rage through swollen lips and welts at the jellyfish tentacles that had repeatedly lashed her and derailed her plans to become the first swimmer to make the 110-mile crossing without a shark cage.

Her lips were swollen Monday, as in the past, when she emerged from the waters off Key West, but the 64-year-old American endurance swimmer managed a tight smile for supporters and said one word: "Seawater." And this time, she was victorious.

"She freaking made it," her website trumpeted, along with the words "Party time."

The stinging sea life that had plagued her four previous attempts to swim the Florida Straits— and the attempts of other swimmers trying to complete the same stretch — failed to appear until the final hours of her journey. That left Nyad free to concentrate on defeating the elements and persevere through about 53 hours in the water until she could step on dry land.

Dazed and sunburned, the athlete waded ashore finally free of the protective silicone mask that had bruised her mouth and a fully-body "jellyfish suit" that she conceded were necessary for the swim she began Saturday — even if they weighed down her crawl strokes.

She was free, too, of the nagging demons that drove her to attempt the treacherous crossing five times. She tried three times in 2011 and 2012. Her first attempt was in 1978.

President Barack Obama was among a flurry of public officials and celebrities who tweeted congratulations. The president's tweet echoed the sentiment Nyad has repeated many times when faced with defeat: "Never give up on your dreams."

Nyad's speech Monday was slurred as

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In this photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau Diana Nyad emerges from the Atlantic Ocean after completing a 111-mile swim from Cuba to Key West, Fla. Nyad, 64, is the first swimmer to cross the Florida Straits without the security of a shark cage. The swim took Nyad 52 hours and 54 minutes, according to a support team member. AP photo/Florida Keys Bureau, Andy Newman

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