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# BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017



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## Citizens voice support for county library program

By **LYNDEL MOODY**  
 Staff Writer

During the Howard County Commissioner's meeting Monday, five residents spoke their concerns about talk of the county merging library services with Howard College.

In January, the county and college signed an inter-local agreement to share a head librarian to oversee both programs. According to officials from both entities, neither has had much

luck in filling the position themselves. Once filled, one of the responsibilities for the new head librarian will be to research ways to combine the two entities' resources to create a program that fits the need of the future. However, officials from both entities have stressed they have not made any long-term commitments toward merging the two library programs other than sharing a head librarian.

See **LIBRARY**, Page 3



*HERALD photo/Sandrena Koning*  
**Howard County Commissioners Jimmie Long, left, and Oscar Garcia, speak with members of the Friends of the Howard County Library following Monday's commissioner's court meeting. A group of people spoke out in support of the keeping current library program.**



*HERALD photos/Roger Cline*  
**Above, members of the Big Spring High School Art Club work on a family tree mural at Marcy Place Assisted Living Community. From front to back, 11th graders Destiny Robles, Adrianna Tijerina, and Zak Baker, are painting murals for area residents to raise money for a summer trip to Seattle. Although not quite finished, this "family tree" mural at Marcy Place Assisted Living Community spreads majestically over the home's front hallway.**



## Beautifulizing the community

BSHS art students create murals as a fundraiser

By **ROGER CLINE**  
 Staff Writer

Businessman Warren Buffett famously said "Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." A group of Big Spring High School students created an artistic "family tree" this week for some of Big Spring's elder citizens.

"The tree that they are painting for us is going to be the family tree for our residents," said Sherrean Jones, community relations manager for Marcy Place Assisted Living Community, 2301 Wasson Rd. "What we're going to do is, we have pictures of all our residents here and just a little summary about them, things that they like, where

they're from, and things like that. They're going to be framed and put all over the tree so that people will be on the tree."

BSHS art teacher Andrea Phinney said the students are members of the extra-curricular art club at the high school.

See **MURAL**, Page 3

## Commissioners sign resolution against proposed Texas Senate Bill 2

By **LYNDEL MOODY**  
 Staff Writer

Howard County Commissioners signed a resolution Monday in opposition to Texas Senate Bill 2 and revenue caps joining other city and county taxing entities around the state which have signed similar resolutions.

The bill filed by state Senator Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, caps city and county governments at a 4 percent increase in taxes before triggering a rollback election. Currently that number is at 8 percent.

County Judge Kathryn Wiseman said the bill's effect may limit county governments for raising much needed revenue to pay for critical services, especially with the

mounting state issued unfunded mandates.

"I think the Texas legislature is doing a shell game, short of a bait and switch," Wiseman said.

"They are standing up and saying our Texas citizens are paying too much on their taxes, and we're going to put a limit on the taxing entities ability to get funds, tax dollars, to support themselves and to supply services. Your school district gets the lion's share of your tax dollars. They are educating your kids. Let's put a cap on all the entities, and say you can only raised this amount."



Wiseman

See **COUNTY**, Page 3

## Flynn resigns late Monday

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fired by one American commander in chief for insubordination, Michael Flynn has now delivered his resignation to another.

President Donald Trump had been weighing the fate of his national security adviser, a hard-charging, feather-ruffling retired lieutenant general who just three weeks into the new administration had put himself in the center of a controversy. Flynn resigned late Monday.

At issue was Flynn's contact with Moscow's ambassador to

the United States. Flynn and Ambassador Sergey Kislyak appear to have discussed U.S. sanctions late last year, raising questions about whether he was freelancing on foreign policy while President Barack Obama was still in office and whether he misled Trump officials about the calls.

See **FLYNN**, Page 3



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## Obituaries

## Ronnie Royce Richardson



Ronnie Royce Richardson, "Rock-in R," age 55, went home to his Heavenly Father Thursday, Feb. 9, 2017, in Odessa, Texas. Ronnie Royce was born to Virginia "Sissy" Richardson and Alton Richardson on Dec. 13, 1961, in Big Spring, Texas.

He grew up in Odessa, raised by Bob and Sissy McClure, and graduated from Odessa High School in 1980. He received a rodeo scholarship at Cisco College after his interest in roping. Ronnie Royce the "heeler" and his partner Gary Don McCain the "header" won the USTRC West Texas Championships in 1998 and were featured on the cover of the Super Looper in 2000 for winning the USTRC North Texas Championship. After a back injury, Ronnie pursued a career as a salesman in the oil industry and started his own company, Rockin' R Gas Works in Granbury, Texas. He later sold his business and moved back home to Odessa, Texas.

Ronnie was a loving son to his surviving parents, Virginia "Sissy" McClure and Bob McClure; brother to Rhonda Krogh; father to daughters Candis "Kandy" Richardson, Amanda Gay Renfro and husband Jaret Renfro of Odessa, and son Bryton Royce Richardson of Odessa; and proud granddaddy to Nolan Anthony Marra (5) and Hope Ember-

leigh Marra (3), who thought the world of him. He is survived by wife Karolinda Cherry Richardson of Arlington, Texas.

Ronnie was preceded in death by his father Alton Richardson; paternal grandparents E.R. Richardson and Dee Scarborough; and maternal grandparents Leo Smith and Birdie Smith; and brother-in-law John Krogh.

Ronnie enjoyed many things in life; hunting, fishing, golf, roping, but most of all he enjoyed time with his family and friends. He always had a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye. He never met a stranger and enjoyed life to the fullest. His love and laughter was contagious and will be missed forever.

Visitation will be Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2017, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Sunset Memorial Gardens in Odessa, Texas. A funeral service celebrating Ronnie's life will be held Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2017, at 1 p.m. at Crossroads Fellowship officiated by Minister Trey Johnson. Graveside services to follow.

Pallbearers: Close friends Gary Don McCain, Bruce McClendon, Tony Hooper, Tommy Pettit, Donnie Wilson, Johnny Morgan and Thomas Taylor. Honorary pallbearers: Johnny Kidd, Kenny Black, Rocky Anderson, Danny Otwell, and Gary Bob Otwell.

Arrangements are entrusted to Sunset Memorial Gardens and Funeral Home. To send family condolences please sign guestbook at [www.sunsetodessa.com](http://www.sunsetodessa.com).

*Paid obituary*

## Don Nichols



Don Nichols, 84, of Big Spring died Sunday, February 12, 2017, at Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez. The family will receive friends 12:30 PM until 1:30 PM Wednesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Graveside services will be at 2:00 PM Wednesday at Coahoma Cemetery.

He was born November 20, 1932, in Fisher County, Texas to Hazel and Clayton Nichols. He was a veteran of the U. S. Army having served in the Korean War. He worked 42 years at the Union Pacific railroad. He spent most of his life in Howard County except for a few years in Odessa and Mission. He was a member of Midway Baptist Church.

He is survived by one granddaughter: Tracy Ann Antonucci and her husband Russell of Dayton, Texas; one grandson: Marc Kimbrell and his wife Shannon of Odessa; one great grandson: Jarrett Fullwood; step-daughter: Shirley Trussell and her husband Jimmy of Lucedale, Mississippi; and her children: Tonya, Shannon and Drucilla; one sister: Peggy Holdridge and her husband Royce of Greenville, South Carolina; and son-in-law: Ted Kimbrell and his wife Peggy of Sweetwater.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by three wives: Peggy, Ruby, and Nina; one daughter: Jacqueline Kimbrell; one granddaughter: Chelsea Fullwood; one brother: Nicky Nichols; and the love of his life: Charlene Robbins.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at [www.myersandsmith.com](http://www.myersandsmith.com).

*Paid obituary*

## Take Note

• A free beginner's genealogy class will be offered Sunday, Feb. 26, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Borden County Event Center in Gail. Those attending should bring materials for taking notes and a laptop; wifi will be available for research. Also, bring information about births, deaths, and wedding dates of your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, if known. Contact Lisa Mahler at [bordencohistory@gmail.com](mailto:bordencohistory@gmail.com) to reserve a seat or to ask a question.

• Parkplace Retirement Living, will hold a Valentine's Dance Friday, Feb. 17, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Big Spring Senior Center, 100 Whipkey Dr. There is no charge to attend and the dance is open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

• The Howard County Fair needs volunteers to cross stitch squares for the annual quilt fundraiser. The theme for this year's quilt is "It's a Jungle Out There." You can pick up a square from Cheryl Joy at the Heritage Museum during regular hours Tuesday through Saturday. Call Suzanne Markwell at 214-256-1674 for more information.

• The late Greg Bodin had his first "Photographic Exhibit" at the Heritage Museum a couple of years ago. In his memory, the museum is offering a last look at his talent. His photographs are on sale one last time through the end of this week only. All sales proceeds will go to his wife, Toni Bodin during this one week exhibit to help with the expenses.

• Scenic Mountain Medical Center will be recognizing Heart Health month with the Healthy

Heart, Healthy You event at Hotel Settles. The event is February 16 and tickets are \$20 per person or \$250 for a reserved table of 10. There will be a free health fair from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. To purchase tickets stop by Scenic Mountain Medical Center or call Amanda Duforat at 432-268-4699.

• Food 2 Kids Big Spring needs you! It is time to start sacking food for Big Spring elementary students who do not receive adequate food over the weekends. Members of the community can be a part by volunteering to sack the food. It just takes a couple hours of your time and the work is very rewarding. To volunteer, just show up at the time and dates listed. For more information, call, 432-935-3998.

The next sacking session will be at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 20 and 21 at the old Lakeview High School gym located at 1107 N.W. Seventh St. To get there, take Gregg Street north and turn left on Delaney, which is the block just past the Salvation Army retail store. Delaney turns into Seventh Street, you will go over the

• Seniors and mature adults are invited to a dance on the first, third and fifth Friday of each month at the Dora Roberts Community Center.

Dances are from 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. with live bands. No

alcohol or smoking permitted. There will be a pot luck as well so bring a dish if you want to eat. Cost is \$8 per person.

• The Big Spring Art Association meets the third Tuesday of each month a 7 p.m. in the basement of the Howard County Library.

• The Christensen-Tucker Post-2013 Veterans of Foreign Wars meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7 pm at 500 Driver Road. For more information, contact David Leonard, Post Commander, at 432-816-6004. All combat veterans of foreign wars are invited to come.

• The Big Spring Symphony Board of Directors meets every first Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. at the symphony office, 808 Scurry Street.

• Order of the Eastern Star Big Spring Chapter 67 meets the third Tuesday of each month at 219 Main St. Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m. Lodge meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

## Police &amp; Sheriff

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity:

• **NICHOLAS DANIEL LOPEZ**, 20, of 1402 Tucson Street was arrested on warrants for theft of property (greater than \$100 but less than \$750).

• **FRANCES AMAYA HILARIO**, 57, of 513 N Goliad Street was arrested on a warrant for theft of service (greater than \$750 but less than \$2,500).

• **DAVID ALAN TINDOL**, 35, of 3414 Old Colorado City Hwy was arrested on a warrant for theft of property (less than \$100).

• **MAJOR ACCIDENT** was reported in the 3500 block of E I-20.

• **BURGLARY OF HABITATION** was reported in the 1000 block of S Scurry.

• **THEFT** was reported in the 2900 block of E I-20.

• **MINOR ACCIDENT** was reported at the intersection of FM 700 and Wasson Road and the 800 block of E I-20.

The Howard County Sheriff's Department reported the following activity:

Note - Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 81 inmates at the time of this report.

• **AARON PAUL DELEON**, 29, was booked by the HCSO on a warrant for possession of marijuana (less than two ounces).

• **VALERIE MARAMONTES GARCIA**, 32, was booked by the HCSO on warrants for theft of property and criminal mischief.

• **NICHOLAS DANIEL LOPEZ**, 20, was booked by the BSPD on warrants for theft of property (greater than or equal to \$750 but less than \$2,500) and theft of property (greater than or equal to \$750 but less than \$750).

• **FRANCES AMAYA ROSAS**, 57, was booked by the BSPD on a warrant for theft of service (greater than or equal to \$750 but less than \$2,500).

• **DAVID ALAN TINDOL**, 35, was booked by the BSPD on a warrant for theft (less than \$100).

• **PRECILIANO VIERA III**, 48, was booked by the HCSO on a warrant for indecency with a child (sexual contact).

## Support Groups

## TUESDAY

• Big Spring and Snyder Parkinsons Support Group meeting at the Big Spring Senior Center at 10:30 a.m. the second Tuesday of the month.

This is a group for all Parkinson's disease patients, spouses and caregivers.

For more information about the support group or about Parkinson's Disease, contact Jo Bidwell at the Lubbock APDA office at 806-785-0942.

• Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; newcomers meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

• Al-Anon, 615 Settles for family members and friends of alcoholics meets at 8 p.m.

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# LIBRARY

Continued from Page 1

A large crowd attended the afternoon meeting held in the commissioner courtroom on the third floor. Speaking to commissioners, homeschool mom Kimberly Mosino said her family uses the library frequently as a tool to help educate her son.

"The ladies that are there currently are super helpful, and it's a family atmosphere," Mosino said. "What I've heard — and I don't know if it is true — is that the county and the college library is going to be combined. I used both.

"For a family that uses it for children, the college library is not little kid friendly," she said. "They are nice people, and I am not saying anything bad about them, they have very different features. I don't know how much of what I am hearing is true and how much is rumor, but we need our library al ot, and we want the county library to stay a county li-

brary separate from the college."

Mosino, and two other homeschool parents who spoke, said her family is able to greatly save money by using library services.

"I've heard we might lose some of the children's section of the library," Mosino said. "That would be a financial burden for us. We save thousands and thousands of dollars in books we would need to buy to educate our son verses going to the library.

"We also use the library to research," she continued. "I know the internet is really, really popular, but I want him to learn how to use the library to find things. That's a lost skill."

Homeschool mom Laura Liphan pointed out the library provides services and access to books to non-school age children as well as home school children and access to reading material for youths when they are out on school vacation. Each year, the library also provides a summer reading program.

"It's not just checking out books," she said. "It's the activi-

ties they have."

Tammy DePauw stated how important a strong library is to the community and requested that the commissioners hold forums to help the community be involved in the decision making process. Howard County Judge Kathryn Wiseman address the issue following the public speakers.

"There is a lot of misinformation circling around," Wiseman said. "We are not contemplating closing the library. There might be something in the future we do to combine a learning center or a library.

"At this point, the only thing we are up to is looking for someone who is an accredited librarian," she continued. "We can not find one and the college is in the same place. We are hopefully pulling our resources, so we can pay someone enough to come to West Texas that has correct accreditation, so they can also oversee our county library and our college library. That is all we are doing right now."

# COUNTY

Continued from Page 1

In 40 years, the county has not held a rollback election, Wiseman pointed out. Reducing the limit to 4 percent will the hinder local entities' efforts to raise revenue when it is really needed, she added.

"The last time we replaced chillers — it was in 1995 — we had to float a \$19 million bond," she said. "We just got finished last year paying that off. We would like to be able to put something away for those types of expense. If we need to go up a couple of cents or event 8 cents, we would like to be able to have that leeway, so we can reserve those fund to make those big payments for things we need."

And with continued unfunded mandates trickling down from the state, Wiseman it's getting tougher each year to cover crucial and critical services.

"The state is expecting a lot and expecting the tax payers in Howard County to pay for it," she

said. "They are making the laws, and we have to pay for it

"We are asking them not to make mandates that they are not going to fund and don't hinder our ability to pay for critical, crucial services... We have all these mandates we have to provide for but not the money to run the program."

In other business, commissioners approved:

- A revision to the road grant plan and permission to bid addition work. According to Brian Klinksiek, Howard County Road and Bridge administrator, the county has access to an addition \$800,000 in TxDOT (Texas Department of Public Transportation) funds for zone 3 road work. The county must contribute a 20 percent match and that work has to begin by May 2017 or the county will lose that funding, Klinksiek said.

- To pay \$2,427 in dues to the Ports-to-Plains Alliance. The vote was 4 to 1 with Precinct 4 Commissioner Craig Bailey voting against the measure. Bailey said the city through EDC (Big

Spring Economic Corporation) funds pays a significant amount of tax dollars to the alliance for dues. He added he would rather use those funds to help shore up the county infrastructure. However, Precinct 1 Commissioner Oscar Garcia disagreed and said supporting the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is more vital than ever with talk of the extension of Interstate 27 possibly coming through Big Spring and the sale tax dollars that could follow with increased traffic flow. Ports-to-Plains Alliance is a collection of communities which lobbies for the Ports-to-Plains transcontinental trade route. U.S. Highway 87 runs along that corridor which runs from Mexico through West Texas and on to Canada.

- To go out to bid for oil and gas lease on county-owned property.

- To close the county offices on Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 3:45 for an employee-wide cyber security workshop.

- Four pipeline crossing request — three in Precinct 4; and one in Precinct 1.

# FLYNN

Continued from Page 1

The center of a storm is a familiar place for Flynn. His military career ended when Obama dismissed him as defense intelligence chief. Flynn claimed he was pushed out for holding tougher views than the Obama administration about Islamic extremism. But a former senior U.S. official who worked with Flynn said the firing was for insubordination, after the Army lieutenant general failed to follow guidance from superiors.

Once out of government, he disappeared into the murky world of mid-level defense contractors and international influence peddlers. He shocked his former colleagues a little more than a year later by appearing at a Moscow banquet headlined by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Given a second chance by Trump, Flynn, a lifelong if apolitical Democrat, became a trusted and eager confidant of the Republican candidate, joining anti-Hillary Clinton campaign chants of "Lock Her Up" and tweeting that "Fear

of Muslims is RATIONAL."

As national security adviser, Flynn required no Senate confirmation vote or public vetting of his record, and his tenure was brief but turbulent.

The Washington Post and other U.S. newspapers, citing current and former U.S. officials, reported last week that Flynn made explicit references to U.S. sanctions on Russia in conversations with Kislyak. One of the calls took place on Dec. 29, the day Obama announced new penalties against Russia's top in-

telligence agencies over allegations they meddled in the U.S. election process to help Trump win.

While it's not unusual for incoming administrations to have discussions with foreign governments before taking office, the repeated contacts just as the U.S. was pulling the trigger on sanctions suggests Trump's team might have helped shape Russia's response. They also contradicted denials about such discussions of the sanctions by several Trump administration officials, including Vice President Mike

# MURAL

Continued from Page 1

"We're trying to raise money to go to Seattle. We've been doing so many fundraising projects throughout the year," she said. "Right now we're selling chocolate, we've done bake sales, we've hosted Art Night, we've just done a whole lot of things to get us ready."

Jones said the residents and staff of Marcy Place loved watching the family tree come together.

"We love it. We are so blessed that they were able to come out and do this," she said. "They literally came Saturday morning, they started it, they worked on it throughout the day and are coming to finish it today. It's gorgeous. They did it all by hand. They're very talented. We're very excited that they were able to do this and just work with us in the community."

Jones said last year art students raised money for a trip to Austin. That endeavor went so well that they set their sights higher this year.

"They kind of talked me into it, really. We went to Austin last April and they just had a blast. We went to the University of Texas Art Department and had a tour, we went to the Blanton Museum. We met a local artist, and went to Graffiti Park," she said. "For this year we were talking about New York, but I was just kind of scared to take them there because I've never been. I've never

been to Seattle either, but I've heard it's a little more slow paced. I've heard that the vibe is a little more like Austin, maybe good for the younger kids. We're going to go to a bunch of the museums there. I contacted a comic book artist, and she agreed to meet with us, and hopefully we'll get to tour a video game company. I just want them to see what else is out there, broaden their horizons."

Area residents who would like to commission work from the BSHS Art Club should contact Phinney by email at [anphinney@bsisd.esc18.net](mailto:anphinney@bsisd.esc18.net).

"I will give them a call," she said. "The cost depends on, I guess, the size that they're wanting. It's kind of like a case-by-case basis. This was all done by students. I helped out a little bit, but they're so creative and talented. We promise to do an excellent job and be really creative."

Prospective art patrons still have plenty of time to request a mural, but shouldn't wait too long, Phinney said.

"We would like to do everything by, let's say, when school lets out," she said. "School lets out at the end of May, and we would like to have all the projects wrapped up before then. We love getting involved in the community and letting their talent show."

Contact Staff Writer Roger Cline at 432-263-7331 ext. 232, or by email at [life@bigspringherald.com](mailto:life@bigspringherald.com).

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Pence.

Flynn later backed off his adamant denials. On Friday, he said he "no recollection" of discussing sanctions policy but "can't be certain," according to an official, who wasn't authorized to speak publicly on the matter and demanded

anonymity. He apologized to Pence, who, apparently relying on Flynn's denials, vouched for him on television.

## MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

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Don Nichols, 84, died Sunday. The family will receive friends 12:30 PM until 1:30 PM Wednesday at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Graveside services will be at 2:00 PM Wednesday at Coahoma Cemetery.

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## Texas police: Standoff ensues after woman beaten at complex

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Police in San Antonio have taken a man into custody following an hours-long standoff that they say began when he broke into an apartment, beat a woman and then held her against her will.

Authorities say the unidentified man broke into the apartment early Monday and began to choke and strike the woman.

Police say the woman either once dated the man or currently does.

A second woman fled the apartment and the one who was attacked eventually was able to escape as a large contingent of police gathered outside the apartment complex.

Police negotiators used a bullhorn to coax the man from the apartment. Authorities say the suspect was armed.

Residents of the complex were evacuated.

## George P Bush hails House select infrastructure committee

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Land Commissioner George P. Bush is applauding the creation of a special House committee on ports and infrastructure, saying it could further efforts to build a much-needed protective hurricane barrier along Texas' Gulf Coast.

Last week, state House Speaker Joe Straus announced the creation of a Select Committee on Texas Ports, Innovation, and Infrastructure.

Bush said in a statement Monday that the coastal barrier is "our state's most important infrastructure project."

Though plans aren't settled, any major push to better protect 350-plus miles of Texas coastline could potentially cost billions in state and federal funds.

Still, Bush noted that a major storm could "change the course of Texas' economy and irreparably harm the lives of millions," adding that "the time has come to get serious about investing in coastal protection."

## Much-watched Texas union dues bill draws early questions

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A bill barring voluntary payroll deductions of union dues from state employee paychecks is drawing questions as it begins a long, potentially contentious journey through the Texas Legislature.

Chairwoman Joan Huffman of the Senate State Affairs Committee introduced the proposal Monday, saying many other states already have similar rules, and that business groups support it.

Democrats noted that the bill wouldn't affect private businesses, and called it unnecessary. Even some Republicans have questioned the proposal's singling out unions but allowing paycheck deductions for some charities.

It will have to pass Huffman's committee before hitting the full Senate. A similar bill cleared the Senate last session, but died in House committee.

Gov. Greg Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick have cheered Huffman's proposal, but labor groups are vowing to fight it.

## Police say man shot after displaying threatening behavior

BRYAN, Texas (AP) — A 33-year-old man is hospitalized in critical condition after Bryan police say he approached officers in a threatening manner and was shot.

Bryan authorities said in a statement that officers responded late Sunday to a disturbance call and were speaking with a woman when the man approached.

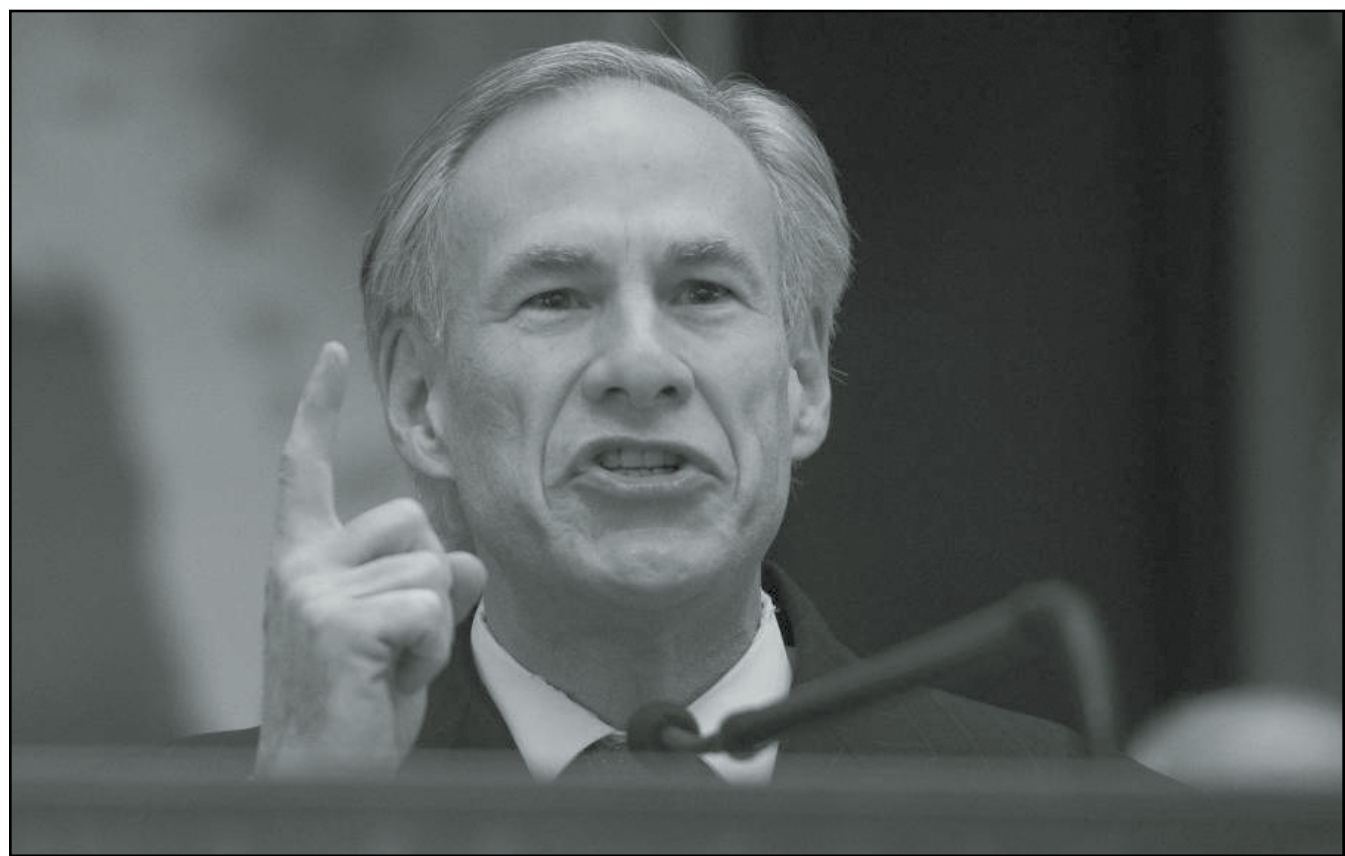
Police say he disregarded commands given by officers and made statements and movements that led them to believe he was armed.

An officer shot the unidentified man and he was taken to a hospital where he remained Monday. The officers and the woman were not hurt.

Authorities say the Texas Rangers are participating in the investigation into the shooting.

The officer who shot the man was placed on administrative leave, which is consistent with department procedure in an officer-involved shooting.

# What to watch: Convention of states; Union dues; LGBT case



AP photo

**In this Jan. 31, 2017, file photo, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott delivers his State of the State address to a joint session of the House and Senate at the Texas Capitol in Austin. Gov. Abbott has made convening a convention to amend the U.S. Constitution and impose a federal balanced budget an "emergency item" in the Legislature. But with Republicans controlling the White House and Congress, limiting the power of a federal government doesn't seem like a top priority to some.**

By WILL WEISSERT

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Could a "convention of states" be a tough sell in Texas?

Few things are dearer to Gov. Greg Abbott's political heart than his call to have legislatures around the country convene a convention to amend the U.S. Constitution and impose things like a federal balanced budget and congressional term limits.

Abbott made it a centerpiece of his book last year and an "emergency item" for state lawmakers this session. While the idea might have appealed to some conservatives under President Barack Obama, though, a Donald Trump White House and Republican-controlled Congress has some wondering why, with the GOP having so much federal power, would Texas want to limit what Washington can do?

Meanwhile, members of the Texas Eagle Forum and other tea party and grassroots activists have long opposed a convention of states, fearing that calling one could spark a "runaway convention" where liberal invitees target the 2nd Amendment and other constitutional fundamentals conservatives love.

Texas isn't the only state struggling with

this. Republicans now hold majorities in 33 state legislatures nationwide — just one shy of the two-third needed to initiate a convention on constitutional amendments. Yet, the idea hasn't caught fire nationally any more than it has in Texas, at least not yet.

Bills supporting a "convention of states" have been filed in each Texas chamber and House Speaker Joe Straus created a special committee to consider amendments to the U.S. Constitution while monitoring federal legislation, regulations and unfunded mandates that adversely affect states.

So far, though, it seems this might one issue where Abbott's wish isn't necessarily the Legislature's command. Here are some other topics making more-immediate news this week in Texas politics:

### UNION DUES BILL

The Senate State Affairs Committee plans Monday to hear a bill by its chairwoman, Houston Republican Sen. Joan Huffman, seeking to end automatic payroll deductions for unions and professional organizations — which labor activists say will weaken public employee bargaining power.

Abbott mentioned the issue in last month's State of the State ad-

dress but didn't make it an emergency item. Neither chamber can pass non-emergency bills until the Legislature has been in session for 60 days, a deadline that's still about a month away.

But Huffman's committee may nonetheless approve the bill quickly and get it to the full chamber to pass in March. A similar bill cleared the Senate in 2015 but never got a House floor vote.

### TRANSGENDER SCHOOL BATHROOMS CASE

A panel of the U.S. 5th

Circuit Court is convening in Austin on Tuesday and is scheduled to hear arguments on an Obama administration order requiring public schools to let transgender students use the bathrooms and locker

See TEXAS, Page 5

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## Report: Number of Latinos who voted in 2016 surged from 2012

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Nearly 30 percent more Latinos in Texas voted in November than in the 2012 election, outpacing the increase in that time for non-Latino voters, according to a state report.

The rise signals to some observers that elections will become increasingly competitive in the Lone Star State.

The share of the electorate with a Spanish surname increased to 19.4 percent in 2016 from 17.2 percent, the figures released by the Texas Legislative Council show. State officials determined the numbers using a count based on a list of surnames and the findings don't account for every Latino voter.

Latinos make up 38 percent of the Texas population but tend to vote at lower rates than other groups in Texas or Latinos in other states, the Austin American-Statesman reported (<http://atxnews.com/2lHyh6G>).

Texas Democrats have long awaited a voter surge among Latinos that could break the Republican stranglehold on statewide elected offices. Democrats don't hold a single one.

"I think it shows there's a transition happening in Texas," Matt Barreto, co-founder of the polling and research firm Latino Decisions, told the newspaper. "Latino voters in Texas are becoming more engaged."

But Rice University political scientist Mark Jones was more measured, calling the increase "notable, but not dramatic," and said it mirrored jumps in past presidential elections.

"The Texas electorate becomes more Latino and less Anglo with every passing electoral cycle," Jones said. "But the increase is fueled primarily by natural demographic trends rather than by a dramatic spike in participation rates among Latinos."

Derek Ryan, a political consultant and former research director for the Texas Republican Party, said an analysis of early voting figures in 20 large counties reveals that new voters are driving the increase in Latino participation.

Lydia Camarillo, vice president of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, said the turnout numbers for 2016 are higher than her group anticipated, but she said Texas has high barriers to register to vote. Camarillo said her group is pushing for legislative changes that would make registering easier, such as by allowing Texans to register to vote online, as more than 30 other states already do.

"When we ask potential voters why they didn't register, they say it's not because they didn't care, but that in most cases they don't start paying attention to elections until about 10 days out," Camarillo said.

Texas law requires voters to register at least 30 days before an election.

## Former ICE chief: Trump order will heavily impact many

DALLAS (AP) — The former U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement chief said President Donald Trump's executive order involving the deportation of people living in the country illegally will affect more people than his other immigration policies do.

The executive order allows any immigrant without documentation to be deported for being suspected of a minor crime, the Dallas Morning News (<http://bit.ly/2lB99m6>) reported. The order not only prioritizes removing those convicted of a criminal offense, but also acts "that constitute a chargeable criminal offense."

Former ICE Chief Sarah Saldana, who led the agency for two years under the Obama administration, said money and litigation will create obstacles for Trump as he attempts to enforce the policy.

"We don't have billions sitting around," she said. "My budget while at ICE was almost \$6 billion and

See **ORDER**, Page 6

# Lance Armstrong loses bid to halt \$100 million lawsuit



AP photo

By **JIM VERTINO**  
AP Sports Writer

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A federal judge on Monday refused to block the government's \$100 million lawsuit against Lance Armstrong, putting the former cyclist on course for trial in a 2010 case stemming from his performance-enhancing drug use.

The lawsuit was filed by Armstrong's former U.S. Postal Service teammate Floyd Landis. The federal government joined in 2013 after Armstrong publicly admitted he cheated to win the Tour de France seven times from 1999-2005. Armstrong was stripped of those titles and banned from competition.

Armstrong has also taken huge hits finan-

cially, losing all his major sponsors and being forced to pay more than \$10 million in damages and settlements in a series of lawsuits. The Landis lawsuit would be the biggest by far and the ruling from U.S. District Judge Christopher Cooper in Washington was a major setback for Armstrong with a trial most likely in the fall.

Armstrong's legal team didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Landis, himself a former doping cheat who was stripped of his 2006 Tour de France title, sued Armstrong under the federal False Claims Act, alleging Armstrong and his team committed fraud against the government when they cheated

while riding under the Postal Service banner. According to court records, the contract paid the team, which was operated by Tailwind Sports Corp., about \$32 million from 2000 to 2004. Armstrong got nearly \$13.5 million.

The law allows Landis and the government to sue to get that money back and for "treble" damages, or triple the amount, and Armstrong could be forced to pay all of it. Landis stands to receive up to 25 percent of any damages awarded.

Armstrong claims he and the team don't owe the Postal Service anything because the agency made far more off the sponsorship than it paid. Armstrong's lawyers have introduced internal studies for the

agency that calculated benefits in media exposure topping \$100 million.

The government has countered that the negative fallout from the doping scandal tainted the agency because of its association with Armstrong.

Cooper's ruling said Armstrong makes a "persuasive case," but that any decision on damages should be left to a jury.

"Giving Armstrong 'credit' for the benefits he delivered while using (performance-enhancing drugs) could be viewed as an unjust reward for having successfully concealed his doping for so long," Cooper wrote. "(But) disregarding any benefits

See **LANCE**, Page 6

## STATE

Continued from Page 4

rooms of their choice.

Texas and 12 other states sued last year, and U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor in Fort Worth issued a temporary injunction. State Attorney General Ken Paxton said he doesn't expect this week's hearing to decide the fate of that injunction and others also believe it may not produce a major ruling in the case.

But the hearing could still provide key clues about whether Trump eventually will defend — or abandon — one of his predecessor's hotly debated transgender policies. On Friday night, Trump's Justice Department submitted a brief withdrawing the federal government's previous request to limit the scope of O'Connor's injunction only to the

13 states that have sued. That doesn't necessarily halt all objections to O'Connor's injunction, but suggests the new White House may not defend the school bathroom order as vigorously as the previous administration.

**HOUSE BUDGET MEETINGS**  
Moments after Straus announced committee assignments on Thursday, the chamber's newly named chief budget writer, Republican Rep. John Zerwas of Richmond, called an Appropriations Committee meeting for 7:30 a.m. Monday.

The Senate got its committee

assignments faster and its budget writers have already been meeting for weeks, polishing a proposed draft budget worth \$103.6 billion. Zerwas and his committee will now begin working on a House draft budget worth nearly \$109 billion and containing key differences with its upper chamber counterpart on funding levels for border security and public education.

How both chambers reconcile spending priorities — especially with state revenue dwindling as oil prices stay so low — will be shape the legislative session perhaps more than any other issue.

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# Israel leader's White House trip clouded in uncertainty

By JOSEF FEDERMAN

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's prime minister heads to Washington this week for a high-profile meeting with President Donald Trump that suddenly is clouded in uncertainty.

After embracing Israel's hard-line nationalist right throughout his presidential campaign, Trump appears to have softened some of his positions on key issues since taking office.

Although Wednesday's meeting is expected to be much warmer than Netanyahu's famously tense encounters with former President Barack Obama, the Israeli leader will still need to tread with caution on sensitive issues like Israeli settlement construction and the conflict with the Palestinians, Iran and the war in Syria.

"It is a very important meeting. It is a new president," said Sallai Meridor, a former Israeli ambassador to Washington. The "positive thing" is that Trump's policies are still not set, he said, "so there is an opportunity to listen and to develop and to impact the strategy that is being developed in the United States."

In dealing with such a divisive president, Netanyahu will also face some potential pitfalls. Key constituencies, including congressional Democrats and many American Jews, oppose Trump's policies, while at home he is under pressure from his hard-line allies to push for policies that Trump may not support.

Ahead of the visit, Netanyahu said he would handle ties with the U.S., Israel's closest and most important ally, in a "prudent manner," but he steered clear of specifics.

"The alliance between Israel and America has always been extremely strong. It's about to get even stronger. President Trump and I see eye to eye on the dangers emanating from the region, but also on the opportunities," Netanyahu said Monday as he boarded a plane to Washington.

Malcolm Hoenlein, a Jewish-American leader who has close ties with both Netanyahu and White House officials, said Netanyahu should set modest goals for his first working meeting with the new president. He said the objective should be to establish a good working relationship in order to tackle concrete issues down the road.

"What I hope will come out of the meeting is this kind of understanding, putting the foundation very firmly in place," he said.

Here are some of the issues that are likely to come up:

## SETTLEMENTS AND THE PALESTINIANS

After repeatedly clashing with Obama for eight years, capped by a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements, Netanyahu seemed relieved by Trump's arrival.

Trump's campaign platform made no mention of a Palestinian state, and his inner circle included allies of the West Bank settler movement. The connections were so strong that a delegation of settler leaders was invited to Trump's inauguration.

Netanyahu responded by approving construction of more than 6,000 new settler homes in the West Bank and east Jerusalem — occupied territories claimed by the Palestinians — and allowing parliament to pass a law retroactively legalizing some 4,000 settlement homes built on private Palestinian land.

His political allies have urged him to go even further, suggesting he abandon the goal of a two-state solution with the Palestinians, step up settlement construction and even consider annexing parts of the West Bank. Such ideas would have

## ORDER

Continued from Page 5

we were stretching to do the things we were doing that are much more narrowly focused than this administration proposes. So if you expand the mission, you will have to expand the budget."

She said conflict can occur by "coming in and saying, 'You will do things one way, our way.'"

According to the Pew Research Center, about 4 percent of the country's unauthorized immigrants live in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Saldana also said immigration courts are already overburdened,

with a national backlog of about 534,000 cases according to nonprofit Transactional Records Action Clearinghouse. The group said it takes an average of about two years for an immigration case to make its way through the Texas system.

"This could be a heyday for lawyers," Saldana said.

She said she hopes Texas policy-makers become leaders in less conflictive implementation of immigration policy.

"Texas is a leader in so many areas," she said. "We are at the epicenter in immigration. Why can't we show the feds how it is done?"



AP photo

In this Sunday, Feb. 12, 2017, file photo, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu chairs the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem. Israel's prime minister heads to Washington this week for a high-profile meeting with President Donald Trump that is suddenly clouded in uncertainty. After embracing Israel's hard-line nationalist right throughout his presidential campaign, Trump appears to have softened some of his positions on key issues since taking office.

been unthinkable during the Obama years.

"All the Cabinet ministers oppose a Palestinian state, including Netanyahu," said Gilad Erdan, a Cabinet minister and member of Netanyahu's Likud Party.

But the hard-line euphoria may be premature. After initially greeting Israel's settlement announcements with a shrug, Trump appears to be having second thoughts. In an interview with a pro-Netanyahu Israeli daily on Friday, Trump said: "I am not somebody that believes that going forward with these settlements is a good thing for peace."

Netanyahu may use the meeting to seek "understandings" as to what sort of construction will be tolerated. Backing from Trump could also help him fend off the pressure from his hard-line rivals.

## THE U.S. EMBASSY

The U.S., like virtually all other countries, maintains its embassy in Tel Aviv due to the conflicting claims to east Jerusalem.

Israel claims all of the city as its eternal capital while the Palestinians seek the eastern sector, captured by Israel in 1967, as their future capital. The status of east Jerusalem is especially sensitive because it is home to Jewish, Christian and Muslim holy sites.

Trump took office vowing to scrap decades of U.S. policy and move the embassy to Jerusalem. But in recent weeks, he has been noncommittal, saying only that he is studying the issue.

The Palestinians have warned that moving the embassy would be explosive. Jordan, a key U.S. and Israeli ally that maintains custodial rights over Muslim holy sites in the city, has also strongly lobbied against the move.

While both men may pay lip service to an embassy move, it is unclear whether there will be any progress on the matter during the visit.

## IRAN

Before taking office, Trump vowed to "rip up" the international deal that placed limits on Iran's nuclear program. But since then, he has backed away from those threats, while seeking other ways to put pressure on the Iranian government.

Netanyahu led an unsuccessful campaign to scuttle the Iranian deal. Although that now seems impossible, Netanyahu will be looking for American assurances to keep Iran in check.

Dennis Ross, a former U.S. peace negotiator, said Netanyahu could seek promises of a U.S. "military response and not just a sanctions response" if Iran moves toward nuclear weapons capability.

## LANCE

Continued from Page 5

USPS received from the sponsorship could bestow the government with an undeserved windfall. The same could be said of Landis, whose role in this entire affair some would view as less than pure."

Landis attorney Paul D. Scott said he was delighted to see the case move toward trial.

"The finish line for Mr. Armstrong ... is fast approaching," Scott said.

Armstrong had been one of the most popular sports figures on the planet before his cheating confession.

His personal story of recovering from testicular cancer that had spread to his brain, while forcefully denying persistent rumors of doping, had built his Lance Armstrong

Foundation cancer charity into a \$500 million global brand and turned him into a celebrity.

The foundation, which removed him from its board

and renamed itself Livestrong, has struggled in the aftermath as donations and revenue plummeted.

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# Lady Steers defeated in playoffs, 47-32

By **MARISSA LOFTIN**

Sports Editor

The Big Spring Lady Steers have been knocked out of the playoffs after a high energy season.

The Lady Steers lost to the Burkburnett Bulldogs, 47-32, when they traveled to Albany, TX last night where they faced off for the 4A bi-district playoff game.

The Bulldogs started out the first quarter serving the Steers with a very energetic and aggressive defense.

Big Spring was only able to attempt 8 shots the entire period, while Burkburnett attempted 20. But it was quality over quantity that helped the Steers stay right on Burkburnett's heels.

Big Spring made half of their first quarter shots while the Bulldogs were only able to make 25%, keeping Burkburnett's lead to only three points at 12-9.

Throughout the rest of the half, the Steers put up a good fight against the Bulldogs' scrappy defense but couldn't hang on as Burkburnett doubled their lead and brought the score to 24-18 at the end of the second quarter.

Burkburnett remained tough defensively, turning a full-court press for the majority of the second half. This caused the Steers to struggle moving the ball down the court and getting any offensive rhythm going.

The Bulldogs outscored the Steers 15-8, bringing the score to 40-26 at the end of the third.

"Their pressure got to us in the third quarter, and we made some freshman and sophomore mistakes," said Lacy Parker, head coach. "We had a good scouting report and knew exactly what we needed to do, but we just didn't quite get it done in that third quarter."

The Steers never turned it down and kept playing with high energy, but still couldn't make a comeback and lost to the Burkburnett Bulldogs 47-32.

"They battled until the very end, and I could see the fire in their eyes even when it was probably out of our reach," said Parker. "I can't be more proud of their effort."

Though this tough loss brings the Lady Steers' season to an end, they are ready to come back next season and set the bar even higher for themselves.

"There for a while I didn't know if that much was expected of Big Spring girls basketball," said Parker. "And this group has had a big part of turning that around."

According to Coach Parker, this is the second year in a row they have made a playoff appearance, and they don't plan on ending their streak anytime soon.



Courtesy photo/Cynthia Barnard

Sophomore Alexa Starr (#10) holds off a Bulldog defender to set up a play.



Courtesy photo/Cynthia Barnard

Sophomore Logan Terrazas (#23) works against the Bulldogs' defense to take the ball inside.



Courtesy photo/Cynthia Barnard

Sophomore Kamri Kemper (#22) moves the ball down the court against Burkburnett's double coverage.

## Thomas, Smart help Celtics stay hot in 111-98 win over Mavs

By **SCHUYLER DIXON**

AP Sports Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Isaiah Thomas and the Boston Celtics had little trouble with a batch of Western Conference opponents — save for a hiccup in Sacramento.

Now they're gaining fast in the East.

Thomas had 29 points and eight assists, backcourt mate Marcus Smart added 19 points and started his hometown team and the Celtics beat the Dallas Mavericks 111-98 on Monday night.

Kelly Olynyk scored seven of his 15 points during a 12-2 run that started with the Celtics leading by one in the fourth quarter as the Atlantic Division leaders won for the 10th time in 11 games.

Boston pulled within two games of defending NBA champion Cleveland atop the East by finishing a 5-1 stretch against the West with three straight road wins, following what now looks like a puzzling 16-point loss in Sacramento.

"We would love to go 4-0, but things happened," said Smart, who starred at a high school in a suburb near Dallas. "But we bounced back. That's what good teams do. We're becoming a very, very great team."

Rookie Jerrell Ford had 20 points for the Mavericks, who came in with three wins over division leaders in the past two weeks after spending the first three months at or near the bottom of the West.

Olynyk started the decisive surge with a pair of layups, followed by a high-arching layup on a drive by Thomas, the NBA's second-leading scorer. After Olynyk hit a 3-pointer, Thomas made one for a 100-89 Boston lead.

"They've got a legitimate shot to get to the Finals with that team out of the East," said Dallas coach Rick Carlisle, who played for the Celtics. "It's a very good basketball team, so when you're playing a team on that level, you've just gotta be on it from the very beginning."

Mavericks guard Deron Williams was ejected late in the second quarter after getting two quick technical fouls for arguing a foul call, part of an 8-0 Boston run over the final 58 seconds for the Celtics' 61-50 lead at the break.

Williams, who was in his second game back after missing eight games with a right toe sprain, was called for pushing off while driving for a layup. He intercepted a pass intended for official Justin VanDuyne, who made the call, and began arguing with him.

Dallas' point guard pounded the ball on the floor with two hands while turning away as the first was technical was called, and VanDuyne quickly called the second tech.

Thomas and Smart combined for 23 points in the first quarter, but Ferrell had 13 at halftime to help Dallas get within three before Boston's late surge.

Harrison Barnes scored 19 for Dallas, and Dirk Nowitzki and Wesley Matthews had 18 apiece.

TIP-INS

Celtics' Gerald Green played despite an illness, scoring 10 points in 13 minutes. ... The Celtics swept the two-game season series after having dropped seven straight against the Mavericks. ... Jae Crowder had 10 points, including a 3 to help put the game away against his former team.

See **MAVS**, Page 13

## Spurs top Pacers for NBA-record 20th straight winning season

By **MICHAEL MAROT**

AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Kawhi Leonard kept the faith Monday night.

Eventually, LaMarcus Aldridge came through, too.

Together, the new faces of the Spurs produced a familiar result — a 110-06 victory at Indiana

for another milestone moment. With their 42nd victory, the Spurs extended their streak of consecutive winning

See **SPURS**, Page 13

## Texas Tech starts fast, rallies to beat No. 4 Baylor 84-78



AP photo

Baylor guard Jake Lindsey drives around Texas Tech guard Devon Thomas during the first half of the Red Raiders' 84-78 upset over the No. 4 Bears.

By **PHIL TERRIGNO**

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — Keenan Evans and Texas Tech didn't have to wait long for another chance against a top-five team at home. This time, the Red Raiders came out

on top with a late rally after blowing a big early lead.

Evans scored 23 points, Niem Stevenson had 21 and Texas Tech toppled fourth-ranked Baylor 84-78 on Monday

See **TECH**, Page 13



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6	8	5	4	1	9	7	2	3
4	3	7	8	2	5	9	6	1
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Tomorrow's Horoscope



HOLIDAY MATHIS

Careless Cosmic Cupid

Cupid is a baby with a weapon who shouldn't be expected to have the aiming accuracy of an archer with fully developed motor skills. This explains a lot. The French author Andre Maurois suggested, "In literature, as in love, we are astounded by what is chosen by others." Anything goes under the zany air-sign astral influences.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** The nature of love cannot be defined in one way that suits every person. Due to its intangible and mysterious qualities, it is impossible to love accurately. Strive instead to love fully.

**TAURUS (April**

**20-May 20).** Love cannot be taught on a chalkboard or in a video series. Sure, one can pick up a few tips here and there, but the only true teacher is experience, as filtered through the heart.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** It's not (SET ITAL) that (END ITAL) you love but (SET ITAL) how (END ITAL) you love that matters today. Your living example will kindle warmth and joy as well as inspire others to show love in action.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** It's easy to pour water from a pitcher to a jar. Filling a jar from an open fire hydrant is hard. Quantity and force come with containment challenges, just as your more passionate feelings do.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Your sincere curiosity and pure desire to focus on others has you utterly unself-conscious, thereby confident -- and, it follows, completely irresistible (though oblivious to the fact).

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** When you love someone, you

want that person to have every good opportunity you've ever had and more. That's why you'll show affection by opening doors for another, literally and figuratively.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** You may not be entirely sure what you're getting into, but there's no question that you're surely getting into it. As author and illustrator Lynda Barry observed, "Love is an exploding cigar we willingly smoke."

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** The heart's logic is multidimensional math, impossible to understand from but one plane of existence. It can't be checked with a calculator, but don't worry; if you feel that it adds up, it does.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Laughter is a form of love you revel in now. It signals agreement. It signals an understanding of another person's intelligence that goes deeper than usual. Your favorite people are the ones you laugh with.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Taking love slowly isn't

just for the very young and the very old. It's also for those who care to soak in every detail, savor moments and weave a magical experience.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** There's much you could do independently (with great ease) that you will instead choose to do with another (with great challenge) because it's an interesting and fun bonding experience.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** For you, love is not about perfect agreement, or even occasional agreement. The best relationships won't duplicate your qualities, opinions and skills so much as complement them.

**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 14).** It takes a truly sophisticated intellect to hold opposing views in mind simultaneously: That's you. You've also a profound wisdom that prevents you from wasting time with meaninglessness. Fresh inspiration and love comes your way in March. Hard work and study will start to pay off in May, and

the trend will continue. Pisces and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 2, 24, 38 and 16.

**HOW TO LOVE...** Passion, fire and kidding (sometimes even arguing) make ARIES feel loved. TAURUS wants the physical evidence of affection represented in gifts of high value and quality. Pay GEMINI a highly original and eloquent compliment; it's better than a material gift in Gemini's estimation. For CANCER, love is showing up and spending quality time at home together. LEO craves to be loved in a way that the public can see -- a ring, for instance. VIRGO wants love that is proven consistently in word and deed time and again. Frequent, if not constant, togetherness is not only tolerated by LIBRA; it's preferred. Songs, poetry, stories, pictures and anything that moves the heart will be well-received by SCORPIO. To SAGITTARIUS, doing something new and unique -- something you've only ever done together -- is love.

CAPRICORN: Honor, respect and attention shown in group settings are important to Capricorn. AQUARIUS enjoys trinkets, symbols, cards and interesting and surprising gifts of all kinds. Take pictures on your dates with PISCES and remember the details of your time together, because the fish love to bond over shared memories.

**CELEBRITY PROFILES:** In many ways 2016 was a sad year in which we lost so many shining bright stars from this plane of existence. Among them was beloved television matriarch Florence Henderson, a Valentine baby born today in 1934. Whether she was dancing with the stars, speaking to motivate a group or hosting her talk show, Henderson radiated the positive attitude and good cheer for which Aquarius is known.

To write to Holiday Mathis, visit [www.creators.com/author/holiday-mathis](http://www.creators.com/author/holiday-mathis) and click "Contact." COPYRIGHT 2017 CREATORS.COM

Annie's Mailbox

Wanting More

**Dear Annie:** I will very soon turn 68. I was with my ex-husband for 42 years before we divorced eight years ago. I dated several men in the first four years, but four

years ago, I connected with a man I had dated in high school.

We spend three nights a week together and a little of the day after together. Very rarely do we vary from this schedule, which is his choice, not mine. Fortunately, we only live about 10 minutes

apart, but I do all of the traveling, except when I had surgery recently; he came to my house those evenings for two weeks. We always have a great time together and laugh a lot. I love him very much, and I'm pretty sure that he has strong feelings for me, although he doesn't say it.

Here's where I need help. We've skirted the idea of living together several times. I would love to move in with him. This morning, I made the remark that if I

sold my house and he would move with me, I'd move to a warmer location. He then said we could never live together because we are so different. The only difference he gave was that I like people and he doesn't. He said that after having a family for 41 years, he enjoys being alone. When he's by himself, he says he's with "all of (his) friends." I'm sure he means his TV, cans of beer and packs of smokes.

I can't give him an ultimatum, because

he would just laugh and dig his heels in, and I don't think I could follow through if I said, "We have to live together, or we're through." I don't really enjoy living by myself, although there are some good things about it. My daughter lives an hour from me and would love to have me move closer to her and her family. I'm going to put my house up for sale this year, and I was wanting to stay in my area as long as I am in a relationship, but after our conversation this morning, I'm beginning to think I should look to the future and move closer to my daughter. I don't want to give up on this man I love, but I can't see myself, in five or 10 years, just spending a few hours a week with him. Feb. 12 marked our fourth anniversary; ironically, it's the same date we broke up on in 1964. -- In a Quandary in PA

Dear Quandary:

It sounds as if you have codependent tendencies and you're allowing a fear of being alone to drive your decision-making. Be honest with yourself. What do you really want out of

a relationship, a few hours of comfort and familiarity each week or loving commitment from someone who wants to share a life with you? I think you want the latter but are afraid to ask for it. You shouldn't be.

Find the self-confidence to deliver that ultimatum -- "Either we move in together or I'm going to have to move on" -- and really mean it. If he's not willing to commit, then I think you really should move closer to your daughter. She will always be there for you, offering unconditional love. And you sound like a charming woman; I'm sure you'll meet another man in your new town, one who wants the same things out of life that you do, and you'll be so glad you didn't settle for second best.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to [dearannie@creators.com](mailto:dearannie@creators.com). To find out more about Annie Lane and read features by other Creators Syndicate columnists and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com). COPYRIGHT 2017 CREATORS.COM



By Steve Becker

Eliminating the luck element

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.  
NORTH: ♠ J 4, ♥ Q J 10 3, ♦ K J 7 6, ♣ 7 5 2  
WEST: ♠ K Q 10 8 5 2, ♥ 5, ♦ 9 3, ♣ A 10 6 4  
EAST: ♠ 9 7 6 3, ♥ 8 2, ♦ Q 10 8 4, ♣ Q J 9  
SOUTH: ♠ A, ♥ A K 9 7 6 4, ♦ A 5 2, ♣ K 8 3  
The bidding: South 1♥, West 1♠, North 2♥, East Pass  
Opening lead — king of spades.

fact, it's sure to succeed regardless of how the East-West cards are divided. The proper approach is to win the spade lead, draw trumps and cash the A-K of diamonds, deliberately rejecting the finesse. You then lead dummy's jack of spades, but instead of ruffing it, you discard the five of diamonds! West finds himself on lead but helpless. He cannot afford a spade continuation, which would present you with a ruff-and-discard, so he is forced to return either a diamond (if he has one) or a club. If West has a diamond, he can't lead it without establishing a diamond trick for you in dummy. He also can't lead a club without making your king a trick. So, no matter what he has or decides to do, West is certain to hand you the contract once you adopt this line of play. Situations like this occur over and over again, and the trick is to recognize them as they arise. The principle that governs them is always the same: Before pinning all your hopes on the favorable location of a particular card (such as the queen of diamonds or ace of clubs in this deal), you should seek a method of play that either reduces or eliminates the element of luck. Whenever possible, leave nothing to chance.

Tomorrow: A tough defensive challenge. ©2017 King Features Syndicate Inc.

sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box.

3			1	4				
8				9		6	7	
	5				6			
2						8	4	5
			4		9			
4	3	7						1
				6			5	
	2	9		3				6
				5	2			7



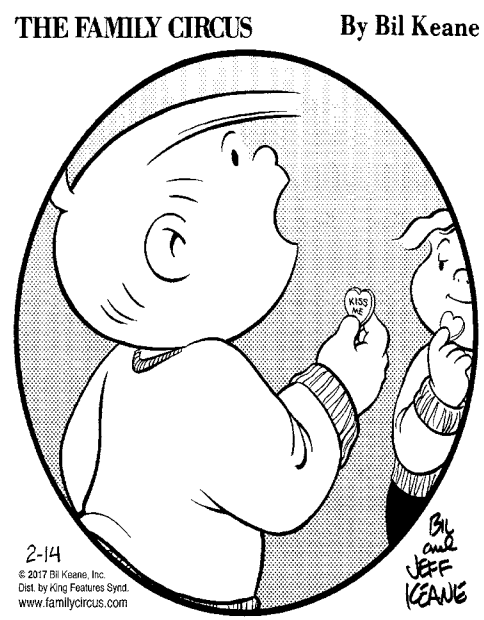
TV schedule table with columns for channel, time, and program name.

DENNIS THE MENACE



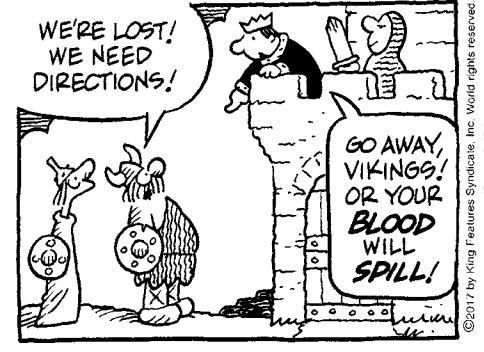
It's for my mom. They're supposed to be mushy, ya know.

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

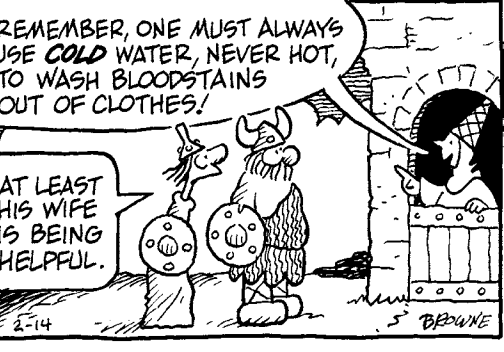


This one says 'kiss me.' Can't I have one that says 'you da man'?

HAGAR



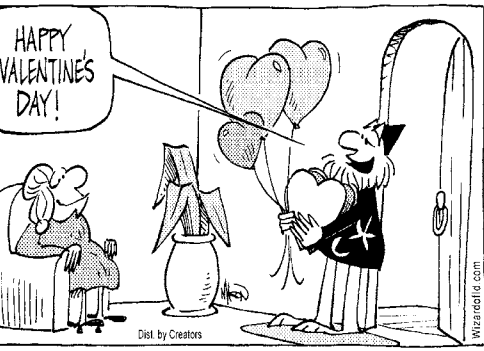
REMEMBER, ONE MUST ALWAYS USE COLD WATER, NEVER HOT, TO WASH BLOODSTAINS OUT OF CLOTHES!



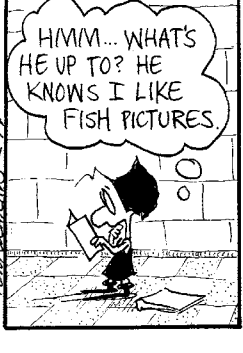
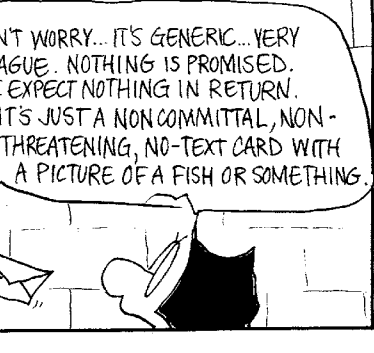
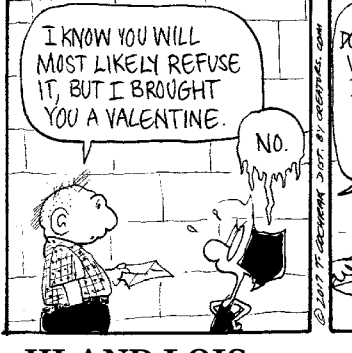
BC



WIZARD OF ID



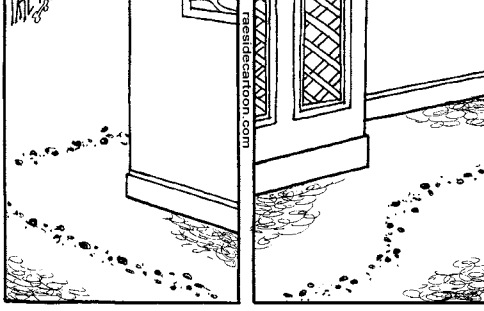
AGNES



HI AND LOIS



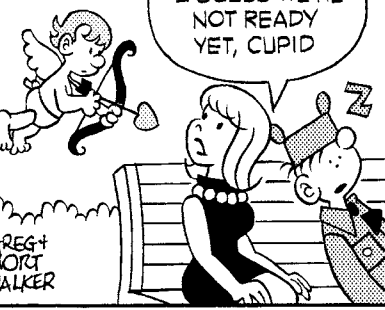
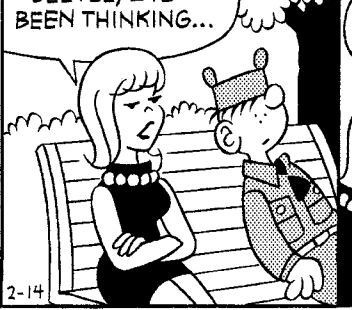
THE OTHER COAST



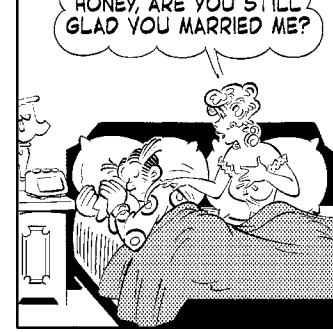
SNUFFY SMITH



BETLE BAILEY



BLONDIE



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 14, the 45th day of 2017. There are 320 days left in the year. This is Valentine's Day. Today's Highlights in History: On Feb. 14, 1967, Aretha Franklin recorded her cover of Otis Redding's 'Respect' at Atlantic Records in New York. The Turtles' single 'Happy Together' was released on the White Whale label. On this date: In 1778, the American ship Ranger carried the recently adopted Stars and Stripes to a foreign port for the first time as it arrived in France. In 1849, President James K. Polk became the first U.S. chief executive to be photographed while in office as he posed for Matthew Brady in New York City. In 1859, Oregon was admitted to the Union as the 33rd state. In 1903, the Department of Commerce and Labor was established. (It was divided into separate departments of Commerce and Labor in 1913.) In 1912, Arizona became the 48th state of the Union as President William Howard Taft signed a proclamation. In 1929, the 'St. Valentine's

Day Massacre" took place in a Chicago garage as seven rivals of Al Capone's gang were gunned down. In 1941, the Carson McCullers novel 'Reflections in a Golden Eye,' previously serialized, was published in book form by Houghton Mifflin. In 1962, first lady Jacqueline Kennedy conducted a televised tour of the White House in a videotaped special that was broadcast on CBS and NBC (and several nights later on ABC). In 1979, Adolph Dubs, the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, was kidnapped in Kabul by Muslim extremists and killed in a shootout between his abductors and police. In 1989, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini called on Muslims to kill Salman Rushdie, author of 'The Satanic Verses,' a novel condemned as blasphemous. In 1990, 92 people were killed when an Indian Airlines passenger jet crashed while landing at a southern Indian airport. In 2013, Double-amputee and Olympic sprinter Oscar Pistorius shot and killed his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, at his home in South Africa; he was later convicted of murder and is serving a six-year prison term. Ten years ago: Challenged on the accuracy of U.S. intelli-

gence, President George W. Bush told a news conference there was no doubt the Iranian government was providing armor-piercing weapons to kill American soldiers in Iraq, and said he would fight any attempt by the Democratic-controlled Congress to cut off money for the war. ConAgra recalled all Peter Pan and Great Value peanut butter made at a Georgia plant because of a salmonella outbreak. Five years ago: A fire broke out at the Comayagua farm prison in Honduras, killing 361 inmates. 'Linsanity' continued as Knicks sensation Jeremy Lin made a tiebreaking 3-pointer with less than a second to play to cap his finishing flurry of six straight points and New York rallied to beat the Raptors 90-87, extending its winning streak to six games.

Answer to previous puzzle crossword grid with words like CASE, CEASE, CHOP, APEX, ASHEN, HAHA, RAMP, STEED, AMID, DRILL, TEAM, LIMOS, OILED, LOSE, ADFREE, SUPERB, CRIED, STARS, HEM, HOLD, FLAME, BORE, EVE, GUIDE, NAMES, EFFORT, CADETS, ORES, SAYTO, POLOS, SAWCOMING, ODDS, TOTAL, ETAL, POET, ALIKE, NAPA, ERRS, BONES, SLED.

Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS: 1 Book of maps, 6 Pampering resorts, 10 Happy cat's sound, 14 Constructed, 15 Thick with vegetation, 16 Largest continent, 17 Scornful look, 18 Not to mention, 19 Religious faction, 20 Koala's food source, 23 Auto fuel, 24 Recline, 25 Bee attacks, 29 Auction offers, 31 However, 34 From the neighborhood, 35 Fishing rod, 36 Top-notch, 37 Versatile appliance controller, 40 Count (on), 41 Adherents: Suff., 42 Allow to enter, 43 Snoop around, 44 Some NCOs, 45 Has a hunch, 46 "What did you say?", 47 Dog show org., 48 Northwestern region of Canada, 56 Letters on the "o" button, 57 Higher than, 58 Figure of speech, 60 Hits the road, 61 Generic dog name.

Down crossword clues: 10 Grade school glue, 11 \_\_\_-friendly software, 12 Grain in sushi, 13 Evaluate, 21 \_\_\_ Vegas, 22 Bro's sibling, 25 Drink noisily, 26 Copier powder, 27 In an unfriendly way, 28 Seagoing force, 29 Canoes and kayaks, 30 Misfortunes, 31 Snowstorm footwear, 32 Loosen, as a knot, 33 Adolescents, 35 "Hey, over here!"

YOU FIRST by Billie Truitt Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

YOU FIRST crossword grid with clues: 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65.



**MAVS**

Continued from Page 7

Mavericks: Nowitzki's 26-point average against Boston coming into the game was the highest against any opponent for the 19th-year player. ... Despite the ejection, Williams got the assist he needed to pass Muggsy Bogues for 19th on the NBA's career list.

Williams now has 6,727 assists.

**CUBAN AMUSED**

Mark Cuban says President Donald Trump's tweet suggesting that the outspoken owner of the Mavericks wasn't smart enough to be commander in chief "gave me a little giggles."

A vocal supporter of Hillary Clinton during the campaign, Cuban said Monday that he woke up a day earlier

to Trump's tweet, which read "I know Mark Cuban well.

He backed me big-time but I wasn't interested in taking all of his calls. He's not smart enough to run for president!"

Cuban retweeted it with an "Lol." Speaking to reporters before the game, Cuban said he woke up thinking "there must be peace and harmony throughout the entire world because the president of the United States has chosen to wake up and tweet to me."

**UP NEXT**

Celtics: A back-to-back before the All-Star break, at home against Philadelphia on Wednesday and at Chicago on Thursday.

Mavericks: At Detroit in the last game before the break.



AP photo

**Boston Celtics guard Isaiah Thomas (4) drives past the Dallas Mavericks in an NBA basketball game in Dallas, Monday, Feb. 13, 2017. The Celtics won 111-98. (AP Photo/LM Otero)**

**SPURS**

Continued from Page 7

seasons to a league-record 20.

"It was a heck of a competitive game," coach Gregg Popovich said. "It was real physical and aggressive. I thought both teams played real well. I'm obviously thrilled with a

win on the road. It could have gone either way."

The Spurs have had a winning record every season since Tim Duncan was a rookie in 1997-98, this one coming after his retirement. Utah had set the record with 19 straight winning seasons from 1985-2004. So, of course the Spurs did it their way.

They struggled early, gave

away the lead in the fourth quarter after it looked like they might pull away and then had to grind it out with a 13-4 closing run after the Pacers retook a 97-94 lead with 4:08 left. Leonard made 13 of 23 shots including two 3-pointers and finished with 32 points, six rebounds and

four steals, including the one that sealed it. It was his fifth straight 30-point game.

"I'm just trying to win," Leonard said.

Aldridge, like most of the other Spurs, looked weary on the second game of a back-to-back. He finished 7 of 22 from the field with 19 points

— roughly half coming in the final 6½ minutes, when the Spurs needed everything he could muster to avoid losing consecutive games for the third time this season.

Paul George scored 27 points and Myles Turner had 22 for the Pacers, who have lost four straight.



**TECH**

Continued from Page 7

night, two days after a one-point loss at home to Big 12-leading and third-ranked Kansas.

"We've known the whole time that we can beat these teams," Evans said. "Especially Kansas, we let that one slip away. But, we knew coming in it was going to be a battle. We knew that we could come out with a win."

Texas Tech (17-9, 5-8 Big 12) rallied in the second half after squandering an early 12-point lead.

The Red Raiders opened the game with an 11-0 run and used an identical spurt late in the game to go ahead to stay.

"People look at a number and they see (No. 4) and they see non-ranked and they think there's a big difference," Baylor coach Scott Drew said. "Coaches know there's not a big difference. These are one-possession games. A one-possession league."

Justin Gray added 13 points and 10 rebounds, and Zach Smith scored 11 for the Red Raiders, who before their 80-79 home loss to Kansas on Saturday had a one-point loss at TCU last Wednesday.

Terry Maston led Baylor (22-4, 9-4) with a career-high 22 points. Manu Lecomte, who fouled out after a tech-

nical in the second half, finished with 16.

Jo Lual-Acuil Jr. and Johnathan Motley had 11 points apiece for the Bears. Motley, who entered the game leading Baylor and ranked fourth in the Big 12 with an average of 16.9 points per game, didn't score until after halftime.

"They doubled him really hard, so it opened up lanes for me and spacing was pretty good," Maston said.

Devon Thomas converted a tying three-point play with 7:09 left, his only points of the game coming after he was originally whistled for charging while making a layup. Officials reviewed the play and the call was overturned after it was determined Jake Lindsey was in the restricted area when he drew contact, and he instead was given the foul.

Aaron Ross then hit a 3-pointer, and his layup with five minutes left put Texas Tech up 69-61.

Ross, a reserve forward, scored eight points after being held to two in each of Texas Tech's previous two games.

"He cares. It was within 30 minutes of the Kansas game and he was back in the gym," Red Raiders coach Chris Beard said. "I think he made 700 shots Saturday night after the game. That's a little bit of a glimpse behind Aaron Ross and who he is."

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# News in brief

## Aetna, Humana call off \$34 billion deal

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Major health insurers Aetna and Humana called off their \$34 billion combination after a federal judge, citing concerns about prices and benefits, rejected the deal.

The announcement Tuesday comes several days after another federal judge shot down a tie-up between two other massive insurers.

Blue Cross-Blue Shield carrier Anthem Inc. is attempting to buy Cigna Corp. for \$48 billion. Anthem is appealing that decision.

Aetna, the nation's third largest insurer, had announced its bid for Humana in 2015.

The deal would have given Aetna the opportunity to significantly expand its presence in Medicare Advantage coverage, which involves privately run versions of the federal Medicare program for people who are over 65 or disabled.

But Aetna's attempt to gobble up the nation's fifth largest health insurer brought in the Department of Justice, which sued last summer to block that deal and the Anthem-Cigna combination.

Regulators worried, in particular, about how the Aetna-Humana deal would affect consumer choices and competition in the fast-growing market for Medicare Advantage plans.

U.S. District Judge John Bates wrote in the decision last month that neither new competition nor plans to shed some of the combined company's businesses would be enough to ease antitrust concerns. Federal regulation would likely be "insufficient to prevent the merged firm from raising prices or reducing benefits," Bates ruled.

Aetna Chairman and CEO Mark Bertolini said in a company release Tuesday that "the current environment makes it too challenging to continue pursuing the transaction."

## Hugh Jackman shows off bandaged nose after cancer treatment

Hugh Jackman has revealed another treatment for skin cancer.

The 48-year-old star of the X-Men and Wolverine franchises posted a selfie on social media Monday showing off his bandaged nose. Jackman writes, "Another basal cell carcinoma. Thanks to frequent checks & amazing doctors, all's well. Looks worse w the dressing on than off!" He also offered his fans some advice to wear sunscreen.

Jackman has been open about his battle against skin cancer in recent years. He also posted a selfie of his bandaged nose in 2013 and showed up at a movie premiere the next year two days after having a growth removed.

Basal-cell carcinoma is a slow-growing form of skin cancer.



AP photo

Emergency personnel respond to parking structure after several cars caught fire in Anaheim, Calif., Monday, Feb. 13, 2017. Several cars were destroyed or damaged by fires in the main parking structure Monday at Disneyland, authorities said.

## Flint mayor, Michigan governor to discuss water bill credits

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The mayor of Flint is planning to meet with Gov. Rick Snyder Tuesday to discuss Michigan's decision to withdraw some financial assistance that was originally offered to help the beleaguered city and its residents cope with a man-made public health crisis caused by lead-contaminated tap water.

The state announced three weeks ago that it will stop paying a portion of customers' bills and also halt covering Flint's costs to use water from the Great Lakes Water Authority — a move that will save the state more than \$2 million per month.

Flint Mayor Karen Weaver said Monday that the customer credits were supposed to continue through March and that she is disappointed by the "short notice" that they will last instead through February. She said during a news conference at city hall that while her goal is to get "the state out" of Flint, "we weren't ready for credits to be suspended."

Weaver's office will discuss her concerns with Snyder at a meeting Tuesday afternoon in Lansing. His office reiterated that the payments will end because the level of lead in the city's water no longer exceeds the federal limit. Residents are still encouraged to use faucet filters provided by the state.

Snyder's office estimates that the state will have spent \$41 million partially reimbursing customer bills for a nearly three-year period ending after the

February billing cycle. Another \$17.8 million has been contributed toward Flint's Great Lakes Water Authority payments, including a \$6 million reconnection fee.

## 7 people treated, 8 cars burn in Disneyland parking fire

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — A fire broke out in Disneyland's main parking structure that burned eight cars and caused seven people to be treated for smoke inhalation, authorities said.

No foul play was suspected but authorities haven't given a cause for the Monday blaze at the Mickey & Friends Parking Structure.

Four cars were destroyed and four more had major damage from the fire, which brought losses estimated at \$180,000, the Anaheim Police Department said. Thousands of cars are tightly packed into the structure daily.

Seven Disney employees were treated for smoke inhalation, four of whom were taken to hospitals. None of the injuries was life-threatening, Anaheim fire Sgt. Daron Wyatt said.

Gray smoke could be seen pouring out of the structure when the blaze was first reported at about 5 p.m. It was extinguished about 30 minutes later. Hundreds of park visitors and employees were stuck outside the structure unable to get to their cars until the evacuation and shutdown ended after about two hours.

# BEST BITES

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