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H BIG SPRING MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2018

HERALD

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Chamber Extravaganza slated for Jan. 30



File photo

This Herald file photo shows the Big Spring Area Chamber of Commerce Banquet in 2015. This year's banquet, renamed the "Chamber Extravaganza, will be held Jan. 30, and will see Manny Negron take over Chamber presidency from Andrea Barr.

Special to the Herald

It's time for the Chamber Annual Banquet...no, it's the Chamber Extravaganza - "Where Business Means Business."
 Yes the name may have changed but the evening will be fun and for everyone to do some network-

ing and mingling with all the members, Board of Directors and community leaders and others in attendance. On Jan. 30 at 6:30 p.m., the chamber will still be passing the gavel from the outgoing president Andrea Barr to incoming president Manny Negron and the announcing of the Man and Woman of the Year; new incoming board members and

much more!!
 "A Chamber is not a Chamber without its members and volunteers and we want for the community to come out and meet them," said Debbye ValVerde, Executive Director at the chamber. "If you are not a member, come out and meet those who are members and give us a chance to talk to you about 'investing in your community."
 This year the chamber wants to do more networking and have fun with the decorated tables.
 "As many who have attended the banquet in the past, members are contacted and asked to purchase and decorate their table in order to promote themselves," said ValVerde. "Well, this year will be no different, except we will be allowing attendees to vote for their favorite table with \$1 bills and we will award the winning business a traveling plaque with monies going towards the Chamber's Program and Event fund."
 There will also be a silent auction of items from the Chamber members. The chamber hopes that by doing this more attendees will meet and get to talk to the members, board of directors and staff. They want the businesses who decorate a table to meet the people that sit at their table, introduce themselves, and give out information and or giveaways to those at their table.
 Tickets for the Chamber Extravaganza are \$30

See **CHAMBER**, Page 3

Grand Jury indicts 16

By **ROGER CLINE**
 Staff Writer

The 118th District Court Grand Jury indicted 16 people in their most recent session Thursday. Those indicted include:

- Rhett Daylon Dedmon, 46, of 1006 E. 12th St., for Possession of a Controlled Substance (Less than 1 gram) (State Jail Felony).
- Gomezindo Diaz, 27, of 1301 Settles St., for Evading Arrest or Detention with a Vehicle (Third-Degree Felony).
- Marty Ray Evans Jr., 27, of 1410 E. 11th Place, for Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle (State Jail Felony).
- Maria Estella Flores, 40, of 1401 Mesquite, for Theft of a Firearm (State Jail Felony).
- Sanjay Gibbs, 26, of 1207 Mesa, for Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon (Second-Degree Felony).
- Heather Ann Guerra, 27, of 1306 Highway 176, for Forgery of a Financial Instrument (State Jail Felony).

- Rafael Jesus Hernandez Jr., 20, of 1404 Lexington, for Possession of a Controlled Substance (1 to 4 grams) (Third-Degree Felony).
- Dakota Mack Murphree, 22, of 204 N. Main in Coahoma, for Violation of a Protective Order (Third-Degree Felony).
- Martin King Norwood, 34, of 1077 County Road 204 in Colorado City, for Burglary of a Building (State Jail Felony).
- Anselmo Vicente Rangel, 21, of 1708 W. Third St., for Evading Arrest with a Vehicle (Third-Degree Felony).
- Adrian Rodriguez, 20, of 1510 Eubanks, for Possession of a Controlled Substance (4 to 200 grams) (Second-Degree Felony).
- Eric Sanchez, 24, of 900 S. Aylesford, for Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon (Second-Degree Felony).
- Darrell Scott Shults, 34, currently a resident of the Howard County Detention Center, for Assault/Family Violence (Impeding Breath) (Third-Degree Felony).
- Deandre Tyrelle Walton,

See **INDICTMENTS**, Page 3

Anger, dejection grows as only half of Puerto Rico has power



AP photo

In this Dec. 21, 2017 filw photo, barrio Patron resident Karina Santiago Gonzalez works on a small power plant in Morovis, Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico authorities said on Friday Dec. 29, that nearly half of power customers in the U.S. territory still lack electricity more than three months after Hurricane

By **DANICA COTO**
 Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The revelation that more than 660,000 power customers across Puerto Rico still lack electricity more than three months after Hurricane Maria has sparked outrage, surprise and resignation among some islanders who ac-

cuse officials of mismanaging their response to the Category 4 storm.

It's the first time the government of the U.S. territory has provided that statistic, which was released as authorities warned that a lot of work remains and that crews were still finding unexpected damage after Maria hit on Sept. 20 with winds of up to 154 mph, knocking power out to the entire island. Officials said 55 percent of Puerto Rico's nearly 1.5 million customers have power.

"It's just extraordinary that it is still so far away from being 100 percent recovered," said Susan Tierney, a senior adviser for Denver-based consulting company Analysis Group who testified before a U.S. Senate committee on efforts to restore power in Puerto Rico. "I'm not aware of any time in recent decades since the U.S. has electrified the entire economy that there has been an outage of this magnitude."

One of Puerto Rico's 78 municipalities remains entirely without power, and it's unclear when some electricity will be restored

See **PUERTO RICO**, Page 3



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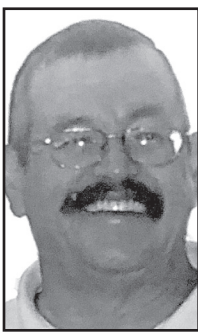
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Obituaries

Fermin L. Florez, Jr.



Fermin L. Florez, Jr., 67, of Big Spring, died Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017, at Parkview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Vigil service will be at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30, 2017, at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2018, at Holy Trinity Catholic Church with Monsignor Bernard L. Gully, officiating. Interment will be at Trinity Memorial Park.

Fermin was born Aug. 4, 1950, in Big Spring, Texas to Maria Correa Florez and Fermin L. Florez, Sr. He was a lifetime resident of Big Spring. He entered the United States Army on Jan. 23, 1970, and retired on Jan. 31, 1990. He loved music and dancing. Fermin was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

Fermin is survived by his wife, Gloria Florez of Pasadena, Texas; four daughters, Venessa Aleman and husband Arturo of Pasadena, Maria Basaldua

and husband Michael of Tulia, Graciela Florez of Houston and Herminia Florez and husband Albert Tangarife of LaPorte; his mother, Maria Florez of Bryan; eight grandchildren, Gabriel Aleman, Aaron Aleman, Ashley Aleman, John Michael Basaldua, Jase Christopher Florida, Abigale Chavez, Gabriella Chavez and Dolcey Tangarife; two brothers, Charlie Florez of Big Spring and Pete Florez of Bryan; three sisters, Florence Rosas of Friendswood, Elizabeth Rios of Big Spring, and Debra Olague of Big Spring; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Fermin was preceded in death by his father, Fermin L. Florez, Sr.; and a grandson, Maximiliano Moreno; and his maternal and paternal grandparents.

Pallbearers will be Michael Basaldua, Albert Tangarise, Gabriel Aleman, Aaron Aleman, Amando Cortez and Sammy Correa.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersandsmith.com.

Paid Obituary

Support Groups

MONDAY

- Reformers Unanimous International is a faith-based addictions program helping people find freedom from addiction. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Mondays at Trinity Baptist Church in Big Spring. Enter at the main entrance of the church.

- Alcoholics Anonymous, As Bill Sees it, 615 Settles, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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.

- A six-week course in Wellness and Quality of Life with Chronic Pain will be held at Spring Creek Fellowship located in the Spring Town Plaza, 1801 E. FM 700. There is no charge for the course, and a workbook will be provided. Contact Steve Purdy at 432-517-4840 for more information.

WEDNESDAY

- RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy) a chronic pain disease, a support and informative group, meets at 213 Circle. Call Lucy at (432) 517-9207 for more information.

- Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m.; open 12 & 12 study meeting 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

THURSDAY

- GriefShare is a biblical support group that focuses on helping people who are dealing with a loved one's death. Each DVD session features nationally respected grief experts and real-life stories, followed by small group discussion about the topics presented (with workbook support). Weekly 10/5/17 through 01/11/18; 6:00 - 8:00 pm at Trinity Baptist Church in Big Spring. Call Vivian Gordon at 432-466-3583 for more information.

- Alcoholics Anonymous, 615 Settles, open discussion noon to 1 p.m.; women's meeting; 6:30 until 7:30 p.m. Newcomers' meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

- Weight Watchers meets at 6 p.m. at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Weigh-in is at 5:30 p.m. Weigh-in is confidential and you don't have to talk if you don't want to. Flexible payment options.

- A Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder support group meeting is at 6:30 p.m. at the VA Medical Center Veteran's Healing Center.

FRIDAY

- AA open discussion meeting from noon until 1 p.m. at 605 Settles. Open Big Book study meeting, 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

SATURDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous open discussion meeting, 615 Settles, noon to 1 p.m. Open podium/speakers meeting 8 p.m. until 9 p.m. Open birthday night, no smoking meeting the last Saturday of each month at 8 p.m. Covered dish supper at 7 p.m.

SUNDAY

- Alcoholics Anonymous closed meeting from 11 a.m. to noon at 615 Settles. Open meeting 7 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Take Note

- Cross stitch squares are now ready for the 2018 Howard County Fair quilt. Theme for this year's quilt is "The Love of Dogs." Anyone able to help by stitching a square may pick one up at the Heritage Museum during regular hours, Tuesday through Saturday. For questions or for more information, please contact Suzanne Markwell at 214-256-1674.

- The Emergency Services Chaplains Corps is seeking volunteer chaplains. The corps provides spiritual services to Howard County residents and visitors in crisis situations. Prospective chaplains don't require any specific experience or education to qualify for the position, just a calling from God and a willingness to devote time to the program, which requires a 24- to 30-week training program and dedication of one day per week for emergency call-outs. Those interested should contact Senior Chaplain Joel Miller at 432-213-1221.

- Big Spring's Centennial Lions Club is holding a drive to collect books for the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club. Books for kids in kindergarten through about 10th grade will be accepted, with special preference for books for younger children in kindergarten through third grade. Cash donations to allow the Lions to purchase additional books are also appreciated. Books or donations can be taken to the Salvation Army, 811 W. Fifth St., or to the home of Lions member Ken Lawhon at 1707 E. 15th St. For more information, contact Lawhon at 214-998-9716 or Lions member David Stives at 432-270-2251.

- 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. If you want additional information about getting your child on this program please contact your

child's school.

- Each week Kindred offers free health checks from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the Corner House Coffee Shop, 1701 Scurry St.

- 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 has dropped to \$5 per person thanks to a sponsor Marcy House, 2301 Wasson Road.

- Howard County Republicans meet the second Monday of each month. Club members meet in the Cactus Room at Howard College at 11:30 a.m. for Dutch treat lunch and meeting at 12 p.m.

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

- Big Spring Centennial Lion's Club meets twice a month at the Big Spring TA Truck Stop. They meet on the first Tuesday of the month at noon and the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. Visitors are welcome.

- 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. For more information, contact 432-271-2138.

- Staked Plains Masonic Lodge

No. 598 meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. (dinner is at 6 p.m.) at 219 1/2 Main St. All Masons are welcome.

- Membership to the Big Spring Native American Association is open to the public. People interested in Native American culture are encouraged to find out more about the organization by calling Richard "Indio" Lesser at 432-935-0125,

- Scenic Mountain Medical Center Auxiliary Group is looking to expand. Positions are available for the Auxiliary group and the Teen Volunteer program. Must be 15 years of age to take part in the teen volunteer program. If you would like to volunteer please contact Heath White at 268-4850.

- The Big Spring State Hospital Volunteer Services Council is in need of volunteers to fill a variety of needs to assist the hospital's patients. Applications to become a volunteer can be picked up at The Chalet, 115 E. Second St., Tuesday through Saturday between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. or at the Big Spring State Hospital Community Relations Department, 1901 N. Hwy 87, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Volunteers can assist with a variety of functions, including The Chalet Resale Shop, various fund-raisers and patient events. For more information, contact Dee Lindsey, Big Spring State Hospital Director of Community Relations, (432) 268-7535 or danielle.lindsey@dshs.state.tx.us

- Home Hospice is in need of volunteers of all ages. The organization is requesting volunteers to visit patients. Volunteers set their own hours. For more information, contact Beverly Grant at 264-7599 or 432-967-0901.

- Mobile meals is in need of volunteer delivery drivers. If you would like to donate one hour per week to help deliver meals to the elderly, call Maria at 816-6474.

- Crossroads Hospice needs volunteers for patient care. Contact Eva at 263-5300.

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CHAMBER

Continued from Page 1

per person and are available now.

"Chamber Members, if you have not been contacted about decorating a table, please contact us and we will put you on the list. We will only be deco-

rating 45 tables for the evening," said ValVerde.

Man and Woman of the Year will be announced towards the end of the evening by 2016 winners, Raul Marquez and Vicki Stewart.

For more information about the Chamber Extravaganza call Debbye ValVerde or Nancy Davenport at 263-7641.

PUERTO RICO

Continued from Page 1

to the central mountain town of Ciales. Crews this week restored power for the first time to parts of the southeast coastal town of Yabucoa, which received the first hit from Maria.

Among those still in the dark is Christian Pagan, 58, who lives near the capital of San Juan and said it was the government's fault that a large number of people still don't have power.

"Everybody saw that the devastation was great, but I don't understand why they're trying to sell people something that's not real," he said of the explanations the government has provided as to why power has not been fully restored. "The first month was lost to bureaucracy and an uncoordinated reaction."

He especially criticized the power company's former director, Ricardo Ramos, who resigned in late October after signing a \$300 million contract for a Montana-based company that had only two full-time employees when the storm hit. Ramos also had said that he did not activate mutual-aid agreements with power companies in the U.S. mainland in part because there was no way to communicate with them.

"That's the kind of help you ask for three days before the hurricane," Pagan said.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has said that power will likely be restored to all of Puerto Rico by May, noting that reconnection efforts have been slow-going at times in part because of the island's rough terrain, lack of supplies and an aging infrastructure that was not maintained given the island's 11-year recession.

Some believe it might take even longer, especially those living in central mountain towns like Eileen Cheverez, a 48-year-old respiratory therapist from Morovis.

Power was restored last weekend to homes around her, but she's still waiting for crews to set up a key cable so she can have lights.

"It's like a lack of respect. I know the damage was great, especially in the mountains, but I feel they've taken too long," she said, adding that seeing homes lit up around her gives her some hope amid the frustration.

It is not yet known what percentage of businesses and homes now have electricity. Power company spokesman Geraldo Quinones told The Associated Press that officials don't have that data yet because the optical fiber that helps provide that and other information was destroyed by the hurricane.

Fredyson Martinez, vice president of a union that represents Puerto Rico power company workers, told the AP that the company should have provided the number of customers without power a while ago, adding that officials had other ways of obtaining the data. He also said a recent study by local engineers found that 90 percent of industries and 75 percent of businesses already have power, meaning residential areas are disproportionately in the dark.

Amarilis Irizarry, a 38-year-old graphic designer, lives in one of those areas.

Every day, she drives underneath an electric post that fell across the road to her apartment in Trujillo alto, hoping it won't finish falling on her car and kill her and her young son.

"This is horrible," she said. "I didn't think it would take so long...To have only half of Puerto Rico with power three months after the hurricane, that's worrisome."

Government officials said nearly 14,000 poles already have been shipped to Puerto Rico, and that another 7,000 will arrive in upcoming days. In addition, some 3,500 workers are trying to restore power across the island, with many working through the holidays.

"We know that the priority of our clients is to know when they will receive the power service again," said Justo Gonzalez, the power company's interim director. "Maria severely impacted most of our energy infrastructure."

Officials said Puerto Rico has 2,400 miles of transmission lines, 30,000 miles of distribution lines and 342 substations that suffered substantial damage during the hurricane.

Carlos Torres, who is overseeing power restoration efforts, said that crews are still finding unexpected damage including what he called severely impacted substations.

"We will not stop working until every person and business has their lights back on," he said.

INDICTMENTS

Continued from Page 1

37, of 1322 Harding, for Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Deliver (4 to 200 grams) (First-Degree Felony Enhanced), Possession of Marijuana (4 oz. to 5 lbs) (State-Jail Felony), and Prohibited Weapons (Second-Degree Felony Enhanced).

• Toron Eugene Williams, 27, of 7737 Tillman St. in Dallas, for Possession of a Con-

trolled Substance (1 to 4 grams) (Third-Degree Felony).

Andres Nieto Solis, 22, of 1404 Lexington, was also listed as having been indicted, but no offense was listed.

Note that indictments do not indicate guilt.

Contact Staff Writer Roger Cline at 432-263-7331 ext. 235, or by email at reporter@big-springherald.com.

Ringo Starr, Bee Gee Barry Gibb tapped as British knights



AP photo

In this Friday, July 7, 2017 file photo, Ringo Starr, center, is joined by guests including filmmaker David Lynch, left, and musician Edgar Winter, second from right, during a 77th birthday celebration for Starr outside Capitol Records, in Los Angeles. A Beatle and a Bee Gee have topped the list of celebrated people designated to receive knighthoods and other awards in the New Year's Honors List. They are joined by a noted children's author celebrated for "War Horse," a politician who fought in vain to keep Britain in the European Union, and many others, including renowned researchers, volunteers and actors.

By GREGORY KATZ

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A Beatle and a Bee Gee are among the celebrated citizens who have been selected for knighthood and other awards given in the name of Britain's monarch.

Britain's Cabinet Office publishes a list of the people receiving honors for merit, service or bravery twice a year: just before New Year's Eve, and on the Saturday in June when Queen Elizabeth II's birthday is officially observed.

The New Year's Honors List made public late Friday revealed that Beatles drummer Ringo Starr and Barry Gibb, the oldest and last surviving of the brothers who made up the pop group the Bee Gees, have been tapped as knights.

These are three of the people picked to receive knighthoods in 2018:

A HARD DAY'S KNIGHT

The future knight is listed as Richard Starkey, a Liverpoolian being honored for services to music, but the world knows him as Ringo Starr, drummer for one of the most famous bands in the history of recorded mu-

sic. He missed the Beatles' hardscrabble years, when they had to scramble for a gig to get by, joining John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison just before they rocketed to stardom.

There were flashier drummers in the rock pantheon — Keith Moon and Ginger Baker come to mind — but Starr fit the band's approach perfectly, playing with uncanny style and imagination as the band's music branched out from its early American rock influences. The drum parts in "Ticket to Ride," "Rain," and "Strawberry Fields Forever" are all seen as masterful contributions to timeless songs.

Starr also had a way of mangling words that pleased Lennon, who used Starr's offhand quips to develop the songs "A Hard Day's Night" and "Tomorrow Never Knows."

"It's great!" Starr said of his knighthood in a brief message Friday. "It's an honor and a pleasure to be considered and acknowledged for my music and my charity work, both of which I love. Peace and love. Ringo."

The knighthood will allow Starr, 77, to join McCartney,

Mick Jagger, Elton John and Van Morrison as 1960s rock royalty honored by the queen. Could Keith Richards be next?

DISCO KNIGHTS

Barry Gibb, the last surviving member of the Bee Gees, said he was dedicating his knighthood to his late bandmates, twin brothers Robin Gibb, who died in 2012, and Maurice Gibb, who died in 2003.

"I want to acknowledge how responsible my brothers are for this honor," said Gibb, 71. "It is as much theirs as it is mine."

He was recognized for services to music and charity.

"This is a moment in life to be treasured and never forgotten," he said.

MY KNIGHTHOOD FOR MY HORSE!

Author Michael Morpurgo says he is giving his knighthood to Joey, the fictional horse at the center of his book and play "War Horse."

Morpurgo, 74, has written many treasured children's books, but it is his 1982 book "War Horse" and the wildly successful play that followed that brought him worldwide fame.

The story, set at the start of World War I, chronicles the friendship between a young boy and his horse, Joey. It was staged using life-size horse puppets that enchanted audiences.

Morpurgo is being knighted for his charitable works as well as for his writing, but he says the honor is really about "War Horse" and the impact of the production staged by the National Theatre.

MYERS & SMITH

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Fermin L. Florez, Jr., 67, died Wednesday. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2018, at Holy Trinity Catholic Church. Interment will be at Trinity Memorial Park.

Gladys Wallace, 75, died Monday. Funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 4, 2017, at St. Paul C.M.E. Church, 409 Lee, Midland, Texas. Interment will be at Resthaven Memorial Park.

Visit the Herald online at www.bigspringherald.com

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Police: Man kills 2, then himself at Houston auto shop



AP Photo

Houston Police Department officers investigate a double murder and suicide scene at 14300 South Post Oak Road on Friday, Dec. 29, 2017, in Houston. Police say a man walked into a Houston auto shop where he used to work and fatally shot two people before going outside and killing himself. The man, whose name wasn't immediately released, entered Bemer Plus about 4 p.m. Friday. The shop specializes in used BMW sales and repairs.

HOUSTON (AP) — A man walked into a Houston auto shop where he used to work Friday and fatally shot two employees before going outside and killing himself, police said.

The man, whose name wasn't immediately released, entered Bemer Plus about 4 p.m. and officers received a call minutes later about "a shooting in progress," Executive Assistant Police Chief Troy Finner said in a news conference.

Multiple people, including customers and other employees, were at the shop when the shooting happened, Finner said.

"It's very, very sad this time of year and any part of the year that we lose three citizens," Finner said. "I just ask our great citizens of this city to pray for each victim here and their families."

Houston police also didn't immediately release the names of the two other people who died. The motive for the shooting is not clear.

The southwest Houston shop specializes in used BMW sales and repairs.

Hours after the shooting, homicide detectives were still at the scene investigating.

Report: Plane crash killing 3 due to plane stalling out

MOORE, Oklahoma (AP) — A plane crash in Texas last year that killed three people from Oklahoma was the result of the pilot flying too slowly, which caused the plane to stall out, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

The NTSB report on the crash determined that the pilot, Dana Gray, was trying to land at Hobby Airport in Houston when the plane went down. But the agency noted that air traffic controllers trying to help Gray land may have confused her with an "unnecessarily complex clearance during a critical phase of flight."

Also on board were her husband, Tony, and his brother, Jerry. All three were from Moore, Oklahoma.

Security camera footage shows

air traffic controllers tried to assist the pilot in her landing, KWTW-TV reported. They had ordered Gray to circle around the airport to land, but she was coming in too high. Controllers distracted her when she was attempting to land a third time, according to an NTSB report.

"The complex instructions from the second local controller during the pilot's go-around following her third landing attempt, were unnecessary at that time and likely distracted the pilot from monitoring critical flight parameters," according to the report.

The report noted Gray had been taking a medication for insomnia that the Federal Aviation Administration warns against using if flying.

Storm victims arrested for theft from church that aided them

MONTGOMERY, Texas (AP) — A couple accused of stealing from a church that had sheltered them since Hurricane Harvey flooded their home have been arrested.

Montgomery County sheriff's deputies picked up Blake Mayon and his wife Naomi Johnston on Friday on felony theft

charges.

The couple had stayed at the Dacus Baptist Church in Montgomery, Texas, about 60 miles northwest of Houston, since they were displaced by the August hurricane. They disappeared suddenly.

The church noticed toward the end of their stay that tools, a television and a

sound system had gone missing.

Deputies said they arrested Mayon as he was leaving a Walmart store in a truck the church had given him. Johnston was arrested later.

The two are being held in Montgomery County Jail. Bond and attorney details were not immediately available.

US rig count down by 2 to 929

HOUSTON (AP) — The number of rigs exploring for oil and natural gas in the U.S. declined by two this week to 929.

That exceeds the 658 rigs that were active this time a year ago.

Houston oilfield services company Baker Hughes reported on Friday that

747 rigs were drilling for oil and 182 for natural gas this week.

Among oil- and gas-producing states, Colorado and Ohio each gained one rig.

North Dakota and Texas were down by two each, while Utah decreased by one.

Alaska, Arkansas, California, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Wyoming were unchanged.

The U.S. rig count peaked at 4,530 in 1981. It bottomed out in May of 2016 at 404.

Fort Worth man convicted on Aryan Brotherhood-related charge

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — A Fort Worth man has been convicted on a felony drug charge stemming from an illegal gambling room that Aryan Brotherhood gang members used to traffic meth.

Federal prosecutors on Friday announced that 41-year-old Jeremy Lee Crabtree had been found guilty earlier this month of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of a mixture containing meth.

He faces at least 10 years in prison and a \$10 million fine at his sentencing in April. It was not immediately clear whether he was in federal custody.

Prosecutors say Crabtree, though not a member, ran the game room in 2014 and 2015 and allowed gang members to distribute meth and "discipline other members for gang-related violations."

The Aryan Brotherhood was formed in California prisons in the 1960s.

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Polish group Majeranki tours Texas history

By MELISSA MCCAGHREN

Associated Press

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site got an entertaining Polish visit Thursday afternoon as members of Majeranki toured the grounds, playing their musical instruments in front of Independence Hall.

The musical high school group from the Polish mountains near Zakopane also toured Barrington Farm and other features at the popular park.

There are 15 members in the delegation: leader Dorota Majerczyk, Katarzyna Majerczyk Bobak, Maria Majerczyk, Jan Majerczyk, Franciszek Majerczyk, Andrzej Wn kowicz, Krzysztof Wn kowicz, Sylwia Dziwiz, Lukasz Urba czyk 16 years male, Wiktoria Starmach, Adam Czyszczo, Ania Lis, Patryk Traczyk, Monika Potaczek and Marzena muda. Eight of them play the violin, one plays the bass, one an accordion and one the duda.

Jim Mazurkiewicz, who is hosting the group, said he wanted to take them to visit Washington-on-the-Brazos.

"Washington-on-the-Brazos is the birthplace of Texas and I want to show them our humble and modest beginning," he said. "Many people need to understand that this is how and where the 10th largest economy began 181 years ago. Texas is now a world leader in energy production and Houston is the energy capital of the world.

"I want to show how proud we are to be Texans and that anything can be achieved through vision, perseverance, leadership and a capitalistic system."

Dorota Majerczyk, who has been to this region but is visiting Texas for the first time, said it was neat to visit Washington-on-the-Brazos and learn about Texas history.

"We found down here many issues of many, many things that are really similar to our culture and that is really interesting from the point of view how those traditional... behaviors that came with the people here and were adopted," she said, translated by Andrzej Wn kowicz.

She was impressed with how Barrington Farm works to show how life was in the 1800s.

"We are impressed how it is important for you and real really really like it here. We didn't realize that it looked like this here," she said, adding most of their children know Texas from the

"many American movies."

"We are really impressed about your style of life and about the agriculture around us. Polish people love horses, love all those agriculture things — Highlanders people, so that's why we are very impressed about that," Dorota said.

For Bobak, visiting Barrington Farm and the park was fascinating.

"She really likes it around her and especially since her studies are in ecology, a lot of people's cultures and stuff. So this is all just fascinating for her to look around and see," her translator, Kasia Krozel, said.

Visiting Republic of Texas President Anson Jones' home and looking at the past interested Katarzyna.

"She really likes how when we walked in and it's like about real life, like when we went to that 'White House' and everyones is dressed up it's actually like you're living in the moment," Krozel translated.

"She thinks that it's so cool that in the beginning how they introduced us and they're like 'Oh you're going back in time now' and she legitimately feels like that's happening. So she thinks that's pretty cool.

"Overall this is a whole other experience and it's great and hopefully she can come again next year."

Mazurkiewicz said the group will also travel to several other tourist attractions during their stay in Texas.

"They will go to the Bush Museum tomorrow morning and in the afternoon they will have a workshop with the Lil' Wranglers Texas Dance Group," he said, adding they will share cultural music and dancing.

"In the evening, they will go to a Texas barbecue at my cousin's, Brian Wisnoski, in Rose Hill."

Dorota said the group is thankful for the experience.

"We are really really grateful that we are able to come here and to see the Texas thanks to Jim Mazurkiewicz.

"We are really grateful to him and we are really impressed how he cares about the relations with Poland and the historical issues about it," she said.

"We would like say greetings for all Texan people and would want to say we're grateful to be here with you."

The group will perform Saturday at Koledy Polskie, which will begin at 11 a.m. at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in Chappell Hill, which has a long Polish heritage.

Texas authorities identify gunman in apparent murder-suicide

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Authorities have identified a man who fatally shot his girlfriend before turning a gun on himself in her San Antonio home.

The Bexar (bayr) County Medical Examiner's Office identified the shooter Friday as 48-year-old Mark Edward Espinosa.

Espinosa first shot 46-year-old Linda Vela and then himself in the San Antonio caterer's master bedroom

on Wednesday.

San Antonio police spokeswoman Sgt. Michelle Ramos said in a statement Wednesday that relatives said the couple had a "contentious relationship," and that Vela had recently allowed Espinosa to return home for the holidays after kicking him out.

Vela's 10- and 14-year-old sons were at home during the shooting.

Police did not release the boys' names due to their ages.

Texas woman accused in fatal shooting of boyfriend's son

By JAMIE STENGLE

Associated Press

DALLAS — A 7-year-old Texas boy died after his father's girlfriend opened fire as the man drove away with his son and two other children, police said Friday.

Greenville police said Kaden Green died at a hospital after being taken there by a witness following the shooting Thursday afternoon.

The woman accused of shooting the boy, 26-year-old Brooke Craig, was arrested early Friday along with the child's father, 24-year-old Cameron Castillo, in the Dallas suburb of Frisco about 45 miles (72 kilometers) west of Greenville. Authorities said Craig led police on a car chase before their arrests.

Craig faces a capital murder charge, while Castillo was arrested for a parole violation.

Officers were responding to a report of a disturbance at a home Thursday when they received a call that a boy had been taken to a hospital with a gunshot wound to the chest. Police said they believe Castillo and Craig had been involved in a disturbance at the home before he got into his vehicle and headed down the street.

After the shooting, the vehicle came to a stop and Craig and a witness approached it, police said. The witness then took the boy to the hospital in another vehicle.

Police said the two other children who were in the vehicle were placed in the custody of the state. Child



Brooke Craig

Protective Services spokeswoman Marissa Gonzales said they have a 4-year-old boy and 7-year-old girl who are the siblings of Kaden in their custody.

Gonzales said Craig is not Kaden's mother. She said CPS has received a report about the boy's death and will investigate. She said the boy's family has had previous contact with

CPS, but that the details are confidential.

McKinney police said Greenville police contacted them early Friday about the capital murder warrant for Craig. McKinney police then located her vehicle leaving a store and she fled into nearby Frisco, going through several residential areas before turning down a dead-end street, police said.

Craig and Castillo, who was her passenger, were arrested without incident after their vehicle struck a police cruiser while attempting to back up, police said.

Jail records show that Craig was transferred from Collin County, where McKinney is located, back to Hunt County, where Greenville is located, by Friday afternoon. The records did not list an attorney in relation to the capital murder charge.

Craig faces an evading arrest charge in Collin County, according to the jail records. The attorney listed in relation to that charge did not immediately return a call Friday.

Castillo was being held in Collin County jail Friday. Jail records did not list an attorney for him.

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Disasters pound North America in 2017; overall down globally

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — North America couldn't catch a break in 2017. Parts of the United States were on fire, underwater or lashed by hurricane winds. Mexico shook with back-to-back earthquakes. The Caribbean got hit with a string of hurricanes.

The rest of the world, however, was spared more than usual from the drumbeat of natural catastrophes.

Preliminary research shows there were fewer disasters and deaths this year than on average, but economic damages were much higher.

While overall disasters were down, they smacked big cities, which were more vulnerable because of increased development, said economist and geophysicist Chuck Watson of the consulting firm Enki Research.

In a year where U.S. and Caribbean hurricanes set a record \$215 billion in damages, according to insurance giant Munich Re, no one in the continental U.S. died from storm surge, which traditionally is the No. 1 killer during hurricanes. Forecasters gave residents plenty of advance warning during a season where storms set records for strength and duration.

"It's certainly one of the worst hurricane seasons we've had," National Weather Service Director Louis Uccellini said.

The globe typically averages about 325 disasters a year, but this year's total through November was less than 250, according to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at the University of Louvain in Belgium.

They included flooding and monsoons in South Asia, landslides in Africa, hurricane in Ireland, and cyclones in Australia and Central America. Colombia experienced two different bouts of floods and mudslides.

Disasters kill about 30,000 people and affect about 215 million people a year. This year's estimated toll was lower — about 6,000 people killed and 75 million affected.

Was it random chance, statistical quirk or better preparedness? Experts aren't certain, but say perhaps it's a little bit of each.

"This has been a particularly quiet year," said Debarati Guha-Sapir who heads the disaster research center. "The thing is not to be ... complacent about this."

But quiet depends on where you live.

The U.S. had gone more than a decade without a

Category 3 storm or larger making landfall on the mainland. The last few Septembers — normally peak hurricane month — had been record quiet until this year when Harvey, Irma, Jose and later Maria popped up and grew to super strength in no time, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

"September was just bonkers. It was just one after the other, you couldn't catch a break," he said.

There were six major Atlantic hurricanes this year; the average is 2.7. A pair of recent studies found fingerprints of man-made global warming were all over the torrential rains from Harvey that flooded Houston.

Researchers at the University of South Carolina estimated that economic damages from this year's disasters, adjusted for inflation, were more than 40 percent higher than normal, mostly because of Harvey, Irma and Maria.

By many private measures, Harvey overtook Katrina as the costliest U.S. hurricane, but the weather service hasn't finished its calculations yet.

Much of the damage and deaths — storm surge and otherwise — from hurricanes striking the Caribbean are still unknown.

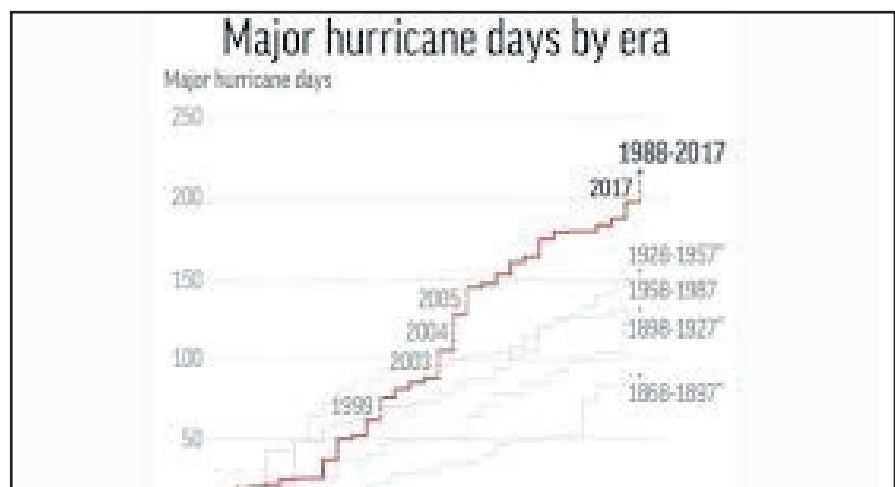
The National Hurricane Center hasn't finished tallying its data.

Uccellini of the weather service said warmer than normal waters and unusual steering currents made the hurricanes especially damaging, combined with booming development in disaster-prone areas.

"We are building in the wrong places. We are building in areas that are increasing in risks," said Susan Cutter, director of the Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute at the University of South Carolina.

Wildfires blazed nearly year-round in the U.S. fanned by relentless winds and parched conditions. Some 9.8 million acres of land have burned, mostly in the West, nearly 50 percent more than the average in the past decade.

A wildfire that ignited in early December in Ven-



AP Photo

Chart shows a cumulative count of major hurricane days for each thirty year era since 1868.

tura and Santa Barbara counties northwest of Los Angeles grew to be the largest in California history.

Scientists connect drier weather after heavy rains — leading to buildup of fuel that can catch fire and burn easily — to a combination of both man-made warming and a natural La Nina, the climate phenomenon that's the flip side to El Nino, said Georgia Tech climate scientist Kim Cobb.

Worldwide significantly fewer people and less land were affected by drought this year, and extreme heat waves were less severe compared to the past.

Landslides were more frequent and deadlier this year, mostly because of the Sierra Leone landslide that killed 915 people, Guha-Sapir said.

Earthquakes worldwide were dramatically down. As of mid-December, there had been only seven earthquakes of magnitude 7 or larger compared to a normal year of about 15.

Two powerful quakes struck Mexico in September including one that hit on the anniversary of the devastating 1985 Mexico City quake.

The back-to-back Mexico quakes were unrelated, said geophysicist Ross Stein of Temblor, Inc., a company that provides information about seismic risk.

"We have to remember that coincidences really do happen," he said.

2 men arraigned on murder charges in quadruple homicide

TROY, N.Y. (AP) — Two men have been arrested on murder charges in the deaths of two women and two children in their upstate New York apartment.

Justin Mann and James White pleaded not guilty to murder charges Saturday in Troy. Both are from Schenectady (skeh-NEHK'-tuh-dee).

The Times-Union says Mann appeared to break down as he was led out of court. Both men are being held in county jail.

A property manager found 36-year-old Shanta Myers; her children, 11-year-old Jeremiah Myers and 5-year-old Shanise Myers; and 22-year-old Brandi Mells in a basement apartment along the Hudson River, just north of Albany on Tuesday. Police say the two women were in a relationship.

Police Chief John Tedesco says he has "never seen savagery like this" in 42 years in law enforcement.



AP Photo

In a Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2017 file photo, Troy police investigate multiple deaths at 158 Second Ave., in Troy, N.Y. Officials announced early Saturday, Dec. 30 that two people have been arrested in the quadruple homicide that took the lives of two women and two children in their Troy, N.Y. apartment.

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Texting ban may soon be enforced on Florida's deadly roads

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Florida Highway Patrol Sgt. Mark Wysocky says it is hard to separate texting drivers from drunken drivers as he cruises down a suburban interstate highway. Both weave. They speed up and slow down for no obvious reason and get too close to other cars. They endanger their lives and others.

"There's one," he says, as a woman zips past. But even though he could see her texting, he couldn't ticket her - Florida statutes wouldn't allow it because she wasn't breaking any other traffic laws.

Florida, with some of the nation's deadliest roads, is one of the last states to not fully ban texting while driving, but the Legislature will soon consider a bill that would - although studies conflict over whether such bans have any effect.

Currently, Florida law says texting by noncommercial drivers is a secondary offense - law enforcement officers must see another violation like speeding or an illegal lane change before they cite a driver for texting. The bill would make texting a primary offense. The fine for a first offense would remain \$30 plus court costs and add no points to the driver's record. Previous attempts have failed, but this bill has support from legislative leaders.

Forty-three states already make texting while driving a primary offense. Three besides Florida list it as a secondary offense - Nebraska, Ohio and South Dakota. There is no state law against texting in Arizona, Montana and, for noncommercial drivers 22 and older, in Missouri. The federal government estimates that in 2015 accidents involving texting and other distracted driving killed almost 3,500 people nationally - more than nine per day - and injured almost 400,000. A Florida trooper, Carlos Rosario, was seriously injured in March when investigators say a texting driver struck him as he worked along a Miami highway shoulder.

Rosario spent two months in the hospital undergoing several surgeries to repair injuries to his face, spine and legs. He will remain off duty until at least late 2018. Driver Hugo Olivares received five years' probation on Dec. 20.

"You see it every day when you are out driving - people texting. It has become part of our culture," said Democratic state Rep. Emily Slosberg, one of the bill's sponsors.

She was seriously injured in a 1996 traffic accident caused by a reckless driver that killed her twin sister, Dori, and four other teens. Her father, former state Rep. Irv Slosberg, long pushed traffic

safety bills including the state's mandatory seat belt law, and she has picked up the mantle.

"It is time for the Legislature to send a message that we will no longer accept this deadly behavior on our roads," she said.

The state says Florida car crashes killed almost 2,700 this year, but the number killed in texting-related accidents is unknown. Under the current law, only about three drivers a day are cited statewide for texting while driving.

According to Insurance Institute for Highway Safety statistics, five of the seven states without a primary offense law had 2016 highway death rates above the national average. Ohio and Nebraska were below; South Dakota and Missouri were just above. Florida, Montana and Arizona tied for the ninth-highest fatality rate.

Counterintuitively, the IIHS says its studies also show that states enacting bans experience no decrease in accidents even though surveillance shows the number of drivers texting drops substantially. Vice President of Research Jessica Cicchino said the reasons aren't known - perhaps texting drivers hold their phones lower so they won't be seen. That takes their eyes further off the road for longer, increasing the risk.

A 2014 University of Alabama at Birmingham study, however, showed a 3 percent drop in fatalities in states after a full texting ban with the best results among young drivers.

Opponents of a texting ban generally fall into two camps. First, libertarians, who say current law is sufficient if texting leads to swerving, tailgating or other dangers. Issue tickets for that, they say.

Minorities fear texting bans lead to racial profiling. State Sen. Perry Thurston, a Fort Lauderdale Democrat, said the law would save lives but he is concerned some officers would stop mostly black drivers. If the law is adopted, he wants statistics collected to make sure minorities aren't disproportionately ticketed.



AP Photo

Florida Highway Patrol Sgt. Mark Wysocky poses for a photo in Sunrise, Fla. Florida is one of the last states to not fully ban texting while driving but the Legislature will soon consider a bill that would. Florida Highway Patrol Sgt. Mark Wysocky says it is hard to separate texting drivers from drunks as he cruises down a suburban interstate highway.

An American Civil Liberties Union study showed that after Florida made driving without a fastened seat belt a primary offense in 2009, black drivers were significantly more likely to receive tickets than white drivers even though studies showed blacks were only slightly less likely to buckle up.

"It's disappointing but the reality in some communities is that this is an issue," said Thurston, an African-American.

At a turnpike rest stop near Fort Lauderdale, retired insurance salesman Steve Josephson said he supports the bill because too many distracted drivers have almost hit him and he's tired of being stuck behind people who are watching their phones when traffic lights turn green. He says he doesn't text and drive.

Landscaper Francisco Martinez wasn't sure whether he likes the ban, but said he stopped texting and driving 11 months ago after his first child was born.

"But it is tempting, particularly when someone is trying to reach you," he said.



demonstrators gather in Times Square, in New York to protest after President Donald Trump declared a ban on transgender troops serving anywhere in the U.S. military. The Justice Department has put its proposed ban on transgender military recruits on hold, meaning their enlistment can start Monday, Jan. 1, 2017. But the future for transgender people in the armed forces remains murky.

Transgender people cleared to join military, for now

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department has made clear its proposed ban on transgender military recruits is on hold, meaning their enlistment can start Monday.

But the future for transgender people in the armed forces remains murky. The Justice Department isn't dropping its court fight to institute the ban on transgender enlistment but said Friday it would wait for a Pentagon study on the issue in coming weeks before deciding what to do next.

President Donald Trump said in July that the government would not allow transgender people to serve in the military, reversing Obama-era policy. So far he's been unable to achieve that prohibition.

On Dec. 22, a panel of the federal appeals court in the District of Columbia refused the Trump administration's request to let the ban start Jan. 1. Other federal judges have also refused to side with the administration. The Pentagon said then that it would

allow transgender enlistment to start with the new year and continue as legal struggles play out.

The Justice Department said late Friday the Pentagon "will be releasing an independent study of these issues in the coming weeks," so the administration will not litigate an appeal in the meantime. That stance clarifies that enlistments can start Jan. 1 and existing transgender service members are protected from being discharged at least for now.

"We are relieved that we don't have to hit pause on the constitutional rights of transgender people who are willing and able to serve our country," said Peter Renn, senior attorney for Lambda Legal, one of the groups fighting the ban in court.

AP Photo

In a Wednesday, July 26, 2017 file photo,



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Court upholds ban on Navalny running for Russian presidency

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's highest court on Saturday upheld a decision barring opposition leader Alexei Navalny from running for president in March.

The Supreme Court turned down Navalny's appeal against the Central Election Commission, ruling that the commission's decision to bar him from the race fully conforms to law.

President Vladimir Putin, whose approval ratings top 80 percent, is expected to easily win a fourth term in the March 18 election.

Navalny has campaigned for the presidency all year despite an implicit ban on his candidacy due to a fraud conviction seen by many as politically driven. Election officials formally barred him from the ballot Monday.

Navalny responded by calling for a boycott of the vote, and the Kremlin said authorities will look into whether such a call violates the law.

In a tweet Saturday, Navalny denounced the judge who made the ruling, saying that "such judges should face trial themselves." He also repeated his call for a voters' strike.

"We don't acknowledge elections without competition," he said.

Navalny's associates said they

would appeal the ruling.

"It's obvious that this decision is political," said Ivan Zhdanov, who represented Navalny in court.

Many others have declared their intention to run in March. They include veterans of past campaigns — ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and liberal Grigory Yavlinsky — as well as communist nominee Pavel Grudinin and TV host Ksenia Sobchak.

While none poses a serious challenge to Putin, the Kremlin is worried about voter apathy and has focused on boosting turnout to make Putin's victory as impressive as possible.

The involvement of 36-year-old Sobchak, the daughter of a late St. Petersburg mayor who was Putin's boss in the 1990s, could raise public interest in the race. While Sobchak has denied colluding with the Kremlin, her participation could draw some Navalny supporters to back her and help improve turnout.



AP photo
Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny pauses, at the Echo Moskvy (Echo of Moscow) radio station in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017.

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NFL changes concussion protocol after Savage incident

By **KRISTIE RIEKEN**
AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON — The NFL and the players' union announced a series of changes Friday to the way potential concussions are handled during games following an ugly incident in which Texans quarterback Tom Savage was allowed to return to the field after a hit left him on the ground, arms shaking.

Among the changes is the addition of an expert watching games from a central location with the authority to alert sideline medical teams to look into an incident. And if a player shows signs of a seizure or similar responses, as Savage did, they will be removed from the game and cannot return.

The NFL has been under increased scrutiny the past several years over player safety when it comes to head injuries. A \$1 billion settlement of concussion-related

claims from more than 20,000 former players took effect earlier this year, resolving thousands of lawsuits that accused the NFL of hiding what it knew about the risks of repeated concussions.

The jarring injury to Savage prompted a joint review of concussion protocol by the NFL and the NFL Players Association. He was hurt in the second quarter of Houston's 26-16 loss to San Francisco on Dec. 10 when he was driven to the ground on a hit by Elvis Dumervil. Replays showed Savage looking dazed after his head hit the ground with both of his arms shaking and lifted upward. He was taken to the medical tent where he stayed for less than three minutes before returning to the bench and going back in for the next series.

Savage threw two incompletions on that

See **NFL**, Page 16



In this Sunday, Dec. 10, 2017, file photo, Houston Texans quarterback Tom Savage (3) is checked by a referee after he was hit during the first half of an NFL football game against the San Francisco 49ers, in Houston. Savage left the game and it was later determined he had a concussion. On Friday, Dec. 29, 2017, the NFL announced a series of changes to the way possible concussions are handled during games following the incident in which Savage was allowed to return to the field after a hit left him on the ground, arms shaking.

AP Photo

On Basketball: Calls, or non-calls, overshadowing games



Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James questions referee Justin Van Duyne about a call during the second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings on Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017, in Sacramento, Calif. The Kings won 109-95.

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

None of this is good. It's a bad look for James Harden, after a game where he took 15 free throws, to say he wasn't getting favorable whistles. It's counterproductive for the NBA to say there were three uncalled fouls against LeBron James in the waning moments of a Finals rematch. It's troubling that referees are too often part of the postgame story.

This is Christmas week, of an NBA start for casual fans who shift their focus from football to basketball.

Those new eyeballs are not seeing the league at its best.

Referees have been in the news plenty this season, especially this week. No one wants that. Fans pay to see triple-doubles, not double-

technical. The latest ref drama was Thursday night in Boston, where the Celtics rallied from 26 points down to beat Houston — but postgame talk was dominated by discussion of two late offensive foul calls against Harden.

"You never want to see a game end like that," Brooklyn's Caris LeVert said.

Boston loved the calls and Houston hated them and everyone else is likely split down the middle. Thing is, fixating solely on those two whistles robs the league of a chance to revel in what should have been considered a great basketball game.

The two calls against Harden came in the final 8 seconds, both pushoffs drawn by Boston's Marcus Smart.

It is undeniable that Smart is a very good defensive player.

He also has a reputa-

tion among opponents for being a flopper.

On the first of the two late fouls, Smart appeared to grab Harden — who tried to get his arms free. Smart is a tough, strong guy, but when Harden made contact with him he dropped like a rock.

On the second, Harden pushed off and Smart fell again. This time, it seemed more believable. If Harden hadn't extended his right arm so far, who knows if referee Tony Brothers (who made both calls) would have blown the whistle.

The first one didn't look like the right call. The second one did.

Neither is why Houston lost. Houston lost because it wasted a 26-point lead. The Rockets might have had a chance to win in the last 8 seconds. But

See **NBA**, Page 16

TCU's Patterson already thinking ahead after 11 wins again



TCU coach Gary Patterson, left, celebrates with his team after a 39-37 win over Stanford in the Alamo Bowl NCAA college football game Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017, in San Antonio.

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**
AP Sports Writer

FORT WORTH, Texas — Gary Patterson was already thinking about the big games TCU has next season.

"I think that's why we've been successful, because we don't just stop," Patterson said after the Horned Frogs completed another 11-win season with another Alamo Bowl comeback to remember.

While Patterson never mentioned any specific games, the Frogs have a much-anticipated matchup next September against Ohio State in AT&T Stadium, the home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys about 20 miles from their campus. That comes right before their Big 12 opener at Texas, which is coming off a bowl victory and winning season in its debut under coach Tom Herman.

Still, after No. 13 TCU overcame an 18-point deficit to beat No. 15 Stanford 39-37 on Thursday night, the coach took time to reflect on a senior class that won 40 games the past four years. And that even included a rare losing season for Patterson, who has now won 160 games in 17 seasons.

"I said before the season I really like this group," Patterson said. "I didn't know whether we were going to win very many ballgames, if we were or not, but the bottom line is coaches love coaching guys that are good people and they work hard, and

this group does that. For me, it's been a blessing to be a part of it."

It was the third time in four years, and the 10th time in 15 seasons that TCU won at least 11 games. Only Ohio State has more 11-win seasons in that span with 11, while three-time defending Big 12 champion Oklahoma and Boise State both have 10 as well.

The departing seniors include two-time Alamo Bowl defensive MVP Travin Howard, the only player in school history with three consecutive 100-tackle seasons. His 343 career tackles are the most under Patterson, who still calls defenses like he did when he was TCU's defensive coordinator for three seasons before becoming head coach.

Cornerback Ranthony Texada, defensive end and sacks leader Mat Boesen, safety Nick Orr and defensive tackle Chris Bradley were also part of that senior group. Junior defensive end Ben Banogu, the team leader with 16 1/2 tackles for losses, is considering bypassing his senior season for early entry in the NFL draft.

There are still 10 underclassmen other than Banogu on defense that had at least 25 tackles this season.

Kenny Hill, the former Texas A&M transfer who was TCU's starting quarterback the last two seasons, scored three different ways in his last game

See **TCU**, Page 16

AP Photo

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RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08 Rule 37 Case No. 0308063
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 11, 2017 Status/Permit No. 831831
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 16, 2018
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.TEXAS.GOV

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the SM ENERGY COMPANY, [RRC Operator No. 788997] has made application for a spacing exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 37 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.37). Applicant seeks exception to the lease line distance requirement because the Applicant is less than the required Rule 37 lease line distance to an unleased or non-pooled interest within the subject unit for the AMENDED NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 17, Bk. 31 T2N, T&P RR CO Survey, A-185, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field,

Public Notice

HOWARD County, being 13.6 miles NE direction from BIG SPRING, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512)463-6848. If you have questions which are specific to the Application or the information set forth in this Notice, please contact the Commission's Drilling Permit Unit at rule 37 (512)463-6751.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 16, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name : MIR-ACLE MAX A
Lease/Unit Well No. : 1744WA
Lease/Unit Acres : 638.5
Nearest Lease Line (ft) : 100.0

Lease Lines : 291.0 F N L, 2335.0 F W L
Survey Lines : 291.0 F N L, 2335.0 F W L

Wellbore Profile(s) : Horizontal

Lateral: TH1
Penetration Point Location
Lease Lines: 500.0 F S (OFF LSE) L
2306.0 F W (OFF LSE) L
Terminus Location BH
County: HOWARD
Section: 26 Block: 31 T2N
Abstract: 1542 Survey: T&P RR CO / KAASE, A
Lease Lines: 50.0 F S L
2307.0 F W L
Survey Lines: 50.0 F S L
2307.0 F W L

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 330/0, 80.0 acres. This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 9500 feet. If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, Jill Hamilton, at (432)8484855.

#9635 December 11, 18, 25, 2017 January 1, 2018

Public Notice

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08 Rule 37 Case No. 0308284
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 18, 2014 Status/Permit No. 832207
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 22, 2015
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.TEXAS.GOV

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the CALLON PETROLEUM OPERATING CO, [RRC Operator No. 124828] has made application for a spacing exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 37 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.37). Applicant seeks exception to the lease line distance requirement because the Applicant is less than the required Rule 37 lease line distance to an unleased or non-pooled interest within the subject unit for the AMENDED NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 28, Bk. 33 T3N, T&P RR CO/ ALLEN, C T Survey, A-1237, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, HOWARD County, being 18.63 miles NW direction from BIG SPRING, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512)463-6848. If you have questions which are specific to the Application or the information set forth in this Notice, please contact the Commission's Drilling Permit Unit at rule 37 (512)463-6751.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 22, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name : WRIGHT

Public Notice

UNIT 33-40 A
Lease/Unit Well No. : 5AH
Lease/Unit Acres : 640.0
Nearest Lease Line (ft) : 1.0

Lease Lines :600.0 F S (offlease) L,2002.0 F W (offlease) L
Survey Lines :600.0 F S (offlease) L,2002.0 F W (offlease) L

Lateral: TH1
Penetration Point Location
Lease Lines: 600.0 F S (OFFLEASE) L
2002.0 F W (OFFLEASE) L
Terminus Location
BH County: HOWARD
Section: 40 Block: 33 T3N
Abstract: 1250 Survey: T&P RR CO/ BOYDSTON, J N
Lease Lines: 100.0 F SOUTH L
331.0 F EAST L
Survey Lines: 100.0 F SOUTH L
2309.0 F WEST L

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:
SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 330/0, 80.0 acres.
This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 8500 feet.
If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, Ryan Emery, at (281)589-5200.

#9646 December 25, 2017
January 1, 8, 15, 2017

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS OIL AND GAS DIVISION

DISTRICT 08 Rule 37 Case No. 0308289
DATE OF ISSUANCE: Dec 20, 2017 Status/Permit No. 832209
NOTICE OF PROTEST DEADLINE: 5:00 PM, Jan 24, 2018
Address: Railroad Commission of Texas ATTN: Drilling Permit Unit
P. O. Box 12967
Austin, Texas 78711-2967
Fax: (512) 463-6780
Email: SWR37@RRC.TEXAS.GOV

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the CALLON PETROLEUM OPERATING CO, [RRC Operator No. 124828] has made application for a spacing exception permit under the provisions of Railroad Commission Statewide Rule 37 (16 Tex. Admin. Code section 3.37). Applicant seeks exception to the lease line distance requirement because the Applicant is less than the required Rule 37 lease line distance to an unleased or non-pooled interest within the subject unit for the AMENDED NEW DRILL permit in Sec. 28, Bk. 33 T3N, T&P RR CO/ ALLEN, C T Survey, A-1237, SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) Field, HOWARD County, being 18.63 miles NW direction from BIG SPRING, Texas.

PURSUANT TO THE TERMS of Railroad Commission rules and regulations, this application may be granted **WITHOUT A HEARING** if no protest to the application is received within the deadline. An affected person is entitled to protest this application. Affected persons include owners of record and the operator or lessees of record of adjacent tracts and tracts nearer to the proposed well than the minimum lease line spacing distance. If a hearing is called, the applicant has the burden to prove the need for an exception. A Protestant should be prepared to establish standing as an affected person, and to appear at the hearing either in person or by qualified representative and protest the application with cross-examination or presentation of a

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direct case. The rules of evidence are applicable in the hearing. If you have any questions regarding the hearing procedure, please contact the Commission's Docket Services Department at (512)463-6848. If you have questions which are specific to the Application or the information set forth in this Notice, please contact the Commission's Drilling Permit Unit at rule 37 (512)463-6751.

IF YOU WISH TO REQUEST A HEARING ON THIS APPLICATION, AN INTENT TO APPEAR IN PROTEST MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE RAILROAD COMMISSION'S AUSTIN OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS, FAX NUMBER, OR E-MAIL ADDRESS SET OUT ABOVE BY Jan 24, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. IF NO PROTEST IS RECEIVED WITHIN SUCH TIME, YOU WILL LOSE YOUR RIGHT TO PROTEST AND THE REQUESTED PERMIT MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY.

THIS NOTICE OF APPLICATION REQUIRES PUBLICATION

The location and identity of the well is as shown below:

FIELD: SPRABERRY (TREND AREA)

Lease/Unit Name : WRIGHT UNIT 33-40 A
Lease/Unit Well No. : 6AH
Lease/Unit Acres : 640.0
Nearest Lease Line (ft) : 100.0
Nearest Well on Lease (ft) : 659.0

Lease Lines : 630.0 F S (offlease) L, 2002.0 F W (offlease) L
Survey Lines : 630.0 F S (offlease) L, 2002.0 F W (offlease) L

Wellbore Profile(s) : Horizontal

Lateral: TH1
Penetration Point Location
Lease Lines: 630.0 F S (OFFLEASE) L
2002.0 F W (OFFLEASE) L
Terminus Location BH
County: HOWARD
Section: 40 Block: 33 T3N
Abstract: 1250 Survey: T&P RR CO / BOYDSTON, J N
Lease Lines: 100.0 F SOUTH L
990.0 F EAST L
Survey Lines: 100.0 F SOUTH L
1650.0 F WEST L

Field Rules for ALL fields on the permit application are as follows:
SPRABERRY (TREND AREA) : Special Rules 330/0, 80.0 acres.
This well is to be drilled to an approximate depth of 8500 feet.
If you have questions regarding this application, please contact the Applicant's representative, Ryan Emery, at (281)5895200.

#9645 December 25, 2017
January 1, 8, 15, 2017

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

By HOLIDAY MATHIS



Supermoon: A Super Emotional Start to the New Year

The Cancer supermoon welcomes 2018 with a rush of emotion. You may be surprised by how people feel and just as surprised by your own feelings. There's a cleansing quality to feelings. If you're willing to let them flow freely through you like water, they will clear the way as they go, always finding the path of least resistance.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're busy making sure the inside of your head is a nice place to live. Your mental environment will be freshened up by challenging some old thought patterns, getting sunlight, exercising and inviting encouragement and inspiration.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The irresistible charm you radiate comes from your genuine interest and skill in finding out what there is to like about people and your total unconcern about what they think about you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Shared knowledge is a beautiful thing, and it cuts out a lot of wasted time today because it means you don't have to discuss everything that led to this moment. You're on the same page, and you'll move forward as a team.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There are those who can do no wrong in your eyes. Have they really earned your unconditional positive regard? Well, they're getting it today, earned or not, because they seem to need the support. You can do the math later.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's good if the plan goes right, but if things go wrong, even better. It's a chance for you to show what you're made of -- that you're a cool, in-control person who handles life in a thoughtful, responsible way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Because you are involved in the triumph of mankind, you will feel the struggle and ultimate achievement of perfect strangers as though it were your own victory.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It doesn't matter what the person next to you is doing. For now, looking ahead is enough. As with a horse wearing blinders,

bers are: 6, 20, 22, 23 and 50.

COSMICALLY CURIOUS ABOUT... TALKING ANIMALS:

There have been, in the history of the world, a number of talking animals. Birds who learned to verbalize human language. Chimpanzees who learned to sign. These animals have expressed many messages, but scientists have only one animal on record -- an African grey parrot named Alex -- who has ever asked an existential question. Alex asked what color he was.

One might conclude that there is, in the animals, a kind of existential contentedness that humans do not possess. As a person who struggles to accept life as it is, I envy any being with animalistic and unquestioning acceptance of a natural reality. Yet a certain discontented wonderment over one's own existence seems ingrained in the very fiber of humanity. To stretch beyond what is currently known and what can currently be proved is to be fully human. What clearly distinguishes us from bird and beast? Questions. Well, questions and cable television bills.

In the weeks to come, I will use this space in the column to explore metaphysical topics that tickle the curiosity. If there is a topic you are particularly curious about, please ask a question. It's the human thing to do! holidaymathis@gmail.com

CELEBRITY PROFILES:

Two American heroes were Capricorns born on the first day of the year: war hero Paul Revere and American flag maker Betsy Ross. Revere was born under the warrior moon of Aries and had Mercury, Jupiter and Uranus in adventurous Sagittarius. Ross was born when the moon was in Cancer, the sign of America and of patriotism.

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Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

Famous Hand



North dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ 10 4 2
♥ A K 8 7 3
♦ 8 6 4
♣ A 5
WEST
♠ —
♥ J 6 5 2
♦ J 7 5 2
♣ Q J 10 9 4
EAST
♠ J 9 8 5
♥ 10 9 4
♦ 3
♣ K 8 6 3 2
SOUTH
♠ A K Q 7 6 3
♥ Q
♦ A K Q 10 9
♣ 7

The bidding:
North **East** **South** **West**
1 ♥ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
3 ♥ Pass 4 ♦ Pass
4 ♠ Pass 6 ♣

Opening lead — queen of clubs.

This hand was played many years ago by Harry Fishbein, well-known New York expert. He bid and made six spades, luckily staying out of a grand slam that would have failed because of the bad trump break.

However, it took a bit of doing just to make the small slam. In case you don't believe it, try the hand out on your friends and see if they end up with 12 tricks.

Fishbein won the club lead with the ace and trumped a club at trick two. When he then played the ace of

spades and discovered that East had the four missing trumps, he cashed the queen of hearts and led the A-K of diamonds.

East could ruff the king if he wished, but he would then either have to return a spade, which would provide an entry to dummy's ten and permit the discard of two diamonds on the A-K of hearts; or a heart, which would be equally ineffective; or a club, which dummy could ruff as South discarded a diamond.

East decided not to ruff the diamond and discarded a heart instead. Fishbein thereupon played the queen of diamonds. If East ruffed, he again would have to put dummy on lead. So East discarded another heart.

Fishbein was now able to ruff the nine of diamonds, establishing his ten, and although East could overruff, declarer could not be stopped from scoring the rest of the tricks.

The key play — a hard one to think of except in retrospect — came at trick two when Fishbein trumped dummy's five of clubs. If he had played a spade to the ace instead, he would have been defeated.

Let's say he had done this and next led the A-K of diamonds. East could ruff and return a club, and there would then be no way for South to make the contract. The club ruff at trick two was a simple play to make, but not many would think of it.

Tomorrow: By the process of elimination.
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SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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

ANSWER:



Referee Tre Maddox, left, controls Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, of Serbia, after he was assessed a flagrant foul against Utah Jazz forward Jonas Jerebko in the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2017, in Denver. Jokic was ejected from the game. The Nuggets won 107-83.

AP Photo

NBA

Continued from Page 10

it should have never come down to officiating. And it had nothing to do with only two refs working the game; one of the three assigned sat out with a sore back.

"First of all, how do you only have two officials on a national TV game? That is the first question," Harden said. "A lot of grabbing, a lot of holding. How else am I supposed to get open? A guy has two arms wrapped around my whole body."

Harden also shot just 7 for 27 from the field.

Fans just want the good stuff. They don't want stories of bad calls and ref suspensions for getting physical with a player, like Courtney Kirkland did with Shaun Livingston. They probably don't want to see what went on late in the Cleveland-Golden State marquee Christmas game, either.

James got fouled three times by Kevin Durant in the final moments — with the Cavs down three. None of the three got called.

James is 6-foot-8, 250 pounds, a problem to defend and a problem to officiate. He suffers from the same issue Shaquille O'Neal did; when you're the

strongest guy on the floor, opponents tend to be allowed to get away with more. He can get clobbered, but won't always get the call.

"For me, the worst thing is when I actually go over and talk to the ref and they say 'it was nothing,'" James said.

The NBA ultimately said James was right about his belief that Durant fouled him, confirming as much in the Last 2-Minute Report on Tuesday. The L2MR is a great tool, though meaningless. It's probably safer for players and coaches to think they were the victims of a bad call instead of having those suspicions confirmed by the league, which isn't going to change the outcomes anyway. ("Sorry, LeBron, you were right. KD did hit you. Our bad. You still lose.")

It's difficult to say if the report helps or hinders the player-ref relationship, which is somewhat tense at the moment.

ESPN reported last week that the leadership from the players' association and the referees' union met with hopes of a better relationship between the sides. It's a nice idea but disagreements are inevitable.

Another issue: the referee corps is changing. Seasoned vets like Danny Crawford, Joey Crawford and most recently Monty McCutchen have all called their last games.

Refs are getting younger, newer. Growing pains are happening.

"You can't deny that there's a transition period right now," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said.

True, but no one would ever want to see a Finals game get decided by a late pushoff.

NFL

Continued from Page 10

drive, and Houston's team doctor approached him after he returned to the sideline at the end of that possession. He was evaluated again and taken to the locker room after it was determined that he did have a concussion.

The NFL said the Texans would not be fined for the incident. The review determined that the medical staff followed protocol but his return to the game was "unacceptable." Medical staff didn't see slow-motion video where Savage's "fencing posture," indicative of a concussion, until after they did their initial evaluation, the review found. Texans medical staff later identified symptoms that weren't present during the first evaluation.

"I think we handled it the way it was supposed to be handled," Texans coach Bill O'Brien said. "I think just speaking for us here at the Texans it's always about trying to do the right thing, doing the right thing by the player, doing the right thing by the rules. That's what we try to do."

O'Brien said he was glad to see that improvements to the protocol were made in the wake of Savage's injury.

"I think there's a lot of things that can be improved," he said. "I think anything where you can help — obviously the safety of the player in this game is the most important thing (and) I think anything like that helps when you try to improve that process."

The Seattle Seahawks were fined \$100,000 earlier this month for not properly following protocol with quarterback Russell Wilson during a game in November. Seattle was the first team to be fined for a violation of the protocol. In addition to the fine, Seattle's medical staff and coaches were required to attend training on the protocol.

Among the changes detailed by the NFL and NFLPA (all of them already implemented):

— Using a centralized, unaffiliated neurotrauma consultant at the league office to monitor feeds of all games and contact the team medical staff on the sidelines if they see anything that deserves further evaluation.

— If players show signs of a seizure or fencing responses, like Savage did, they will be removed from the game and cannot return.

— Players who stumble or fall when trying to stand will require a concussion evaluation in the locker room.

— Officials, teammates and coaches have been told to take injured players straight to the medical staff for evaluation if a concussion evaluation is warranted.

— All players who are evaluated for concussions on game day must

have a follow-up evaluation the next day by a member of the medical staff.

— A third, unaffiliated neurotrauma consultant will be added to all playoff games including the Super Bowl to step in if one of the other two are away from the sideline tending to an injured player.

Dr. Hunt Batjer is a neurosurgeon and a former co-chairman of the NFL committee on head, neck and spine injuries who currently serves as the chair of the Department of Neurological Surgery at Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. He said that the addition of the consultant watching all games and the move to immediately take any players who show signs of seizures or fencing responses out of the game were positive steps.

He said he still believes more should be done to protect players.

"When a player has a suspicious either helmet-to-helmet or helmet-to-playing-surface hit and he's down on the field and play is stopped because of that play then that person

should be escorted to the locker room for a full exam," Batjer said. "So that should be added to this."

Batjer believes that the game will eventually be made safer when parents decide that it's too dangerous for their children to play.

"The biggest lever that could

be used is to say: 'We as American parents do not believe the safeguards are in place to protect our kids and therefore they're not playing,'" he said. "Those are the forces in my mind that will really push this forward."



TCU

Continued from Page 10

— throwing, catching and running for touchdowns. Desmon White also was a three-way scorer in his finale, with a 76-yard punt return for a touchdown to go along with his TDs pass from and to Hill.

There will be two young quarterbacks following behind Hill. Shawn Robinson started a game when Hill was hurt, and appeared in five other games as a true freshman.

"I'm excited for his future," Hill said. "Very talented. I think he's going to be very special."

Recent signee Justin Rogers will enroll at TCU in the spring, like Robinson did last year.

Speedy freshman Jalen Reagor had a 93-yard touchdown catch, while sophomore running back Sewo Olonilua had 58 yards rushing and caught four passes in the Alamo Bowl.

The return of Olonilua and leading rusher Darius Anderson, who missed the last three regular season games injured and didn't have a carry in the bowl game, will help the Frogs overcome the departure of Kyle Hicks, the pass-catching running back whose senior season was plagued by injuries. Speedy receiver and special teams threat KaVontae Turpin will also be back.

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