

Villanova avenge its worst game of the season.

Georgetown thumped the Wildcats (21-2, 8-2 Big East) by 20 in the first game Jan. 19. In the second matchup of the longtime conference rivals, the Wildcats raced to a 17-point lead.

L.J. Peak scored 15 points for the Hoyas (15-8, 7-5).

OKLAHOMA STATE 67, NO. 8 KANSAS 62

STILLWATER, Okla. (AP) — Le'Bryan Nash scored 18 points to help Oklahoma State upset Kansas.

Down by 11 at halftime, the Cowboys held the Jayhawks to 27 percent shooting in the second half. Oklahoma State students stormed the court after beating the Jayhawks at home for the second straight year.

Anthony Hickey added 15 points for the Cowboys (16-7, 6-5 Big 12). Wayne Selden Jr. scored 15 points for Kansas Jayhawks (19-4, 8-2).

NO. 11 IOWA STATE 75, TEXAS TECH 38 AMES, Iowa (AP) — Jameel McKay scored 17 points on 7-for-7 shooting in his first start and keyed a strong defensive effort for Iowa State.

It was a sharp turnaround for the Cyclones (17-5, 7-3 Big 12) from their surprising 78-73 loss at Tech two weeks earlier, a game in which they fell behind 29-10.

Toddrick Gotcher led Texas Tech with 11 points.

NO. 12 NORTH CAROLINA 79, BOSTON COLLEGE 68

BOSTON (AP) — Isaiah Hicks scored 21 points, Brice Johnson had 20 points and 10 rebounds and North Carolina beat Boston College to snap a two-game losing streak.

Marcus Paige added 13 points, all in the final 11 1/2 minutes for the Tar Heels (18-6, 8-3 Atlantic Coast Conference). Olivier Hanlan led Boston College (9-13, 1-9) with a season-high 30 points.

NO. 19 BAYLOR 87, NO. 15 WEST VIRGINIA 69

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — Rico Gathers had 17 points and 17 rebounds for Baylor.

Royce O'Neale and Taurean Prince added 15 points apiece for Baylor (18-5, 6-4 Big 12). Devin Williams scored 20 points for West Virginia (18-5, 6-4).

ST. BONAVENTURE 73, NO. 18 VCU 71 OLEAN, N.Y. (AP) — Marcus Posley scooped in a 6-footer off the backboard at the buzzer, lifting St. Bonaventure over injury-depleted VCU.

It was Posley's second straight winning basket. On Wednesday night, Posley went end-to-end in the final 5 seconds and scored on a layup in a 62-61 victory at Davidson. Posley finished with 15 points and Dion Wright had 17 for St. Bonaventure (13-8, 6-4 Atlantic 10). Terry Larrier scored 15 points for VCU (18-5, 8-2).

NO. 21 OKLAHOMA 68, TCU 56 FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Ryan Spangler scored 21 points in Oklahoma's victory over TCU.

Buddy Hield added 16 points and 10 rebounds for Oklahoma (16-7, 7-4). Kenrich Williams had 10 points and nine rebounds for TCU (14-9, 1-9). The Horned Frogs have lost six in a row — all against Top 25 teams.

NO. 22 BUTLER 83, DEPAUL 73 INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Kellen Dunham hit four 3-pointers and scored 24 points for Butler.

Roosevelt Jones added 20 points for Butler (18-6, 8-3 Big East). The Bulldogs built a 20-point lead in the first half, shooting 60 percent from the floor and going 5 of 6 on 3s. Jamee Crockett had 14 points for DePaul (12-13, 6-6).

NO. 25 TEXAS 61, KANSAS STATE 57 MANHATTAN, Kan. (AP) — Isaiah Taylor scored 23 points, including two free throws with a second left, in Texas' victory over Kansas State.

Connor Lammert had 12 points and nine rebounds for the Longhorns (15-8, 4-6 Big 12). Nino Williams had 13 points for the Wildcats (12-12, 5-6).

Top 25 roundup: Kentucky survives LSU to stay perfect

BATON ROUGE, La. — Freshman forward Karl-Anthony Towns, berated by coach John Calipari for drawing a technical foul by hanging on the rim, made a go-ahead baby hook shot in the lane with 1:29 left to lead top-ranked Kentucky to a 71-69 comeback victory over LSU on Tuesday night at the Maravich Center.

Kentucky (24-0, 11-0 Southeastern Conference) escaped with the victory after falling behind 66-60 with 7:26 left on the strength of a 21-2 surge by LSU.

Towns, who finished with 12 points, gave Kentucky a 70-69 lead with a strong move in the lane and the short hook shot. Then, after the Tigers committed a turnover, Towns grabbed a rebound on a missed layup by Kentucky guard Andrew Harrison. Wildcats guard Devin Booker was fouled with 14 seconds left, and he made one of two free throws for the final margin.

LSU had a chance to tie the game inside 10 seconds, but guard Jalyn Patterson passed up a near-certain layup to swing the ball into the corner, where guard Keith Hornsby could not get off a clean shot. LSU had one more chance with 6.6 seconds left, but Hornsby missed a 3-point attempt from the left wing. Forward Willie Cauley-Stein led Kentucky with 15 points, Booker had 14, and Andrew Harrison finished with 13.

Forward Jarell Martin led LSU with 21 points and 11 rebounds.

CLEMSON VS. NOTRE DAME

Senior guard Jerian Grant scored 22 points to lead 10th-ranked Notre Dame to a come-from-behind victory.

Clemson (14-10, 6-6 ACC) led for the majority of the game and held a 56-52 lead with less than four minutes remaining, but the Fighting Irish (22-4, 10-3) outscored the Tigers 8-2 over the final 3:50 to claim the victory in their first-ever foray into Littlejohn Coliseum.

Notre Dame went ahead on a follow shot by guard Demetrius Jackson with 2:24 left, and Grant expanded the margin to 60-56 with a jumper with 47 seconds remaining.

After Rod Hall scored to reduce the deficit to 60-58 with 37 seconds left, the Tigers misfired twice in the final seconds.

KANSAS VS. TEXAS TECH

Texas Tech has had some success on its home floor against ranked opponents in recent years, but the eighth-ranked Jayhawks avoided that trap as they distanced themselves from Texas Tech in the second half.

The Jayhawks (20-4, 9-2 Big 12) stretched out a comfortable lead early in the second half as they hit 13 of their first 15 shots after intermission, including 6 of 6 on 3-pointers. Kansas guard Wayne Selden led the Jayhawks with 16 points, and forward Perry Ellis added 14.

Kansas notched its 20th win of the season, extending its streak to 26 consecutive 20-win seasons.

WISCONSIN VS. NEBRASKA

Sam Dekker scored a season-high 21 points, and fifth-ranked Wisconsin held off a Nebraska rally for the victory.

Wisconsin (22-2, 10-1 Big Ten Conference) opened a three-game lead in the Big Ten over four teams tied for second place.

Center Frank Kaminsky, a candidate for Big Ten player of the year, finished with 13 points and 12 rebounds for Wisconsin.

Guard Terran Petteway scored 23 points for Nebraska (13-11, 5-7), which trailed by 16 points with 7:25 remaining but cut the deficit to five points, 58-53, with 1:01 left. But the Huskers could get no closer.

ARKANSAS VS. AUBURN

Forward Bobby Portis scored 22 points and guard Michael Qualls added 19 as No. 24 Arkansas beat Auburn for the eighth consecutive time.

It was the most points Auburn allowed in five seasons at Auburn Arena. Arkansas finished with its highest point total of the season.

The Razorbacks (19-5, 8-3 Southeastern Conference) shot a blistering 53.8 percent from the field, sinking 11 3-pointers while handing the Tigers (11-13, 3-8) their sixth loss in seven games. Five Razorbacks reached double figures.

Senior guard KT Harrell paced Auburn with 21 points.

Taking a leave of absence is smartest thing Tiger Woods has done in years

On Wednesday evening Tiger Woods issued a statement saying he was taking a brief leave of absence from golf.

"Right now, I need a lot of work on my game, and to still spend time with the people that are important to me," Woods said. "My play, and scores, are not acceptable for tournament golf. Like I've said, I enter a tournament to compete at the highest level, and when I think I'm ready, I'll be back." His agent Mark Steinberg added in a statement to USA TODAY Sports: "This is not an indefinite leave of absence and this is not injury related. This is golf-game specific."

And he's going to work his butt off. He's not happy with his game right now and he's not ready to play under the gun."

Releasing the statement is the smartest thing Tiger Woods has done in a long time. I'm not even talking about decisions about his personal life, which I don't much feel like getting into. I'm talking purely as a golf move, this is smart. Why?

A break gives him time to get healthy
Despite Woods' agent saying the break is not injury-related, Woods has repeatedly pointed to issues with his health when it comes to poor play. In the original statement, he wrote: "This latest injury is not related to my previous surgery. I am having daily physical therapy and I am feeling better every day." I don't know if there's a real issue there or it's like the situation when I pretend that my hip is bothering me when I repeatedly shank shots into the trees. If he is unhealthy, though, it's no good for anyone for him to go out there and try to force his body through this. It's not good for his game, and it's not good for his body.

It gives him time to figure out what he's doing out there

Woods is a mess on the golf course. His body has been through a lot, and it's not allowing him to play like he wants to.

Woods has to go back to the drawing board when it comes to his game. He might not be able to be the big hitter off the tee anymore. At a certain point, your body won't allow you to hit 340-yard drives. Woods revolutionized golf when he came onto the scene — he was bigger and stronger than everyone, and his power and drive to win made him nearly impossible to beat.

He isn't more powerful than everyone anymore. He's still got the drive to win, because I don't think that goes away, but he needs to find a new way to play if he wants to compete.

It allows other golfers to grab some attention

I know it feels like golf isn't as important when Woods isn't around, but think about his last absence from the game. We started talking about Rory McIlroy, an incredible young golfer who's only going to get better. Guys like Ricky Fowler became more well known. We got to know Bubba Watson and his antics. Stories always come up in sports. Right now the narrative is: "How bad was Tiger this week?" He drains the air out of the room. By stepping aside, it allows him to regain (hopefully) his form, and it allows the golf media to start telling stories of people playing well, as opposed to one dude not playing so well.

This is a win all around, except for those who delight in Tiger schadenfreude.

N.B.A. Is Having an All-Star Party This Weekend (and You're Not Invited)

The N.B.A. is doing just fine these days. The game is in the hands of immensely popular stars like LeBron James and Kevin Durant. New contenders, like the Golden State Warriors and the Atlanta Hawks, have added appealing story lines to the regular season.

And the league's owners will soon be reaping the benefits of a new television contract that will pay out \$2.66 billion a year, nearly triple the amount of the current deal.

Now come the N.B.A.'s annual All-Star Game festivities, which are taking place in New York City this week and serve as a sustained advertisement of the league's appeal. What used to be a single afternoon exhibition has increasingly expanded into what is now a five-day happening, flush with fan festivals, open practices, a celebrity game, caravans to local schools and Manhattan fashion parties for the American sport most closely identified with personal style.

Yet the best-known parts of the event are largely restricted. Tickets for the All-Star Game (on Sunday night at Madison Square Garden) and for the slam-dunk contest and other competitions (on Saturday evening at Barclays Center) were not made available for public sale for the fifth straight year. Only a small percentage of the seats were even offered for purchase by season-ticket holders of the two host teams, the Knicks and the Nets.

Fans, of course, can still buy tickets for Saturday and Sunday night from secondary-sale sites like StubHub. However, those prices have soared, averaging close to \$2,000 per ticket this week, a lot more than they would have cost if purchased at face value. In effect, the N.B.A. has created something of a closed-access party. Two-thirds of the available seating (or more than 10,000 tickets) for the events Saturday night and Sunday were claimed by the league to distribute to its long list of broadcast and marketing partners, other affiliates, players, the players' association and N.B.A. alumni. Those commitments encompassed a vast portion of the lower sections of both arenas. In addition, close to 20 percent of the seats in both arenas were claimed to accommodate production and staging needs for the TV broadcasts and to accommodate a large news media contingent.

The rest of the tickets? They were divided among the 30 N.B.A. teams to be distributed to fans and others, with the Knicks and the Nets getting special dispensation. The overall formula meant that average fans around the league, the ones who actually voted on who should be the starters in the All-Star Game, had virtually no chance of attending.

"If this was back in 1983, when the game was shown on tape delay, this would not be an issue," said Bill Sutton, a sports marketing consultant for the N.B.A. from 1999 to 2006. At the heart of the N.B.A.'s quandary is the issue of size. Major League Baseball's All-Star Game, the most seriously competitive of such events, is also an automatic sellout, but fans have a chance to purchase tickets online because the games are held in far bigger stadiums. Unlike the N.B.A., Major League Baseball sees fit to claim only about a third of the All-Star tickets in a given stadium for its own use.

Then there is the N.F.L., which presides over the most popular sport in the United States. It also has the biggest stadiums, which means its corporate needs take up less overall space than other sports; in the recent Super Bowl in Arizona, for example, the N.F.L. claimed just 25.2 percent of the tickets. (The N.F.L.'s all-star game, the Pro Bowl, has long been viewed as an afterthought, although the game did sell out this season.)

As for the N.H.L., the league most directly comparable to the N.B.A. because they share some of the same arenas and the same basic calendar, its All-Star Game requires that about 40 percent of the seats be delegated for league purposes, substantially less than the N.B.A.'s needs. Then again, the N.H.L. does not have as broad an appeal as the N.B.A. And it is not only in recent years that the N.B.A. has created a featured event that is so hard to get into. In 2002, a month before Philadelphia was the home city for the N.B.A. All-Star Game, Ed Snider, the 76ers' chairman at the time, told The Philadelphia Inquirer that he never again wanted to be the host because of the issues, and local resentment, created by the fact that there were so few tickets for his own fans. He said the league had given the 76ers 3,000 tickets to sell to a season-ticket base that numbered 15,000. Demand, he said, was overwhelming supply.

"People think it's our game, but it's the league's game," Snider, who sold the team in 2011, told The Inquirer. Through a spokesman, Snider declined to be interviewed for this article.

Joe Favorito, a former strategic communications adviser for the Knicks and the 76ers, a sports media consultant and a professor at Columbia, said the N.B.A.'s global draw, with television partners around the world, made an event like the All-Star Game something all sorts of corporate clients wanted to attend.

"It is a necessary evil," he said of reserving so many seats for corporate interests. "It's hard to justify making more tickets available to every fan when you've got corporations looking to spend a lot of money with you and grow the game."

As Sutton noted, the N.B.A. All-Star Game and its related events were not always this popular. The first full weekend was held in 1984, and David Stern, then the commissioner, fretted that attendance might be embarrassingly low when the new slam-dunk contest was held on Saturday night. Tickets went for just \$2.

But the notion of a full weekend quickly caught on. That was no problem in 1989, when the All-Star Game took place at the Houston Astrodome and was watched live by an announced crowd of 44,735. Tickets could be had.

The next year, though, when the game returned to much smaller confines, at Miami Arena, the N.B.A. needed to do something about its promises to sponsors, licensees and teams. The league designated 5,000 of the arena's 14,000 available seats to the Heat to

BY: LEON IRBY

3073 XOXO DATED: FEB. 13, 2015

"This day you will be with me in paradise"
(Luke 23:43).

Dear Friends,

The title of our newsletter gets its name from Luke's gospel and the conversion of our patron, St. Dismas. In a few short words, Jesus extends salvation to the criminal sentenced to death next to him, who had just given his heart and soul to Jesus in total trust.

This scene, called *a gospel within the gospel* by early Christian writers, is an amazing, profound revelation of God's love and mercy. It ought to be etched into our minds and hearts. At this pivotal point in the salvation of the humanity, when all else has gone dark, God's spotlight shines directly on Jesus and this repentant criminal. For all time and eternity we see into the very heart of God who is infinite love and mercy. As the story opposite tells, about a modern day Dismas, there is always hope for anyone, no matter what they have done. The *tragedy* of Judas, whom Jesus called "friend" at the very moment he betrayed him, and the other criminal crucified with Jesus, was that they failed to accept God's lavish mercy. This mercy is free, not forced, and it is available to everyone without exception.

Each of us has been given the "work" on our spiritual journey of integrating this truth deeply in our hearts and souls. There its healing power will work for great good, in our own life and in the lives of others around us, who will benefit from the mercy we will dispense, because we are sons and daughters of God and followers of his son, Jesus Christ. A blessed feastday of St. Dismas, a joyous Easter, and *thank you* for all your prayers!

In God's endless mercy,

Ron Zeilinger

Ron Zeilinger, Director



Jesus himself was a prisoner.

"Just as God never abandons us, so too we must be in covenant with one another. We are all sinners and our response to sin and failure should not be abandonment and despair, but rather justice, contrition, reparation and return or reintegration of all into the community.

Jesus, himself was a prisoner, calls us to visit the imprisoned and to take care for the sick (including victims of crime), the homeless and hungry (Mt. 25). His mission began with proclaiming good news to the poor and release to captives (Lk. 4). In our day, we are called to find Christ in young children at risk, troubled youth, prisoners in our jails and on death row, and crime victims experiencing pain and loss."

TODAY IS A NEW
DAY. YOU ARE
WORTHY OF A NEW
DREAM. YOU ARE
GOD'S DREAM AND
"GOD DON'T MAKE
NO JUNK!"



HOPE IS AN
IMPORTANT
HUMAN VALUE
FOR DYNAMIC
LIVING.
WHERE THERE
IS HOPE,
THERE IS LIFE!

BY: LEON IRBY DATED: FEBRUARY 17, 2015



August 2014



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☾ Last Quarter						
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31	● New Moon					



The Power of Positive Attitude

Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure. The way you think about a fact may defeat you before you ever do anything about it. You are overcome by the fact because you think you are.

Norman Vincent Peale



The Power of Positive Attitude

Holding on to anger, resentment and hurt only gives you tense muscles, a headache and a sore jaw from clenching your teeth. Forgiveness gives you back the laughter and the lightness in your life.

Joan Lunden

enter into contracts to put on the \$575,000 event.

MFI invested over \$345,000 from its reserves to keep Rhythm and Booms alive the past two years, officials said.

While Kelliher said MFI had secured as many sponsorship dollars as the previous operator, she went on to say there was not enough public funding to secure contracts. "That's the sad part. In many cases people believe fireworks should be free. In many cases cities have always put on fireworks shows. But they can't do that any longer," Kelliher said.

MFI officials say if the public wants to see Rhythm and Booms it will take \$100,000 of public funding every year.

After helping start the summer tradition in 1992 and leading the 2012 event that raised enough money to donate \$400,000 to area charities, Rhythm and Booms founder Terry Kelly said it was time for a change.

"We transferred it to a group we thought was going to keep it safe. And keep it going," Kelly said.

Kelly blames the root of the problem on MFI's location change from the north side's Warner Park to Lake Monona downtown. "I think we lost a major asset," Kelly said. "I feel and continue to feel it's not economically feasible to recoup the funding that's necessary if you have it way out in the middle of the lake."

Kelliher maintains the more expensive location change had to happen due to surrounding neighborhood concerns, dwindling city money and environmental violations.

"We've studied all sorts of locations," Kelliher said. "We planned for 18 months and that (downtown) was the ideal location." MFI stands by the lake location, saying they hope to have enough money to bring Rhythm and Booms back downtown in 2016.

Group to protest Wisconsin's wolf hunt at state Capitol

A group of wolf advocates plans to engage in civil disobedience at Wisconsin's Capitol building next week to protest the state's wolf management policies.

The Wolf and Wildlife Action Group, a national group of activists, announced Wednesday that its members will protest at 11 a.m. on Dec. 8 on the Capitol steps. They will then move to Gov. Scott Walker's office. The group plans to deliver four "violation notices for Wisconsin's crimes against nature" to the governor, citing the United Nations' World Charter for Nature.

According to a news release, WWAG will release more details about the alleged violations when they deliver them to the governor.

The group "demands all wolf killing stops now and wolves be returned to full endangered species protection forthwith under the Endangered Species Act."

Wisconsin's wolf hunt has been controversial since Walker signed into law the state's wolf hunting and trapping provisions. By way of

that law, Wisconsin is the only state to allow dogs to be used hunting wolves.

The 2014 hunting and trapping season opened Oct. 15 and entered the hound phase on Monday. Dog use is prohibited until the conclusion of the gun deer season.

The state Department of Natural Resources sets a yearly quota for wolf kills; this year's is 150. The DNR also sets smaller quotas for six management zones throughout the state, closing a zone when the quota is reached. The season ends on Feb. 28, or when the statewide quota is met. As of Dec. 3, 147 harvests had been reported and only two of the six zones remained open.

Two zones were closed before their zone-specific quotas were met and two others were closed after their quotas were exceeded. Some opposition to the wolf hunt comes from those opposed to the hunting and killing of any animals, while some comes from those who believe wolves specifically deserve protections.

In 2012, several groups sued the DNR seeking to halt the provision allowing the use of dogs in the hunt. The groups contended that the practice amounted to state-sanctioned animal fighting. That lawsuit failed. The group coming to Wisconsin, WWAG, has led similar protests in Idaho and Montana.

Its members called for Idaho Republican Gov. Butch Otter's resignation and spoke with him briefly in May. They delivered a "violation notice" to Montana Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock in October.

Wisconsin wolves were taken off the federal endangered species list in 2011, allowing state officials to determine how best to manage the population.

At the time the bill was signed, the state's wolf population numbered more than 800. Last winter, Wisconsin had at least 660 wolves.

When Walker signed the bill, he said in a statement that the hunt will help farmers protect their livestock by reducing the wolf population to a "healthy, sustainable level."

Gov. Scott Walker joins lawsuit over President Barack Obama's immigration action

Gov. Scott Walker has joined a lawsuit seeking to block President Barack Obama's executive action on immigration.

The lawsuit was filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas by governors and attorney general from 17 states.

"The immigration system is broken, but this is an issue that should be addressed through collaborative federal action, not unilateral action by the President," Walker said in a statement.

Walker, who is considering a 2016 presidential run, added that the lawsuit is "about the rule of law and the legality of President Obama's actions."

The lawsuit was filed by the State of Texas. Obama's executive action, which he announced last month, spares as many as 5

PRESIDENT'S IMMIGRATION

million people living illegally in the United States from deportation.

Super typhoon on track to batter Philippines

Powerful Super Typhoon Hagupit is on a collision course with the Philippines, and is forecast to batter the island nation over the weekend.

Residents in the storm's path have fled coastal homes and triggered panic-buying in grocery stores and gas stations.

Hagupit should be equal to a category 4 hurricane — with winds of 130-156 mph — when it makes landfall late Saturday or early Sunday, the Joint Typhoon Warning Center predicts.

Extreme winds, a large and deadly storm surge, and torrential rains causing massive flooding and dangerous mudslides are all of great concern for Hagupit's landfall, Weather Underground meteorologist Jeff Masters said. The storm "could be an absolutely catastrophic flooding disaster if the typhoon stalls near any of the islands," meteorologist Ryan Maue said in an email.

All forecasts now show the storm moving west into and across the Philippines. Hagupit is forecast to weaken significantly as it tracks over the Philippines, though it is very likely that the center of the storm could pass near the capital of Manila, reinsurance company Aon Benfield reported.

Manila is 13 hours ahead of U.S. eastern time.

It's the planet's strongest storm since Typhoon Haiyan — also known as Yolanda — slammed into the Philippines in November 2013, which killed more than 7,000 people and demolished about one million houses. Tacloban City was hardest hit.

"Definitely we will now strictly enforce forced evacuation," Tacloban City Vice Mayor Jerry Yaokasin told the Philippine Star. "We have no more excuse, we have gone through Yolanda, and to lose that many lives, it's beyond our conscience already." A typhoon is the same type of storm as a hurricane but is called a typhoon in the western Pacific Ocean.

As of Thursday morning ET, Typhoon Hagupit — Filipino for "smash" — was packing sustained winds of 127 mph and gusts of up to 149 mph over the Pacific, about 435 miles off the country's eastern coast. The storm was about 740 miles east-southeast of Manila.

In the Philippines, Hagupit has been given the name Ruby. The Philippines has its own alphabetical list of names, separate from the international list that comes from the World Meteorological Organization, for tropical storms and typhoons that pass near or over its territory, the Weather Channel said.

There is no official typhoon season in the western Pacific, as typhoons can form there year-round. On average, about 30 tropical storms and typhoons form in the western Pacific Ocean each year, the Joint Typhoon Warning Center reports.

BY: LEON IRBY

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DATED: FEBRUARY 17, 2015

five of its citizens, known as "The Cuban Five." The men were convicted in U.S. federal court on espionage charges and have become national heroes in Cuba, where their images are painted on billboards and walls throughout the island. Two of the men have completed their prison terms and returned to Cuba. The other three remain in U.S. prisons, where one faces a life term.

State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf lamented the "difficult conditions" Gross is living under but did not elaborate on any efforts to win his freedom.

"It is gravely disappointing, especially in light of its professed goal of providing Cubans with internet access, that the Cuban government has not allowed Mr. Gross to return to his family, where he belongs," Harf said in a statement. "We reiterate our call on the Cuban government, echoing foreign leaders and even Cuba's allies, to release Alan Gross immediately."

Gross was arrested on Dec. 3, 2009 while on a USAID contract to improve communication on the island, where Internet use is heavily restricted by the Communist government. He was bringing satellite phones and computer equipment to the Jewish community on the island and was arrested, charged with "destabilizing" and "subverting" the government and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

In the years since, he has been visited by relatives, his attorney and a stream of U.S. government officials, most recently in November by Sens. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., and Tom Udall, D-N.M. But the senators, like others before them, said they heard no indication from Cuban officials that there were any plans to release Gross.

His case was further inflamed when the Associated Press uncovered this year a separate USAID program known as the "Cuban Twitter." The program, which operated from 2009 to 2012, was designed to use social media to help a new generation of dissidents on the island, and involved setting up a front company, routing money through the Cayman Islands and creating elaborate cover stories for people working in the program.

With seemingly no progress on his case, Gross has grown more desperate. He started a hunger strike in April to protest his imprisonment, but stopped after nine days when his 91-year-old mother asked him to out of fear for his already-diminished health. In May, when Gross turned 65, he vowed that it would be the last birthday he spends in a Cuban jail "one way or the other," according to his lawyer, Scott Gilbert.

By August, when his wife and youngest daughter went to visit, Gross said could not take life in prison any longer. He told them goodbye and asked them not to come see him again. They haven't seen him since.

About 100 brains missing from University of Texas

The University of Texas at Austin has lost track of about 100 jars of brains, possibly

including that of Charles Whitman, the ex-Marine sniper who killed and wounded dozens of people from a campus clock tower nearly 50 years ago, according to school officials and local media.

The university's Animal Resources Center originally received the missing organs in 1986 from the Austin State Hospital, formerly known as the Texas State Lunatic Asylum, under a "temporary possession" agreement.

The specimens, originally assembled by Dr. Coleman de Chenar, a resident pathologist at ASH, were to be used by UT as a teaching tool in its psychology lab.

The missing organs, which represent about half of the university's collection, had been stored in jars of formaldehyde in a basement because the lab did not have enough room for all of them, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

Psychology professor Lawrence Cormack, co-curator of the collection, says the specimens may have been removed over the years as a prank.

"It's entirely possible word got around among undergraduates and people started swiping them for living rooms or Halloween pranks," he told the newspaper.

It is not entirely clear whether the missing organs include the brains of 25-year-old Whitman, who killed 16 people, including his mother and wife, before he was fatally shot by police in 1966.

All identifying data was removed from the specimens when the center took them in, the newspaper reported.

"It would make sense it would be in this group. We can't find that brain," Tim Schallert, a neuroscientist at UT and the collection's co-curator, told the American-Statesman.

In a written note before his shooting rampage, Whitman complained of his "many unusual and irrational thoughts" and "violent impulses."

He said he hoped that there would be an autopsy on his body "to see if there is any visible physical disorder."

The autopsy, performed by pathologist de Chenar from the Austin State Hospital, showed that he had a small brain tumor. A state commission report later found that "the highly malignant brain tumor conceivably could have contributed to his inability to control his emotions and actions."

Co-curator Schallert tells The Atlantic that the jars were supposed to be returned to ASH in the mid 1990s when the university found it did not have enough room to keep them.

Jerry Fineg, the center's then-director, tells the magazine that he believes the organs were sent back to the hospital, but a spokesman for ASH tells The Atlantic that the last they saw of the specimens was when they were originally shipped out.

The university said in a statement that it will investigate "the circumstances surrounding this collection since it came here nearly 30

years ago" and that it's "committed to treating the brain specimens with respect."

The 100 remaining brains at the school have been moved to the Norman Hackerman Building, where they are being scanned with high-resolution resonance imaging equipment, Cormack said.

"These MRI images will be both useful teaching and research tools. It keeps the brains intact," he told the newspaper.

Pentagon: Mission failed to rescue U.S. hostage in Yemen

WASHINGTON — U.S. commandos failed to rescue American journalist Luke Somers in Yemen recently because he was not at the raid site, the Pentagon acknowledged Thursday. Yemeni troops did rescue other hostages.

Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Pentagon spokesman, said in a statement that the operation included air and ground forces, but that Somers was "not present at the targeted location. Details about the mission remain classified."

Kirby said the Pentagon was announcing the raid only to "provide accurate information given that it is being widely reported in the public domain."

Last month, defense officials said U.S. special operations troops led Yemeni forces in a pre-dawn raid on a cave in Yemen to rescue Somers and other hostages. Six Yemenis, a Saudi and an Ethiopian were rescued in the operation.

Somers was kidnapped in September 2013 from a street in Sanaa, Yemen, by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Yemen-based militant group released a video Thursday featuring Somers in which it said it would kill the 33-year-old photojournalist, who worked for the Yemen Times, in three days if the U.S. government did not meet its unspecified demands.

Kirby said in his statement that "the United States government is committed to the safety and well-being of its citizens, particularly those suffering in captivity. We use the full breadth of our military, intelligence, law enforcement, and diplomatic capabilities to bring people home whenever we can. The United States will not tolerate the abduction of our people, and will work tirelessly to secure the safety of our citizens and to hold their captors accountable."

Madison Festivals: Rhythm and Booms put on indefinite hold

The nonprofit organization said they needed \$400,000 by Dec. 1 to move forward with contracts and plans for the June 2015 event. "We secured the support of a generous title sponsor and were optimistic we'd meet our goal and be able to continue Madison's Independence Day celebration. Staff has worked for months. Unfortunately, there was insufficient financial backing from community businesses and the public by our deadline," said Rita Kelliher, MFI's president. Without meeting the Dec. 1 goal, Kelliher said it was too much of a risk for MFI to

These are from a book called Disorder in the American Courts, and are things people actually said in court, word for word, taken down and now published by court reporters that had the torment of staying calm while these exchanges were actually taking place.

ATTORNEY: What was the first thing your husband said to you that morning?

WITNESS: He said, 'Where am I, Cathy?'

ATTORNEY: And why did that upset you?

WITNESS: My name is Susan!

ATTORNEY: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

WITNESS: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

ATTORNEY: Are you sexually active?

WITNESS: No, I just lie there.

ATTORNEY: This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

WITNESS: Yes.

ATTORNEY: And in what ways does it affect your memory?

WITNESS: I forget.

ATTORNEY: You forget? Can you give us an example of something you forgot?

ATTORNEY: Do you know if your daughter has ever been involved in voodoo?

WITNESS: We both do.

ATTORNEY: Voodoo?

WITNESS: We do.

ATTORNEY: You do?

WITNESS: Yes, voodoo.

ATTORNEY: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

WITNESS: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

ATTORNEY: The youngest son, the twenty-year-old, how old is he?

WITNESS: He's twenty, much like your IQ.

ATTORNEY: Were you present when your picture was taken?

WITNESS: Are you shitting me ?

ATTORNEY: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

WITNESS: Yes.

ATTORNEY: And what were you doing at that time?

WITNESS: getting laid

ATTORNEY: She had three children, right?

WITNESS: Yes.

ATTORNEY: How many were boys?

WITNESS: None.

ATTORNEY: Were there any girls?

WITNESS : Your Honor, I think I need a different attorney. Can I get a new attorney?

ATTORNEY: How was your first marriage terminated?

WITNESS: By death.

ATTORNEY: And by whose death was it terminated?

WITNESS: Take a guess

ATTORNEY: Can you describe the individual?

WITNESS: He was about medium height and had a beard.

ATTORNEY: Was this a male or a female?

WITNESS: Unless the Circus was in town I'm going with male .

ATTORNEY: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice which I sent to your attorney?

WITNESS: No, this is how I dress when I go to work .

ATTORNEY: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

WITNESS: All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

ATTORNEY: ALL your responses MUST be oral, OK? What school did you go to?

WITNESS: Oral .

ATTORNEY: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

WITNESS: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

ATTORNEY: And Mr. Denton was dead at the time?

WITNESS: If not, he was by the time I finished.

ATTORNEY: Are you qualified to give a urine sample?

WITNESS: Are you qualified to ask that question?

And the best for last:

ATTORNEY: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for blood pressure?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for breathing?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

WITNESS: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

ATTORNEY: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

WITNESS: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law.

Following series of exercizes look hard but can be done on any level and are helpful. They look very much like the "Sun Salutation" taught in yoga class. Face the sun, east in the morning. Wakes every part of you up.

BY: LEON IRBY DATED: FEBRUARY 26, 2015

Florida flight-school plane crashes into warehouse with student and teacher on board, sparks fire: officials

A flight-school plane piloted by a student-teacher team crashed into a Florida warehouse Thursday, sparking a massive fire that sent toxic chemicals into the air, officials said.

Witnesses said the plane nosed and then exploded as it collided into a former plastics warehouse in rural Lakeland around 10 a.m., Lakeland Police Sgt. Gary Gross told 10 News.

No one was inside the plant at the time of the crash, but hazardous chemicals are stored inside the building, officials said.

There is no threat to the general public. The plane belonged to a flight school at the Lakeland Linder Regional Airport. A student and a teacher were on board the single-engine plane, Lakeland fire officials said.

No one was inside the building, investigators said.

Firefighters and a hazmat team are working to rescue or recover the pilot and copilot. No details about the people on the plane have been released.

Lakeland is just east of Tampa, Fla.

New York assembly speaker arrested on public corruption charges

NEW YORK — New York Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver was arrested Thursday on public corruption charges and accused of using his position as one of the most powerful men in Albany to obtain millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks masked as legitimate income.

The 70-year-old Silver was taken into custody around 8 a.m. at the FBI's New York City office, FBI spokesman Peter Donald confirmed. Silver faces five counts, including conspiracy and bribery charges.

In a criminal complaint, authorities said Silver abused his power and "obtained about \$4 million in payments characterized as attorney referral fees solely through the corrupt use of his official position."

Silver's attorney, Joel Cohen, called the charges "meritless."

"Mr. Silver looks forward to responding to them — in court — and ultimately his full exoneration," Cohen said in a statement. Silver was expected to make a court appearance later Thursday.

The arrest sent shock waves through New York's Capitol as a new legislative session has begun, and it came just a day after Silver shared the stage with Gov. Andrew Cuomo during his State of the State address.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara took over the files of New York's Moreland anti-corruption commission after Cuomo closed it in April. He said in October that investigations into Albany's pay-to-play politics are continuing. The commission and Bharara were looking into lawmakers' earnings outside their state salaries. Silver's outside income has long been a subject of discussion and controversy. Last year, he reported making up to \$750,000

for legal work, mostly with the trial firm of Weitz & Luxenberg.

When the commission began to investigate public corruption in 2013, including outside income earned by Silver and other state legislators, "Silver took legal action and other steps to prevent the disclosure of such information," the complaint said.

As speaker of the Democrat-controlled Assembly, Silver is one of the most influential people in New York state government. Along with the Senate majority leader and the governor, he plays a major role in creating state budgets, laws and policies in a system long-criticized in Albany as "three men in a room."

The Assembly canceled a scheduled Thursday session. Its majority Democratic Conference was meeting, but members said they would make no immediate changes in leadership.

"There's no chance of that happening," said Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell, a Manhattan Democrat. Legislators hadn't seen the charges, Silver is presumed innocent, and it's "a sad day considering" all the work Silver and the conference have done protecting New York's poor and others, he said.

Silver has gone toe-to-toe with five New York governors — from the late Mario Cuomo to his son Andrew Cuomo — since early 1994, when he was selected Assembly speaker to replace the ailing Saul Welprin. Silver was first elected to the Assembly in 1976, representing a district on Manhattan's Lower East Side, where he was born and still lives with his wife, Rosa.

A graduate of Brooklyn Law School and a practicing attorney, Silver has championed liberal causes in the Legislature, where he has used his position as a powerbroker to support teachers, trial lawyers and civil service unions.

But he has also seen more than his share of corruption and scandal in his chamber. Several Assembly members have been hit in recent years with criminal charges ranging from taking bribes to using campaign funds for personal expenses.

In 2003, Silver's then-counsel, Michael Boxley, was convicted of sexual misconduct. Nine years later, Silver handled a confidential settlement of \$103,000 in public funds for two women who said they were sexually harassed by their boss, then-Assemblyman Vito Lopez of Brooklyn. After the details of the settlement went public, the Assembly speaker was criticized for his role. Silver later said the case should have been handled by the ethics committee.

Supreme Court agrees to rule on gay marriage

The Supreme Court agreed Friday to resolve the national debate over same-sex marriage once and for all.

The justices will consider four cases from Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, consolidated and heard together. They will hear 2 1/2 hours of oral arguments in April

and issue a ruling before the current term ends in late June.

The new challenge to states' gay marriage bans is destined to become even more of a landmark than the two cases decided by the court in 2013 — *United States v. Windsor*, which forced the federal government to recognize gay marriages, and *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, which made California the 13th state to allow them.

Those rulings, while historic, did not resolve the threshold questions in the debate: whether gays and lesbians have a constitutional right to marry, or whether states have the right to ban the practice. This spring's case will answer those questions.

"This is the beginning of the end game on the freedom to marry," said James Esseks, who leads the effort for the American Civil Liberties Union.

The justices' hands were forced by a split among federal appellate courts, created when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit upheld four states' marriage bans in November. While gays and lesbians can marry in 36 states, most recently including Florida, the practice is banned in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee, along with 10 other states.

The court had sidestepped the issue in October, when it let stand appeals court rulings striking down gay marriage bans in Virginia, Indiana, Wisconsin, Oklahoma and Utah. Those rulings and a later appeals court decision affecting Idaho and Nevada drew in neighboring states as well. As a result, more than 70% of Americans live in states where gay marriages are legal, and thousands of couples have tied the knot.

The high court's long-awaited decision to intervene pleases both sides in the debate. National gay-rights groups have been pressing for a 50-state solution. The National Organization for Marriage and others that oppose gay and lesbian unions also wanted the court to step in.

"We've reached the moment of truth — the facts are clear, the arguments have been heard by dozens of courts, and now the nine justices of the Supreme Court have an urgent opportunity to guarantee fairness for countless families, once and for all," said Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay rights organization.

"The U.S. Supreme Court now has the opportunity to issue a long-overdue ruling to restore the freedom of the people to uphold marriage in their state laws as the union of a man and a woman," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council.

"Lower court judges have robbed millions of people of their voice and vote on society's most fundamental relationship — marriage." The justices will consider two questions — whether the 14th Amendment to the Constitution requires states to license marriages between same-sex couples, and whether it requires states to recognize such marriages when licensed by other states. The

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Michigan case involves the first question, the Ohio and Tennessee cases involve the second, and the Kentucky case includes both. "I can't wait to walk up those steps and have the Supreme Court understand that we're just like everyone else," said James Obergefell, the lead plaintiff in the Ohio case. Because of the order in which the court listed the four cases, it appears likely the combined case will be named *Obergefell v. Hodges*. Richard Hodges directs the Ohio Health Department.

JUSTICES REMAIN DIVIDED

Since the gay marriage movement gained steam in the 1990s from Hawaii to Vermont, 30 states have passed constitutional bans. Eleven states and the District of Columbia legalized same-sex marriage by legislative action or voter initiatives. In 33 more states, judges have made the same call, though some of those decisions were delayed or overruled. Most of the progress by gay-rights groups has come in the last two years: The number of states where gays and lesbians can marry has nearly doubled since October alone, and tripled since the court's 2013 rulings.

The justices appear as split today as they were then, when Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the 5-4 decision striking down a key part of the federal Defense of Marriage Act. In dissent, Justice Antonin Scalia seethed that it would lead to exactly what has happened since — a flurry of court rulings using the high court's equal protection reasoning to strike down state bans.

But while divided, the justices have made a series of procedural moves that allowed same-sex marriage to proliferate, particularly by refusing to hear five states' appeals in October. They even refused to halt gay and lesbian marriages in Idaho while the state challenges the verdict of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals — something they had done last year in Utah and Virginia.

The swing vote remains Kennedy, who has authored the last three major rulings advancing the cause of gay rights. On one hand, he has defended voter-approved constitutional amendments, most recently in a Michigan case last year that upheld the state's ban against racial preferences in university admissions. But he struck down the federal same-sex marriage ban as an affront to the constitutional rights of gays and lesbians. Since then, dozens of federal and state court judges have toppled marriage bans for the same reason the Supreme Court ruled against DOMA, mostly citing gay and lesbian couples' right to equal protection or due process under the Constitution. Since September, however, three federal courts have gone the other way — in Louisiana, Puerto Rico and the four-state 6th Circuit. Circuit Judge Jeffrey Sutton, once considered a potential Supreme Court nominee for a Republican president, issued that 42-page appellate decision, with fellow GOP nominee Deborah Cook concurring. He said lower court judges' hands are tied by a one-sentence Supreme Court ruling in 1972 that "upheld

the right of the people of a state to define marriage as they see it."

In response, couples in all four states asked the Supreme Court to hear their appeals. State officials in Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky, though victorious, agreed that the justices should weigh in. Gay couples and state officials in Louisiana sought to have their case considered before the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals rules, but the justices denied that request.

The Obama administration is certain to enter the case on the side of the gay and lesbian plaintiffs.

"It is time for our nation to take another critical step forward to ensure the fundamental equality of all Americans — no matter who they are, where they come from, or whom they love," Attorney General Eric Holder said.

STATES MAKE THEIR CASE

The Michigan case is the simplest of the four that the court considered. April DeBoer, 43, and Jayne Rowse, 50, are nurses and foster parents who have separately adopted four children, including two with special needs. They seek the right to marry and to joint adoptions; currently, each child has only one legal parent.

"This is a monumental thing," Rowse said. "In my lifetime, I never thought that this would ever happen — not even in my kids' lifetime."

Their case is unique because it included a two-week trial with "expert testimony presented in the fields of sociology, psychology, demography, history, and law," their brief said. "Issues relating uniquely to the children were examined thoroughly in the crucible of the trial process."

The state echoed Judge Sutton in its response brief. "This case comes down to two words: Who decides?" it said. "The history of our democracy demonstrates the wisdom of allowing the people to decide important issues at the ballot box, rather than ceding those decisions to unelected judges."

The Ohio case was brought by four same-sex couples with children, one adopted child and two men whose partners died. All were married in other states and are seeking to have the marriages recognized in Ohio through birth and death certificates. Pam Yorksmith, one of the clients, pronounced herself "over the moon" with excitement about the Supreme Court's agreement to hear her case.

"Petitioners have been denied the full dignity and financial and emotional benefits Ohio provides to different-sex spouses, including, most urgently, the recognition of their marriages on critical family identification documents such as birth and death certificates," the challengers' brief says.

"These cases are about love, from birth to death. The relationships at the heart of each case involve the love spouses share, with each other and with the children they jointly raise, and the love that survives the death of a spouse."

The Kentucky case combines two gay couples seeking to marry and four other couples who want their marriages, performed from Connecticut to California, recognized in their home state.

One couple is raising four children. Another has been together 47 years. A third left the country to marry in Canada a decade ago. Greg Bourke, the lead plaintiff who has been together with his partner Michael De Leon for more than three decades, said, "I feel like we've been waiting 32 years to have this day arrive."

After losing at the district court level, the state's Democratic attorney general, Jack Conway, refused to participate in the appeal. Gov. Steve Beshear, also a Democrat, named outside counsel to handle the case.

The Tennessee case features three couples married in New York and California. One lesbian partner had a child while the lawsuit was pending. A gay partner was deployed and has returned from Afghanistan. A third couple has two adopted children.

"We live in fear for ourselves and our little girl because we don't have the same legal protections in Tennessee as other families," said Valeria Tanco, the lead plaintiff in the case.

"The court of appeals' holding not only denies recognition to petitioners' own marriages and families, but also establishes a 'checkerboard' nation in which same-sex couples' marriages are dissolved and re-established as they travel across the country," their brief says. "That is the antithesis of the stability that marriage is supposed to afford." Tennessee was the only state that asked the Supreme Court to let the appeals court ruling stand. The state's marriage law is "a proper exercise of its own sovereign authority within our federal system," it said.

The four states are among 14 where gay marriage remains against the law. The others are Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Texas.

Speculation mounts over Romney White House bid

Former presidential candidate Mitt Romney did nothing Friday to settle speculation that he might be close to announcing another White House bid.

During a speech at a Republican National Committee meeting in San Diego Friday evening, Romney said, "I'm giving some serious consideration to the future."

Romney's remarks at the gathering were his first even touching the campaign question since the 2012 GOP presidential nominee told about 30 of his supporters last week that he is seriously looking at making another presidential bid.

During the meeting, Romney also predicted that the GOP would win back the White House in 2016 and that he would back the Republican nominee, whoever that may be. The Republican race effectively began when Jeb Bush announced in December that he would "actively explore" a 2016 presidential

BY: LEON IRBY
DATED: FEB. 27, 2015 (IRBY) 4