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Tuesday, February 24, 2015 | 50 Cents

IT'S GOLD

Winter swoops south, bringing snow, ice to Webster



Austin Sumner rides down a snowy, icy hill Monday afternoon after winter weather moved into the area. Bruce Franklin/Press-Herald

Wintry mix expected Tuesday night

BONNIE CULVERHOUSE
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Temperatures are on the rise today, according to the National Weather Service, but a wintry mix returns to the forecast later tonight through Wednesday morning.

“Right now, it looks like Tuesday night could be a repeat performance,” meteorologist Joel Martin said. “It’s a problem knowing where the freezing line will be.”

Martin says winter storm forecasts are tricky.

“It’s because water freezes at exactly 32 degrees Fahrenheit,” he said. “It’s often difficult to predict exactly where the freezing boundaries will be at the surface and above us.”

Tuesday morning, City of Minden Public Works Director George Rolfe said his crews sanded some streets overnight.

“We did a little bit of sanding on Pennsylvania Avenue,” Rolfe said. “But we don’t do state highways, like Homer Road. DOTD does that.”

Rolfe says the street department has been ready for possible icy conditions since last week and once the temperature drops to around 28 degrees Fahrenheit, the street department starts the sanding process.

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Snow and ice blanketed Minden Monday after an upper atmospheric storm moved through the area. Forecasters say another wintry mix may move through Wednesday. Bruce Franklin/Press-Herald



FIND IT ONLINE
View video of Austin Sumner and Tracy Lee sliding down the snowy hill at **press-herald.com**.

WEBSTER CRIME

Escaped YCP cadets caught

*One leads police on
high-speed chase
across 3 parishes*

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Four teenagers who managed to elude authorities from Sunday afternoon until Monday morning are now in custody, including one who allegedly stole a vehicle in Sibley and led police on a chase through three parishes at speeds which at times exceeded 100 m.p.h. in the wrong lane of a rain and sleet slickened Interstate 20.

Webster Parish Chief Deputy Bobby Igo Sr. says the suspect was captured only after Sheriff Gary Sexton, who had been involved in the pursuit through Webster, Bienville and Lincoln parishes, used a “PIT maneuver” on the stolen vehicle to bring the chase to an end shortly after 11:30 a.m.

PIT (precision immobilization technique) is a pursuit tactic by which a pursuing car can force a fleeing car to abruptly turn sideways, causing the driver to lose control and stop.

Igo says the suspect’s vehicle rolled over after the PIT maneuver impact, landing upside down just off the highway. He showed no signs of injury when taken into custody, arresting officers confirmed.

“The suspect got on Interstate 20 heading east in the westbound lane and stayed there until he finally got stopped about three or four miles east of Ruston,” Igo said. “We firmly believe the weather is the only reason someone wasn’t killed. If it had been a normal day with the normal amount of traffic, there could have been a tragedy.”

Minden Police Department officers, who joined parish deputies in the hunt for the runaways, pursued the stolen vehicle from Sibley onto Interstate 20 around 10:54 a.m. At the time, sleet and freezing rain was falling and temperatures hovered just under the freezing mark.

“The road conditions were terrible,” Igo said. “But officers pursuing the suspect stayed with him.”

It was a real example of agencies assisting one another. Dispatchers were able to give us almost a play-by-play as the chase continued while still giving us reports of accidents, which seemed to be occurring all over the place because of the icy conditions.”

Igo says two of the four teenagers were juveniles and would be sent to the state juvenile facility. Names of the

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specht

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WEATHER TOMORROW’S OUTLOOK



41
HIGH

28
LOW

A mixture of winter precipitation in the morning. Snow mixing with rain at in the afternoon.

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MHS Darling
Winners **PAGE 5**



WHEN EVERY MINUTE MATTERS
Our ER is an Accredited Chest Pain Center.



STRANDED

Couple stuck in Minden due to bad weather

MICHELLE BATES
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A California couple got stranded in Minden after American Airlines cancelled their flight home Monday morning.

Sara Hansen and her husband Garret, were in Minden visiting with cousin Jenny Mourad to celebrate their uncle's 90th birthday in Belcher over the weekend. Their uncle is W.H. Greene, a decorated World War II veteran.

The Hansens were scheduled to return to Lodi, California, Monday morning but are still having a good time with the Mourads.

"We've had an absolute blast," Sara Hansen said. "It's been great. We have enjoyed every minute of being here. We had a great flight in, a great few days, and now we're just going to enjoy this weather."

Hansen says they are scheduled to fly out Tuesday night from Shreveport, but the family has been separated. One will go home via Shreveport, the other from the Monroe airport. As for the weather, they are hoping it clears up enough by then.

"We're keeping our fingers crossed because we need to go back to work,"



Kris Embree, Garret Hensen, Sara Hansen, dog Ralphie Mourad, Jenny Mourad and Kass Wixom pose for a picture after the Hensen's flight to California was canceled Monday due to winter weather. Courtesy Photo

Sara Hansen said.

She and her husband own a farm where they grow grapes for Gallo Wines. They also grow tomatoes, beans, walnuts, wheat and alfalfa.

As for having something to do over the week-

end, the Mourads have been keeping them busy. Mourad said they'd taken them on a tour of Minden and took them to Monroe/West Monroe to the Duck Commander warehouse, the site of A&E's hit show "Duck Dynasty."

"We've had a great time; lots of food, visiting and reconnecting," Mourad said. "Thankfully the harvest was over, and they were able to take some time off and come for a family event."

Icy conditions have

caused several airlines to cancel and reschedule flights out of Shreveport. American Airlines, the airline the Hansens were scheduled to fly out with cancelled roughly 1,000 flights.

The weather is expected

to deteriorate over the course of the day, improving by Tuesday. The high for Tuesday is 37 with a 30 percent chance of an icy mix expected, according to weather officials.

CADETS

Continued from page 1

two older teens have not been released, and the pair is currently being held at Bayou Dorcheat Correctional Center. Charges are pending, Igo said.

Igo says the episode began when four males left the Camp Minden YCP facility Sunday and headed west into Bossier Parish. There, police say they stole a vehicle and drove east toward Doyline where the vehicle crashed and escaped by running into a wooded area.

Around 2:15 a.m. Monday, the cadets reportedly broke into a business in Doyline where they were recorded on the store's surveillance system taking a variety of items including cigarettes and food. Deputies arrived at the scene of the burglary

quickly in response to an alarm.

"The four fled to the railroad tracks in Doyline and headed east where they stole another vehicle on Mathis Road," Igo said. "Apparently, an individual had cranked a car preparing to go to work and these people came along at that time. The individual called quickly enough that our deputies were able to get in pursuit of the vehicle."

Deputies pursued the stolen vehicle east on La. Hwy. 164 to the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 371 in Sibley. While trying to elude capture, the driver of the stolen vehicle allegedly collided with a deputy's vehicle and tried unsuccessfully to push through the roadblock.

"They bailed out of the car headed east along the railroad tracks that runs through Sibley," Igo said.

After avoiding arrest, police say the group managed to cross Hwy. 164 and headed north through wooded areas where they were spotted by residents on two separate occasions. Deputies took to the woods in pursuit and captured one suspect, then used a K-9 officer to hunt

down another two.

"After we had three of them in custody, the fourth managed to get away and stole the vehicle," Igo said. "That made three vehicles the group stole while they were on the run. We don't know yet why they left, but I've never seen any kids who

have left Camp Minden try as hard to avoid capture as this bunch."

Igo says cooperation between the various law enforcement agencies finally brought the episode to an end.

"I can't begin to thank all the officers who were out here," he said. "Min-

den police units were very active in helping us, Sibley's police were assisting, our reserve deputies were out and our night shift worked over. It was a total effort and every single officer played a key role in capturing these people."

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LOUISIANA BUDGET

Germantown Colony Museum part of budget cuts

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Months after the opening of a \$500,000 visitor's center in November, the Germantown Colony Museum has become the victim of mid-year budget cuts handed down from the state.

Secretary of State Tom Schedler announced last week that he will lay off 24 full-time employees and reduce hours at museums under his control to cope

with his \$930,000 portion of the budget cuts.

Meg Casper, spokesperson for Schedler's office, says the Germantown Colony Museum will open only one day a week – Saturday – as opposed to the former three days a week schedule.

“Everybody was treated the same – everybody was reduced by two days,” Casper said. “Only two museums were open five days a week – the Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge

and the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum in Shreveport. They will be cut to three. All others were already at three days a week. They will now be one.”

Cuts and layoffs will take place April 13.

“In the case of a full-time employee, they are laid off and then can be hired back as a part-time employee,” Casper said, explaining that museum employees are civil service and require that approval

before layoffs take place.

Germantown Colony Museum has one part-time employee, curator Jean Doerge.

Because so much of the Secretary of State's spending involves election expenses that happened earlier in the year, Schedler says he is limited in where he can cut.

He said nearly half the spending reduction will be savings from Jindal's agreement to postpone the special election for a state

education board seat until October when other elections already were scheduled. Schedler's plan also involves eliminating an elections outreach division and putting a hiring freeze in place for parish registrars of voters' offices.

The remaining \$119,000 cut involves the museums, forcing the layoffs and reduced hours. Schedler expects the cut to be carried over into next year, when the state has even deeper budget problems.

“This will likely be a permanent change unless something unexpected happens during the budget process,” Casper said.

Communities trying to keep the museums open are being encouraged to offer ideas.

“Anyone or any group that has a specific interest in assisting our museums or outreach efforts in any way should step forward now,” Schedler said.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

CAMP MINDEN CLEANUP

U.S. Army expected to join dialogue committee table

MICHELLE BATES
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As the Camp Minden dialogue committee's technical work group met again to hash out more details on how to choose a method and company to dispose of millions of pounds of M6 propellant, some good news came their way.

Dialogue committee facilitator Doug Sarno announced as of Monday morning, the U.S. Army is willing to sit at the table and offer its expertise. Sarno said he hopes to have them on the next conference call Wednesday.

“It was as early as today that the Army is on board,” he said. “That's good news that the Army is now engaged with us, that they will be on the call Wednesday and they certainly will be helping out preparing these materials, providing information and helping us move forward.”

However, there is still some concern about the

trustworthiness of their expertise. Dr. Brian Salvatore, a chemistry professor and dialogue committee member, said he was concerned about the leeway being given to the Army now that they have agreed to come to the table. He also said they would not be bluffed.

“It sounds like we're going to give them a lot of leeway in getting up to speed here,” he said. “I understand that they're going to be somewhat in the dark, because they willingly did not take part in these discussions. However, when they come into these meetings, they are regarded as the experts. We're not going to give them days and weeks to say, ‘Well, we're just gathering information.’ They're expected to come to these meetings with experts, with the know-how...The Army isn't going to come in as an interested observer. They're going to come in as an active participant.”

Frances Kelley, with

STOP THE BURN RALLY RESCHEDULED FOR MARCH 3

The Stop the Burn Community Rally has been rescheduled for March 3. Beginning at 7 p.m., the rally is set to take place at the Minden Civic Center with Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, of the Green Army, as the featured speaker. Coming in from Baton Rouge, Honore has become a voice for the people of Louisiana to stop toxic waste from being dumped in this state. He will encourage the public to keep up the pressure to make sure the millions of pounds of M6 propellant at Camp Minden is disposed of properly.

Louisiana Progress Action and dialogue committee member, also asked if an ACWA member would be among those from the Army at the table. The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives assessment is the process used by the Department of Defense Explosives Safety

Board to certify alternative technologies to dispose of chemical weapons and other stockpiled munitions in the 80s.

In answer, Sam Coleman, representing the EPA on the dialogue committee, said the Army will be providing experts who have or are working on this

specific project at Camp Minden.

“I would like to still ask that we have one of the ACWA program managers be asked to be available,” Kelley said. “I am concerned that these technical experts from the EPA think of the experts on open burn, open detonation, on incineration, and it just seems like it would be fair that we would have experts on the advanced treatment technologies providing advice and the expertise to describe those technologies and help us have the information to evaluate this technology.”

Kelley said she would keep pushing on this as the experts are not coming from the community, but rather the EPA and the Army. The community is at a disadvantage because of this, she says.

“I'm going to keep pushing on this so that we are comfortable with these experts to talk about the technologies we are interested in learning about,”

she said. “I don't mean to be difficult, but I will keep asking the difficult questions.”

Sarno says since they just received word that morning that they'd be willing to join the committee, he has no other details to offer at this time.

The next hour and a half was spent talking about a myriad of issues related to moving forward in finding an alternative method, including key considerations for the analysis and the focus of the dialogue committee.

The next meeting will be from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 25. The technical work group will gather again to continue their discussions before meeting again with the full dialogue committee on Friday via conference call.

For the Wednesday meeting, the public can dial in at 1-866-900-8984, conference ID 92058188. On Friday, the conference ID number will be 92058899.

WEATHER

Continued from page 1

“But, we just don't see many problems inside the city limits with our streets,” he said.

After talking with the

city's steam plant operator early Tuesday, Rolfe said there were few calls last night, and “to my knowledge we didn't lose anything with our power.”

Rolfe says the city experiences more problems with ice on lines and trees than roads, but there is

nothing the city can do to prepare for it.

“One thing you can do is watch the pine trees,” he said. “If the pine boughs start sinking, you know ice is forming. Hopefully, that's not going to happen.”

BYE-BYE BURNOUT

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OPINION

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Have a question about this page or want to submit an opinion? Send a message to Pat Culverhouse.
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Reduce bloated government

The bloat of government needs to be reduced and a good place to start is the Department of Homeland Security.

The weeping, moaning, threats, and fear-mongering coming from Washington about funding DHS are merely political theater designed to scare politicians into keeping this less than worthless department going and growing. DHS has become a readily accessible lobby to badger Congress with claims that public safety is at risk unless DHS spending is increased in every federal budget.

Before there was a homeland security department sheriffs, police chiefs, mayors, fire departments, etc. handled the essential government function of local security. They are still capable of doing so without a DHS.

Grants for local public safety equipment are also no reason for DHS's continuing existence. Without a federal DHS there would still be two federal programs to help local law enforcement get equipment. Also three U. S. government departments give resources to local police departments.

The DHS, a knee-jerk reaction to 9/11, was supposed to eliminate duplicative internal security efforts

and coordinate them. It hasn't. Instead DHS has politically muddled the mission of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), thus helping President Obama thwart immigration control and border security.

Disgusted and demoralized border control professionals are pleading for DHS to stop their political interference and allow them to do their border security jobs.

Further evidence of DHS's wasted existence is the federal DHS report issued Friday, Feb. 20. DHS insinuates that the American political right contains threats that should be feared as much as Muslim terror.

This absurd idea affirms that DHS is nothing but a political tool of Pres. Obama's administration. DHS's nonsense seems timed to give credence to his recent delusional speeches in which he tongue-lashed Christians for the crusades of 1,000 years ago.

It is obvious that Obama with DHS connivance wants to boost his creds with American Muslims by shifting the onus for radical Islam's blood-lust to American conservatives and Christians.



GERALD HOLLAND

Meanwhile many American Muslims are going the Mid-east to join ISIS in burning, beheading, and butchering other Muslims, Christians and all Westerners they can lay their hands on.

Fanatical Muslim sleeper cells and military-style training camps are operating in the U. S. but Homeland Security is not competent to project any push-back against these domestic terrorists-in-waiting and in training. DHS is so bound up with political correctness that they will not profile likely homeland Islamic terrorists.

Transportation safety comes under DHS's purview. The TSA should be revamped so that grandmas in wheelchairs and babies in cradles are not patted down before boarding airplanes as they are now. Systems of profiling and lists of security-cleared fliers must be set up to relieve free and peace-loving Americans from the hassle and personal privacy invasions imposed in hysterical government attempts to avoid offending anybody.

The Department of Homeland Security as it exists is little more than a sinkhole for money and a political arm of Pres. Obama's fundamental transformation of America. It should be done away with.

*Gerald Holland
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EDITORIAL ROUNDUP

The Advocate, Baton Rouge, on sad end of the Nagin era:

The sad remainders of the Ray Nagin era were settled in U.S. District Court with the sentencing of Frank Fradella, bag man to the mayor who thought he was a rock star and ended up in the pen for petty corruption.

Fradella was a devastating witness against Nagin, who is now serving a 10-year sentence. The New Orleans businessman who paid most of the bribes was sentenced to a year and a day in prison on Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Susie Morgan.

Under a plea deal with

the government signed in 2012, Fradella faced a maximum of five years in prison. He was the last figure in the Nagin corruption case to be sentenced, and his punishment is the same as the one doled out to Rodney Williams, another star witness who testified against the mayor.

As the case wound its way through the courts, the people of New Orleans had a right to feel betrayed by Nagin and his cronies. But it is one of the ironies of the case that Fradella's faithful payoffs to Nagin never got him the big score he was after: a huge contract to oversee a redevelopment, perhaps of the decrepit Market Street power plant or the flooded Six Flags amusement park.

Showering the mayor

with "gifts" and free granite for his family's countertop business was a symptom of the rot that ran through Nagin's City Hall, even as a deeply wounded community needed every bit of leadership and integrity that the mayor ought to have offered.

The wages of sin came to about \$200,000 in cash and gifts over several years, including \$112,500 in nine monthly "consulting payments" Fradella made to the mayor after his exit from City Hall. Fradella also testified to providing the Nagin family's granite business with two truckloads of free granite and other payments of \$50,000 in cash through a third party.

In return, Nagin vouched for Fradella with bankers, helping him land a \$40 mil-

lion line of credit, and he tried to help him get a bigger redevelopment contract, Fradella said — though none ever materialized.

Fradella pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery and one count of false certification of financial reports, each of which carries a maximum penalty of five years.

Failure at double-dealing was rarely so comprehensive or expensive. But the real price was paid by the people of Nagin's city and state who looked to him for guidance and saw instead a huckstering prima-donna in one of the great crises of the 300-year history of New Orleans.

Online: <http://theadvocate.com>

PERSPECTIVE

No gatekeepers

FOR YEARS, PEOPLE assumed encyclopedias had to be created by professionals. Then Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales attempted to create an encyclopedia without central planners.

That sounded like a terrible idea to the old gatekeepers — people who hired experts to carefully fact-check and edit every encyclopedia entry. When they heard that Wales would crowdsource an encyclopedia, one Encyclopedia Britannica editor sneered, "The user who visits Wikipedia is a visitor to a public restroom."

But today research shows that Wikipedia is as accurate as Encyclopedia Britannica. Wikipedia is now the sixth most visited website, and the hardcover Encyclopedia Britannica no longer exists.

"It's a bit sad in a way," says Wales. "I love Britannica. But I love candles, too, and I sure wouldn't give up my electric light."

When I say Wikipedia is crowd-sourced, I mean that millions of readers edit the entries. Their power to correct things is weighted according to the reputation they acquire from the "crowd." Without being paid, this army of amateurs takes pride of ownership. They work hard to keep their entries accurate.

After model/actress Anna Nicole Smith died, someone changed her Wikipedia entry to something vulgar. It was fixed within minutes.

The amateur editors specialize, says Wales. "There is a group of people who say, look, we've got all these entries about bridges, we want to make sure they're all really good, because we love bridges; we're bridge fanatics. I mean, who knew bridge fanatics exist?"

But they do. So do fanatics who want to get things right about Roman history, bacteria, spy novels and so on.

That this could be accurate without strict central planning is hard to grasp. Even Wales started out thinking that some kind of planner was necessary. He hired a Ph.D. in philosophy to edit a more centralized online encyclopedia, Newpedia. It failed.

But Wikipedia, without a central plan — just a few simple ground rules — flourished.

Wales likens the lesson to economist Friedrich Hayek's insights about why decentralized, free-market decisions are wiser than centralized, socialist planning: The crowd possesses "local knowledge" that experts can't begin to replicate.

Many of today's most popular websites — Google, Indiegogo, Facebook — thrive because they gave more control to users than to the founders. They also help users get things done without relying on gatekeepers at publishing houses, mainstream media or colleges.

Defenders of government and central planning often say that there are some things we just can't leave to individuals, things that require government central planning, such as road building. But often that's not true either.

In Britain, a highway was damaged by heavy rains. The local government promised to repair it. "After three weeks, they said it's going to be three months. After three months, they said a year," entrepreneur Mike Watts told me.

Mike's wife then told him he should build the road. Although he had no road-building experience, he agreed to try. He went to the local pub and persuaded a farmer to let part of his land be used for the project.

Government said it would take a year to rebuild the road. On TV one bureaucrat said, "you can't just do what you want ... (Everything must) conform to highway standards!"

But Mike built his "private road" in just 12 days. He paid for it by collecting a \$3 toll. Drivers cheerfully paid because Mike's road saved them so much time. (British private toll roads like this are where we got the word "turnpike." Private tollbooth operators would lift a "pike" to let the horses through.)

After Mike started giving interviews about the success of his road, the local government got embarrassed and quickly finished work on its road. Mike had to shut down. He at least managed to break even.

Both he and Wikipedia are reminders that human beings can still do great things, big and small, when they stop waiting for permission from above.

John Stossel is host of "Stossel" on Fox News and author of "No They Can't! Why Government Fails, but Individuals Succeed."



JOHN STOSSEL



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COMMUNITY

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Karlee Osbon, center, was crowned 2015 MHS Darling Saturday night. She was joined by third runner-up Peyton Woods, left, Little MHS Darling Addison Fields, first runner-up Ke'Adria Miller and second runner-up Victoria Williams. Osbon won evening gown competition and tied with Miller in the interview competition, while Miller took honors as People's Choice.
 Bonnie Culverhouse/Press-Herald



Around
 Town

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Linda Weaver Clarke will teach a seminar on important elements of writing family history from 3 until 5 p.m. in the Stewart Center at the Webster Parish Library on East and West Street.

Thursday, Feb. 26

Adult Christian Education Class from 6:30 until 8 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, 1107 Broadway. Topic for second week: Jesus in Galilee (Mark 1:16-4:34).

Parent PARCC test information night will be held from 6 until 7:30 p.m. at the Doyline High School cafeteria. Parents can learn ways to assist a child with the timed PARCC test, express concerns and ask questions about upcoming Phase I and Phase II, learn strategies to assist their child with PARCC tests and the implications of "opting out." call 318-745-3673 for information.

Sunday, March 1

Mayflower Baptist Church will host a 27th anniversary honoring Pastor J. J. Jones at 2:30 p.m. Special guest will be the Rev. Billy Target, Pastor of the Evergreen Missionary Baptist Church of Shreveport.

The United Christian Assistance Program (UCAP) is in need of the following:

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Donations may be made at 204 Miller Street between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday or call 377-6804.

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SPORTS

SPORTS briefs

COLLEGE BB LSU still has

plenty to play for

With only four games remaining in the regular season, the Southeastern Conference men's basketball tournament is starting to come into focus.

It is for some teams, anyway.

In a not-so-shocking development, top-ranked and unbeaten Kentucky has officially clinched a double-bye and won't have to play until the quarterfinals of the March 11-15 tournament at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tennessee.

On the other end of the spectrum, Missouri, which has lost 13 consecutive games since topping LSU in overtime in its conference opener on Jan. 8, will be playing on the first day of the tournament when the bottom four seeds fight for the right to play another day.

Almost everything else is in play at this point, even the possibility of LSU having a shot at securing one of the other three double-byes awarded to the top four teams in the final standings.

LSU, which claimed a much-needed 70-63 win over Florida on Saturday in the Pete Maravich Assembly Center, is currently tied for fifth with Georgia with 8-6 records.

LSU and Georgia are two games behind Texas A&M and Ole Miss, who are in a third-place tie at 10-4 — just one game behind second-place Arkansas.

The bad news for LSU is Arkansas, A&M and Ole Miss all won Saturday to help those three teams maintain their cushion over their nearest pursuers.

The good news is the Tigers play two of those three teams in the final two weeks of the season.

After visiting Auburn on Tuesday night, LSU will host Ole Miss on Saturday and Tennessee on March 4, then close out the regular season at Arkansas on March 7.

As a result, LSU can finish anywhere from second to 12th in the jumbled-up league even though it's guaranteed to be penciled in no worse than sixth by winning three of its last four.

Of course, the Tigers are concentrating on the north end of that scenario.

Since the Tigers are three games behind Arkansas with four games remaining, LSU is likely playing for the third or fourth seed even though the 18th-ranked Razorbacks have Texas A&M, Kentucky and LSU in front of them.

Still, with two setbacks against Texas A&M, giving the Aggies the edge in a two-team tiebreaker, the Tigers have a better chance of catching Ole Miss, whom LSU beat in Oxford on Jan. 14.

COLLEGE BASEBALL

STEVENSON STARS FOR LSU



Andrew Stevenson raced toward the warning track in center field at almost a full sprint.

He flung out his left hand in search of the wall, threw up his gloved right hand and hoped the baseball found his mitt.

Of course, it did. It usually does.

Stevenson's third-inning catch in LSU's 16-2 win over Boston College doesn't seem so important in a 14-run victory. But it saved two runs, preserved the Tigers' four-run lead at the time and helped a rookie starter get out of a troublesome inning.

Thing is, it may have been Stevenson's less impactful play of his explosive weekend in the Tigers' three-game series sweep of Boston College.

Stevenson had two triples in one game Saturday. He had an RBI triple in the series opener Friday afternoon. He stole back-to-back bases in Friday's nightcap of a doubleheader and eventually scored on a sac-fly — it was a line drive to short center field. He used his speed again to score on a wild pitch in Saturday's series finale.

Throw in that eye-popping catch in center field and the junior from Youngsville is developing into LSU's most versatile player. His competition for that title — shortstop Alex Bregman — even admits it. "I think he's the full package," Bregman said.

LSU (6-1) is nearly halfway through its four-week non-conference schedule, and its offensive, defensive and base-running leaders are beginning to emerge.

Catcher Kade Scivicque has a team-leading three home runs and seven RBIs, and outfielder Jared Foster is batting .545. Bregman and second baseman Kramer Robertson have made a host of sticky plays, and Scivicque has gunned down three of five runners.

But only one guy has shined in each of those three areas: Stevenson.

He's second on the team batting at .360, is first in triples with three and has yet to commit an error in the outfield. The speedster has been a menace on the base paths, too.

"Boy, he's electric," coach Paul Mainieri said. "He's an exciting player."

He batted 5-for-9 on the weekend, a stat with a story behind it.

After the 6-3 loss to Nicholls State on Wednesday, coaches tweaked Stevenson's swing. They quieted his hands. He's more still when swinging through the ball.



"I was able to see the ball better and it just kind of paid off," Stevenson said. "Not as much movement. I had too much movement going on making me late for the ball."

Mainieri describes the difference in his contact with the baseball as moving from soft to "jumping off his bat."

Two of Stevenson's triples were line drives down the right field line and a third bounded to deep center. The lefty had a single up the middle and another through the left side of the infield.

He hit over the weekend like that guy who, shocking-

ly, led LSU in batting last season — a year after hitting .193 as a freshman.

"After his freshman year, he made some adjustments you saw last year," Bregman said. "I think he's made even more adjustments. He squares the ball up. And, by the way, he's probably the fastest center fielder in the country and, by far, the best defensive center fielder in the country."

He might challenge for LSU's stolen base title this year. After all, he's been the fastest player on the team three years running.

New hitting coach Andy Cannizaro, a base-stealing guru from his days at

Tulane, is pushing LSU's speedsters — Bregman, Stevenson, Mark Laird, Jake Fraley, Jared Foster — to swipe more bags.

Through seven games last season, the Tigers were 5-of-9 in stolen bases. This year through the first seven? LSU has 11 stolen bases on 12 attempts. Stevenson, 9-for-14 in steals all of last year, is 2-for-2.

"I love stealing bases. It gives you a little rush," he said.

Stealing, hitting triples, making mouth-gaping catches. What's next?

"You'll see him hit a few homers too," Bregman said. "Just wait."

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Charges against Saints' Galette dropped



NEW ORLEANS (Reuters) - Domestic battery charges against New Orleans Saints linebacker Junior Galette have been dropped, prosecutors said on Friday, even as a related civil suit against the football player was filed by his alleged victim.

Galette was arrested last month and charged with beating a 22-year-old woman in one of a string of recent high-profile domestic abuse cases involving NFL players, including Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson and former Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, amid public pressure, in August strengthened the league's penalties against such crimes.

Prosecutors in the New

Orleans suburb of Kenner on Thursday determined that the evidence against Galette was insufficient to show a crime had been committed, Kenner City Attorney Michael Power said.

In addition to dropping a misdemeanor domestic violence charge against Galette, prosecutors dropped a simple battery charge against Galette's cousin, codefendant Terrance Banks.

Also on Thursday, Galette's alleged victim, who has described herself

as his live-in assistant, filed a lawsuit against the football player accusing him of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

It also alleges that Galette allowed an unidentified Saints player to grope her as other teammates watched.

"This young lady has been severely traumatized," said her attorney, Joseph Raspanti. "She seems to be a classic example of an abused woman."

Galette's attorney, Ralph Whalen, on

Thursday provided to local media a letter sent last month by Raspanti offering to forego a lawsuit in exchange for a \$2 million payment to his client.

Raspanti said the letter was confidential and that Whalen should not have made it public. Whalen did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said in a statement that the case is still under review.

The Saints declined to comment.

LOUISIANA OUTDOORS

NWTF banquet set for Thursday in Ruston

Growing up in the south, I have always looked forward to spring and all it affords those who love to get into the outdoors to enjoy what the Good Lord has provided.

For me, that always meant that I'm spooling new line on my reels, getting them cleaned and lubricated, checking my tackle boxes taking inventory of what lures need new hooks and skirts and what needs to be replaced. Springtime means that bass, crappie and bream are headed for the shallows to spawn and wild horses couldn't keep me away.

At least, that's what the springtime outdoors meant to me until 1992 when against my better judgment I gave in to the gentle arm twisting of a fellow outdoor writer to give spring turkey hunting a try.

As it turned out, that trip over to Alabama for my

initial foray into spring turkey hunting was a life-changing experience.

Admittedly, it didn't feel natural to be sitting in the woods clad head to toe in camouflage cradling my shotgun with purple martins twittering far above the flowering dogwoods. Sitting in my boat on a lake casting into pollen-flecked water would have felt much more normal.

Something happened on that April morning under the dogwoods in rural Alabama, though, that changed all that. My guide called in a mature long beard that came in gobbling, strutting, spitting and drumming, I squeezed the trigger and I was immediately and forever hooked. Each spring since, bedded bass and bluegills have taken a back seat to wild turkeys and I've traveled the country from Florida to South Dakota;

Texas to Connecticut chasing these amazing birds.

Hunting wild turkeys is one of my passions; making sure we continue to



HARRIS

a committee member of my local National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) chapter, the North-Central Louisiana bunch of good old guys and gals.

Being a turkey hunter but refusing to support efforts on their behalf is something like somebody handing you the keys to new pick-up truck but

you're not willing to buy the gas to make it go. The truck won't run without fuel; wild turkeys won't prosper without the help of folks willing to support with their dollars projects necessary to make sure they do.

This is why becoming a member of your local chapter of the NWTF is vitally important. How do you do that? It's easy; make plans to attend an annual fund-raising banquet and you're on board.

Our North-Central Louisiana chapter banquet is on the calendar and it's only a few days away. Thursday February 26 is the date of the event to be held at the Ruston Civic Center. Doors will open at 5:30 to give attendees time to browse among the tantalizing array of merchandise to be auctioned off followed by dinner at 7:00.

If you've never attended

a banquet, you're in for a treat. In recent years, the name of these annual fund-raising banquets has been changed to add something vitally necessary to protect and defend the tradition of hunting. These meetings are now called Hunting Heritage banquets with the added goal of helping us protect our Second Amendment rights.

At this year's banquet, you'll enjoy a delicious meal, you'll get to talk turkey with your buddies and have the opportunity to head home with a valuable prize or two.

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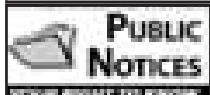
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ACROSS

1 Harvest

5 Crafty

8 One of Henry VIII's Cath-erines

12 Shrek is one

13 Go like the wind

14 Hodge-podge

15 French fries, e.g.

17 Turnpike payment

18 Curvy letter

19 Scepter

20 Relieve

21 Trench

22 Sticky stuff

23 Take ten

26 Baby food

30 Blueprint

31 The whole shooting match

32 Nevada city

33 Whodunit

35 Make pigtails

36 Sphere

37 Luau staple

38 O'Neill's specialty

41 Claiborne of fashion

42 Energy

45 Hindu royal

46 Grand view

48 Teensy bit

49 Superla-tive ending

50 Rainbow

51 Actor Hackman

52 Personal question?

53 Prohibits

DOWN

1 "Clue" weapon

2 lds' counter-parts

3 The "A" in "A&E"

4 Pod occupant

5 "Phooey!"

6 Told a big one

7 "Of course"

8 Sachet mixture

9 Burn soother

10 Stream-let

11 Somer-sault

16 Silly Rabbit's desired cereal

20 Weep loudly

21 Marceau forte

22 Cow-boy's sweetie

Solution time: 22 mins.

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23 Spinning meas.

24 Tarzan portrayer Ron

25 Part of UNLV

26 Thick-ness

27 Meadow

28 Half of bi-

29 Chic, in the '60s

31 Wall St. wheeler-dealer

34 Mound stat

35 Long-popular clown

37 Mottled pony

38 Party pooper

39 Assess

40 In due time

41 Whip

42 Brazilian rubber

43 Eastern poten-tate

44 Just say no

46 Church seat

47 Type of steak

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