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STATE

Senate hears sanctuary cities bill

By Mikaela Cannizzo
@mikaelaac16

More than 500 people testified at the Texas State Capitol Thursday concerning a bill that would prevent cities from determining their own immigration policies.

The Senate State Affairs Committee met Thursday morning for the first public hearing of the proposal, Senate Bill 4. The bill, also known as the sanctuary cities bill, would reinforce statewide compliance with federal

immigration laws.

Charles Perry, R-Lubbock and author of the bill, said the core mission of this bill is to restore the law and apply it without prejudice. Perry said the result of not complying with the law is an undermined society.

"The real cost of continuing to foster, nurture and encourage the contempt of the culture, the contempt for our legal system and the laws contained within is the loss of public trust," Perry said during the hearing.

The bill would allow law enforcement officers to question the immigration status of those involved in a crime. Immigrants in custody would also be subject to review by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and face the threat of deportation, according to the bill.

Additionally, cities failing to enforce federal immigration laws would be denied state grants for a year, according to the bill's fiscal note from the Legislative

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Joshua Guerra | Daily Texan Staff

Senator Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville, listens to more than 500 people testify at the Texas State Capitol Thursday morning.

SYSTEM

Senate committee approves new regents

By Claire Allbright
@claireallbright

Former Sen. Kevin Eltife, businessman James Conrad Weaver and attorney Janiece Longoria are one step closer to being the newest members of the University of Texas System Board of Regents.

The Senate Nominations Committee voted to approve the nominations of the three UT Board of Regents appointees Thursday morning. Their confirmations now are contingent on a full Senate vote.

No objections to the regents nominees were made, and the voting results showed six in favor, zero against and Sen. Borris Miles, D-Houston, abstaining. Sen. José Menéndez, D-San Antonio, was not in attendance.

All three regent appointees are UT graduates and have ties to the University. Eltife served as a Republican state senator from Tyler from 2004 to Jan. 9, 2017. Weaver is the CEO of the San Antonio-based McCombs Partners, an investment management company. Longoria is the former vice chairman of the Board of Regents and would turn over her role as president-elect of Texas Exes upon her regent approval.

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CITY

Burglaries, thefts are in steady decline

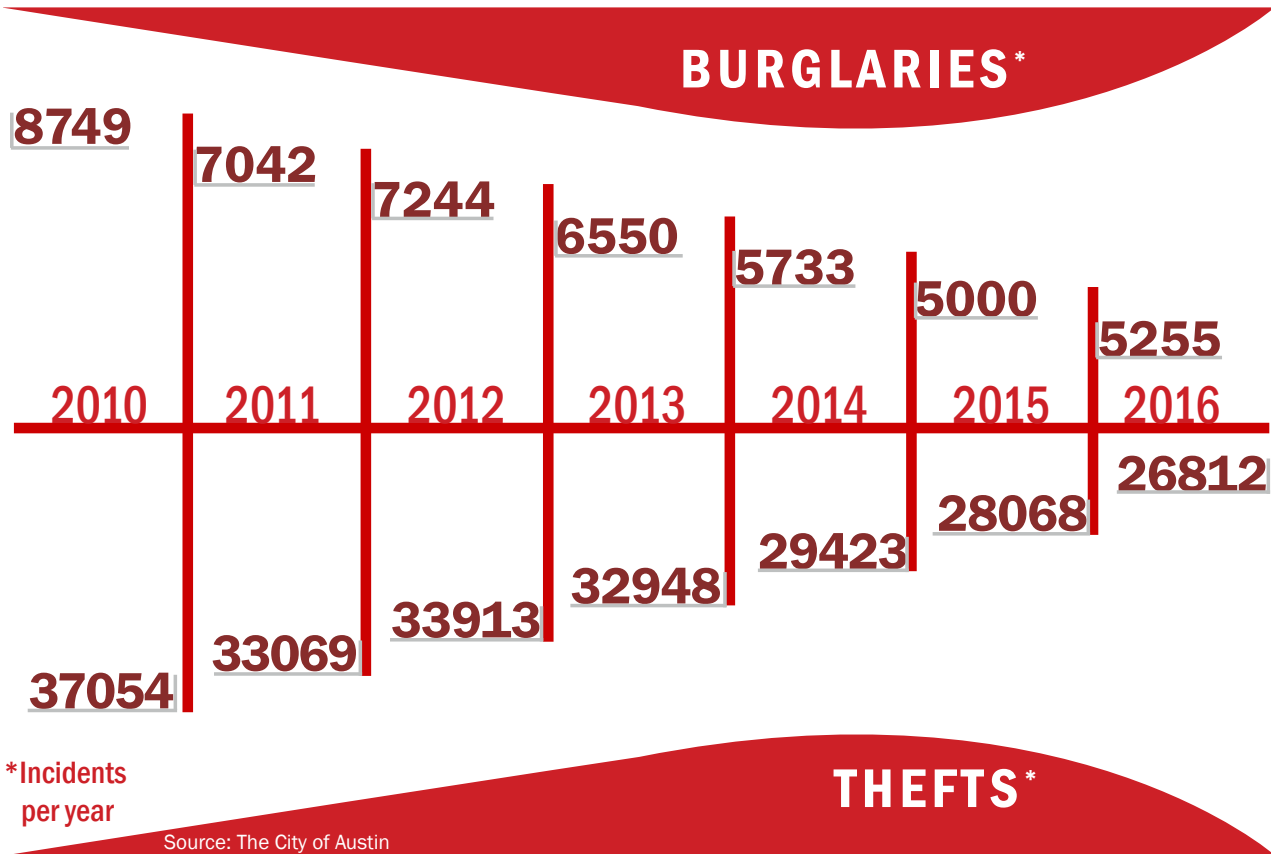
By Catherine Marfin
@catherinemarfin

Burglaries and thefts in the Austin area have been steadily declining since 2007, according to Austin Police Department's Annual Crime and Traffic Reports.

In 2007, APD reported 8,031 burglaries and 34,461 thefts. Nine years later, burglaries have decreased by 34.9 percent and thefts by 22.2 percent, with 5,255 burglaries and 26,182 thefts reported in 2016, according to the year-to-date data in the Chief's December Monthly Report. Theft is consistently the highest reported crime, according to both reports.

Sgt. James Kettleman, who supervises APD's burglary unit, attributed these declines to changes in APD's operations in recent years, specifically in the burglary unit. Prior to 2010, detectives were set up in satellite offices throughout the

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CAMPUS

Panel stresses robust, truthful reporting

By Kayla Meyertons
@kemeyertons

The term "fake news" has loomed over mainstream media since the start of President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign.

On Thursday, UT student journalists brought together professional journalists John Burnett, Abby Livingston and Krissah Thompson to discuss the importance of accurate media coverage during the Trump Era.

"Donald Trump is the biggest story in the world right now," Burnett, Daily Texan alumnus and National Public Radio correspondent, said. "This is why you want to be a journalist is to cover a story like this. You draw on everything you can at the time, and you do your job as best you can. It's challenging, but I also think it's really satisfying to cover a

story like this."

It has never been more important for a journalist to stand up, go to work and get the facts out than during Trump's presidency, Burnett said.

Livingston, reporter and Washington bureau chief for the Texas Tribune, said Trump has significant control over Texas, which has the single most powerful congressional delegation at the Capitol.

"The fear among Republicans on Capitol Hill to oppose (Trump) on anything is very palpable because he has that Twitter feed," Livingston said. "In 30 seconds, he could send out a tweet about an individual member of Congress and destroy them in a primary."

Thompson, a reporter for The Washington Post, said there is a demonization of the press that co-exists with an understanding that journalists will



Angel Ulloa | Daily Texan Staff

Professional journalists John Burnett, Abby Livingston, and Krissah Thompson speak in a panel discussion on Feb. 2.

continue to do their jobs.

"We're going to be there," Thompson said. "We're going to write stories. We're not going to shut up. That's all to say that it's more complicated than it seems, and we all understand we have to have tough skin."

All three panelists agreed young journalists shouldn't be afraid to cover stories and should accept the

personal repercussions of being a journalist.

"People are going to get ugly, get in your face and make you cry," Burnett said. "That's because you're doing your job."

Nicole Cobler, journalism senior and president of UT's Society of Professional Journalist chapter, helped organize the event and

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STATE

Bill seeks to reform, privatize child welfare

By Claire Allbright
@claireallbright

At any given time, 30,000 to 50,000 children are in the Texas foster care system. The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services held their first hearing of Senate Bill 11, which aims to privatize and reform aspects of the child welfare system, Thursday.

Improving Texas' Child Protective Services agency has been named as a top legislative priority for this session by Gov. Greg Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick. The proposed House and Senate budgets also allocate an additional \$268 million and \$260 million to CPS respectively.

"Protecting Texas children is one of my top priorities," Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said in a December statement. "Senate Bill 11 will strengthen the state's ability to investigate child abuse and neglect and improve foster

care accountability and capacity. I commend Chairman Schwertner for putting the safety of Texas children first."

SB 11 expands Foster Care Redesign, a program that began in 2011 to promote a community-based approach to foster care, by contracting the state with private entities in what are known as Single Source Continuum Contracts.

"It is the Legislature's ultimate responsibility to get this right," said Sen. Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown, and an author of SB 11. "...We are going to get this done, we are going to get this right this session."

ACH Child and Family Services was the first non-profit agency to contract in such a way with the state.

During his testimony, ACH CEO Wayne Carson supported SB 11 and said turning case management over to SSCs will provide better care for children.

REFORM page 2

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FRAMES

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Emmanuel Briseno | Daily Texan Staff

“Never gonna give you up, never gonna let you down. Never gonna run around and desert you,” said English singer and songwriter, Rick Astley.

The Texan strives to present all information fairly, accurately and completely. If we have made an error, let us know about it. Call (512) 232-2217 or e-mail managingeditor@dailytexanonline.com.

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TOMORROW'S WEATHER

High

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Low

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Don't stub the tub.

REFORM

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Sen. Charles Perry, R-Lubbock, said Carson's agency is a guinea pig for what the bill would do.

“Communities want to take care of their children we just need to approach them the right way and make sure the funding is there,” Perry said.

Scott McCown, UT Law professor and director of the Children's Rights Clinic, opposed aspects of privatization under SB 11.

McCown said he recognizes the good done by Carson's organization, but said it could all be accomplished without the state turning over case management.

Defending SSCCs, Schwertner said the state is still responsible for representing the children and is not “abdication or outsourcing its responsibility.”

“Some metropolitan areas would do great freed from the shackles of how the state does this,” Schwertner said.

McCown also said



Joshua Guerra | Daily Texan Staff

Senator Schwertner leads a hearing of Senate Bill 11 Thursday afternoon at the Texas State Capitol.

privatizing case management would put caseworkers out of jobs and halt any improvements within the system.

Schwertner said current caseworkers would be given preferential hiring by the SSCCs or have the opportunity for upward mobility within the agency.

Henry Whitman, commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services, said caseworkers have the hardest job in the world.

“I was shocked on what these

THEFT

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city. Today, all officers in the unit work in the same space, a contributing factor to their increased ability to identify crime trends, Kettleman said.

“When we're not together, we're not as aware of what the other group is doing,” Kettleman said. “When we combine our efforts it's more effective when it comes to filing charges. We're more apt to identify trends and show if someone is responsible for other burglaries as well.”

The Texas Penal Code defines a theft as a person taking another's property with the intent to deprive them of that property. A burglary, on the other hand, occurs when a person enters a residence or other building not open to the public with the intent to commit a felony, theft or assault.

Thefts in the Austin area are consistently reported and occur at a rate four to five times higher than burglaries, according to APD's annual crime reports. This difference is primarily due to the fact that most thefts occur as a crime of opportunity, while burglaries are premeditated and require more planning, Kettleman said.

“If someone leaves a phone on a counter at a store and they walk away and someone else picks it up, the person in line wasn't standing there to steal, the opportunity just presented itself,” Kettleman said. “It's a much bigger thing to kick someone's door in and take someone's property.”

Similar to city-wide averages, thefts are also the most commonly reported crime to the UT Police Department, according to their crime reports. While the UTPD primarily responds to on-campus crimes, their jurisdiction stretches beyond the campus area.

“Most of our buildings are open to the public during the day and most things stolen are left out in the open and unattended,” UTPD Lt. Laura Davis said in an email. “(The most thefts happen) when people leave their items unattended. Bikes, laptops then cell phones are the most common.”

The Austin burglary rate has consistently been lower than the national average in recent years, according to APD's annual crime reports. Thefts, however, continue to be consistently higher than the national average and surrounding comparison cities, such as Dallas and Houston, despite these yearly declines.

To prevent burglary and theft, APD and UTPD recommend securing all doors, locks and windows of personal residences at all times, as well as engraving or marking personal items with a state-issued ID or driver's license number and keeping personal items closely attended.

“Often burglaries are committed by individuals who take advantage of easy targets,” APD wrote on their burglary prevention tips web page. “Don't make it easy for them.”

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Budget Board.

Sen. Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville, said he opposes the bill because it creates an environment of distrust between citizens and law enforcement, which could potentially result in a lack of protection for victims and witnesses of crimes.

“Because of the size and the diversity of our state, communities, cities and counties ... know and understand their needs and priorities best,” Lucio said during the hearing. “Forcing local law enforcement to assume responsibility for enforcing federal immigration law not only goes against that principle, but undermines trust between police and immigrant communities.”

Several critics of the proposed law said they were concerned about the implications of the vague language used in the bill. Many people who gave public testimony during the hearing expressed concern about police taking on roles as immigration officers.

In light of the Legislature's discussion on sanctuary

cities, J.B. Bird, UT director of media relations, confirmed UT is not legally allowed to become a sanctuary campus, however he said the University will continue to respect students' privacy.

“The university police, following statewide law enforcement practice, do not ask for a student's immigration status,” Bird said. “UT is firmly committed to protecting student privacy and will not change those policies or values, in accordance with state and federal law.”

Gov. Greg Abbott declared sanctuary cities an emergency item during his State of the State Address Tuesday. While bills usually cannot pass until after the first 60 days of a legislative session, an emergency item can be voted on by legislators before then.

Sally Hernandez, a new sheriff in Travis County, recently announced intentions to not fully comply with federal immigration authorities. In response to these actions representing sanctuary city policies, Abbott said he canceled criminal justice grants to the county on Wednesday, according to the Texas Tribune.

REGENTS

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During last week's nomination hearing on Jan. 26, the committee heard testimony from each of the appointees, all of whom stressed the importance of college affordability, access to higher education and increasing four-year graduation rates.

“Nothing is more important than higher education and making it accessible to all Texans,” Eltife said at last Thursday's hearing.

Several senators also addressed the need to increase communication

between the legislature and the board, citing UT Chancellor William McRaven's recent \$200 million land purchase in Houston, which the legislature claims to have been left in the dark about.

If approved by the Senate, the new regents' terms begin Feb. 1 and expire Feb. 1, 2023. Each of the three outgoing regents — Wallace Hall, Alex Cranberg and Brenda Pejovich — were appointed by former Gov. Rick Perry and began their term, which expires upon the approval of the incoming regents, in 2011.

PANEL

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said the student journalists wanted to push their fellow peers to consider the importance of ethical reporting using reliable sources.

“There sort of seems to be a growing distress (towards) the press from some readers,” Cobler said. “It's an important time for

journalists to think about how we can be fair and accurate in our coverage.”

Journalism professor Robert Quigley said he thinks the panel inspired students to feel confident as young reporters.

“To me, this is the time to be a journalism student,” Quigley said. “You can hear that coming from professionals who are

out there doing this every day that they are emboldened and going to do their jobs and do it fairly and accurately.”

Undeclared freshman Isaiah Zaragoza said he thinks fake news is meant for the tabloids.

“I felt the most inspiring thing was what (Burnett) said about how this new administration is going

to give more journalists work,” Zaragoza said. “I'm ready to do that work.”

The event took place at the Moody Auditorium and was sponsored by the Asian American Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and SPJ. It was free and open to the public.

HEALTH

Discovery aids efforts to prevent eye damage in space

By Freya Preimesberger
@freyapreim

Nearly two-thirds of astronauts, after returning from space, have reported having vision problems. UT Southwestern researchers may have found the cause.

A team from UT Southwestern recently discovered that damage to eyesight may be due to the absence of a changing day-to-night cycle of skull pressure in space. The team published their findings on Jan. 16 in the Journal of Physiology.

Deemed the most critical health problem for astronauts in space, the study linked the mysterious vision problem to structural changes in astronauts' eyes, said Benjamin Levine, UT Southwestern professor of internal medicine and last author of the study.

"If you look behind (astronauts') eyes ... there's evidence that there's damage," Levine said. "It looks like it's getting squashed from behind."

The researchers had previously noted that astronauts have similar symptoms to those caused by elevated pressure inside the brain

and set out to study how zero-gravity affects this pressure, called intracranial pressure.

During this study, eight volunteers, assisted by NASA, were subjected to simulated zero-gravity and low gravity conditions. Researchers measured the pressure in volunteers' brain tissue as they stood up or laid down, and compared the measurements to those taken on earth at normal gravity.

In earth conditions, intracranial pressure is higher when lying down, and decreases after sitting up. The researchers found that low or zero-gravity conditions in space prevented a decrease in intracranial pressure from occurring, keeping intracranial pressure relatively high at all times. These results imply that day-to-night cycles on earth protect brains from illness caused by high intracranial pressure, according to the study.

"You spend most of your days hopefully upright and not (lying down)," Levine said. "The human body is used to 16 hours a day of low pressure and 8 hours a day of higher pressure. In

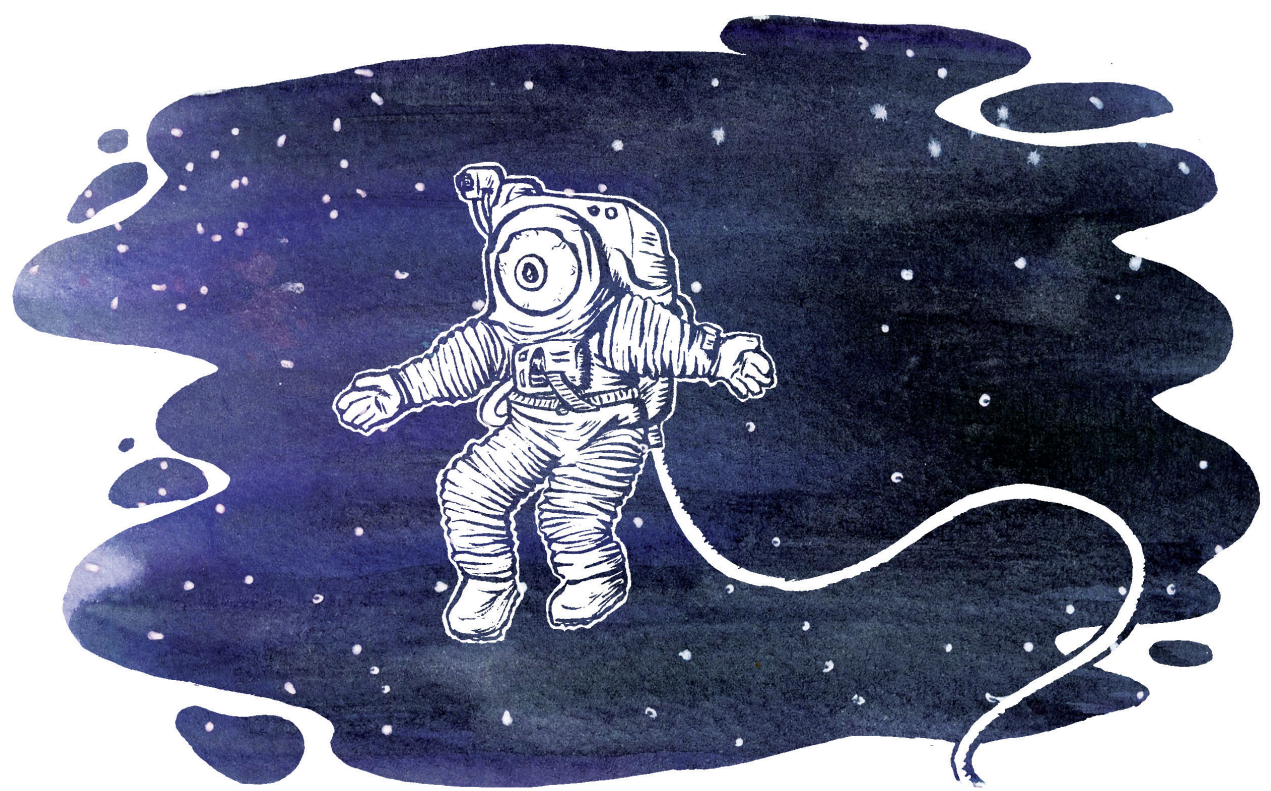


Illustration by Melanie Westfall | Daily Texan Staff

space, you can't stand up, so the pressure is not pathologically elevated, but the brain can never get a rest."

However, scientists need to conduct further research to fully understand how zero-gravity affects eyesight, said Rong Zhang, UT Southwestern associate professor of internal

medicine and co-author of the study. Intracranial pressure may affect the shape of eyes or cause swelling, but the mechanism is not clear, Levine added.

"We do not know the magnitude and potential impact of this problem, which may depend on the duration of space travel,

individual tolerability, as well as the severity of the damage and the underlying pathophysiological mechanisms," Zhang said.

In order to solve this problem, researchers hope to design devices that will simulate the pressure from standing upright during the day. Levine and colleagues

are currently working with a garment company to create a negative pressure sleeping bag, which works by drawing blood away from the brain and lowering intracranial pressure.

"Now can we lower the pressure inside the brain and it give it a rest," Levine said.

ASTRONOMY

Astronomer contends star may have engulfed neighbor

By Jack Stenglein
@thedailytexan

UT astronomy professor J. Craig Wheeler recently discovered more information about the history of red supergiant Betelgeuse, the ninth-brightest star in the night sky and the shoulder of the constellation Orion.

Wheeler recently released research claiming that Betelgeuse, pronounced "Beetlejuice," may have originally had a companion star that it later absorbed.

Wheeler first began studying Betelgeuse about seven years ago in an attempt to estimate when the star will explode as a supernova. His new companion-star theory was formed when studying models of Betelgeuse to analyze its size and temperature. When studying the models, he also noticed irregularities about the speed at which the star spins.



Illustration by Bixie Mathieu | Daily Texan Staff

because the (speed) discrepancy is so big. People might come up with some other explanations, but I haven't yet."

If the companion star did exist, Wheeler estimates that it would have been about the mass of the sun, assuming it was located where Betelgeuse's outer surface is now. Wheeler said this assumption raises more questions.

"We haven't yet addressed the question of how (the companion star) got there," Wheeler said. "Was it born there or was it drug in? There's a whole suite of issues we are just now defining. It's difficult to answer questions like these for one particular system. It's easier to address them statistically. Often progress comes by struggling with a question, though."

The next stage for Wheeler's team is studying the inside of Betelgeuse through a technique known as asteroseismology, which uses waves hitting the surface of a star to produce images of the star's interior. Although Wheeler said it is technically more difficult to apply this process to a

large star like Betelgeuse, asteroseismology should provide a more definite answer as to the star's mass. He said he hopes that answer will help make progress determining when Betelgeuse will explode; his current estimate is around 100,000 years.

"I would still like to pin (the time frame) down more and what the clues would be if it continued as it is now," Wheeler said. "It's an interesting thing to try and work out. We know roughly what (the explosion) will look like. It will be about as bright as the moon for about three months, then fade away. It will be pretty dramatic when it goes."

Wheeler said that while astronomy doesn't affect people directly, it teaches them about humanity's place in the universe.

"You, I or anybody else can go out tonight, find the constellation of Orion and see Betelgeuse," Wheeler said. "You can look at that star with your own eyes and be assured it will blow up someday. These astronomical questions teach us about our place — how we came to be and how we can be."

BIOLOGY

Investigating dino evolution, researchers extract proteins

By Lawrence Goodwyn
@Tyler_Goodwyn

Molecular research offers a new avenue of studying dinosaurs outside of solely examining their fossils.

Elena Schroeter, a post-doctoral researcher at North Carolina State University, and Tim Cleland, a UT chemistry post-doctoral researcher, worked together to extract and analyze the peptides of an 80 million-year-old Brachyophosaurus dinosaur.

Peptides are small protein molecules consisting of roughly 2-50 amino acids that control numerous functions, such as fighting off disease and helping the body grow.

The flightless dinosaur's collagen, a commonly found structural protein, was similar to that of modern crocodiles and basal birds, such as ducks and chickens.

Schroeter said the team used mass spectrometry and bioinformatic software to detect the peptide sequencing. The mass spectrometer revealed the structure of the peptide molecules, and bioinformatics software then ran the data through a large database to tell the researchers what exact peptides were in the sample.

"The software actually tells us what we have in our sample, searching against databases of known proteins, so that way we actually know we have collagen and it gives us a level of statistical confidence in our

identifications," Cleland said.

Schroeter said the dinosaur remains give the scientists a basic look into the phylogeny of the dinosaur, or how it is genetically related to other animals. She added that with enough information about peptide sequencing, any dinosaur can be placed accurately on a phylogenetic tree.

Cleland said the collagen peptides offer the team a look into the evolution of dinosaurs and how this species relates to other animals.

"(This study) gives you the opportunity (to see) how the molecules change over time, allowing you to put the proteins into an evolutionary context," Cleland said. "It also gives information about how proteins are preserved in bones."

The pair based their study on the 2007 research of Mary Schweitzer, North Carolina State University paleontologist and the first person to ever extract proteins from a dinosaur, a T. rex. In 2009, Schweitzer first recovered eight Brachyophosaurus peptides.

Schroeter said studying the molecular makeup of a fossil can incur a lot of backlash from within the science community because contamination of the data is very likely. The tiniest organism can land on the extraction tools, ruining the results of the analysis and rendering the study's results a false positive, she said.

"I took the same sample, and different

protocols and more strict parameters throughout, and I also used much more strict anti-contamination procedures while comparing the samples," Schroeter said.

Schroeter said she used more powerful and accurate methods to analyze the Brachyophosaurus sample than what had previously been used.

Due to the enhanced extraction processes, Schroeter said this study was able to find six new peptides in addition to the initial eight peptides found in the 2009 extraction by Schweitzer.

"(In) the original paper, the machine did high resolution for the first measurement, but low resolution for the second measurement," Schroter said. "In this paper, I used high resolution for both of those measurements and then used more stringent discovery settings to analyze those pieces later."

Schroeter said the next step is to look into proteins other than collagen so that molecular dinosaur research can be expanded.

"Right now, everything we know about how dinosaurs are related to each other is based solely on the shape of their bones," Schroeter said. "The hope is that if we can get sequences from other dinosaurs, we can actually start to test hypotheses about the evolutionary relationships of dinosaurs using more than just the shapes of skeletons."



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FORUM

Forum: Refugee ban hits UT community

By Jordan Shenhar & Emily Vernon
Daily Texan Forum Editors

Here at the Daily Texan Forum, we seek to provide a platform for a variety of perspectives on the week's topic of focus. Today is different. There are not multiple opinions worth printing on President Donald Trump's executive order that keeps refugees and tourists from seven Muslim-majority nations out of the U.S., and which initially extended to U.S. permanent residents from those same nations.

The order won praise from both the Islamic State and the neo-Nazi Daily Stormer blog, and it was roundly condemned by both immigration and national security experts. It subjected hundreds of innocents, whether fleeing persecution abroad or simply returning home, to harrowing detentions and the threat of deportation. And it didn't block entrants from any of the countries whose residents had previously committed Islamist-inspired attacks in the U.S., limiting its appeal even to those inclined to support tight entry restrictions.

So this week's Forum showcases a few different takes on what the ban means and what you can do about it. Evan Rathjen and Irene Gomez of the Liberal Arts Refugee Alliance describe their work with Austin's refugee community, particularly through partnerships with local organizations such as Refugee Services of Texas and Casa Marianella. Levi Joseph, whose Jewish grandparents fled Europe during World War II, explores the historical roots of anti-refugee sentiments in the United States. Finally, Mrinalini Shah, the director of UT's chapter of the Ameri-

can Civil Liberties Union, writes on how to mobilize against misguided immigration policies on the state and local level.

One of the biggest stories of both Trump's election and the blowback it inspired is that no voice is too small to make a difference. As always, we encourage you to make yours heard by reaching out to us at editor@dailytexanonline.com.

Shenhar is a Plan II, economics, and government senior from Westport, Connecticut. Vernon is a rhetoric and writing sophomore from The Woodlands.

FORUM

Working with refugees can assuage irrational suspicions

By Evan Rathjen & Irene Gomez
Liberal Arts Refugee Alliance
Director & Volunteer Coordinator

In a small living room in Austin, Texas, a map covered in thumbtacks takes up most of the wall. Through every series of thumbtacks runs a piece of colored string, following the travels of just one resident at the international emergency shelter Casa Marianella. Across the map stretches a rainbow of journeys from countries across the globe. What the strings cannot tell you, the friendly residents of Casa tell stories of tragedy, but also of triumph in the face of persecution and violence.

As the world faces the largest refugee crisis since World War II, the Texas and federal governments both meet displaced people with hostility. But for the past three years, the Liberal Arts Refugee Alliance has sought to challenge misinformation and fear in our community. Working with organizations like Casa Marianella, we've met asylum seekers who spent six to nine years traveling through six to nine countries. Through resettlement agencies like Refugee Services of Texas, we've worked alongside professional dancers, engineers, theologians and teachers with promising careers that have been put on hold.

You might find these Austin residents bagging your groceries or driving your taxi as they enter an unwelcoming economy and political climate. However, despite Governor Abbott's disapproval, Texas has been leading the way in housing refugees for the past few years, with about 11 percent of the nation's total population of refugees resettled in the Lone Star State. And in Austin alone, we have over 12,000 refugees — not including asylum seekers.

University of Texas students we have talked with are surprised to discover that many of their peers they walk the Forty Acres with everyday are refugees themselves. LARA strongly believes that understanding different groups of people comes from direct contact, and as an organization, we seek to connect students and refugees through meaningful service activities. From adult language partner programs to high school mentorships to elementary arts and crafts, we've toured museums, grown vegetables and even helped win a court case. We've felt inspired, amused

and challenged by our work with refugees. Not once have we ever been made to feel threatened or unsafe — a sentiment echoed by LARA's numerous volunteers.

It is our firm belief that if President Trump or Governor Abbott had a chance to sit down and have a cup of tea with our all-women ESL group, put their hands in the soil next to a Burmese refugee or maybe just share stories and pictures of their families with the friendly faces at Casa Marianella, their hearts and minds would change. Until then, we challenge the UT student body, the Austin community and citizens of the United States to look beyond the stereotypes perpetuated by the news about refugees, immigrants and asylum-seekers. They are our neighbors, our friends, our co-workers and our fellow Americans and they share the same hopes, dreams and desires we do. History is watching.

Rathjen is a history and English junior from Oklahoma City. Gomez is a sociology junior from Wimberley.



Illustration by Audrey McNay | Daily Texan Staff

FORUM

Abandoning refugees violates America's founding principles

By Levi Joseph
Daily Texan Forum Contributor

My paternal grandfather, Hanz Rudolph Joseph, fled Nazi Germany in 1937. He left Germany carrying a passport emblazoned with a swastika and stamped with a large red "J," placed there by the Nazi government to clearly identify him as a Jew. The United States initially denied him entrance, a reflection of the pre-WWII American public's concern about the economic impact of increased immigration. As a result of the U.S.'s decision, he spent two years in Cuba awaiting a visa. He was granted entrance to the U.S. in 1939. Rudolph Joseph went on to serve for nine years in the U.S. military. He fought for the United States. He loved the United States.

My maternal grandfather, Laszlo Ishtvan Ronai, fled Communist Hungary in 1956. In 1941, fifteen years before he left Hungary, the Nazi Government imprisoned him in a labor camp, as his background as an engineer and his physical fitness made him "useful" to the war effort. The

less "useful" members of my family were sent to a ghetto. He survived World War II only to see his country occupied again in 1945, this time by the USSR. After the failed Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Laszlo Ronai came to the United States. He started a business here. He raised a family here. He quickly became an American citizen. He loved the United States.

Recently an old high school friend texted me in support of the ban on travel from seven predominantly-Muslim countries. When I asked him why he supported such a ban, he explained that he thought we needed to "take drastic measures" to "make some necessary changes" to "keep our country safe." When I asked why blanket bans on specific countries were "necessary," he stated that it was to prevent the immigration of "compromised individuals."

I wonder if my German grandfather would have been categorized as "compromised" when he emigrated from Nazi Germany? I wonder if my Hungarian grandfather would have been categorized as "compromised" when he emigrated from Communist Hungary during the Cold War? I wonder if my parents would have ever met. I wonder if I would be alive today.

It is reductive, ineffective and flat-out discriminatory to only use nation of origin when making immigration decisions. An individual is so much more than his nation of origin. In many instances, these refugees are incredibly talented, possessing advanced degrees and skill sets that would benefit our country and economy. In almost every instance, they are at the very least incredibly motivated. Skilled or not, they bring grit and entrepreneurial enthusiasm to a society built on these traits.

It goes against basic economic theory and, more importantly, common human decency to deny legal immigrants entry based only on their nation of origin. These are human beings, complete with faces, families and dreams. We, as Americans, cannot view ourselves as exceptional if we do not behave in such a manner. We, as Americans, cannot look out on the Statue of Liberty with pride, while ignoring its message: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Joseph is a supply chain management and Plan II senior from Dunwoody, Georgia.

FORUM

Immigration activists gear up for state-level battles

By Mrinalini Shah
American Civil Liberties Union
UT Chapter Director

Donald Trump's immigration agenda has hit Texas within days of his taking office. Over the weekend, Trump signed two executive orders to start building a border wall and ban immigration from seven majority Muslim countries. This week, Governor Abbott and the Texas legislature have mimicked his efforts, targeting immigrant communities. This is a time of great threat and great opportunity that has pushed students of all backgrounds to get involved in the formation of the laws they are governed by.

This week, Governor Abbott cut funding for Travis County programs benefiting children, women, families and veterans when Sally Hernandez, Travis County Sheriff, refused to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement on policies similar to Senate Bill 4 that she believed did not benefit Travis County. Following this, the Texas Senate proposed SB4, or the "sanctuary cities" bill, which, if passed, would require police officers to enforce federal immigration policy and allow noncitizens to be detained or deported for offenses as minor as traffic violations. Many are concerned that the bill will encourage racial profiling and deter victims and witnesses from reporting crimes. Over 500 peo-

ple showed up to testify at the bill's hearing this Thursday, which lasted well into the night. Tellingly, Sen. Charles Perry, R-Lubbock, its author, left before close of business.

This election has spurred a wave of grassroots movements throughout the city. The Women's March in Austin drew around 50,000 protesters adorned with Viva la Vulva t-shirts chanting, "This is what democracy looks like." The legislature is in session this semester and a number of organizations have cropped up on campus — including a student chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union — to host community organizing trainings and legislative session workshops. Because the legislature is in session, new laws are being considered. This means you can call the representatives who will be voting on these bills, from home in your pajamas (DailyAction.Org is a good site to get started). If you are looking to volunteer in your community, the TRUST Coalition is a group of nonprofits dedicated to promoting common sense immigration reforms. Many TRUST partners are eager for new volunteers, such as Grassroots Leadership and the ACLU of Texas. If the phone calls, community work or on-campus engagement sounds intimidating, try writing your opinions in the peace of your own home. You can submit an op-ed to the Daily Texan, like I am, and share your unique perspective on what's affecting all of us.



Photo by Rachel Zein | Daily Texan Staff

Protesters gather at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport on Jan. 30 to demonstrate against President Trump's executive order restricting immigration from seven majority Muslim countries.

You don't have to be a politics junkie to get involved in your community and you don't have to know all the answers to demand change. There are people who have been working to create safer, more inclusive communities

for longer than you or I. You don't have to reinvent the wheel — just support their efforts. The power of the people starts with 10 minutes of your day.

Shah is a government senior from Temple.

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MEN’S BASKETBALL

Cleare leaves his footprint despite Texas’ woes

By Trent Daeschner
@TrentDaeschner

Senior forward Shaquille Cleare isn’t one to call attention to himself. He always uses “we” when speaking to the media and never delves into talking about individual accomplishments.

Take Texas’ thrilling 84-83 win over Oklahoma on Jan. 23 for example. Cleare imposed his will all night long. He scored a career-high 23 points, made a career-high 10-of-14 field goals and tied his career high in rebounds with eight. But he uttered a mere five words to assess his performance.

“It’s a great feeling, man,” Cleare said.

He quickly proceeded to talk about the team.

“But to move off me a little bit, I’m surrounded by great guards,” Cleare said. “A lot of guys play with self-ish guys. My guys are really unselfish. They share the ball well, and they put me in good positions.”

Cleare’s humble, self-less personality is one that surely resonates with head coach Shaka Smart, who constantly preaches about the importance of being devoted to the team. At a recent press conference, Smart raved about Cleare’s impact.

“Shaq’s been our most consistent person this year (and) most consistent teammate,” Smart said. “He’s been by far our most unselfish player on our team. He’s been a guy that has sacrificed at times, and his attitude has always been great.”

Cleare has been around the block more than a few times. This is his 10th semester of college. He played two seasons at Maryland, then had to sit out a year at Texas after transferring. With so much youth on this Texas roster, Cleare is like an elder statesman in the locker room.

And while he may not be the most boisterous teammate, he still is one that

players look up to. “We want him to speak up even more just because he knows a lot more than (the younger) guys,” Smart said. “He’s not the most outgoing, talkative guy around people, but when he does speak up, it carries a lot of weight. I’ve just tried to encourage him — you’re never gonna regret speaking up and saying something. You’ll regret not saying it.”

The past six games have been the most productive stretch of Cleare’s career. He’s averaging 8.5 points per game and shooting at a 57.9 percent clip during that span. One of the biggest reasons behind Cleare’s success is the improvement in his post play. Cleare’s crafty baby-hook shot has become a viable asset in his game.

“He’s worked on it a lot,” Smart said. “His confidence has really grown there. Shaq is hard on himself. You’ve probably seen it in some of our games where he’ll



Senior forward Shaquille Cleare protects the ball against a Red Raider defender in Wednesday’s 62-58 home victory against Texas Tech. Cleare looks to stay hot against TCU on Feb. 4.

Rachel Zein | Daily Texan Staff

shoot a jump hook and it’ll hit the front of the rim, and you can kind of see him grimace because he knows that’s a shot he can make.” The Longhorns (9-13, 3-6 Big 12) travel to Fort Worth to meet TCU on

Saturday. The Horned Frogs defeated Texas in the first meeting this season in Austin, 64-61. Freshman forward Jarrett Allen led Texas with 18 points and nine rebounds. Texas struggled to

contain TCU junior forward Vladimir Brodziansky and freshman guard Jaylen Fisher. Brodziansky led all scorers with 19 points, and Fisher added 16 points. Texas tips off against TCU at noon.

SWIMMING AND DIVING

Longhorn men and women hit road for emotional last meet of season

By Wills Layton
@willsdebeast

The long and grueling regular season is coming to an end for the No. 3 men’s and No. 2 women’s Longhorn swim teams.

After a year filled with progress and success, head coach Carol Capitani loves the look of her team heading into its final regular season meet with TCU. She said her squad is trending upward as championship season approaches.

“You always want to be in the mix at the end of the year,” Capitani said. “Just to build a team from the very

beginning and that’s been the story is just that you know every year you don’t know what’s going to happen but we want to be in the race, we want to be in the running you know to do something special.”

The Longhorn men, despite being reigning back-to-back NCAA champions, enter the meet ranking third in the nation. And as senior Clark Smith said, a threepeat is very much on the team’s radar.

“Obviously we want to win again,” Smith said. “We kind of take that day by day, putting in as much effort as we can. I guess this year we

“We kind of take that day by day, putting in as much effort as we can. I guess this year we kind of are considered underdogs, not really expected to win it.”

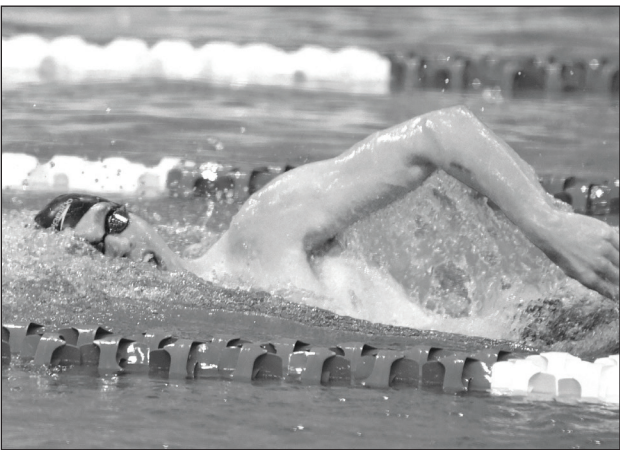
—Clark Smith, Senior

kind of are considered underdogs, not really expected to win it.”

Adding to the emotions of last week’s Senior Day meet at home, the final regular season event also looks to be another emotional send off for the burnt orange. Head coach Eddie Reese said this senior class is crucial to the success of the team.

“The tough part is, since they’ve been here every year, the training has gotten harder and they put up with it,” Reese said. “They’ve helped me keep everyone else in line. We count on our seniors a lot.”

The Longhorns resume competition on Friday at 4 p.m. at the University Recreation Center in Fort Worth.



Zoe Fu | Daily Texan Staff

Senior Clark Smith glides through the water during his final season with Texas’ two-time reigning championship team. Smith is ready for his last regular season meet in Fort Worth on Friday.

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ALBERT LEE

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

SUDOKUFORYOU

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

Always Hoodie Season

Oh.

Ah, Laura probably needed somethin...

Next Day

What? I wasn't in your room last night.

kill Bill sirens

Oh.

Victoria Smith 2017

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DEATH BY CUTE PUPPY OVERDOSE

DEATH BY WORK

DEATH BY SMEARED MAKEUP ...IN PUBLIC

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Quarantined: seussveillance!

With apologies to Steve Mann, Theodor Geisel, and your childhood.

The New York Times Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 1230

ACROSS

1 It's soft and sweet

10 Turpentine source

15 Possible rap sheet entry

16 Empty-headed

17 Pressing

18 Has a rough time?

19 Buttonless garment

20 Appliance in a fast-food restaurant

21 Sears buyer of 2005

22 Military movements

24 Like some passcodes

26 Dumbbell

27 "Goodness gracious!"

28 Defeat by playing mental games, with "out"

31 Lingerie fabric

32 Make use of

33 Dread line?

34 Too small, possibly

35 Spreadsheet filler

36 Disreputable periodical

37 Richard who won a Tony for playing Don Quixote

38 Ticket prices?

39 Man and others

41 "Zero Dark Thirty" org.

42 Site of the Cedar Revolution

43 Shep Smith's channel

47 Fancy wine vessels

48 Source of riches

50 Bete (honor society member, informally)

51 Thomas who is known as the Queen of Memphis Soul

52 Big Apple power supplier

54 Hatch in the Capitol

55 Stadium whose first home run was hit by Mickey Mantle

56 Disengages

57 Families share them

DOWN

1 Vouchers

2 "O, I am fortune's fool!" speaker

3 Bovine product mascot

4 Sports drink suffix

5 Swimmer in cloudy water

6 Skyline points

7 R&B group with a series of 1970s hits, with "the"

8 Show adoration

9 King's collaborator

10 Alan who played the title role in "Rasputin"

11 Smooth finish

12 Good person in a parable

13 Confidentially

14 "Isn't that so?," to Rousseau

23 Dash gauge

25 Infantry division

27 Wand wielders

28 Fountain drink containing grape juice and vanilla ice cream

29 "Try now, pay later" products

30 Player with the most seasons (10) on a World Series-winning team

31 Nickname for U.S. president #30

34 Post-W.W. II rival of Stalin

35 "Gorillas in the Mist" writer Fossey

37 Dorothy and Auntie Em, for two

38 Obsessed with

40 Fish in "The Old Man and the Sea"

41 Like cloak-and-dagger operations

43 Lots of characters?

44 Market town in Surrey

45 Mock-innocent question

46 Right triangle ratios

49 Sub (confidentially)

53 Gilbert and Sullivan's "Princess ..."

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

ENGR TABOR ITCH
POLO ILLGO TERI
ECOL FEARS SAYS
EARLOFCHESTER
SRI BAT SOLDTO
BARONOFRENFREW
UEY RIAS ORE
RABE BOP RPMS
ELI TOBY KFC
DUKEOFCORNWALL
OMEARA ILLAIX
PRINCEOFWALES
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BASEBALL



Joshua Guerra | Daily Texan Staff

Redshirt junior Bret Boswell connects with the ball in his wheelhouse and looks to be an offensive threat for Texas in the upcoming season. Boswell was named shortstop on the Big 12 Baseball Championship All-Tournament team after hitting .600 and slugging .933.

Longhorns host friendly alumni game

By Vanessa Le
@vanesssale

Although America’s furry symbol of spring saw its shadow on Groundhog Day, another season has arrived, nonetheless — baseball season.

The Longhorns are ready to kick off their 2017 season at UFCU Disch-Falk Field in the annual Texas Baseball Alumni Game on Saturday at 2 p.m.

Saturday’s friendly matchup serves as a homecoming for many burnt orange alums who have laid the groundwork of tradition for the Texas baseball program. Longhorn fans can expect to see the faces of current major leaguers on the field, including last season’s graduates: catcher Tres Barrera and pitcher Ty Culbreth.

New head coach David Pierce looks forward

to his first alumni game and understands its significance to the history of the program.

“We have some tremendous history,” Pierce said. “We get to socialize with those guys, have a dinner with them and hopefully our players understand that history that they’ve created here.”

Regardless of the game’s outcome, the Longhorns will have their first opportunity to set the tone for 2017. Senior infielder Kacy Clemens aims to spark the team’s offensive power and create a high-scoring mentality for the Longhorns.

“We’re here to rake,” Clemens said. “We’re not afraid of anybody. There’s no more playing for one run. We’re playing to score every single inning. That’s the kind of our mindset now.”

An aggressive offense

for Texas is likely to be fueled by the long ball after the outfield fences were retracted during the off-season. But redshirt junior pitcher Morgan Cooper said he believes the ballpark will still be a pitcher’s playground.

“They’ve still got to hit it,” Cooper said. “Some balls in that past that have hit the wall are going to go out but the mentality as a pitcher is, they’ve still got to hit it.”

With both pitchers and hitters eager to put on a show, the Longhorns expect to make a trip to the College World Series this year. Redshirt junior infielder Bret Boswell said the chemistry amongst the squad can be a catalyst for success in the upcoming season.

“We’re really excited,” Boswell said. “This is the tightest I think we’ve ever been since I’ve been here.

We’re really looking forward to what we’ve got coming for us.”

But the road to Omaha won’t necessarily be smooth for Texas. The team must overcome the adversity it has faced as a result of two disappointing seasons in 2015 and 2016. Cooper recognizes Texas’ past struggles and highlights Pierce’s crucial role in bringing the team back to championship form.

“Everybody wants to beat us and we’ve got to bring it everyday,” Cooper said. “So he needs to be tough and I think he’s done a great job of letting us know we’ve struggled in the past but we’ve got the guys to do it.”

During his first season at the helm, Pierce said he is focused on helping players avoid undue pressure and rebuild their confidence in time for playoffs.

“

We’re here to rake. We’re not afraid of anybody. There’s no more playing for one run. We’re playing to score every single inning. That’s kind of our mindset now.

—Kacy Clemens, Senior infielder

“What I’d like to see them do is ... understand how talented they could possibly be and really have confidence in themselves to go out and play,” Pierce said. “To me, there is a sense of hunger where they have a bitter taste in their mouth and they want to make a difference this year.”

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

Texas hosts Kansas State in preparation for Baylor

By Dalton Phillips
@Dalton_Tweets

The No. 12 Longhorns seek to build momentum before Monday’s division-defining showcase against No. 2 Baylor.

Texas hosts Kansas State on Saturday in the teams’ first matchup of the season. The Wildcats are the Longhorns’ first opponent with a winning conference record since their Jan. 17 contest against Oklahoma.

Barring a huge upset from TCU over Baylor, a Texas win on Saturday means that Monday’s game against the Bears would decide the sole ownership of the No. 1 seed in the Big 12, which in turn could affect seeding for the approaching Big 12 tournament.

Given what’s at stake, head coach Karen Aston isn’t taking any chances by looking too far ahead.

“We’ve taken one day at a time, and it wouldn’t matter who we were playing Saturday, Monday, Tuesday — it doesn’t matter what we’re doing,” Aston said. “I’m not the type of coach anyway that would look ahead.”

The Wildcats enter Saturday’s game riding a two-game winning streak and sit comfortably at fourth place in the Big 12, just ahead of No. 22 West Virginia.

Texas, meanwhile, has yet to drop a game in 2017.



Joshua Guerra | Daily Texan Staff

Senior center Kelsey Lang dodges a West Virginia defender during her 13-point night to boost the Longhorns to a 69-54 victory on Jan. 29. Texas has won 15 straight games.

The Longhorns boast a flawless 11-0 conference record — part of a 15-game winning streak that ties the 12th longest in program history.

Texas is coming off a 85-71 road win over Oklahoma State on Wednesday evening. Junior guard Ariel Atkins carried much of the offensive load against the Cowgirls, pouring in a career-high 26 points on

11-13 shooting in just 23 minutes of action.

Senior center Kelsey Lang collected her ninth career double-double against the Cowgirls, adding 21 points and 12 rebounds to go along with two blocks in 34 minutes.

Four of Texas’ five starters contributed double-digit scoring numbers, marking the 17th time this season that three or more

players have posted 10 or more points in a game.

Lang will likely have her hands full with center Breanna Lewis, Kansas State’s leading scorer and rebounder. The senior is averaging 14.4 points and 8.9 rebounds through 23 games and is one of only 24 Wildcats to notch at least 1,000 career points and 500 boards.

Despite having a young



squad, Aston is confident her players can stay focused.

“We come in here Saturday with, again, another team that’s fighting for a bid,” Aston said. “I don’t think we’ll get into that. I don’t think we’ll have a problem with that.”

Texas and Kansas State hit the hardwood Saturday at 5 p.m. in the Frank Erwin Center.

SIDELINE

NBA

	HAWKS
	113
	ROCKETS
	108

TODAY IN HISTORY

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TOP TWEET



Imani Boyette
@ImaniBoyette

“Once you accept people for who they are and not who you need them to be, you give them the space to surprise you.”

SPORTS BRIEFLY

Women’s golf heads to Orlando for UCF Challenge

The 19th-ranked Longhorn women head to Orlando, Florida, to play in the UCF Challenge at Eagle Creek Golf Club on Sunday.

Central Florida is set to host a strong field of women golfers in the 54-hole stroke play tournament lasting over a span of three days.

Texas last appeared at the Las Vegas Collegiate Showdown on Oct. 25, finishing in fourth place to collect its fifth top-four ranked showcase in all five fall tournaments. The team also tied its lowest 18-hole program history record with a score of 277 at the event.

Freshman Greta Volker carried her team with a 7-under 65 performance to tie the Longhorn record and finish in second place just one stroke behind the winner.

“Overall, this fall was solid, and we haven’t even scratched the surface of what we are capable of,” head coach Ryan Murphy said after the showdown. “I look forward to watching this team get better and better.”

Volker and her fellow senior teammates Julia Beck, Anne Hakula and Haley Mills also showed strong academic performances off the field after landing on the Big 12 Commissioner’s Honor Roll announced Friday.

Moving forward, Murphy’s squad can carry its momentum into Sunday’s tournament and bring home more success during the season.

—Vanessa Le

CAMPUS

Faculty honored for championing black education

By Acacia Coronado
@acaciatree18

As a sophomore in college with a 1.8 GPA, Leonard Moore was uncertain about his future in academia until a professor pulled him aside and showed him tough love. Now a history professor teaching at UT, he wants to give students the second chance he was once given.

“I really believe if he wouldn’t have invested in me, I wouldn’t be here, and I wouldn’t be able to in turn do that for other students,” Moore said.

The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural Center and Genealogy Center will be honoring history professor Dr. Leonard Moore and Dr. Reginald Baptiste, director of pre-health professions at Dell Medical School, for their work helping to alleviate the crisis in black education — the national theme

for Black History Month this year. Baptiste spent the last few years working to develop programs that expose youth to the medical field. Moore, associate vice president of academic diversity initiatives, works with students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds to expand their academic possibilities through travel. The group has taken trips to Cape Town, South Africa and Beijing, China.

“One of the greatest satisfactions for me is when we take kids to South Africa or China and some have never been on an airplane before,” Moore said. “When we are flying and we are about to land, I glance over and look at those students looking out the window, and what you see is a person’s life is about to be changed.”

Para Agboga, site coordinator for the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, said that both

Moore and Baptiste have gone above and beyond to help expose students to opportunities they might not have otherwise discovered.

“They are trailblazers because they are willing to go out there and do something that may not have been done before, and they are passionate about what they do,” Agboga said. “They put all of their heart and soul into it.”

Every year, the museum makes a banner with images and names of those who they believe embodied the year’s theme for Black History Month. Since the theme this year focuses on the crisis in black education, they felt the honor should fall to those who they felt recognized the crisis and did something to help.

Baptiste said his past teachers, such as his 8th grade life sciences teacher, inspired him to help young children discover their possibilities.



History professor Leonard Moore (pictured) and Reginald Baptiste, director of pre-health professions at Dell Medical School, will be honored by the George Washington Carver Museum for their efforts in alleviating the crisis in black education.

Ann Morris
Daily Texan Staff

“I had a lot of mentors growing up in the medical center that allowed me to work in their labs, so I am just trying to do what was done for me,” Baptiste said.

Baptiste helped develop medical programs for middle and high school students that introduce them to different health professions. They in-

clude monthly talks for high school students with health professionals and summer camps that allow them to have hands-on experience with medical experience.

Moore said he felt honored to be recognized, but his greatest joy is seeing 1,200 underclassmen mature and develop their careers. Moore

said he hopes he will make a difference in the lives of his students in the same way that his college professors positively impacted his own life.

“(They) really motivated me and checked me when I needed to be checked,” Moore said. “But more importantly constantly told me they believed in me.”

MOVIE REVIEW | ‘THE COMEDIAN’

De Niro misses punch line in aimless but enjoyable ‘Comedian’

By Justin Jones
@justjustin42

Robert De Niro’s legendary career has earned him a place in the pantheon of great actors, but his current streak of mediocrity truly disappoints, with his new film “The Comedian” falling right in with the trend.

The film aims to be recognized as a heartfelt dramedy, but its weak character development lands it somewhere between a meandering mess and a second-rate Woody Allen imitation.

De Niro plays Jackie Burke, an aging insult comic known for his role in “Happy Days”-like sitcom, “Eddie’s Home,”

as the goofy father. At the beginning of the film, Burke is touring comedy bars around New York City, resisting requests to say the classic lines of his former character while also trying to make a name for himself as a stand-up comedian. When prank vloggers interrupt one of his shows, Burke loses his temper and lashes out, resulting in spending a short stint in prison and doing community service.

While serving out his community service sentence, Burke meets Harmony Schiltz (Leslie Mann), a younger, but still not quite young, daughter of millionaire Mac Schiltz (Harvey Keitel). Harmony is a free

spirit who forces the world to meet her on her own terms, disappointing her father. The film focuses on the dynamic between Burke and Harmony but is filled in with smaller roles for a brilliant supporting cast including Danny DeVito, Patti LuPone and Cloris Leachman.

What makes watching “The Comedian” fun is mostly the result of great actors playing roles they obviously enjoy and not because of any substantial plot content. When entertaining secondary characters enter the scene, such as Lupone’s Leachman and DeVito’s exasperated brother, the movie loses its rhythm.

Celebrity comedians also play cameo roles in the film, such as

the notably odd and self-serving decision to have Billy Crystal as himself. This raises the question: In the universe the movie has created, does the 1999 film “Analyze This,” starring Billy Crystal and Robert De Niro, exist? It raises the question for the viewer, if Billy Crystal exists, does Robert De Niro? It is a distractingly odd choice that rips the viewer out of the film just to wink at the audience.

The plot of the film is hard to describe in detail simply because there isn’t much of it to begin with. “The Comedian” goes where it feels, which works for some movies, but this requires compelling, well-written leads, which this film lacks. Though De Niro and Mann

have strong chemistry and act well together, their roles are so paper-thin that they are impossible to emotionally invest in. Burke makes a few turns in the last act that show some hints of depth, but Mann is underserved, with a typical love interest role and not much else, save for an out-of-nowhere, groan-inducing “twist.”

Director Taylor Hackford fails to add anything to the film, as the only semblance of style is relaxed jazz music and exterior shots of New York between scenes. Reportedly, De Niro has tried to make “The Comedian” for eight years, with a rotating door of directors including even Martin Scorsese. One cannot help but

THE COMEDIAN

Rating: R
Runtime: 119 minutes
Score: ★★☆☆

wish to see Scorsese’s version of this film, replacing Hackford’s drab, imitative direction with visually appealing style.

Like last year’s German film “Toni Erdmann,” “The Comedian” attempts to tell a comedic story with a focus on characters rather than humor. But where “Erdmann” played on the over-worn dramedy tropes, “The Comedian” falls headfirst into them, leaving an empty but somewhat amusing time at the movies.

MOVIE REVIEW | ‘THE SPACE BETWEEN US’

Tedious sci-fi teen romance deserves banishment to Mars

By Charles Liu
@CharliInDaHaus

Good sci-fi films make it easy to suspend disbelief. Bad ones don’t. Take “The Space Between Us,” which asks us to believe NASA would be dumb enough not to check if one of their astronauts is pregnant before a mission to Mars.

Nonetheless, astronaut Sarah Elliot (Janet Montgomery) shacks it up with an anonymous beau, highfives it to Mars and gives life to a son before succumbing to complications resulting from childbirth. Back on Earth, mission director Nathaniel Shepherd (Gary Oldman) decides to keep the child a secret to avoid public outrage at NASA’s carelessness.

Sarah’s son, Gardner (Asa Butterfield), grows up on Mars under the guardianship of one of the scientists, Kendra (Carla Gugino), and dreams of life on Earth. He’s formed an online friendship with a troubled Colorado girl, Tulsa (Britt Robertson). This idea pushes the boundaries of reasonability, as “The Space Between Us” takes place in the near future, and human technology doesn’t seem advanced enough to feasibly allow the kids to Skype each other without signal delay between Earth and Mars.

When Gardner uncovers a video of a man he believes to be his father, he resolves to finally journey back to Earth and find the only family he has left. NASA manages to shuttle him back, but Shepherd realizes Gardner’s body is unsuited for our planet’s environment, and he will die if he does not return to Mars.

But Gardner couldn’t care less about his impending demise — he flees from NASA,



Courtesy of STX Entertainment

Gardner (Asa Butterfield) and Tulsa (Britt Robertson) are bogged down by cheesy romance in “The Space Between Us.”

meets up with Tulsa and sets out on a journey that involves crashing a plane into a barn, stealing random cars and appropriating strangers’ electronic devices. But Bonnie and Clyde get away with their crimes and, because they’re in love, that somehow makes their felony-ridden road trip completely okay.

Yes, this isn’t just a sci-fi movie — it’s a teen romance sci-fi movie. So sit back and enjoy the incessant use of pop songs and scene after scene of Gardner professing his undying love for Tulsa. His compliments are so cheesy that you’ll be wondering if the filmmakers were trying to make cinematic fondue.

And that’s a shame, because Butterfield and Robertson play their underwritten characters very well. When the movie casts light on Gardner’s fish-out-of-water moments, such as his disarmingly sweet attempts at chivalry and his first experience with rain, “The Space Between Us” offers glimpses of a more authentic tale beneath its commercial aspirations. Tulsa is similarly charming when she’s not causing property damage

THE SPACE BETWEEN US
Runtime: 121 minutes
Rating: PG-13
Score: ★★☆☆

and determinedly leading the naive Gardner across the American West.

The adult characters, on the other hand, are dumb, but at least they aren’t one-dimensional villains. Shepherd and Kendra pursue Gardner because they are acting in his best interests, not because they want to deny him happiness. Oldman and Gugino are talented enough to shine even when the writing doesn’t do them any favors.

All in all, 90 percent of “The Space Between Us” is tolerable enough. The same can’t be said for the outright ridiculous climax, which features a double twist, an impromptu spaceship launch and nonsensical medical jargon. It’s so mind-numbingly stupid that even the teen demographic will raise their eyebrows. Gardner might be able to win Tulsa’s heart, but his movie won’t win ours.

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