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Frame Switch may dissolve

RICHARD STONE
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A joint project between the cities of Taylor and Hutto that had been lauded as a breakthrough agreement may fizzle out soon.

The Hutto City Council Thursday gave that city's staff the go

See **DISSOLVE** • page 3

Woman caught with half a million

STAFF REPORTS

KINGSVILLE – On Tuesday, a woman who was just released from jail, found herself arrested again, this time with more than half a million dollars.



Deary

According to a press release from the South

See **CAUGHT** • page 3

Time for spring cleaning

The Annual Spring Clean Up in Taylor will be held Saturday, April 22, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional volunteers will be working in the Bull Branch area helping neighbors with their clean up.

See **CLEANING** • page 3

Time to go egg hunting

JASON HENNINGTON
news@taylorpress.net

It's springtime, which means it's time for Easter egg hunts. Two of the annual hunting events will return this year.

The city of Taylor will host its annual Easter egg hunt on April 15 at 10 a.m. in Heritage Square.

See **HUNTING** • page 3

Taking a SWAT at crime



A Williamson County SWAT team executed a search warrant on a Taylor home Thursday afternoon.

Photo by Jason Hennington

“I was at home and heard something, but I thought it was thunder. When I came out, I saw [officers] shooting out the windows.”

Guns and drugs found in Taylor raid

JASON HENNINGTON
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On Thursday afternoon, a Williamson County SWAT Team executed another search warrant in Taylor and found drugs and guns in the suspect's home.

According to the Williamson County Sheriff's Office, around 3:15 p.m., officers executed a narcotics search warrant in the 400 block of W. Rio Grande St. The person who lives in the house was not home at the time of the search.

Officers found 35.6 ounces of marijuana, a loaded semi-automatic rifle and Smith & Weston 9mm semi-automatic pistol, which was reported stolen out of Travis County.

During the search, witnesses said they saw the SWAT team in the neighborhood and when they entered the home.

“I was at home and heard something, but I thought it was thunder. When I came out, I saw [officers] shoot-

ing out the windows,” one neighbor said.

He said this was not the first time law enforcement had been in the area.

Last week on the opposite end of Rio Grande, a SWAT team executed a warrant and caught a suspect in the process of manufacturing crack cocaine. Officers also found seven ounces of cocaine along with \$10,000 in cash and a stolen handgun.

Other witnesses were in the area waiting for their

children to be dropped off by the school bus, and saw the SWAT team.

A small area of W. Rio Grande was blocked off by SWAT vehicles, which caused buses to use alternate routes.

Although no one was arrested during the search, Sheriff's do have a person of interest. The name has not been released pending the investigation.

More information will be released as it becomes available.

Local artist wins Song of the Year award

FORT WORTH – The classic Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters song “You Were Meant to Ruin My Dreams,” found new life through local fiddler and vocalist Paul Schlesinger. The song won Song of the Year at the Will Rogers Academy of Western Artists (AWA) awards banquet on March 16 at the Brown-Lupton Ballroom on the Texas Christian University Campus in Fort Worth.

“The original recording is a tad slower than my version, and by today's recording standards

sounds a bit primitive,” Schlesinger said. “I always liked the song and occasionally performed it live at shows and dances. I thought it had potential, and I decided to revamp it for my CD, adding twin fiddles, twin guitars, drums, and a swing-style chord pattern.”

“You Were Meant to Ruin My Dreams” was written in 1949 by lyricist Cecil R. “Butterball” Harris and composer Arlie A. Carter, who were band members of Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters from

Taylor. The song was originally recorded by the Melody Masters for Imperial Records, and sung by fiddler Perk Williams. Though all involved with the original recording are now deceased, both Williams and Carter taught Schlesinger how to play the fiddle in the early 1990s.

“It sold well enough regionally, but was not a hit in 1949,” Schlesinger said. “In 2011, Cecil Harris told me he wrote the song to fit around the heart-break theme, using a

See **AWARD** • page 2



Paul Schlesinger (center) accepts the Western Swing Song of the Year award at the 21st Annual Will Rogers Academy of Western Artists awards banquet in Fort Worth, March 16. Presenting the award is Billy Bowles (left) and Cathy Whitten, DJs of radio station KSSL FM in Slaton. Over 400 western artists attended the event.

Photo by Steven Jeffers

Pints & Politics: An artist's view of success

JASON HENNINGTON
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This month's Pints, Politics & Culture featured a local artist who has helped paint a brighter downtown Taylor, Judy Blundell.

Blundell, the 2016 Citizen of the Year, has a family property outside of town and said Taylor is a nice fit for her as an artist.

“As a painter, I can work out here, I can have a studio out here

and afford to live here,” she said.

Blundell and Mark Nibbleink co-own the McCrory Timmerman building and project, which was named the 2016 Business of the Year.

“Mark and I decided to put our money where our mouth is, and invest in our own community,” she said.

Blundell looked out the window and smiled when asked what downtown Taylor would look like with out her and Nibbleink's efforts.

“I think it would look a

great deal like it did four years ago,” she said.

She said there were plenty of people who brought ideas to Taylor, but were underfunded and may not have known what it really takes to build, such as codes and ordinances.

Blundell said she and Nibbleink, “have to be realistic” about where they are.

“This isn't Austin . . . our whole motive has been to try and get people to be able to start. Take an idea and try it out,” she said.



Local artists and entrepreneur Judy Blundell was the guest of this month's Pints, Politics & Culture interview at the Texas Beer Company.

Photo by Jason Hennington

See **SUCCESS** • page 2



Drug take back event April 29

The Taylor Police Department will once again participate in the United States Drug Enforcement Administration's Drug Take Back Event.

People can bring their expired and unused prescription drugs to City Hall, 400 Porter St., on Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Police officers will be available to help anyone who wants to participate in the program.

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Many Americans are not aware that medicines that languish in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse.

Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are at alarming rates, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs. Studies show that many abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. In addition, many Americans do not know how to properly dispose of their unused medicine, often flushing them down the toilet or throwing them away – both potential safety and health hazards.

As a reminder, no sharps, such as needles will be accepted. Citizens are encouraged to bring any prescription drugs that are outdated or no longer needed for drop off. There will be no questions asked, and citizens are not asked to identify themselves in order to participate in the program.

House passes budget after 15-hour debate

EDGAR WALTERS
Texas Tribune

After 15 and a half hours of debate on hundreds of amendments to the Texas House budget, lawmakers in the lower chamber Thursday passed the two-year, \$218 billion document, with 131 votes in favor and 16 votes against.

The House vote included using \$2.5 billion from the state's savings account, colloquially known as the Rainy Day Fund. State Rep. John Zerwas, R-Richmond, thanked lawmakers for exhibiting "true leadership" with their willingness to tap the fund, "instead of electing to use an unconstitutional transfer from the transportation funding."

That was a jab at the Senate, which last week approved its version of the two-year budget using a \$2.5 billion accounting trick to free up funds dedicated to highway spending. The House must now work with the Senate, which is under the leadership of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who vehemently opposes using the Rainy Day Fund, to reconcile their budget differences.

House lawmakers, debating the budget late into Thursday night, took several jabs at Patrick and other statewide elected officials throughout the evening.

Included in the fray were Gov. Greg Abbott, who saw one of his prized economic development programs defunded; Patrick, who heard a resounding "no" when his favored proposal to subsidize

private school tuition with public funds was put to a vote; and Attorney General Ken Paxton, who lost more than \$20 million from his agency's budget for lawsuits.

On the winning side of the House budget debate were child welfare advocates, who saw funding for foster care and Child Protective Services tentatively boosted; social conservatives, who scored \$20 million for the Alternatives to Abortion program; and the lieutenants of House Speaker Joe Straus' leadership team who, in a display of unity, easily brushed aside most challenges from far-right Republicans.

Statewide GOP leaders took some of the heaviest blows in the House chamber. Lawmakers there voted to strip \$43 million from the governor's Texas Enterprise Fund, the "deal-closing" fund the state uses to lure businesses from elsewhere, and divide it into two equal pots: one for Child Protective Services and foster care funding, the other for a program that pays for disabled children's physical, occupational and speech therapy services. Both are hot-button issues that have dominated the House's budget negotiations during this legislative session.

A spokesman for Abbott said he was unfazed by the vote. "As we get closer to a final budget, we believe the Legislature will ultimately fund critical economic development programs that create jobs and keep Texas in the

vanguard of attracting new businesses in the future," John Wittman, the spokesman, said in an email.

Private school subsidies, a pet issue of Patrick and his Senate, also suffered a perhaps fatal wound on Thursday. House lawmakers voted 103-44 to prevent state money from being spent to subsidize private school tuition in the form of vouchers, education savings accounts or tuition scholarships.

Paxton's attorney general's office also saw funding gutted by House lawmakers who opted to instead fund programs that serve vulnerable children. Foster care funding would receive \$21.5 million that was previously intended to pay for Paxton's legal services budget under a proposal by state Rep. Ina Minjarez, D-San Antonio, that passed 82 to 61.

Meanwhile, several other controversial topics ignited debate on the House floor, including multiple amendments that aimed to boost funding for the state's Alternatives to Abortion program, which provides counseling and resources to pregnant, low-income women. As of Thursday evening, one proposal passed and the rest appeared to have been set aside in a back-door compromise. The one measure that was approved stripped \$10 million per year budgeted for air quality control at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and moved it to the anti-abortion program.

Other controversial issues were killed before they could even enter the fray. One proposal from State Rep. Jonathan Stickland, R-Bedford, which would have cut state funding to public universities that allow non-citizens, including undocumented immigrants, to pay in-state tuition rates, never saw the light of day. That's because state Rep. Rafael Anchia, D-Dallas, killed the amendment on a technicality, using a legislative procedure known as a point of order.

Another proposal that died without a vote would have regulated bathroom use in government buildings, mirroring the spirit of the Senate's controversial "bathroom bill."

The proposal, by state Rep. Valoree Swanson, R-Spring, appeared to be withdrawn as part of a compromise to bypass floor debates on dozens of amendments and instead insert all of them into a non-binding portion of the budget widely referred to as "the wish list."

The House agreed to the compromise just before 2 a.m., shortly after the passage of an amendment by Tea Party-aligned state Rep. Matt Rinaldi, R-Irving, that is meant to bar state government funds from Planned Parenthood. It passed 101 to 43. Then, just a few minutes later, the chamber approved its overall budget.

The Texas Tribune is a non-profit news organization focused on statewide legislative and policy issues.

AWARD • page 1

'hook line' that would hopefully catch the public's fancy."

Jimmy Heap, Jr., who grew up in Taylor and has since become one of Nashville's veteran country drummers, is delighted to see his dad's music still being recognized today.

"We are proud to call Paul a friend and to see him carrying on true country music... As the son of Jimmy Heap I feel I can truthfully say that my dad, Bill Glendenning, and Butterball Harris would be proud of the way Paul honors and carries on the Melody Master legacy. Keep up the good work and hope to share the same stage with you in the near future," Heap Jr. said.

When Schlesinger was notified in January that he was nominated, he said he did not expect to win the award.

"I didn't know anything about the AWA and really had no idea the song would ultimately win," he said. "My wife Tara and I attended the event thinking it would just be an interesting experience, and we'd never have the opportunity to go again. However, I think she secretly had more faith than me."

Schlesinger did not prepare a speech because he did not expect to win, but improvised on stage.

"I thanked the Lord for setting me on my life path, all the musicians who helped with the CD, as well as those folks who supported me," he said.



Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters at KTAE studios in Taylor, ca. 1949, around the time the original "You Were Meant to Ruin My Dreams" was recorded. Band members are (from left) Arlie Carter, Jimmy Heap, Bill Glendenning, Perk Williams, Horace Barnett and Cecil "Butterball" Harris.

Courtesy photo

Schlesinger is a lifelong resident of Taylor, and a 1989 graduate from Taylor High.

Last year, he released his album "Paul Schlesinger and his Knights of Texas Swing," which caught the attention of country and western swing enthusiasts around the world. Country Music People magazine gave the album a 5-star rating and spotlighted Schlesinger's career. The album is currently number one on the international Swingin' West radio show.

In addition to his Knights of Texas Swing band, Schlesinger is the music team leader for the Lee County Cowboy Church, and a member of the church's band Second Chance, which includes his wife Tara on piano. The Schlesingers also perform regularly with the Milam County Cowboy Church band, and are members of the Comal Country Music Show house band in New Braunfels. They were named Entertainers of the Year in December 2016 by the Country

Music Hall of Fame in Gatesville. Schlesinger also performs regularly Glen Collins and the Alibis, a classic-country show and dance hall band who have been featured on the syndicated television program "Songwriters Across Texas," and perform all over Central Texas.

Paul Schlesinger's Knights of Texas Swing CD is available at Plain Jane's on Main Taylor, Friends of the Bride in Taylor and online at www.paulschlesinger.com.



Tara and Paul Schlesinger at the 21st Annual Will Rogers Academy of Western Artists awards banquet in Fort Worth, March 16. Schlesinger received the Western Swing Song of the Year award for "You Were Meant to Ruin My Dreams," a song on his latest CD, Paul Schlesinger and his Knights of Texas Swing.

Photo by Steven Jeffers

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