

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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Mostly sunny: High 78, Low 51

CITY | STATE

Garbage fee to support Prop B may be dumped

Nine City Council members have said they do not support the idea of a "regressive tax" intended to offset costs of the controversial pay parity measure. **PAGE A3**

SPORTS



Associated Press

Will James Harden earn MVP again?

MVP: James or Giannis?

Milwaukee's star may have the edge, but don't discount a repeat for James Harden. Either way, appreciate the greatness of both this season. **PAGE C1**

NATION

Implants face fresh scrutiny

U.S. medical authorities are revisiting the safety of breast implants used by millions of American women, the latest review in an ongoing debate about their potential health effects. **PAGE A6**

BUSINESS

Siri, play an Apple movie

Apple announces entertainment services that will include the company's own films and TV shows featuring stars such as director Steven Spielberg and Reese Witherspoon. **PAGE B1**

State places HISD search on hold

Naming of new superintendent must wait until probe's end, official says

By Jacob Carpenter
STAFF WRITER

A state-appointed official ordered Houston ISD trustees to suspend their search for a permanent superintendent on Monday, an unprecedented intervention that comes one

day before school board members were expected to choose the lone finalist for the job.

The order, issued by conservator Doris Delaney, who has been monitoring HISD since September 2016, coincided with the expansion of a Texas

Education Agency special accreditation investigation into possible procurement-related issues in the district, multiple HISD trustees said. State investigators also have been reviewing allegations of Texas Open Meetings Act violations by five trustees since January, with no timeline for completing their inquiry.

Delaney ordered HISD



Board President Diana Dávila called the timing 'horrible.'

trustees to suspend the superintendent search until the investigation is complete. HISD has been without a permanent superintendent since March 2018,

when Richard Carranza abruptly left the district to become chancellor of New York City public schools.

Delaney's move, authorized under state law, represents yet another potentially ominous sign for the HISD school board's ability to maintain local control over the district. If state officials find serious wrongdoing during their **HISD continues on A10**

PATIENCE PAYS OFF FOR KATY CENTER



Photos by Godofredo A. Vasquez / Staff photographer

The Muslim American Society Katy Center got a chilly reception when it was established in 2006.

By Massarah Mikati
STAFF WRITER

You heard them before you saw them.

Muslim families pulling into the MAS Katy Center for prayer on Fridays — the holiest day of the week for Muslims — would hear the squealing of pigs and the cheers of spectators watching the animals race around a track.

They were used to it by then, though. The mosque's next-door neighbor had been holding weekly pig races for months, knowing that

Yearslong efforts warm relations between neighbors and the Muslim community



Craig Baker, whose business borders the center, used to host Friday night pig races when the mosque was first established. **MAS continues on A8**

Muslims are restricted from eating pork. The events reinforced a message: The Muslim community was not welcome in the neighborhood, where the mosque's leaders had purchased property in 2006.

Thirteen years later, suspicion and hostility among some have turned to compassion and concern within the broader community.

A few days after someone fired gunshots at the mosque in January, neighbors stood at the parking lot entrance with flowers **MAS continues on A8**

Trump vows to launch his own inquiry

He demands accountability for 'witch hunt'

By Peter Baker and Nicholas Fandos
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump and his Republican allies went on the offensive Monday, vowing to pursue and even punish those responsible for the Russia investigation now that the special counsel has wrapped up without finding a criminal conspiracy to influence the 2016 election.

Trump, grim-faced and simmering with anger, denounced adversaries who have pounded him for two years over Russian election interference, calling them "treasonous" people who are guilty of "evil deeds" and should be investigated themselves. "Those people will certainly be looked at," he said.

On Capitol Hill, the Republican chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee announced he would **Trump continues on A9**

Obstruction?

Democrats push for release of Robert Mueller's full report. **Page A7**

Channel closure could cost area \$1B

Region's energy sector takes economic hit

By Andrea Leinfelder and Jordan Blum
STAFF WRITERS

A dayslong chemical fire in Deer Park did more than endanger the health of residents and pollute the environment. It potentially cost

the region's oil and gas and petrochemical sectors \$1 billion in lost revenues and added expenses as it shut down one of the nation's busiest waterways and cut off Houston companies from markets and suppliers, according to estimates.

For three days, nearly half of the 52-mile Houston Ship Channel was cut off from the Gulf Coast and Gulf Intracoastal Water-

Family sues ITC

Denver Harbor residents allege negligence in suit. **Page A3**

way, the result of contaminated runoff from the Intercontinental Terminals Co., where fire ripped through the storage facility, damaging 11 tanks holding chemicals such as naphtha and xylene, both used in gaso-

line, and toluene, a solvent used in nail polish remover, glues and paint thinners. Some vessels were permitted Monday morning to move through the roughly seven-mile stretch that had been closed in the Houston Ship Channel since Friday. The channel was opened to daylight traffic at 2:21 p.m.

Maria Burns, director of the University of Houston's **Channel continues on A10**



Brett Coomer / Staff photographer

Maritime traffic moves through the Houston Ship Channel on Wednesday near the Deer Park facility.

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West 8

Houston Botanic Garden's Global Collection Garden will feature a series of outdoor rooms, including an area of arid-climate plants referred to as the agave garden.

A CELEBRATION OF BIODIVERSITY

By Molly Glentzer
STAFF WRITER

Houston's temperate climate gives gardeners an amazing palette to play with. While weather may wreak havoc from time to time, the conditions generally support subtropical, tropical and arid-environment plants from all over the world, as well as robust natives. That biodiversity will be the focus of plant collections displayed across three acres of overlapping "outdoor rooms" at the center of the Houston Botanic Garden, which is scheduled to open in about 18 months.

Houston Botanic Garden will feature wide variety of plant collections that create 'outdoor rooms'

The organization's offices moved into the gently renovated clubhouse of the former Glenbrook Golf Course southeast of downtown a few weeks ago. Construction crews will soon begin transforming the 132-acre site. Funding for Phase 1, a \$35 million project that covers about 15 acres and includes a children's discovery garden, an edible garden and entrance from Park Place Boulevard with wetlands and

an oak collection, is about 80 percent complete.

Renderings by lead design firm West 8 envision the heart of the city's new nature attraction as a curvaceous patchwork of beds and paths where visitors will meander through about a dozen different environments that suggest opposite ends of the Earth. The plantings will also reflect the nature of Houston, with its famously diverse population of

immigrants – so many visitors may find a sense of home there, or relive travels, or see something for the first time.

Claudia Gee Vassar, the Botanic Garden's executive director, expects it to feel like visiting a natural science museum, where one might see exotic gemstones – only outdoors, with plants, along Sims Bayou. While the Global Collection Garden will occupy less than 3 percent of the entire Botanic Garden property, Vassar expects it to be a "get lost in the gardens kind of experience," with a balance of intimate spaces and more open areas where people can gather.

Each section has a beautiful and

Botanic continues on D3

OUTDOORS

HOME TOUR

Big city living feels right at home in the Downtown District

By Diane Cowen
STAFF WRITER

Jackie Traywick knew she wanted to live downtown, closer to her job at the Downtown District, but worried about noise and traffic, not to mention finding the right place at the right price.

After a yearlong search, she found her 1,360-square-foot condo in the St. Germain Lofts building, started a six-month remodeling project to redo a bathroom and closets, and moved in three years ago.

Downtown District Home Tour

What: Tour of six downtown homes
When: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday
Where: Bayou Lofts, Block 334, Catalyst, St. Germain, W.L. Foley Building and 500 Crawford
Tickets: \$25 advance at downtownhouston.org; \$35 day of event, purchased at Heritage Texas Properties, 214 Travis
Parking: \$5 at One Market Square Garage, 800 Preston; or on-street metered parking; Greenlink shuttle service available at each site
Benefits: A portion of proceeds from the tour, planned as an annual event, will go to the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston.

Her charming home, with its 14½-foot ceilings, open ductwork and old

wood floors, will be one of six downtown homes open

Downtown continues on D3



Jackie Traywick's condo at the St. Germain Lofts, which features high ceilings, open ductwork and wood floors, will be included in the Downtown District Home Tour.

Karen Warren / Staff photographer

DEAR ABBY: Son feels mother's rejection after revealing that he is gay. **PAGE D5**

HINTS FROM HELOISE: Big-box retailers are making it easier to return merchandise. **PAGE D5**

