RAZORBACKS
No. 1 Kentucky overwhelms Arkansas in SEC final, 78-63
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TROJAN TRIUMPH: From left, Hot Springs' Berniezha Tidwell, Tiaunna Watkins, Kiki Hunter, Arianna Guinn and Imani Honey celebrate after defeating Pulaski Academy 62-61 in overtime for the Class 5A championship Saturday night at Bank of the Ozarks Arena. The Lady Trojans captured their fourth state title, first since 1998.

Lady Trojans take state title

Tidwell's late free throw in overtime gives Hot Springs championship

SEAN SAUNDERS
The Sentinel-Record

Hot Springs' "big three" went out in style.

Berniezha Tidwell capped her season-high 30-point performance with one of two free throws with 3.1 seconds left in overtime, and fellow three-year starters Tiaunna Watkins and Ashley Clayborn combined for 25 points. All three helped lift the Lady Trojans to a thrilling 62-61 victory over Pulaski Academy in the Class 5A championship game Saturday night at Bank of the Ozarks Arena.

"What a heck of a game!" said Hot Springs coach Mark Upshaw, winning a state title in his first championship appearance in 14 years as a head coach (eight with the school). "We knew Pulaski Academy was going to be tough. Coach (Rick) Treadway does a great job up there. I've known him forever, and we knew it was going to be a great battle. I wasn't wrong. It was about as close of a game as it could be."

The Lady Trojans (26-4) take home

LADY TROJANS, PAGE 5A

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

MAGIC MOMENT: Hot Springs coach Mark Upshaw hugs guard Berniezha Tidwell (1) while assistant Yvonne Neal looks on following the Lady Trojans' 62-61 overtime victory over Pulaski Academy for the Class 5A championship Saturday night at Bank of the Ozarks Arena. Tidwell, the Sam Houston State signee, was named most valuable player after scoring a season-high 30 points, hitting the clinching free throw with 3.1 seconds left.

EAST conference kicks off Tuesday

JAY BELL
The Sentinel-Record

The Environmental and Spatial Technologies Initiative's annual conference will return to the Hot Springs Convention Center for the 10th time Tuesday to highlight student work and community projects over the past year.

At least 2,000 students from across the country are expected for the 2015 EAST Conference, "Create Today, Improve Tomorrow." The conference begins Tuesday and concludes Thursday. It will be the 10th EAST Conference held at the convention center.

Jessica Dunham, EAST Initiative event coordinator, said excitement for the conference has been building for months. Discussion about the conference can be tracked on social media with the hashtag, #EASTCon15.

> Open to the public Wednesday, Thursday.

EAST Initiative partnered with the Arkansas Tech University Department of Emergency Management this year to focus on emergency planning and preparedness projects. The National Service Project allowed EAST students to learn more about resources available to them and how they could develop projects to create more efficient emergency plans if disaster strikes in their communities.

The public is welcome to visit exhibits and learn more about the EAST Initiative on Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Thursday from 8:30-11:45 a.m. Attendance is free during the designated times.

Six Arkansas schools are eligible for the Timothy R. Stephenson Founder's Award. Their booths will be featured in a carpeted area. The award is presented to the school that judges determine best exemplifies the EAST model of education.

The six finalists are Don R. Roberts Elementary School in Little Rock, Dover High School, Greenbrier High School, Harrisburg Middle School, Helen Tyson Middle School in Springdale and Joe T. Robinson Middle School in Little Rock. Hot Springs High School was

EAST, PAGE 2A

Curious exhibition

Peculiarity museum aims to fascinate visitors

LORIEN E. DAHL
The Sentinel-Record

When the shop located next to his Theater of Magic moved to a new address, Maxwell Blade jumped at the chance to purchase the vacant space and turn it into an homage to the bizarre.

"I've wanted to open a museum for many years in downtown Hot Springs," Blade said, adding, "I've always kind of admired the odd."

And odd the collection is.

Ranging from carnival sideshow items to a Fiji mermaid and two-headed animals, pieces have come from all over the world to rest in their newest home, Blade's Curiosity Museum, now adjoining his theater at 121 Central Ave.

"We have sort of an eclectic collection," the owner said, adding the assemblage contains items from both his personal collection and that of local antique dealer Davis Tillman.

Everything displayed dates from before the 21st century and many items have aged far longer. The oldest and

MUSEUM, PAGE 2A

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER: Owner and curator Maxwell Blade stands next to a display in his Curiosity Museum. The downtown attraction is now open daily.

Baseball Trail wins state tourism award

BETH BRIGHT
The Sentinel-Record

The Hot Springs Historic Baseball Trail was recently awarded the Community Tourism Development Award at the 41st Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism in Texarkana.

The award is given as part of the annual Henry Awards — named for Henri de Tonti, one of the earliest European explorers to visit Arkansas — and presented to the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

"It's great to win this award just as a tribute to the great work of an excellent group of people who put their time and effort into bringing this Hot Springs history to the forefront," said Steve Arrison, CEO of Visit Hot Springs. "Everybody working on this knew it was worthwhile, but when we receive these awards, it just validates that. And it introduces a lot of people to a history that they

AWARD, PAGE 2A

Kerry willing to talk with Syria's Assad

BRADLEY KLAPPER
The Associated Press

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said he would be willing to talk with Syrian President Bashar Assad to help broker a political resolution to the country's civil war.

Kerry said in an interview with CBS News that the U.S. is pushing for Assad to seriously discuss a transition strategy to help end Syria's four-year conflict, which has killed more than 220,000 people, given rise to the Islamic State group and destabilized the wider Middle East.

"We have to negotiate in the end," Kerry said. "What we're pushing for is to get him to come and do that, and it may require that there be increased pressure on him of various kinds."

The Obama administration has long pushed for a political settlement to the Syrian crisis, and helped bring the Assad government and the Western-backed opposition to the

KERRY, PAGE 4A

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Weather

SUNNY. HIGHS IN THE MID 70S. LOWS IN THE MID 50S.

SUNRISE: 7:22 A.M.
SUNSET: 7:20 P.M.

TUESDAY: HIGH 76° LOW 49°

WEDNESDAY: HIGH 52° LOW 46°

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