

SUNDAY • 05.03.2015 • \$2.50 • FINAL EDITION

Ferguson legal bill: \$1,335 an hour

Council brings in high-priced lawyer to wrestle with Justice Department



ASSOCIATED PRESS
 Dan K. Webb (left), then attorney for former Illinois Gov. George Ryan (right), speaks to the media during a news conference in 2003.

BY CHRISTINE BYERS AND STEPHEN DEERE
 St. Louis Post-Dispatch

FERGUSON • In the days following a Department of Justice report accusing Ferguson's police and municipal court of widespread abuses, the city made a series of conciliatory moves. Three employees involved in racist emails were forced out. The city manager stepped down. So did the police chief and municipal judge.

Less than a month later, on March 27, a City Council that's been grappling with declining revenues voted unanimously in a closed meeting to hire one of the

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St. Louis B&Bs are fighting City Hall over added tax

BY NICHOLAS J.C. PISTOR
 St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS • When Mike Petetit moved into his gutted Victorian mansion more than a decade ago, about the only living things that cared were the pigeons that left behind droppings by the bucket full.

But now, the home and others in the city used as bed-and-breakfast establishments have attracted the attention of the tax man.

Petetit spent many years and hundreds of thousands of dollars renovating his "painted lady" in the city's Lafayette Square neighborhood, at a time when the area was filled with vacant buildings.

"This was a pass-through to the projects," Petetit said. "I had

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Cameron Hensley stayed at Normandy High when many transferred out.

He thought people in the region had a misperception about his school, and he wanted to prove them wrong.

But despite state intervention, he says, he was the one proven wrong.

A SENIOR YEAR MOSTLY LOST



PHOTOS BY ROBERT COHEN • rcohen@post-dispatch.com

Normandy High honors student Cameron Hensley (left), a senior, checks his phone Thursday as some students nap during physics class. "Last school year I was learning, progressing," Hensley said. "This school year, I can honestly say I haven't learned much of anything."



Normandy senior Cameron Hensley gets ready for state solo and ensemble competition, practicing the tuba Thursday with band director Bernard Long Jr. and accompanist Mary Ann Schulte (not pictured) in the high school's band room.

BY ELISA CROUCH
 St. Louis Post-Dispatch

WELLSTON • Cameron Hensley is an honors student at Normandy High School with plans for college. But this year his school quit offering honors courses. His physics teacher hasn't planned a lesson since January. His AP English class is taught by an instructor not certified to teach it.

The first-period English class is held in a science lab because the room across the hall smells like mildew and lacks adequate air conditioning. Stools sit upside down on the lab tables.

On a recent day, Hensley looked at an as-



Normandy senior Cameron Hensley learns about logarithms Thursday from veteran teacher Winifred Deavens. Hensley said precalculus is his only challenging class. There is just one set of precalculus textbooks, which students cannot take home.

CROSSING LINES

An occasional look at how student transfers are affecting education in the St. Louis region.

signed worksheet. He wrote "positive" or "negative" beside 15 statements, depending on their connotation. "This is pretty easy," he mumbled.

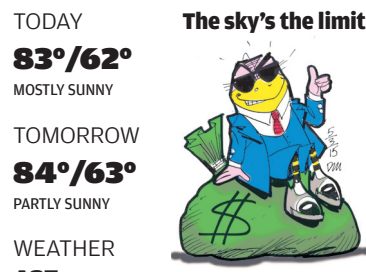
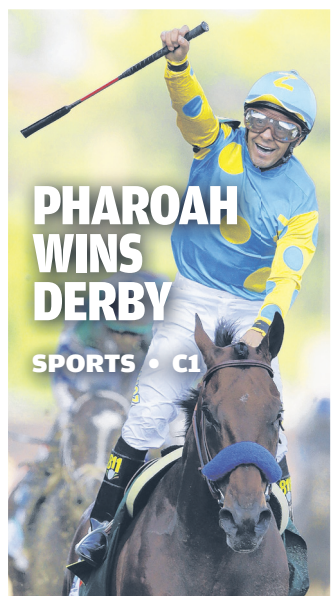
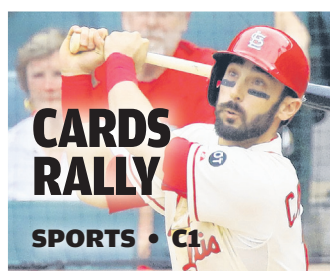
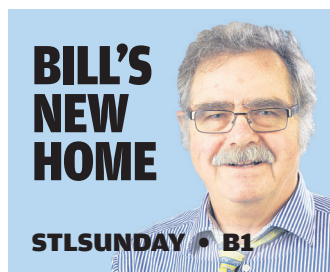
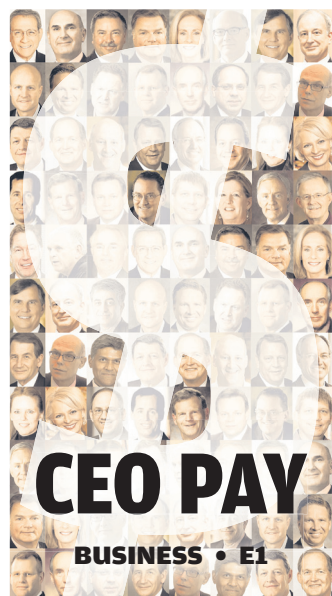
When Missouri education officials took over the troubled Normandy School District last summer, they vowed to help its 3,600 students become more college- and

career-ready. About a quarter of the enrollment had already left for better schools under the controversial Missouri school transfer law, extracting millions of dollars from Normandy in the form of tuition payments to more affluent districts.

Even so, state education officials promised a new dawn in the district, with new leaders, better faculty and an unprecedented degree of attention from their department in Jefferson City.

But Hensley's experience suggests things have gotten worse for many students who remain in Normandy schools.

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