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H BIG SPRING HERALD

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2017



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Megachurch Hillside Christian branch coming to Big Spring

By **ROGER CLINE**
 Staff Writer

Big Spring residents who haven't found a church home locally will have another option in 2018.

"Hillside Christian Church is coming to Big Spring," said Pastor Timmy Dunn. "We've had two preview nights, and we are launching Jan. 7. Starting Jan. 7, we'll have one service at 10:30 a.m. at Big Spring High School every Sunday morning."

According to its website, Hillside Christian is a non-denominational church with four locations in Amarillo, and one each in Lubbock, Levelland, Dalhart, and Canyon, and Clovis, N.M., as well as the new Big Spring location.

"The lead pastor is Tommy Pollitz," Dunn said. "So about 11 years ago, they had a desire to 'Let's not just be good with what's going on here, but let's plant churches in different towns that we think

could use Hillside's ministry and be able to share the love of Jesus.' So they came to Lubbock, Texas, approximately five years ago, and planted Hillside Christian Church in Lubbock, where my wife and I have been attending for over a year now."

The church leadership approached Dunn about the Big Spring pastorship about six months ago.

"They had been praying about planting a campus in Big Spring, Texas," he said. "(Dunn's wife) Deb and I raised our kids in Big Spring and have a great love for Big Spring, so we began to pray about it. We decided that there was a need, not for necessarily another church, but for another kind of church, just to compliment the churches that are already there. Not to come in and compete with those churches, but maybe to come in and reach a different dynamic that maybe hasn't been

See **CHURCH**, Page 3



Courtesy photo
Timmy Dunn, pictured with wife Deb, will be the pastor of the Big Spring branch of Hillside Christian Church, coming to Howard County in 2018.

Local insurance agent pays off student lunch debts

By **ERIN STEPHENS**
 Staff Writer

While most people recognize this time of year as the 'season of giving', there are certain members of the community who go above and beyond what is expected of them during the holidays. Agent with Farmer's Insurance and Big Spring resident Eric Escamilla is one such person. Escamilla has a history of giving back to the city and working to improve the lives of its residents. He's currently the president of Keep Big Spring Beautiful, president of the Big Spring Centennial Lion's Club, volunteer for The Emergency Services Chaplain Corp, in-house minister at Family Faith Center, phone book library organizer, and leader of the initiative to put together "blessing boxes" for needy families.

"I recently went through a breakup with my girlfriend and decided to use the money I was going to spend on her Christmas presents to help out our local school district," said Escamilla. After making a phone call to the Big Spring school district's

main office earlier this week, he asked about student lunch debts because he was interested in paying them off. "I was told the amount that needed to be paid totaled \$446.36 so between myself and Big Spring resident John Spence's contribution of \$50, we paid off every lunch in the BSISD district," he said.

According to Escamilla, the response from BSISD faculty and staff has been great. "Everyone was extremely happy and I was surprised because I thought it would just be a quick transaction between me and the school district but everyone was so receptive and very appreciative," he said. "The school district probably understands more than I do about how impactful this will be for the kids."

Escamilla says that in the future, he'd like to continue being a part of local organizations who aim to make the city a better place to live in but has a new idea to start promoting art in the city. "I have some ideas and I've been brainstorming with the Big Spring High School art teacher, Andrea Phinny, as well," he said. "After asking if she wanted to be involved with my new art initiative, she decided to help out and told me about some places in

See **DEBT**, Page 3

Good enough to eat!



Gingerbread house contest winners

Courtesy photo
The Big Spring Museum Heritage held a Gingerbread contest this past December to the locals of Howard County. Shown here is first-place winner of the Heritage Museum's gingerbread contest, Jessica Rivera. She teamed up with her mother-in-law, Silvia Martinez, to take home the grand prize. Second place went to Marcy Place for their gingerbread village. Third goes to Michelle Worthan, for her exact replica of Big Spring's Stampede dance hall.

Christmas brings Northeast blizzard, bitter cold in Midwest

CHICAGO (AP) — The good news for many in the Northeast and Midwest was that it has been a white Christmas. The bad news was that a blizzard swept into parts of New England and bitter cold enveloped much of the Midwest.

Even the usually rainy Pacific Northwest got the white stuff. The National Weather Service says it's only the sixth time since 1884 that downtown Portland had measurable snow — only an inch or two — on a Dec. 25.

A blizzard warning was issued Monday for portions of Maine and New Hampshire, with forecasters saying snow of up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) and wind gusts up to 50 mph (80 kph) could make travel "dangerous to impossible."

Most businesses were already shuttered on Christmas Day in New England. One of the few open was The Tobacconist cigar shop in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, where area-resident Dwayne Doherty said he welcomed the fresh blanket of snow.

"I'm actually happy," he said, chuckling as he made his way to his pick-up. "We haven't had snow on Christmas at all in the last few years. It's actually perfect."

States from Montana and the Dakotas to Wisconsin expected wind chill temperatures in plac-

es at 40 below zero (40 below Celsius), the National Weather Service said. The upper half of Iowa and northern Illinois also braced for subzero temperatures.

Minnesota was experiencing its most frigid Christmas Day since 1996, with wind chills as cold as 35 degrees below zero, KSTP-TV reported. The National Weather Service warned that those whose skin was exposed in such conditions could get frostbite in as little as 15 minutes.

Snow amounts in the Midwest were not large for this time of year. A storm system that swept from Nebraska through Iowa dropped around 2 inches of snow on Chicago, the weather service said.

That was just enough to provide a picturesque backdrop for those gathering for Christmas dinners in the Chicago area. But it wasn't enough to cause havoc either on roadway or airport runaways.

Chicago's O'Hare International Airport was reporting just six cancellations and average delays of only 15 minutes around noon Monday. There were no cancellations at the city's other major airport, Midway, and delays were less than 15 minutes on average.

The nation's third largest city had comparatively little snow for the season until the weekend — just over 2 inches (5 centimeters) in all, the National Weather Ser-

vice said.

The city of Milwaukee had 103 salt trucks treating slick spots Monday, according to WITI-TV. The trucks were using treated salt that's deployed when temperatures drop below 15 degrees.

In addition to slowing travel in New England, the storm was responsible for some power outages. Eversource reported more than 20,000 customers in eastern Massachusetts without electricity, the bulk on Cape Cod which was feeling the brunt of strong winds.

Most of Indiana had been under winter weather advisory with officials urging motorists to stay put unless they absolutely had to travel. Northern Indiana had been expecting up to 5 inches (13 centimeters) with slightly less in the southern part of the state.

New England was expected to get up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow. Strong winds were predicted for Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island with gusts up to 65 mph (105 kph).

Mountain areas in parts of Colorado, Montana and Wyoming received more than 1 foot (30 centimeters) of snow, which started Saturday. It was good news for holiday skiers and resorts which have struggled with a slow start this season.



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Obituaries

Jack Capps



Jack Capps, 81, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2017, in Temple, Texas.

The family will receive friends from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2017, at Myers and Smith Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017, at Sand Springs Baptist Church, 201 E. 24th Street, Big Spring, Texas, with Pastor Billy J. Capps of Sand Springs Baptist Church and Pastor Elwin Collom of Hillcrest Baptist Church officiating. Burial will follow at Vealmoor Cemetery.

Jack was born on Aug. 10, 1936, in New Mexico to Francis Statham Capps and Irvin Thomas Capps. He married Jo Ann Watson on Nov. 10, 1955, in Levelland, Texas. Jo Ann passed away on March 18, 2013. He spent his lifetime in both Howard and Bor-

den County. Jack worked all his life as a cowboy and in the oilfield. He was a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church.

Jack was survived by one son, the Rev. Billy and Brenda Capps of Ackerly; one daughter, Denise Emfinger of Big Spring; three grandchildren, T.J. Capps (Shelbie) of San Angelo, Ashley Ann Allen (James) of Austin, and Jaelyn Renee Connolly (Chisom) of Vealmoor; four great-grandchildren, Jimmy Jack Walker of Austin, Gaberial Capps of San Angelo, Lacey and Ashton Connolly of Vealmoor; two sisters, Charlene Metcalf of Temple and Barbara Santiago of Sterling City; and two brothers, Joe Kropp of Cotulla, Texas, and Marvin T. Capps of Vernal, Utah.

In addition to his parents and wife, he was preceded in death by two sisters, Dorothy Denton and Gladys Pruitt; and one brother, Ray Neal Camp.

Arrangements are by Myers and Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com.

Paid obituary

Anna Marie Miller



Anna Marie Miller, 67, of Midland, formerly of Big Spring, died Thursday, Dec. 21, 2017, in Midland after losing her battle with COPD.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017, at the Nalley-Pickle and Welch Rosewood Chapel with Dr. Randy Cotton officiating.

The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2017, at the funeral home.

Marie was born Jan. 9, 1950, to Dutch and Myrtle Strickland in San Angelo and grew up in Forsan. She married Larry Miller May 28, 1968, in Big Spring. He preceded her in death Dec. 24, 2016. They lived in Big Spring from 1970 until 1995 when they moved to Midland. She was a member of Trinity

Baptist Church in Big Spring. She loved Bingo, Las Vegas, and her two schnauzers Rufus and Scooter.

She is survived by a son, Shane Miller of Big Spring; two daughters, Carol Jeter and husband Steve, and Meredith Burgess and husband Tommy, all of Midland; five grandchildren, Presley Miller, Danielle Jeter, Jensen Jeter-LeClear and husband Justin, Breeana Jeter, and Tyler Burgess and wife Aimee; a brother, Eddie Strickland and wife Linda of Odessa; two sisters, Janette Cunningham and husband Larry of Lubbock, and Virginia Stanton of Lewisville; and numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

In addition to her husband, she is preceded in death by her parents; two brothers, Eugene Strickland and Elbert Strickland; and two sisters, Elizabeth Staley and Evelyn Morgan.

Arrangements under the direction of Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home. Online condolences may be made at www.npwelch.com.

Paid obituary

Theresa Stehling Lewis



Theresa Stehling Lewis of Big Spring died Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017, at her home from complications following cancer surgery.

The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017, at Myers and Smith Funeral Home, with a vigil service starting at 7 p.m.. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Friday, Dec. 29, 2017, at Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

Theresa was born in Fredericksburg, Texas on Dec. 4, 1938, to Hugo and Dora Stehling. She attended and graduated from the Seton School of Nursing

in Austin, Texas. Theresa worked as a registered nurse in Austin for several years. In 1969, she married J. R. "Rod" Lewis and soon after became an ardent Red Raider fan.

Theresa is survived by her husband Rod of Big Spring, Texas; her daughter, Christy and her husband Jeff Brorman of Big Spring, Texas, and their eight children; a son, James with his wife Megan of Rockport, Texas, and their four children; a daughter, Stephanie with her husband John Timmons of San Angelo, Texas; and two great-grandchildren.

Theresa was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Hugo Stehling; and her sister Loretta that died in infancy.

Arrangements are by Myers and Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com.

Sheriff

The Howard County Sheriff's Department reported the following activity:

Note - Officials with the Howard County Jail reported having 67 inmates at the time of this report.

• **OSCAR CANALES III**, 19, was booked by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• **DAVID ANTHONY CHARVARRIA**, 37, was booked by BSPD on charges of driving while intoxicated and forgery of a financial instrument.

• **CHRISTOPHER RYAN COLEGROVE**, 25, was booked by BSPD on a violation of bond for forgery of a financial instrument and a bond forfeiture for possession of marijuana (less than 2 oz.).

• **ERNESTO DIAZ**, 17, was booked by BSPD on a charge of

theft of property (\$100 to \$750).

• **WILLIE CHARELS FOSTER**, 63, was booked by BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

• **JACOB ALEXANDER GALAN**, 27, was booked by BSPD on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

• **CARLOS ELIAS MARTINEZ**, 28, was booked by DPS on warrants for failure to appear for child neglect, failure to appear for failure to pay court costs, public intoxication, driving with an invalid license, and bail jumping/failure to appear.

• **RAY CARL MCGEE JR.**, 41, was booked by BSPD on charges of criminal trespassing and possession of drug paraphernalia.

• **LISA MARIE MCNEW**, 37, was booked by HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for forgery, a violation of probation, and on a

warrant for possession of methamphetamine.

• **JONATHAN PEREZ**, 25, was booked by BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

• **ALEXANDER QUINTANA**, 37, was booked by BSPD on warrants for contempt of court and terroristic threat.

• **JESSE TONY REYES JR.**, 31, was booked by BSPD on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• **ELIJAH ANTONIO RIOS**, 22, was booked by BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.

• **GILBERT SILVA**, 30, was booked by BSPD on a charge of criminal trespassing.

• **JUSTYCE BRIANNA SMALL**, 20, was booked by HCSO on a motion to revoke probation for false driver's license or ID.

Jose "Little Joe" Davila



Jose "Little Joe" Davila, 79, of Big Spring, died Thursday, Dec. 21, 2017, at Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez Texas State Veterans Home.

He will lie in state Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017, from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. at Myers and Smith Funeral Home, with a Memorial Service at 6 p.m.

Jose was born May 9, 1938, in Hargill, Texas, to Lydia Garza Davila and Luis Bernados Davila.

Jose moved to Big Spring in 1960 from San Diego. He was a veteran of the United States Air Force, serving three years. He married Sara Lopez on Nov. 18, 1963, in Big Spring. He was a retired electrician and had worked for TNT Electric. He loved horse races and fishing. He was a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

He is survived by his wife, Sara Davila of Big Spring; three sons, Oscar Davila (Joann), Rolando Davila (Rhonda), and Luis Davila (Karen), all of Big Spring; one daughter, Cynthia Villareal (John) of Odessa; one sister, Olivia Montemayor of Edinburg; 16 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one son, David Davila; one sister, Olga Macias; and one great-granddaughter, Faith Davila.

Arrangements are by Myers and Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com.

Paid obituary

Pearl Armstrong

Pearl Armstrong, 83 of Big Spring died Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017, at her home. Services are pending with Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home and Crematory.

Lois Berry

Lois Berry, 79, of Big Spring died Saturday, Dec. 23, 2017. Services are pending at Myers and Smith Funeral Home.

Mary Joe Harland

Mary Joe Harland, 91, died Saturday, Dec. 23, 2017, in a Lubbock hospital. Services are pending with Nalley-Pickle and Welch Funeral Home and Crematory.

Police blotter

The Big Spring Police Department reported the following activity:

• **JONATHAN PEREZ**, 25, of 608 S. Douglas was arrested on a charge of public intoxication.

• **JACOB ALEXANDER GALAN**, 27, of 1607 S. Main St. was arrested on a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

• **JESSE TONY REYES JR.**, 31, of 1006 Goliad St. was arrested on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

• **ELIJAH ANTONIO RIOS**, 22, of 2901 S. Anderson Rd. was arrested on a charge of public intoxication.

• **LISA MARIE MCNEW**, 37, of 802 E. County Road 38 was arrested on outstanding warrants.

• **CRIMINAL MISCHIEF** was reported in the 400 block of College Street.

• **DISTURBANCE** was reported in the 2900 block of Hali Road.

• **THEFT** was reported in the 7200 block of South Service Road.

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CHURCH

Continued from Page 1

reached yet."

Dunn said many people in Big Spring don't attend church.

"What Deb and I began to pray about was, you know, 25,000 to 30,000 people in Big Spring and the surrounding areas, and on any given Sunday, maybe 4,000 are in church," he said. "So at the end of the day, I saw that as a great need. Our desire is not to take from other churches. Our desire is to come and

minister to those who maybe aren't in church, or may be looking for a church. That's what we're about. Our mission is simple: It's to love God and to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ."

Dunn said the church has had two previous "Preview Nights" to give local residents a taste of Hillside before the Jan. 7 opening day.

"It's been great. We had a total of 127, 18 of those being kids," he said. "We're excited, ready to go. We're looking for offices. We're going to be at the high school for a little

while, as long as the good Lord wants us to be there. When he says it's time for us to have a permanent facility, that's what we'll do, but until then, we're kind of a mobile setup. We're excited to do it, and see what the good Lord has planned."

Dunn said the church offers a place for all ages.

"Our service will be for sixth grade and up, for adults; and then for fifth grade and down, nursery all the way through fifth grade," he said. "We have our kids' environments that will be set up, so we'll have a ministry for the

entire family."

Bible study is currently taking place at private homes, due to lack of space for Sunday school programs, Dunn said.

"Right now, because of the facilities, what we do is, we have home groups that we've already started up, and we plan on growing it through that," he said. "Obviously there's not a way for us to meet at a church, but we will be building it through home groups and our Sunday morning services at 10:30 a.m."

Those looking for more information about Hillside or

its Big Spring branch can visit the church's website.

"They can go to hillside-wired.com," Dunn said. "There is actually a place where they can go to the Big Spring campus, and any inquiries or any questions, they will find me on the website, and my email. I would love to get back to them and answer any questions they may have."

Contact Staff Writer Roger Cline at 432-263-7331 ext. 235 or by email at reporter@big-springherald.com.

In break with tradition, Trump doesn't host a state dinner



AP photo

In this Nov. 9, 2017, file photo, President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping participate in a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China. Trump couldn't seem to stop talking about the red carpets, military parades and fancy dinners that were lavished upon him during "state visits" on his recent tour of Asia. "Magnificent," he declared at one point on the trip. But Trump has yet to reciprocate in kind. In fact, he is the first president in decades to close his first year in office without welcoming a counterpart on a visit to the U.S. with similar trappings.

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump couldn't stop talking about the red carpets, military parades and fancy dinners that were lavished upon him during state visits on his recent tour of Asia. "Magnificent," he declared at one point on the trip.

But Trump has yet to reciprocate, making him the first president in almost a century to close his first year in office without welcoming a visiting counterpart to the U.S. with similar trappings.

Trump spoke dismissively of state dinners as a candidate, when he panned President Barack Obama's decision to welcome Chinese President Xi Jinping with a 2015 state visit. Such visits are an important diplomatic tool that includes a showy arrival ceremony and an elaborate dinner at the White House.

"I would not be throwing (Xi) a dinner," Trump said at the time. "I would get him a McDonald's hamburger and say we've got to get down to work."

DEBT

Continued from Page 1

the area she felt could be brought to life with artwork," he continued. "We spoke about an unused white school in town bus that has been sitting in the same location for awhile." Together, Phinney and Escamilla came up with the idea to turn what might currently be considered an eyesore, into a beautiful art project. "My goal is to just keep on doing what I've been doing in the past but I'd like to also continue coming up with with new art-related ideas," he said.

Escamilla urges anyone who wants to help in a similar way to call their local city offices and/or school district, or visit the Keep Big Spring Beautiful Facebook page. "I want people to start helping if they see a need or feel it in their heart and you don't have to get permission to be a blessing to someone else, but if you think you need permission, then I'll be the first one to say go ahead and do it, he says."

Contact Staff Writer Erin Stephens at 432-263-7331 ext. 232, or by email at citydesk@bigspringherald.com.

Last month it was Xi's turn to literally roll out the red carpet. The Chinese leader poured on the pageantry as he welcomed Trump to Beijing on what was billed as a "state visit, plus." Trump also made state visits to South Korea and Vietnam.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said there is no "singular reason" why Trump hasn't extended a state visit invitation yet, but added that the administration hopes to schedule a visit early in 2018. Sanders gave no hints about which of Trump's foreign counterparts are being considered for the diplomatic honor.

A state visit typically is offered as a sign of friendship and to showcase strategic ties between countries that are important to each other, said Anita McBride, a veteran of three Republican administrations who last served as chief of staff to first lady Laura Bush.

"The White House is the world stage to elevate that," she said. "These occasions really go a long way to solidify and strengthen relationships."

Trump speaks often about his relationships with many of his foreign counterparts, including Xi. Trump and the Chinese leader met at Trump's Florida estate in April, and Trump treated Xi to a full dinner — not the aforementioned burger — and what Trump described as "the most beautiful piece of chocolate cake."

"President Xi was enjoying it," the president reported.

Trump has also met at the White House, sometimes over lunch as well as abroad, with many of his foreign counterparts. He recently put the figure at more than 100.

But nothing compares to a state visit. The White House portion of the visit begins with an elaborate arrival ceremony on the South Lawn, including the pomp of a military honor guard, a troop review and leader statements. The leaders meet privately in the Oval Office before they hold a joint news conference in the East Room or the Rose Garden. The evening ends with the foreign leader as the guest of honor at a lavish state dinner attended by hundreds, including members of Congress, business leaders, celebrities, political donors and others.

The visiting leader also has lunch at the State Department, and sometimes will address a joint meeting of Congress.

Such visits are reserved for when the U.S. wants to put on its "best face" for a particular leader and ally, said Peter Selfridge, who served as a liaison between the White House and visiting foreign dignitaries as U.S. chief of protocol from 2014 to Janu-

ary 2017.

"It's a really important arrow in a president's quiver when it comes to the diplomatic nicety side of his work," Selfridge said.

And not just for American presidents. Knowing Trump enjoys flattery, Xi pulled out all the stops to impress him on that November stop in Beijing.

The visit opened with an arrival ceremony considered lavish even by Chinese standards, with Trump and his wife, Melania greeted at the airport by Chinese and American dignitaries standing at attention, a band playing military music and scores of flag-waving children chanting "welcome."

Trump was then whisked away for a private tour of the Forbidden City that included dinner. The meal was a first for a visiting foreign leader at Beijing's historic imperial palace since the founding of modern China. Trump also raved about an outdoor opera performance.

The following morning brought another welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People featuring a military parade that Trump said was "magnificent." He said "the world was watching" and claimed to have received telephone calls about it from around the world. "Nothing you can see is so beautiful," Trump said.

Xi also honored Trump at a state banquet that included video highlights from the Chinese leader's visit to Florida, along with clips from Trump's trip and the screening of a video of Trump's granddaughter, Arabella, singing in Chinese.

McBride said Trump's decision to not extend a state visit invitation could be partly because his first year was a chaotic one, dominated by staff upheaval and lengthy negotiations with Congress over health care and tax legislation. Separately, the first lady, who is responsible for planning a state dinner down to the smallest detail, didn't officially relocate to the White House until June. A state visit is also a massive undertaking and Trump has been running the government with a barebones staff.

But Trump's first state visitor will matter. "The other world leaders will pay attention to that," McBride said.

Not since Calvin Coolidge in the 1920s has a president ended his first year in office without hosting a foreign leader for a state visit, according to the White House Historical Association.

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Jack Capps, 81, died Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2017. Visitation will be from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2017, at Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at Sand Springs Baptist Church, with burial at Vealmoor Cemetery.

Jose "Little Joe" Davila, 79, died Thursday. He will lie in state Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017, from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. at Myers & Smith Funeral Home, with a Memorial Service at 6 p.m.

Theresa Stehling Lewis, 79, died Sunday. The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. Thursday, followed by a vigil service at 7 p.m. at Myers & Smith Chapel. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Friday at Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

Lois Berry 79, died Saturday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.



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Sheriff: South Texas mother admitted to suffocating infant

MERCEDES, Texas (AP) — Authorities in South Texas say a 34-year-old woman admitted to suffocating her 1-month-old daughter and is now facing a capital murder charge.

Maria Guadalupe Cardenas was being held Monday on \$1 million bond in Hidalgo County, in Texas' Rio Grande Valley next to the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Hidalgo County sheriff's office said in a press release that deputies on Saturday responded to a call from someone later identified as Cardenas, saying that she had killed her infant child.

Deputies found the unresponsive body of the infant in the house. The sheriff's office says Cardenas admitted to having suffocated the child.

A phone number for Cardenas' home or an attorney could not be found.

United apologizes to passenger who says US Rep got her seat

HOUSTON (AP) — United Airlines has apologized and given a \$500 travel voucher to a passenger who accused the airline of giving her first-class seat to U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, a Houston Democrat.

An airline spokeswoman said Monday that its internal systems show the passenger, Jean-Marie Simon, canceled her Dec. 18 seat from Houston to Washington, D.C. after a weather delay.

Simon denies that she canceled the flight. She was given a seat in Economy Plus on the flight, and told the Houston Chronicle she saw Jackson Lee sitting in the seat that was assigned to her.

United says it upgraded Jackson Lee automatically and not because she was a member of Congress. The congresswoman says in a statement that she didn't ask for anything "exceptional or out of the ordinary."

3 dead, 2 critical after West Texas vehicle crash

LEFORS, Texas (AP) — Three people are dead and two critically injured after one SUV crashed into another at an intersection in rural West Texas.

The Texas Department of Public Safety said the crash occurred Saturday afternoon near Lefors, about 65 miles (105 kilometers) northeast of Amarillo. DPS says the 29-year-old driver of a Chevrolet Tahoe was unable to avoid a Chevy Equinox that did not yield the right of way at a stop sign and entered the intersection in front of the Tahoe.

Authorities identified the three killed as 72-year-old Wesley Lewis of Elk City, Oklahoma, and 79-year-old Mildred Garza and 79-year-old Alverto Garza, both of Leedey, Oklahoma.

The driver of the Equinox and another passenger were hospitalized in critical condition. DPS said Monday it had no updates on their condition.

New Mexico woman dies in crash near I-10; Texas man injured

LAS CRUCES, N.M. (AP) — Authorities say an 88-year-old Las Cruces woman has died in a car crash near Interstate 10.

Las Cruces police say Lois Johns Decker was transported to a hospital after the 9:30 a.m. accident Sunday and died from her injuries about two hours later.

Police say Decker's vehicle crashed into a car driven by a man from Texas.

The two cars collided near the I-10 underpass. Decker was initially trapped and unconscious in her vehicle, but a passer-by removed her and provided initial care before paramedics arrived on scene.

Police say the 28-year-old Houston man and his three passengers weren't seriously injured and he has been issued a citation for failure to yield to oncoming traffic.

Texas man critically injured in New Mexico in big-rigs crash

BERNALILLO COUNTY, N.M. (AP) — A semi-truck driver from Texas remains hospitalized after two big-rig trucks collided head-on in New Mexico's Bernalillo County.

New Mexico State Police say 60-year-old John Paul Oneal of Foley, Alabama was pronounced dead at the scene of the crash Friday night on Interstate 40.

State Police say Oneal was a passenger in the freightliner driven by 52-year-old Jeffrey Gotreaux of Beaumont, Texas.

Gotreaux is being treated for critical injuries, but officials at University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque didn't immediately provide a condition update Sunday.

State Police say the semi-trucks were traveling in opposite directions on Interstate 40 about 80 miles (128 kilometers) west of Albuquerque when the crash occurred.

The driver and passenger of the big rig that caused the crash had non-life threatening injuries and weren't identified.

Pardoned by Christie, woman pushes for change to US gun laws



In this Aug. 5 2014, file photo, attorney Evan Nappen, left, and his client Shaneen Allen, talk to media outside Atlantic County Criminal Court in Mays Landing, N.J., after a motion to dismiss the gun possession charges against her was denied. The handgun that Allen was carrying when she was pulled over on a New Jersey highway could have sent her to prison for years if not for a pardon from Republican Gov. Chris Christie. Now the legal saga that kept the Pennsylvania mother of two in jail has helped inspire a measure that could change handgun laws across the country.

By **MICHAEL CATALINI**
Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — The handgun that Shaneen Allen was carrying when she was pulled over on a New Jersey highway could have sent her to prison for years if not for a pardon from Republican Gov. Chris Christie.

Now the legal saga that kept the Pennsylvania mother of two in jail for 48 days has helped inspire a measure that could change handgun laws across the country.

"Hopefully I'll be at the White House next to (President) Trump signing this bill," said Allen, who has become a face of the Republican effort to break down barriers to carrying concealed firearms between states. "Republicans put their money where their mouth was."

The GOP-led House passed legislation this month that would allow gun owners with a state-issued concealed-carry permit to carry a handgun in any state that allows concealed weapons. The bill faces longer odds in the Senate, which didn't vote on it before leaving for the year.

The measure has pit gun control advocates who say it would endanger public safety by effectively overriding states with tighter laws against gun rights activists who say it's needed to allow gun owners to travel freely without worrying about conflicting state laws.

The measure is a top priority of the National Rifle Association and attorneys general from 23 Republican states wrote a letter in support of the measure.

Seventeen Democratic attorneys general have called on Congress to give up the effort, the first significant action on guns in Congress since mass shootings in Nevada and Texas killed more than 80 people.

Even Christie, a Republican who has pardoned a number of out-of-state residents caught up in New Jersey's strict gun laws, is against the change. Christie said it's a state's rights issue that the federal government should stay out of.

Allen's story, along

with others who have been caught up in similar circumstances, has helped the measure get this far.

North Carolina Republican Rep. Richard Hudson, who authored the legislation, cited Allen's story as an example about why the measure is needed in a speech on the House floor.

Christie also pardoned Florida and North Carolina residents who faced charges even though they legally possessed firearms in their home states. On Friday, he pardoned three people charged with handgun possession, including a man with permits to carry a gun in Pennsylvania and New York who was charged after he told police he had a gun following a car accident.

In another case, prosecutors dropped charges against a Delaware man who had a Tennessee concealed carry permit but faced felony gun charges in his new state.

Allen, a phlebotomist, was driving on the Atlantic City Expressway when she was pulled over for making an unsafe lane change in October 2013.

She told the police officer that she was carrying a firearm and that she had a Pennsylvania-issued concealed carry permit.

"I thought my license was just like a driver's license," she said.

She spent 48 days in jail before she was admitted to a pretrial intervention program. In 2015, while gearing up for his failed presidential run, Christie interviewed her and eventually pardoned her.

Allen's ordeal captured national attention from gun-rights advo-

cates and prompted her to switch from a Democrat to a Republican and vote for Trump over Hillary Clinton. She says it also turned her into an advocate for the 2nd Amendment, including lobbying lawmakers to pass the measure and speaking at rallies.

"When you see the system go wrong in the life of a real person it becomes more compelling," said GOP New Jersey Rep. Tom MacArthur, who met with Allen and voted for the legislation. "The woman did nothing wrong and yet her family was thrown into real chaos."

The legislation includes some limits. It does not allow those barred by federal law — including convicted felons — from carrying concealed firearms across state lines. The measure also requires gun carriers to carry photo identification and a valid carry permit.

The measure also calls for strengthening the FBI database of prohibited gun buyers after the Air Force failed to report the criminal history of the gunman who killed more than two dozen people at a Texas church. Democrats called adding that a "cynical" maneuver aimed at forcing them to cast an unpopular vote against background checks.

Allen's response to opponents echoes those of the GOP lawmakers who back the bill: Laws aimed at keeping weapons from people intent on committing a crime are essentially futile.

"All I can say is I pray for them. Crime is everywhere," she said. Every person that is carrying could possibly save your life. A crime could happen anywhere."

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College students come up with plug-in to combat fake news

By PAT EATON-ROBB

Associated Press
NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — A team of college students is getting attention from internet companies and Congress after developing a browser extension that alerts users to fake and biased news stories and helps guide them to more balanced coverage.

The plug-in, "Open Mind," was developed earlier this month during a 36-hour problem-solving competition known as a hackathon at Yale University.

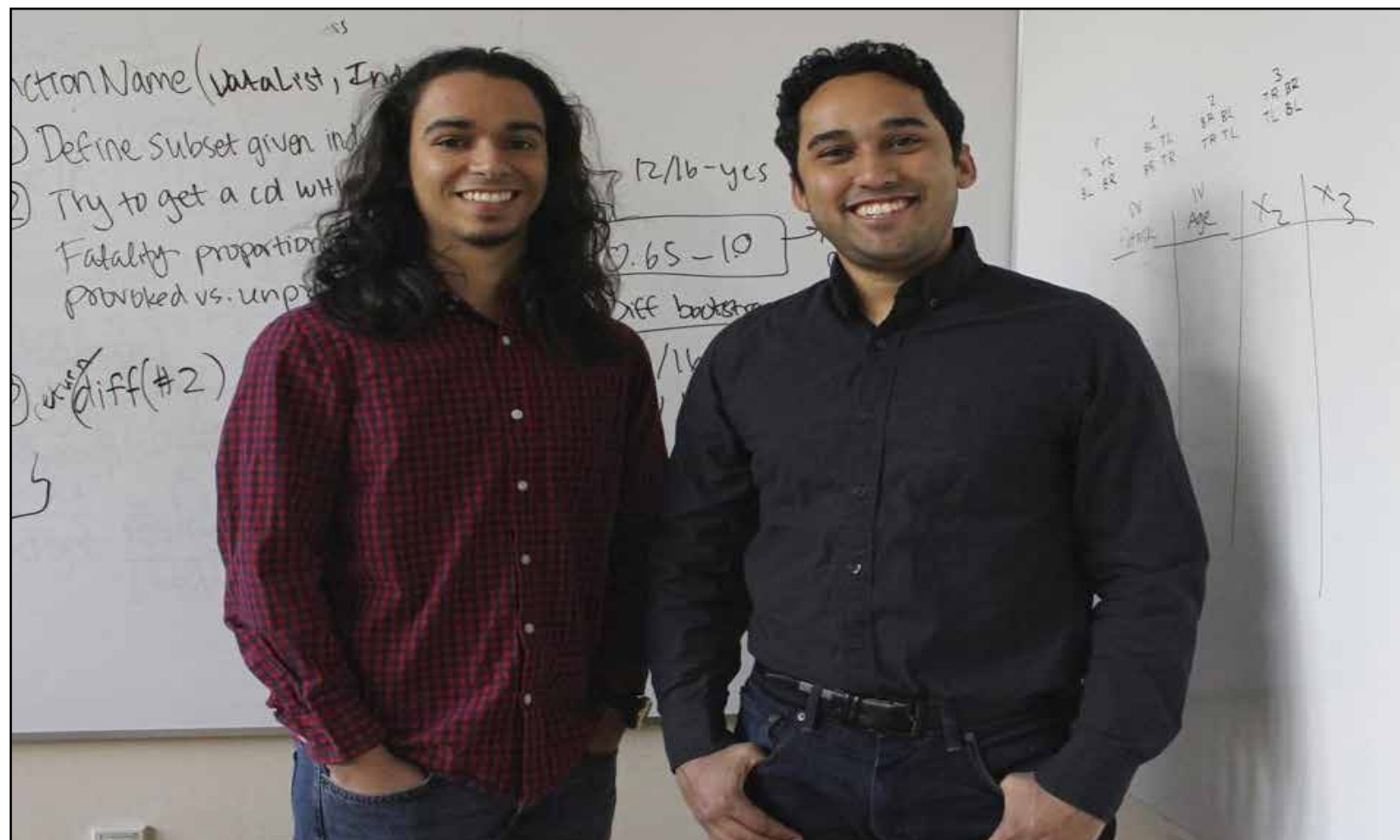
The winning team was comprised of four students: Michael Lopez-Brau and Stefan Uddenberg, both doctoral students in Yale's psychology department; Alex Cui, an undergraduate who studies machine learning at the California Institute of Technology; and Jeff An, who studies computer science at the University of Waterloo and business at Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario.

That team competed against others to win a challenge from Yale's Poynter Fellowship in Journalism, which asked students to find a way to counter fake news.

The team's software, designed as an extension for Google's Chrome browser, will display a warning screen when someone enters a site known to disseminate fake news. It also will alert a reader if a story shared on social media is fake or biased.

But it does much more than just warn.

The plug-in uses existing sentiment analysis technology to analyze any story that might appear in a newsfeed, identifying the major players and any political slant. It



In this Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017 photo, Yale graduate students Michael Lopez-Brau, left, and Stefan Uddenberg pose at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. The pair helped create an internet browser extension, "Open Mind," with students from Cal Tech and Waterloo University. The extension is designed to flag fake and biased news stories and provide the reader with alternatives.

AP photo

then can suggest to the reader other stories on the same topic that have an alternate viewpoint.

"So let's say there is an article that is very pro-Trump on a topic," said An. "We would then try to give you something more left of center. We can go out and find for you that alternative article."

The extension also collects browsing data and can show a user a graph that indicates whether they have been reading stories from just one side of a political spectrum. It

curates a news feed for that user, showing alternative stories to the ones they have been reading.

The idea, said Lopez-Brau, is to help get people out of the habit of associating on social media only with people who share their viewpoints and reading biased news coverage skewed toward their beliefs. "Social media sites grow bubbles," said Lopez-Brau. "They make it extremely easy for people to only follow people with similar interests, so often there is

no real opportunity for them to be confronted with an opposing viewpoint. They've allowed us to silo people off at a distance."

The team's prize for winning the challenge will be a meeting this spring with members of Congress.

Facebook, which was one of the sponsors of Yale's hackathon, also is interested in talking to the students as part of its ongoing work to solve the same problem, said Ruchika Budhreja, a Facebook spokeswoman.

"We're building products, many of which are very similar to what the students came up with at Yale," said Budhreja. "We have something called 'Related Articles,' which helps people discover articles on the same topic when they share an article."

The two Yale students plan to create a research project using the extension, tracking the browsing history of volunteers to try and determine if the plug-in actually changes browsing habits.

Cities, volunteers clash over feeding homeless in public

By KATE BRUMBACK

Associated Press
ATLANTA (AP) — When Adele MacLean joined others in an Atlanta park to feed the hungry the Sunday before Thanksgiving, she left with a citation and a summons to appear in court.

The case was dropped when she showed up in court earlier this month, but she and her lawyers say the citation for serving food without a permit was improper and demonstrates callousness toward the homeless. The city and some advocates say feeding people on the streets can hinder long-term solutions and raises sanitation concerns.

"I'm still outraged this is happening," MacLean said after her court appearance Dec. 14. "I'm concerned that the city, whenever they want to crack down on the homeless, they're going to go after anyone that tries to help them."

About 40 cities nationwide had active laws to restrict food sharing as of November 2014, and a few dozen more had attempted such restrictions, according to the

National Coalition for the Homeless. Interim Director Megan Hustings said she doesn't have updated numbers but that she's heard about more cities considering such regulations.

MacLean, a volunteer with a movement called Food Not Bombs, was cited Nov. 19 by a Georgia State University police officer after her group refused to stop feeding the homeless in a downtown park, and her lawyers say city officers have been distributing a "misleading pamphlet" bearing the city seal that says a permit is required to feed people in public places.

That's simply not true, said Southern Center for Human Rights attorney Gerry Weber, who's representing MacLean. Permits are required for restaurants, food trucks and festival food vendors, not for people sharing food at no charge, he said.

Even though MacLean's case was dropped, it doesn't mean officers will stop telling people they can't feed the homeless, and doesn't eliminate the

possibility of future citations, Weber said. The Southern Center is pushing for a clear statement from the city that people have a right to feed the homeless in public places, he said.

Conflict between city government and groups feeding the homeless in public isn't unique to Atlanta.

A Fort Lauderdale, Florida, ordinance requiring permits to feed the homeless in a park is being challenged in federal court by another Food Not Bombs group. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in that case in August but has not ruled yet.

The lawyers in that case argue the ordinances violate the group's right to free speech because group members share food "as an expression of their political message that hunger and poverty can be ended if society's resources are redirected from the military and war."

"I salute genuinely the good will and good nature of all these people. There is no bad guy in this," said Georgia

State University police Sgt. Joseph Corrigan, a chaplain who also leads the department's homeless outreach program.

But instead of having feedings that pop up in different places all the time, it's better to connect people with shelters or other established organizations that provide consistent help and services, he said.

Food safety, garbage and the human waste left behind when people are fed in a place with no bathrooms are also concerns, Corrigan said.

Additionally, many homeless people struggle with serious mental illness or addiction, which can make them wary of help, said George Chidi, social impact director for Central Atlanta Progress, a non-profit community development organization that serves downtown Atlanta. The city has teams whose mission is to reach out, develop trusting relationships and, ultimately, connect the homeless with

housing and treatment services. Public feedings can disrupt those efforts, Chidi said.

"We don't want anybody to stop feeding people," he said. "We just want it done in a way that's connected to social services providers ... and not on the street corner because we can't make sure those connections are being made in these street corner feedings."

MacLean doesn't buy those arguments.

"Food is a human right, and you don't force people to do what you want them to do by withholding food," she said.

Some avoid shelters because of strict rules, safety and health concerns or because they aren't able to be in the same place as family or friends, she said.

Hustings said restrictions on public feedings are most commonly enacted or enforced when the homeless population becomes more visible. In Atlanta, advocates say, more people have ended up on the

streets after the recent closure of the city's shelter of last resort.

"Even though the rhetoric will be around providing access to safe food or something that purports to be considering the folks who are homeless and need the food, a lot of times our communities across the country know it's because citizens don't like seeing large gatherings of people who look homeless," Hustings said.

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Prescott sees humbling side of NFL, bright Cowboys future



By **SCHUYLER DIXON**
AP Pro Football Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas — Now that Dak Prescott knows how the other half lives in the NFL, the Dallas quarterback can see where it was easy to think every season would be like his remarkable rookie year.

Missing the playoffs just wasn't much of a thought after an NFC-best 13 wins — until the Cowboys lost a postseason elimination game to Seattle and suddenly have only a winning record to play for going into the season finale at Philadelphia on Sunday.

"It makes me respect this league, the game, the preparation and everything it takes to be great in this league so much more," Prescott said after Sunday's 21-12 loss to the Seahawks.

"Having a first year like I did, I think you almost want to take things for granted. And then you come in the second year and a lot of things go against you and it's tough."

On the field and off, Prescott went on to say — an acknowledgment that running back and fellow

rookie star Ezekiel Elliott's six-game suspension over domestic violence allegations was high on the list of what went wrong for Dallas (8-7).

Elliott returned against the Seahawks, but many of the things that plagued Prescott without him continued. He made poor decisions and poor throws, while he mostly avoided setting an NFL rookie record for passer rating last season.

And since it was in such a high-stakes game, the bad overthrow to Elliott that resulted in Justin Coleman's 30-yard interception return for a touchdown was magnified.

The throw behind Dez Bryant that went through the drop-prone receiver's hands for the second pick was another example of how critical mistakes have replaced the clutch moments of a year earlier.

"I think as much as anything else it was the turnovers," coach Jason Garrett said. "He's done such a good job taking care of the football throughout

See **DALLAS**, Page 12

Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) is sacked by Seattle Seahawks' Michael Bennett (72) late in the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017, in Arlington, Texas.

Houston's Yates struggles again in 34-6 loss to Steelers



AP Photo

Pittsburgh Steelers defensive end Cameron Heyward (97) knocks the ball loose from Houston Texans quarterback T.J. Yates (2) during the first half of an NFL football game Monday, Dec. 25, 2017, in Houston. The Steelers recovered the fumble.

By **KRISTIE RIEKEN**
AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON — Houston's quarterback woes continued on Monday, and it led to yet another loss.

T.J. Yates had two turnovers in the first half and managed just 83 yards passing in a 34-6 loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers that extended the Texans' skid to five games.

The losing streak is Houston's longest since the team dropped the final 14 games of the 2013 season. The Texans have dropped eight of their last nine games and are 1-7 since losing star rookie quarterback Deshaun Watson to a season-ending knee injury.

"It's brutal," coach Bill O'Brien said of Houston's slide. "It's been a tough year."

Yates completed 7 of 16, had an interception and lost one of his three fumbles. His performance came after he threw for 128 yards with an interception in a 45-7 loss to Jacksonville last week in his first start since 2015.

"It's extremely frustrating ... the pass game was pretty terrible," Yates said. "We've just got to figure it out. We've got one week left. Just got to go out there and try to find a way to get a win."

Yates made his second straight start since Tom

See **TEXANS**, Page 12

TOP 25 THIS WEEK: Oklahoma-TCU headlines big week in Big 12



AP Photo

In this Dec. 19, 2017, file photo, Oklahoma guard Trae Young (11) drives past Northwestern State forward Brandon Hutton (right) in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game in Norman, Okla. The Big 12 is poised for a big week as conferences dive deep into league play. It has a national-best six teams in this week's AP Top 25 along with two games featuring a pair of ranked teams, including No. 12 Oklahoma's visit to 10th-ranked surprise TCU as the top game on the schedule for ranked teams in the week ahead.

By **AARON BEARD**
AP Basketball Writer

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Big 12 is poised for a big week as conferences dive deep into league play.

It has a national-best six teams in this week's AP Top 25 along with two games featuring a pair of ranked teams, including No. 12 Oklahoma's visit to 10th-ranked surprise TCU as the top game on the schedule in the week ahead.

"I think it's two teams playing with a lot of confidence, and we've

got to go in there and do what we do every day in practice," Sooners coach Lon Kruger said after Friday's win against Northwestern. "A lot of good teams in the Big 12 and we know how tough every night is going to be."

No. 18 Baylor (10-2) visits No. 22 Texas Tech (11-1) on Friday to start the Big 12 doubleheader, then freshman star Trae Young leads Oklahoma (10-1) into Fort Worth to face TCU (12-0) — which owns the nation's longest winning streak at 17 games

dating to last year's run to the NIT title.

The Horned Frogs have their highest ranking in program history under second-year coach Jamie Dixon. They had never been higher than 13th (February 1998) before climbing five slots in Monday's new poll.

"It's what it is — I don't spend a lot of time on it," Dixon said after Friday's win against William & Mary. "I think we're good. I know we can be better. ... But I think certainly we'll have a big-time atmo-

sphere and a big-time game come December 30th. That's what we came here to do. So it's upon us."

SUN DEVILS' TEST

Third-ranked Arizona State (12-0) has spent the past month reaching milestones for matching the highest ranking in program history (last time in 1980-81) and posting the best start in program history.

Now comes a new test: a Saturday trip to face a regrouped Arizona squad.

See **NCAA**, Page 12

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Annie's Mailbox

Coed Sleepovers, Revisited

Dear Readers:
I recently published a letter from "Not Comfortable," who is helping to raise her three granddaughters. She stated that coed sleepovers seem to be the norm for children in her town, and she wondered what reader consensus is on that

topic. I was delighted to hear from people of all ages on all sides of the issue. Here's but a small sample.

Dear Annie: I am writing about "Not Comfortable." I am a 13-year-old boy in the eighth grade, and 90 percent of my friends are girls. I have two particular female friends with whom I am very close and have been friends for four years.

We have sleepovers often. Sometimes we sleep at their house (they are sisters), and sometimes we sleep at mine. Their parents are fine with our sleepovers, and so are mine.

Two of the girls "Not Comfortable" wrote to you about are 11, and I think that at that age, they are still young enough that coed sleepovers are fine. I think boys and girls can be in the same room for a sleepover, and you can check on them if you would like. If you don't trust your child with coed sleepovers, you can put a monitor or another device in the room. -- Sleepover Connoisseur

Dear Sleepover Connoisseur: You seem like a thoughtful young man. The monitoring device is a novel solution, though I'm not sure it would suffice for the following folks.

Dear Annie: Most of the people I know tell me there's nothing wrong with having boys and girls sharing sleeping space

unsupervised. Some add, "They're just kids. There's nothing to worry about." I disagree. Children do not have mature decision-making abilities or mature impulse control. Many have raging hormones that demand action. Allowing children to act on their impulses is a good way to create adults with poor impulse control. People don't suddenly become mature; they grow into it slowly. Most require plenty of adult guidance, and sometimes people need restrictions that prevent future problems. -- A.B.S.

Dear A.B.S.: I tend to agree with you. And we're not the only ones who feel this way.

Dear Annie: I don't think parents should put their kids in a situation where they might get themselves into trouble. We can't be everywhere as parents, but we can do our best to not "provide" situations that might cause unwanted results, e.g., teen pregnancies. Keep up

the dialogue! -- Cheryl
Dear Cheryl:
Thanks for writing. The dialogue continues.

Dear Annie:
When my daughter had her first serious boyfriend, I started out worrying a lot about what they were doing together when they were alone. (I grew up with a "no boys, no dating" rule, and I definitely hid a lot from my parents.) When she asked whether she could start birth control, I had to admit to myself that she was already sexually active. I was really upset. But I supported her.

Since then, she has been open about everything and talked to me about things that I would never dream of saying to my mother (even now). Eventually, my daughter would sleep at her boyfriend's house, and then he started staying at our house, too. (They live 40 minutes of dark, moose-filled, no-cell-service driving apart.) Instead of sneaking around, they would hang out at

home. I realized that I felt really good knowing that they were safe and not at some party. My daughter appreciated my listening to her and not just sticking to outdated social taboos. We are incredibly close, and that is a bond built on openness and trust. -- No Regrets

Dear No Regrets:
While I'm not sure you'll convince many of my readers that coed sleepovers are OK (I'm still not sure I'm convinced myself), I do agree that trust and openness, rather than deceit and secrecy, are key to a healthy relationship with your teens. Thanks for writing.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com. To find out more about Annie Lane and read features by other Creators Syndicate columnists and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com.
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE
Pursuant to the Decree and Order for Partition by Public Sale entered in Cause No. 7104 in the 118th District Court in Martin County, Texas, the following property will be sold by public auction:

THE SURFACE ONLY OF SECTION 43, BLOCK 37, TOWNSHIP 1 NORTH TEXAS & PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY SURVEY, ABSTRACT NO. 233, MARTIN COUNTY, TEXAS, CONTAINING 640.81 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS.

Such sale will be for cash, which may also be in the form of certified funds. The public auction will 288613 take place in front of the northeast corner of the Martin County Courthouse on the 2nd day of January, 2018 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

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Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

The two-way finesse

South dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ K 10 4
♥ A K 9 2
♦ Q 5
♣ Q 9 8 3
WEST
♠ 7
♥ J 10 7 4
♦ A K J 10 8 3
♣ 6 4
EAST
♠ Q 9 6 5 3 2
♥ Q 8 5
♦ 9 2
♣ 7 2
SOUTH
♠ A J 8
♥ 6 3
♦ 7 6 4
♣ A K J 10 5

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	1 ♦	1 ♥	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
5 ♣			

Opening lead — king of diamonds.

It is much easier to play a hand correctly if you see the defenders' cards. But even though in practice you can't see their cards, you can often force them to reveal their holdings and so achieve the same result as if their hands were exposed.

Consider this deal where West cashes the K-A of diamonds and continues with the jack after East plays high-low to show a doubleton.

Declarer ruffs with dummy's eight and is left with the problem of avoiding a spade loser. This is not a difficult task to accomplish if you get a peek at East's hand, see the spade queen and finesse accordingly.

But which way to finesse without seeing the opposing cards is a bit more complicated. You could argue that West bid and is therefore more likely to have the queen, or that East is more likely to have it because he probably has more spades than West.

Both are valid arguments, even though they lead to opposite conclusions. However, the best way of trying to reconcile these differing viewpoints is to attempt to learn more about how the defenders' cards are divided.

So you cash the A-K of trumps and A-K of hearts, and ruff a heart. You then cross to dummy with a trump and ruff the last heart. When West follows suit, your worries are over. West has shown up with four hearts, six diamonds and two clubs, and so is bound to have a singleton spade.

You therefore lead a low spade to the king and return a spade to the jack with total assurance that the jack will win the trick. So long as everyone started with 13 cards, this is one finesse that cannot lose.

Tomorrow: Partnership rapport.

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Tomorrow's Horoscope

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS



Happy Kwanzaa

A lucky trine of the moon in Taurus and Mercury in global-minded Sagittarius sprinkles some practical magic over the first day of Kwanzaa, a week-long celebration of African heritage, in particular seven principles: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You've seen it time and again: The seemingly mundane becomes quite miraculous when you know a little more about it. That's why you look into what makes things work and why.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Of course you want to choose joy. Who wouldn't? But it's not always so easy to see where the joy is in the situation. A lot of times, the joy is elsewhere, and you have to take yourself out of the situation to find it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There are communication barriers that will come down once you learn the other person's language. If the rewards look promising enough, you'll do just that today.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're the king or queen of compromise. You'll quite easily strike upon an arrangement that will make life easier for all. Your motivation may be something you promised your people, but truly everyone involved will benefit.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You think about what the other person's experience is in dealing with you. Is it pleasant? Is it easy? Do they like the person they are in your eyes? Nail this, and your dealings will be stellar.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's

a lot that's competing for your attention today, but if you follow the ancient wisdom of putting first things first, all problems will fall into a manageable form. You can do this!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Expert performances will not arise out of genetic predisposition or super-intelligence but out of thousands of hours of deliberate practice. Put in your time now and later you'll be glad you did.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Knowing the difference between what's important and what's urgent will allow you to focus yourself well today. Many of the so-called "urgent" matters vanish if you simply ignore them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There are many ways to work through your feelings. You can talk them out, dance them out, exercise them out; you can write, paint, cry, shout them out. Do get them out, though, so you know what you're dealing with.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The pursuit will take motivation, time and discipline. With the right motivation, the other two will be easier to obtain. If you don't have them, you'll make them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). No matter how far you get with what you know, there will always be new knowledge, adaptations and complex mental models to spur you to ever higher levels. It's a good thing you love to learn, because it's a continuous path.

19-March 20). The issue that appears weighty and diffused in the soft morning light will look very different to you as the sun steps higher in the sky. You'll correctly assess the big picture and get sharper details in the direct light of day.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 26). Good decisions get easier and easier for you. You'll be tuned in to the small things that matter -- which is to say every small thing, as the miraculous essence of life shimmers under every surface. Friends and loved ones gravitate toward your positivity and joy. There's healing in February. Finances free up in March. Cancer and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 28, 4, 44 and 18.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTION: "I often get sick right after the holidays. It's a horrible way to bring in the new year, but I'd say 50 percent of the time I manage to catch something, flu shot or no. What advice do you have for a post-holiday Aquarius?"

The holidays coincide perfectly with cold and flu season. Luckily, there are some contagions that actually promote health. One in particular triggers changes in the body that raise energy, reverses the damage of stress, diminishes pain and boosts the immune system. This contagion is highly infectious and, more good news, it's free. Can you guess what it is? Yes, it's laughter!

To write to Holiday Mathis, visit www.creators.com/author/holiday-mathis and click "Contact."

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SUDOKU

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

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Level: Advanced

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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

ANSWER:

Table with 20 columns representing different TV channels and their programming schedules for December 26, 2017. Columns include KMID, UNI, KPEJ, KOSA, KTLT, KWES, KMLM, KPBT, KWOT, KWES2, WTBS, TNT, ESPN, ESPN2, FSN, USA, A&E, and DISC.

AGNES



ANDY CAPP



ARCHIE



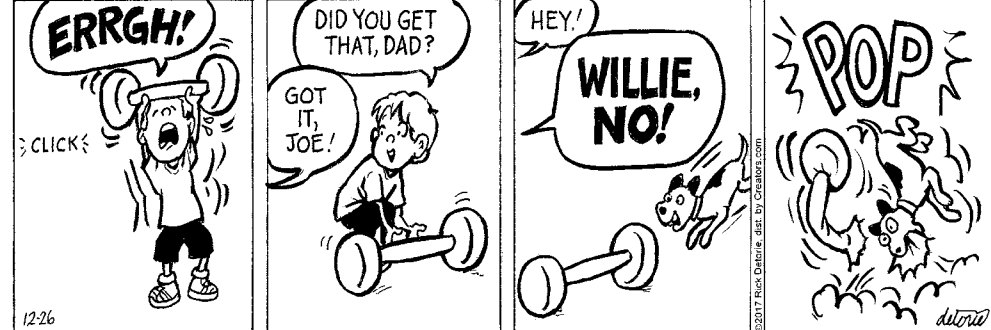
MOMMA



NEST HEAD



ONE BIG HAPPY



This Date In History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 26, the 360th day of 2017. There are five days left in the year. The seven-day African-American holiday Kwanzaa begins today. This is Boxing Day.

Today's Highlight in History:
On Dec. 26, 1947, heavy snow blanketed the Northeast, burying New York City under 26.4 inches of snow in 16 hours; the severe weather was blamed for some 80 deaths.

In 1776, British forces suffered a major defeat in the Battle of Trenton during the Revolutionary War.

In 1799, former President George Washington was eulogized by Col. Henry Lee as "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

In 1865, James H. Nason of Franklin, Massachusetts, received a patent for "an improved coffee percolator."

In 1908, Jack Johnson became the first African-American boxer to win the world heavyweight championship as he defeated Canadian Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia.

In 1917, during World War I, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation authorizing the government to take over operation of the nation's railroads.

In 1944, during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, the embattled U.S. 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne, Belgium, was relieved by units of the 4th Armored Division. Tennessee Williams' play "The Glass Menagerie" was first performed at the Civic Theatre in Chicago.

In 1967, "Magical Mystery Tour," the Beatles' poorly received TV special, was broadcast (in black and white) on BBC1.

In 1972, the 33rd president of the United States, Harry S. Truman, died in Kansas City, Missouri, at age 88.

In 1980, Iranian television footage was broadcast in the United States, showing a dozen of the American hostages sending messages to their families.

In 1996, 6-year-old beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey was found beaten and strangled in the basement of her family's home in Boulder, Colorado. (To date, the slaying remains unsolved.)

In 2004, more than 230,000 people, mostly in southern Asia, were killed by a 100-foot-high tsunami triggered by a

9.1-magnitude earthquake beneath the Indian Ocean.

In 2006, former President Gerald R. Ford died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 93.

Ten years ago: Six people were found dead at a rural property east of Seattle; the property owners' daughter and her boyfriend were arrested. (Michele Anderson and Joseph McEnroe were convicted of killing Anderson's parents, her brother, her sister-in-law and her niece and nephew on Christmas Eve; both received life prison terms.) Francesca Lewis, the sole survivor of a plane crash in Panama two days earlier that claimed three lives, was reunited with her family after rescue workers brought the 12-year-old American out of a remote mountain area. Joe Dolan, one of Ireland's first pop music stars, died in suburban Dublin at age 68.

Five years ago: Toyota Motor Corp. said it had reached a settlement worth more than \$1 billion in a case involving unintended acceleration problems in its vehicles. Old-guard veteran Shinzo Abe took office as Japan's prime minister. Gerry Anderson, 83, British puppetry pioneer and creator of the sci-fi TV show "Thunderbirds," died near Oxfordshire, England. Soul singer Fontella Bass, 72, died in St. Louis.

One year ago: President-elect Donald Trump and President Barack Obama traded competing claims about who would have won had the presidential election been a contest between the two of them; Obama suggested in a podcast he still held enough sway over the coalition of voters that elected him twice to get them to vote for him once again while Trump tweeted: "He No way! that but I say NO SHOULD!" Star gymnast Simone Biles was voted AP Female Athlete of the Year after her golden run at Rio Olympics.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Donald Moffat is 87. Actor Caroll Spinney (Big Bird on TV's "Sesame Street") is 84. Rhythm-and-blues singer Abdul "Duke" Fakir (The Four Tops) is 82. Record producer (and convicted murderer) Phil

Spector is 78. "America's Most Wanted" host John Walsh is 72. Country musician Bob Carpenter (The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 71. Funk musician George Porter Jr. (The Meters) is 70. Baseball Hall of Fame catcher Carlton Fisk is 70. Retired MLB All-Star Chris Chambliss is 69. Baseball Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith is 63. Former Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., is 62. Humorist David

Sedaris is 61. Rock musician James Kottak (The Scorpions) is 55. Country musician Brian Westrum (Sons of the Desert) is 55. Rock musician Lars Ulrich (Metallica) is 54. Actress Nadia Dajani is 52. Rock musician J is 50. Country singer Audrey Wiggins is 50. Rock musician Peter Dinklage (Candlebox) is 48. Rock singer James Mercer (The Shins; Flake) is 47. Actor-singer

Jared Leto is 46. Actress Kendra C. Johnson is 41. Rock singer Chris Daughtry is 38. Actress Beth Behrs is 32. Actor Kit Harington is 31. Actress Eden Sher is 26. Pop singer Jade Thirlwall (Little Mix Actor) is 25. Actor Zach Mills is 22.

gone, and I — to speak selfishly — am glad of it. The season always gives me the blues in spite of myself, though I manage to get a good deal of pleasure from thinking of the multitudes of happy kids in various parts of the world." Edwin Arlington Robinson, American poet (1869-1935).

Thought for Today:

"Christmas has come and

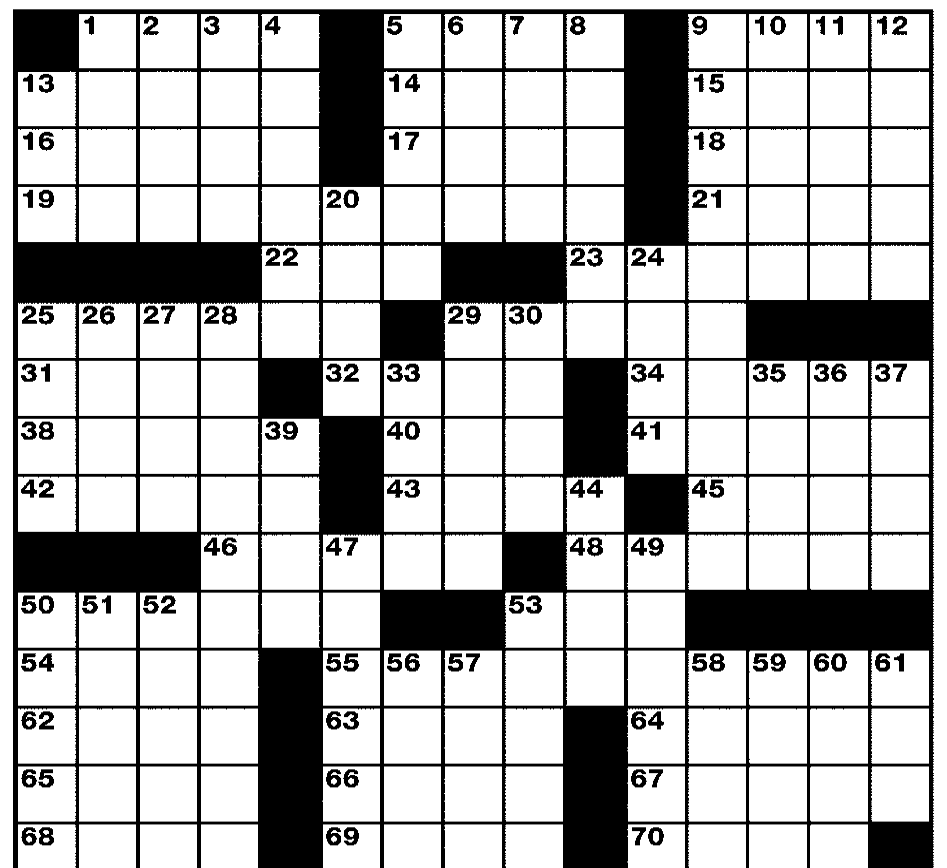
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Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Front of the hand
5 Annoys
9 Pickle herb
13 Cavalry sword
14 Scenic sight
15 "Understood"
16 Islam's Almighty
17 Notion
18 Wise person
19 Very, very small
21 Barber's expertise
22 Prosecutors: Abbr.
23 Makes into law
25 100-yard races
29 Autumn apple drink
31 Convertible or coupe
32 Make preparations
34 Accumulate
38 Three-person singing groups
40 Raggedy doll
41 Bottom-line amount
42 Agricultural soil
43 Toward sunset
45 ___ of the above (questionnaire category)
46 Is worthy of
48 Wrote a limerick, for example
50 Alter
53 Take to court
54 Luau dance
55 Hodgepodge
62 Metal in barbells
63 Garfield dog

I LOVE NEW YORK by Sally R. Stein Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

- 7 Sharp, as vision
8 Convinced
9 Friction within a group
10 Sir ___ Newton
11 Authentic, informally
12 Impolite looks
13 Occupied a sofa
20 Stinging insect
24 Tidy
25 Go out with
26 Subtle glow
27 Mix together
28 Folk-singing gathering
29 Walking sticks
30 Rural hotels
33 Grass in front of a home
35 Molecule part
36 Sensible
37 Snow glider
39 Thick carpet
44 Factual
47 TV device with a mute button
49 Lent a hand
50 Set of fine dinnerware
51 One of the Great Lakes
52 So all can hear
53 Part of a play
56 Fan favorite
57 Titles for knights
58 VIP's vehicle, for short
59 Line of rotation
60 Evening, on marquees
61 "You bet!"



Answer to previous puzzle
ROBS TACOS AFAR
OPEC ILLBE TRUE
MESH ALOOP HAND
ENTOURAGE GOTTO
OKAYS DIME
ADDLES REVERES
TRESS SCENE NET
TIL FEAST IRA
EVE SLEPT SET IN
NEGATED REDYED
AVIAD MIAMI
ALTER COMMITTEE
REIN SONAR IOWA
AGOG OUTGO ODES
BONE SPIED NOISE



AP Photo

Dallas Cowboys' Dak Prescott (4) walks into the team's clubhouse tunnel after their NFL football game against the Seattle Seahawks on Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017, in Arlington, Texas. The Seahawks won 21-12.

DALLAS

Continued from Page 6

his career, and that is not an easy thing for a young quarterback to do."

Franchise passing leader Tony Romo conceded the job to Prescott last year when he was ready to return from a preseason back injury and the Cowboys were in the middle of a franchise-record 11-game winning streak. Then Romo retired to the broadcast booth when the season ended.

Owner and general manager Jerry Jones is all in with Prescott despite a big increase in interceptions (13 compared to four last season, with four returned for touchdowns).

The Seattle loss was the second time in six games the Dallas offense didn't score a touchdown, all the more alarming with Elliott back.

"I'm excited about our future with Dak at quarterback," Jones said. "I'm extremely excited about our future. We've just got to get it done better."

As good as Prescott was as the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year last season, he lost his only playoff game for the top-seeded Cowboys — the same thing Romo had done nine years earlier, when he was forging a reputation as a good, but not clutch, quarterback.

After throwing the most interceptions for a Dallas quarterback since Romo's 19 in 2012, Prescott will face questions about his staying power in his third season.

"The future is bright," said Prescott, who will have significant drops in completion percentage and passer rating.

"We are not giving up on this team. We are not giving up on ourselves. We know we are not making the postseason, but hopefully it will motivate us."

NCAA

Continued from Page 6

The 17th-ranked Wildcats (10-3) went from No. 2 nationally to unranked in a week after an 0-3 showing at the Battle 4 Atlantis in the Bahamas, but have since won seven straight games.

MORE RANKED MATCHUPS

There are two other matchups between ranked teams. No. 23 Seton Hall hosts No. 25 Creighton in the Big East on Thursday, while No. 4 Duke hosts No. 24 Florida State in the Atlantic Coast Conference on Saturday.

VILLANOVA STAYS ON TOP

The top four teams stayed unchanged in Monday's poll, with Villanova checking in at No. 1 for the third straight week after receiving 43 of 65 first-place votes.

The Wildcats (12-0) open Big East play with two road games, first Wednesday at

DePaul and then Saturday at Butler.

STATUS QUO

There were no new teams nor departures from this week's poll, with eight teams staying in their same spot from last week.

WATCH LIST

Arkansas was the leading vote-getter not to make this week's poll, though the Razorbacks will get a chance for a resume-helping win this week. The Razorbacks (9-2) first host Cal State-Bakersfield on Wednesday before hosting No. 19 Tennessee (9-2) on Saturday in their Southeastern Conference opener.

Clemson (11-1) hovers 30 points back of Arkansas and hosts North Carolina State on Saturday in the ACC.

Two other teams — Texas and Louisville — face ranked opponents Friday. The Longhorns (9-3) host No. 11 Kansas, while the Cardinals (10-2) visit No. 16 Kentucky.

TEXANS

Continued from Page 6

Savage sustained a concussion. Yates left the game briefly Monday to be evaluated for a concussion, and his replacement, Taylor Heinicke, sustained a concussion on his only full possession.

The Texans have had a revolving door at quarterback over the past few years, and when Heinicke entered the game he became the 11th player to appear at the position for the team since 2013. They'll likely have to sign yet another quarterback this week to backup Yates in the season finale at Indianapolis with Heinicke in the concussion protocol.

The Steelers hurried and harassed Yates all day, with Mike Hilton leading the way with three sacks and three quarterback hits, Cameron Heyward adding two and forcing a fumble. Hilton became the first cornerback with three sacks in a game since sacks became an official statistic in 1982.

Despite Houston's struggles at quarterback, receiver DeAndre Hopkins has continued to excel. Hopkins, second in the NFL with 1,378 yards receiving, had 65 yards receiving and the team's only touchdown Monday.

His acrobatic 3-yard touchdown reception in the fourth quarter was one of the few highlights of Houston's tough day. Hopkins deflected the ball with his right hand, reeled it in with his left and got both feet down before falling out of bounds for his NFL-best and franchise-record 13th touchdown reception.

"It was incredible," O'Brien said. "Great catch. He did an unbelievable job."

Even cornerback Joe Haden, who was covering Hopkins on the play, lauded him for the catch.

"He was able to tap both feet in," Haden said. "It was just an amazing catch."

Hopkins may have been the only one who wasn't impressed with the grab.

"I'm mad I didn't catch it the first time," he said. "Like me, who I am, I was

supposed to catch that one the first time with my right hand."

The Texans also got a good game from backup running back Alfred Blue, who had 16 carries for 108 yards to give the team its first 100-yard rushing performance of the season.

The Texans trailed 10-0 when his 48-yard run on the first play of the second quarter got the Texans to the Pittsburgh 18-yard line. Houston got to the 1 on second down later in that drive, but couldn't do anything on the next two plays before Yates was intercepted in the end zone.

Pittsburgh added a touchdown on a 1-yard run by Roosevelt Nix on the ensuing possession. Heyward sacked Yates three plays later and caused a fumble recovered by Bud Dupree to give the Steelers the ball right back.

"We probably should have run it almost every down," O'Brien said. "Probably should have, looking back on it. I don't know how many times we ran it, but probably should have done it a lot more than we did."

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