

MIDLAND REPORTER-TELEGRAM

MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2018

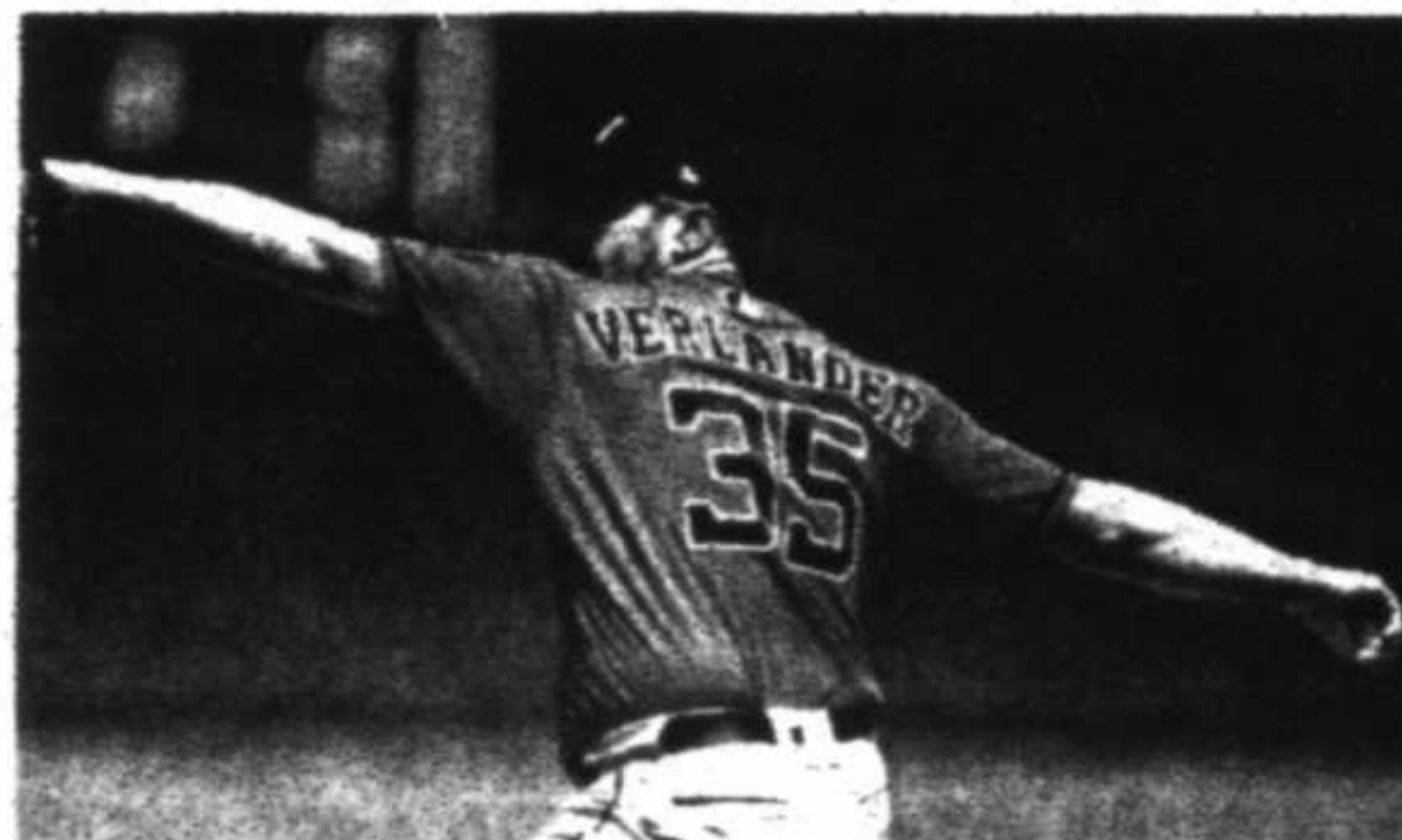
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HELPING HOMELESS

Online socks seller Bombas mixes commerce and charity.

Page 4A



ASTROS ACE GETS 200

Justin Verlander pitched well enough to earn his 200th career win and the Houston Astros hit five home runs, beating the Oakland Athletics 9-4 Sunday to retake sole possession of AL West lead.

Page 1B

Local economy continues to reach new highs

By Mella McEwen
mmcewen@mrt.com

Midland and Odessa's economies continue to rocket into record territory as the region rebounds from the downturn caused by falling oil prices in 2014-2015.

Karr Ingham, the Amarillo economist who prepares the Midland-Odessa Regional Economic Index for the Midland Development Corp., said, "Coming up with new descriptions for that economy is getting more difficult."

The June index is 21 percent higher than it was in June 2017, while the Mid-

land index is 20.8 percent higher and the Odessa index 21.3 percent higher than a year ago, according to Ingham. All components of the index posted year-over-year increases for the second quarter, "most impressively so, and remain higher midway through the year, as well," he said in a phone interview.

"This is a pretty stunning turn of events in the overall economy, which saw stunningly high growth rates and rapid recovery from sharp downturns. (But) this is unrivaled — the sheer rate of growth, the rate at which the economy has recovered and grown past its previous highs," he said. "And the fact is, all this

is occurring with a regional oil and gas index that's nowhere near its peak level."

He said that trend indicates a shift in the relationship between the general economy and the region's oil and gas industry. The success of oil and gas producers are having in increasing production despite a lower rig count, fewer drilling permits and commodity prices well below the highs seen in recent years is pushing more and more revenue into the overall economy, he said.

Retail spending in Midland-Odessa continued at what Ingham called a white-hot pace, jumping 42.2 percent in the first half of the year, 42.9 percent in the

second quarter and 41.5 percent in June compared to a year earlier.

"Incredibly, the January to June 2018 real spending total is nearly 50 percent higher compared to the total through June 2016, just two years ago in the depths of the general economic contraction induced by an 80 percent decline in crude oil prices," he said.

In Midland, retail spending was up 37.6 percent in the first half of the year, up 39.6 percent in the second quarter and 36.5 percent in June over the same period of 2017.

Please see ECONOMY/2A

WASH ON, WASH OFF



James Durbin/Reporter-Telegram

Members of the West Texas Longhorns football team wash a Midland Police Department vehicle belonging to Officer Camilo Fonseca on Saturday in a parking lot near West Wadley Avenue and Loop 250. The team is part of the Texas Youth Football Association and put on a car wash and bake sale to raise money for the season.

US says conserving oil no longer an economic imperative

By Ellen Knickmeyer
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Conserving oil is no longer an economic imperative for the U.S., the Trump administration declares in a major new policy statement that threatens to undermine decades of government campaigns for gas-thrifty cars and other conservation programs.

The position was outlined in a memo released last month in support of the administration's proposal to relax fuel mileage standards. The government released the memo online this month without fanfare.

Growth of natural gas and other alternatives to petroleum has reduced the need for imported oil, which "in turn, affects the need of the nation to conserve energy," the Energy Department said. It also cites the now decade-old fracturing revolution that has unlocked U.S. shale oil reserves, giving "the United States more flexibility than in the past to use our oil resources with less concern."

With the memo, the administration is formally challenging old justifications for conservation — even congressional prescriptions — as with the mileage standards. The memo made no mention of climate change. Transportation is the single largest source of climate-changing emissions.

President Donald Trump has questioned the existence of climate change, embraced the notion of "energy dominance" as a national goal and called for easing what he calls burdensome regulation of oil, gas and coal, including repealing the Obama Clean Power Plan.

Despite the increased oil supplies, the administration continues to believe in the need to "use energy wisely," the Energy Department said, without elaboration. Department spokesmen did not respond Friday to questions about that statement.

Reaction was quick.

Please see OIL/2A

Industry expects rules to increase diesel cost

■ Limits on sulfur emissions could squeeze truckers, airlines, railroads, ships

By Erin Douglas
Bloomberg

In 16 months, new standards will descend on a corner of the global oil market that may disrupt fuel supplies crucial to transportation industries like trucking, airlines, railroads and ships. While the goal of the change is to reduce sulfur emissions, which cause acid rain, the rules could boost diesel prices by 20 percent to 30 percent, according to the

International Energy Agency. That means Paar could be shelling out more than \$344 on fuel for each New York trip.

"We bleed diesel," said Paar, 62, whose brothers, wife and son are all truckers. Diesel accounts for about 20 percent of the operating costs at his company, Sandman Services.

The last time diesel prices shot up as much as the IEA is predicting was mid-2008, according to data from AAA. At that time, crude oil hit a record high of \$145 a barrel. This time, the culprit isn't the raw material, which is around \$70, but new rules from the International Maritime Organization. The group is requiring the world's ocean-going vessels to cut the

sulfur content in fuel to 0.5 percent from 3.5 percent.

"Expensive as hell"

The IEA estimates 3 million barrels a day of high-sulfur bunker fuel is used by the global shipping industry, which handles about 90 percent of the world's trade. Some ships may keep using the fuel after 2020 by installing scrubbers to clean up emissions, or just ignore the rule and take the chance on heavy fines. A few may switch to new ships that run on liquefied natural gas.

Please see DIESEL/2A

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Did you know?
At the box office, 'Crazy Rich Asians' surpassed expectations and earned \$34 million. Page 3A

The big number
An Oklahoma casino says 14 people were injured during a rainstorm before a Backstreet Boys concert. Read more on Page 4A.

Word of the Day:
gauche
Do you know what it means? Find out the definition on Page 3A.

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Oil

From 1A

"It's like saying, 'I'm a big old fat guy, and food prices have dropped — it's time to start eating again,'" said Tom Kloza, longtime oil analyst with the Maryland-based Oil Price Information Service.

"If you look at it from the other end, if you do believe that fossil fuels do some sort of damage to the atmosphere ... you come up with a different viewpoint," Kloza said. "There's a downside to living large."

Climate change is a "clear and present and increasing danger," said Sean Donahue, a lawyer for the Environmental Defense Fund.

In a big way, the Energy Department statement just acknowledges the world's vastly changed reality when it comes to oil.

Just 10 years ago, in summer 2008, oil prices were peaking at \$147 a barrel and pummeling the global economy. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries was enjoying a massive transfer of wealth from countries dependent on imported oil. Prices now are about \$65.

Today, the U.S. is vying with Russia for the title of top world oil producer. U.S. oil production hit an all-time high this summer, aided by the technological leaps of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing.

How much the U.S. economy is hooked up to the gas pump, and vice versa, plays into any number of policy considerations, not just economic or environmental ones, but military and geopolitical ones, said John Graham, a former official in the George W. Bush administration, now dean of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University.

"Our ability to play that role as a leader in the world is stronger when we are the strongest producer of oil and gas," Graham said. "But there are still reasons to want to reduce the amount we consume."

Current administration proposals include one that would freeze mileage standards for cars and light trucks after 2020, instead of continuing to make them tougher.

The proposal eventually would increase U.S. oil consumption by 500,000 barrels a day, the administration says. While Trump officials say the freeze would improve highway safety, documents released this month showed senior Environmental Protection Agency staffers calculate the administration's move would actually increase highway deaths.

"American businesses, consumers and our environment are all the losers under his plan," said Sen. Tom Carper, a Delaware Democrat. "The only clear winner is the oil industry. It's not hard to see whose side President Trump is on."

Administration support has been tepid to null on some other long-running government programs for alternatives to gas-powered cars.

Bill Wehrum, assistant administration of the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, spoke dismissively of electric cars — a young industry supported financially by the federal government and many states — this month in a call with reporters announcing the mileage freeze proposal.

"People just don't want to buy them," the EPA official said.

Oil and gas interests are campaigning for changes in government conservation efforts on mileage standards, biofuels and electric cars.

In June, for instance, the American Petroleum Institute and other industries wrote eight governors, promoting the dominance of the internal-combustion engine and questioning their states' incentives to consumers for electric cars.

Surging U.S. and gas production has brought on "energy security and abundance," Frank Macchiarola, a group director of the American Petroleum Institute trade association, told reporters this week, in a telephone call dedicated to urging scrapping or overhauling of one U.S. program for biofuels.

Fears of oil scarcity used to be a driver of U.S. energy policy, Macchiarola said.

Thanks partly to increased production, "that pillar has really been rendered essentially moot," he said.



Sanja Bucha/Warner Bros. Entertainment via AP

'Crazy Rich Asians' shines bright at box office

By Lindsey Bahr
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Glitz won over guns as the gilded romance "Crazy Rich Asians" debuted at No. 1 in North American theaters this weekend, surpassing industry expectations and beating out action-packed fare like "Mile 22."

Warner Bros. estimates that the film earned \$25.2 million over the weekend and \$34 million since its opening Wednesday. It's a surefire win for the film, which cost \$30 million to produce and went into the weekend with months of buzz and a 93 percent "fresh" rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

Breakout star Henry Golding told The Associated Press on Sunday that the film's performance is a "testament to the people who are turning up."

"It's not just the Asians who are coming. It's people of all colors from all walks of life who are enjoying this cinematic experience," Golding said. "It's a real shift in Hollywood."

Adapted from Kevin Kwan's best-seller, "Crazy Rich Asians" stars Constance Wu as an American woman who gets a culture shock meeting her boyfriend's obscenely wealthy family in Singapore. The studio strategically bumped up the film's opening to a Wednesday earlier in the summer.

"We knew we'd get avids who read the book and a large Asian following," said Warner Bros. domestic distribution president Jeff Goldstein. "We figured OK, we get good reviews, open on Wednesday, word of mouth will spread and really propel the movie into the weekend, and that's exactly what happened."

As recently as July 26, box office experts were predicting that the film would open to at least \$18 million over its first five days, but no one expected a launch of over \$30 million.

"I think the audience isn't an obvious audience," Goldstein said. "When you get a culturally important event like this movie, I think it just takes off like wildfire."

The stakes were high for the first studio-produced movie led by Asian-Americans in 25 years. The filmmakers even turned down a big offer from Netflix to give the historically significant film a theatrical platform. Cast members and fans started using the hashtag #GoldOpen to try to encourage more opening weekend support.

Director Jon M. Chu tweeted his appreciation Sunday and asked audiences to keep spreading the word.

"We still have a long run to go but our message to the world has been heard. We have arrived," Chu wrote. "Now let's go tell more of our stories! We have a lot more to say. And I don't want to wait another 25 years to see them. This is only the beginning."

Despite the success of "Crazy Rich Asians," other films still found audiences this weekend, including Warner Bros. shark movie "The Meg," which fell only 53 percent in its second weekend, adding \$21.2 million. The Jason Statham-led film has now grossed more than \$300 million worldwide.

Mark Wahlberg's action-packed "Mile 22," his fourth collaboration with director

Peter Berg, debuted in third place with an estimated \$13.6 million. The STX film had a \$35 million production budget.

Launching with \$10.5 million, "Alpha," an Ice Age-set adventure tale, tied for fourth place in its opening weekend with "Mission: Impossible — Fallout."

In limited release, Sony Pictures Classics' "The Wife" opened with \$111,137, and Roadside Attractions' "Juliet, Naked" debuted with \$60,922. Both films opened in four theaters.

One film that did not find much of an audience was Kevin Spacey's "Billionaire Boys Club," which Vertical Entertainment released in eight theaters this weekend after making it available for purchase on Video on Demand last month. Official earnings were not reported to comScore, but industry trade publication The Hollywood Reporter said Sunday that the film earned a dismal \$425.

Hollywood's winning streak continues with the summer season up 12.4 percent from last year and the year overall up 8.9 percent.

"The box office is on a roll," said comScore senior media analyst Paul Derrigardian, noting the diverse genre offerings in cinemas this summer. "The line-up basically looks like a streaming service. That's what people have become accustomed to and the movie theater is delivering it in a big way this summer."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Crazy Rich Asians," \$25.2 million (\$730,000 international).
2. "The Meg," \$21.2 million (\$67 million international).
3. "Mile 22," \$13.6 million (\$538,000 international).
4. "Alpha," \$10.5 million.
- 4.(tie) "Mission: Impossible — Fallout," \$10.5 million (\$20.5 million international).
5. "Christopher Robin," \$8.9 million (\$7.9 million international).
6. "BlackKkKlansman," \$7 million (\$1.2 million international).
7. "Slender Man," \$5 million.
8. "Hotel Transylvania 3," \$3.7 million (\$28.3 million international).
9. "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again," \$3.4 million (\$15.3 million international).

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "The Meg," \$67 million.
2. "The Island," \$38.7 million.
3. "Hotel Transylvania 3," \$28.3 million.
4. "Mission: Impossible — Fallout," \$20.5 million.
5. "Europe Raiders," \$19.5 million.
6. "Go Brother!," \$17.7 million.
7. "The Equalizer 2," \$17.5 million.
8. "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again," \$15.3 million.
9. "Oolong Courtyard: Kung Fu School," \$14.8 million.
10. "Incredibles 2," \$8.9 million.

DIESEL

From 1A

But those options may be too expensive, so the IEA expects many ship owners to upgrade the fuel they use. That would spark a rush on existing supplies of middle distillates like diesel and jet fuel. When the standards kick in at the start of 2020, global demand for diesel could jump by about 1 million barrels a day, to 29.7 million, the IEA estimates.

"The consensus is that it will be expensive as hell," said John Butler, president and CEO of the World Shipping Council. "It will dwarf anything we've seen as an external cost on the industry."

Trucking companies already are getting squeezed by higher labor costs, reflecting a shortage of drivers. The average hourly wage was \$24.14 in June, up 23 percent since June 2009, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For the airline industry, where fuel is expected to account for a quarter of operating expenses this year, companies are likely to pass along costs to passengers and adjust flight plans or plane loads, according to a survey by Macquarie Group Ltd.

Broader impact

The IMO announced the new emission standards in

October 2016. If oil prices weaken in the next couple of years, the expected switch to diesel probably won't have much impact on industries that depend on it, economists said.

But at least one economist, Philip Verleger at PK Verleger LLC, said the impact of the IMO rules could reach beyond transportation industries, especially if the rush boosts demand for crude and sends oil above \$85 a barrel.

"It's actions like this that cause big recessions," said Verleger. "It's not like it's regulating one industry; it's a whole series of industries."

Economy

From 1A

In Odessa, spending is up 46.9 percent in the first half of the year, 46 percent in the second quarter and 46.4 percent in June over last year.

Even more impressive, Ingham said, is another component of consumer spending. Automotive spending was up 38.3 percent in the first half of the year, 32.7 percent in the second quarter and 19.6 percent in June over a year ago.

In Midland, automotive spending was up 32.1 percent in the second half, 18.7 percent in the second quarter but a scant 0.8 percent in June compared to 2017 levels.

Still, compared to the growth in real spending, Ingham said the growth in new and used motor vehicles is even more impressive, up 68 percent compared to the January-to-June 2016 total, the low point in automotive spending during the economic contraction.

The unemployment rate has joined other components in record territory, Ingham said. The combined Midland-Odessa unemployment rate of 2.7 percent is the lowest rate ever and a decline of 34.4 percent from the 4.1 percent recorded at the same time last year. Unemployment rates for June and the second quarter are also below 3 percent, with June's 2.8 percent marking the first time a June rate has fallen below 3 percent, and the second quarter rate averaged 2.5 percent.

In Midland, the June unemployment rate averaged 2.4 percent; it averaged 2.2 percent in the second quarter and 2.3 percent for the first half of the year.

In Odessa, the June unemployment rate averaged 3.2 percent; it averaged 2.9 percent in the second quarter and 3.1 percent in the first half of the year.

Ingham said seasonally adjusted employment data indicates total employment in Midland-Odessa was 178,200 in June, the highest June total on record and a gain of 6.9 percent from 166,700 last June. But the total is down about 900 jobs from the peak of 179,100 in December 2014. He said that gap will close in the coming months and employment "will be in record territory by every measure."

Midland employment in June totaled 102,400, up 9.5 percent from 93,500 last June, while second quarter employment averaged 101,765, up 10.2 percent from 92,365 the previous year, and 99,850 for the first half of the year, a gain of 10 percent from 90,735 for the first half of 2017.

Odessa employment averaged 75,800 in June, up 3.6 percent from last June; 76,035 in the second quarter, up 4.7 percent; and 75,685 in the first half of 2018, up 5.8 percent.

The only negative in the June index was total building permit valuations, which sank 55.9 percent compared to the previous June, which was the second-highest total on record and second only to June 2013 valuations. For the second quarter, valuations were up 1.2 percent,

and for the first half of the year, they're up 35.7 percent.

In Midland, June valuations were down 4.3 percent from the previous June. Valuations in the second quarter were up 40.6 percent, and valuations in the first half of the year soared 101.6 percent.

Odessa saw declines in its building permit valuations across the board, with June valuations down 74.4 percent, second quarter figures down 23.6 percent, and first half totals down 14.5 percent.

New housing construction shattered the previous records for the month of June, the second quarter and the first half of the year. Midland and Odessa issued 970 building permits in the first half of the year. That is 33.4 percent higher than was issued in the first half of 2017, which was a record high and more than 42 percent higher than the first half of 2016. The six-month total is higher than the annual total for each year up to and including 2011, Ingham said.

Midland has issued 556 new housing permits so far in 2018, up 22.5 percent from 454 in the first half of 2017. Odessa has issued 414 new housing permits, a jump of 51.6 percent from 273 a year ago.

Existing home sales in Midland-Odessa through the first six months of the year surpassed 2,000 for the first time ever, outpacing the January-to-June 2017 sales total by 8.9 percent. There were 420 homes sold in June, up 1.2 percent from 415 last June. There were 1,214 homes sold in the second quarter, up 11.7 percent from 1,087 in the second quarter of 2017 and a record quarterly total.

In Midland, existing home sales took a breather from year-ago levels. The June total of 272 was down 2.9 percent from 280 last June, while the second quarter total of 765 was up 2.1 percent from 749 last year. In the first half of the year, 1,353 homes were sold, down 1.7 percent from 1,377 last year.

Odessa saw a much healthier housing market, with the 148 homes sold in June, up 9.6 percent from 135 the previous June. The 449 sold in the second quarter is a gain of 32.8 percent, and the 802 sold in the first half of the year is an increase of 33.2 percent.

Ingham predicts Midland-Odessa will see a decline in growth rates as the region's oil and gas industry is impacted by the pipeline constraints that have resulted in lower prices for locally produced crude and difficulty moving Permian crude and natural gas to market.

"You won't have 20-plus percent year-over-year growth in the Midland-Odessa Regional Economic Index indefinitely. Spending growth won't be above 40 percent indefinitely," he said.

Even with lower growth rates, the economy will continue to grow, Ingham said.

"Even in the most difficult times, this is the most interesting region economically in the country," he said.

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James Durbin/Reporter-Telegram

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232nd day of 2018. There are 133 days left in the year.

Today's highlight in history:
On Aug. 20, 1953, the Soviet Union publicly acknowledged it had tested a hydrogen bomb.

On this date:
In 1866, President Andrew Johnson formally declared the Civil War over.
In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act.

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Trump says his White House counsel not a 'RAT' like Nixon's

By Jill Colvin
Associated Press

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. — President Donald Trump insisted Sunday that his White House counsel isn't a "RAT" like the Watergate-era White House attorney who turned on Richard Nixon, and he blasted the ongoing Russia investigation as "McCarthyism."

Trump, in a series of angry tweets, denounced a New York Times story that his White House counsel, Don McGahn, has been cooperating extensively with the special counsel team investigating Russian election meddling and potential collusion with Trump's Republican campaign.

"The failing @nytimes wrote a Fake piece today implying that because White House Counsel Don McGahn was giving hours of testimony to the Special Counsel, he must be a John Dean type 'RAT,'" Trump wrote, misspelling the word "counsel," as he often does. "But I allowed him and all others to testify - I didn't have to. I have nothing to hide."

The New York Times said it stands by its story. Dean, a frequent critic of the president, was the White House counsel for Nixon during the Watergate scandal. He ultimately cooperated with prosecutors and helped bring down the Nixon presidency in 1974, though he served a prison term for obstruction of justice.

Dean tweeted Saturday night in response to the Times story: "Trump, a total incompetent, is bungling and botching his handling of Russiagate. Fate is never kind to bunglers and/or botchers! Unlike Nixon, however, Trump won't leave willingly or gracefully."

He added Sunday in response to Trump's tweets that he doubts the president has "ANY IDEA what



Andrew Harnik/AP

White House counsel Donald McGahn, left, listens as President Donald Trump speaks Thursday during a cabinet meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington. Trump insisted Sunday that McGahn isn't a John Dean type "RAT," making reference to the Watergate-era White House attorney who turned on Richard Nixon. Trump, in a series of angry tweets, blasted a New York Times story reporting that McGahn has been cooperating extensively with the special counsel team investigating Russian election meddling and potential collusion with Trump's Republican campaign.

McGahn has told Mueller. Also, Nixon knew I was meeting with prosecutors, b/c I told him. However, he didn't think I would tell them the truth!"

Trump's original legal team had encouraged McGahn and other White House officials to cooperate with special counsel Robert Mueller, and McGahn spent hours in interviews.

Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, said in an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press" that Trump didn't raise executive privilege or attorney-client privilege during those interviews because his team believed — he says now, wrongly — that fully participating would be the fastest way to bring the investigation to a close.

"The president encouraged him to testify, is happy that he did, is quite secure that there is nothing in the testimony that will hurt the president," Giuliani said.

McGahn's attorney William Burck added in

a statement: "President Trump, through counsel, declined to assert any privilege over Mr. McGahn's testimony, so Mr. McGahn answered the Special Counsel team's questions fully and honestly, as any person interviewed by federal investigators must."

Trump on Sunday continued to rail against the Mueller investigation, which he has labeled a "witch hunt."

"So many lives have been ruined over nothing - McCarthyism at its WORST!" Trump tweeted, referencing the indiscriminate and damaging allegations made by Sen. Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s to expose communists.

"Study the late Joseph McCarthy, because we are now in period with Mueller and his gang that make Joseph McCarthy look like a baby! Rigged Witch Hunt!" he later wrote.

Giuliani, in his interview, also acknowledged that the reason for the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting between Trump campaign

aides and a Russian lawyer, arranged by Trump's son Donald Trump Jr., was that they had been promised dirt on Trump's 2016 Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton.

"The meeting was originally for the purpose of getting information about Clinton," he said, adding that the Trump team didn't know that Natalia Veselnitskaya was Russian — even though emails later released by Trump Jr. show that she had been described as a "Russian government attorney."

Giuliani also tried to make the case that having Trump sit down for an interview with Mueller's team wouldn't accomplish much because of the he-said-she-said nature of witnesses' recollections.

"It's somebody's version of the truth, not the truth," he said, telling NBC's Chuck Todd: "Truth isn't truth."

Todd appeared flummoxed by the comment, responding: "This is going to become a bad meme."

Science says: Hotter weather turbocharges US West wildfires

By Seth Borenstein
Associated Press

As temperatures rise in the U.S. West, so do the flames.

The years with the most acres burned by wildfires have some of the hottest temperatures, an Associated Press analysis of fire and weather data found. As human-caused climate change has warmed the world over the past 35 years, the land consumed by flames has more than doubled.

Experts say the way global warming worsens wildfires comes down to the basic dynamics of fire. Fires need ignition, oxygen and fuel. And what's really changed is fuel — the trees, brush and other plants that go up in flames.

"Hotter, drier weather means our fuels are drier, so it's easier for fires to start and spread and burn more intensely," said University of Alberta fire scientist Mike Flannigan.

It's simple, he said: "The warmer it is, the more fire we see."

Federal fire and weather data show higher air temperatures are turbocharging fire season.

The five hottest Aprils to Septembers out West produced years that on average burned more than 13,500 square miles, according to data at the National Interagency Fire Center and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

That's triple the average for the five coldest Aprils to Septembers.

The Western summer so far is more than 3 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than

the 20th century average. California in July logged its hottest month in 124 years of record-keeping.

The five years with the most acres burned since 1983 averaged 63.4 degrees from April to September. That's 1.2 degrees warmer than average and 2.4 degrees hotter than the years with the least acres burned, AP's data analysis shows.

In California, the five years with the most acres burned (not including this year) average 2.1 degrees warmer than the five years with the least acres burned.

A degree or two may seem like not much, but it is crucial for fuel. The hotter it is, the more water evaporates from plants.

When fuel dries faster, fires spread more and burn more intensely, experts said.

For every 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit that the air warms, it needs 15 percent more rain to make up for the drying of the fuel, Flannigan said.

Fuel moisture levels in California and Oregon are flirting with record dry levels, NOAA western regional climate center director Tim Brown said.

And low humidity is "the key driver of wildfire spread," according to University of Colorado fire scientist Jennifer Balch who says the Western U.S. soon will start to see wildfires of 1 million acres.

Veteran Colorado hotshot firefighter Mike Sugaski used to consider 10,000-acre fires big, now he fights ones 10 times that or more.

"You kind of keep saying, 'How can they get much worse?' But they do," Sugaski said.

REGION BRIEFS

FROM WIRE REPORTS

OKLAHOMA CITY Ex-sports doctor Nassar moved to another prison facility

Authorities say disgraced former sports doctor Larry Nassar has been transferred to another federal prison facility.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons website on Sunday shows the former Michigan State University and USA Gymnastics doctor is at the Oklahoma Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City. He had been imprisoned in Tucson, Arizona.

Nassar's attorneys said last month he was assaulted within hours of being placed in the general population at the Arizona federal prison.

Ralph Miller, a retired federal prisons worker who specialized in sex offender designations, told The Detroit News the transfer is likely because of the assault.

Nassar pleaded guilty in two cases to molesting women and girls who sought treatment. He's serving decades in prison and likely will never be released.

OKLAHOMA Backstreet Boys fans treated for injuries after powerful storm

THACKERVILLE — An Oklahoma casino says 14 people suffered cuts and bruises when a powerful rainstorm toppled entrance trusses and disrupted the start of an outdoor concert by the Backstreet Boys.

Kym Koch-Thompson, spokeswoman for the WinStar World Casino and Resort, said the concertgoers were treated at the scene following Saturday's storm, then taken to hospitals in Oklahoma and Texas. She said they were all treated for minor injuries and released. The casino in Thackerville is about 70 miles northwest of Dallas.

The casino says a storm packing winds of up to 80 mph struck the venue about 5:30 p.m. and blew down entrance trusses on about 150 concertgoers who didn't heed earlier evacuation warnings.

Koch-Thompson says the concert was postponed. A new date hasn't yet been set.

Online socks seller Bombas mixes commerce and charity

By Anne D'Innocenzio
Associated Press

NEW YORK — David Heath co-founded online socks company Bombas not because of an overwhelming desire to make a comfortable sock, but after realizing that they were the No. 1 clothing item requested by the homeless.

Heath, the CEO, and his partner Randy Goldberg spent two years developing socks with features like blister tabs and arch support. Then they teamed up with shelters and nonprofit groups, and the company donates a pair for every pair it sells. Those socks focus on darker colors, and get reinforced seams and an anti-microbial treatment.

Incorporating charity into the business from the get-go has turned out to be successful. So far, the New York-based company has sold almost 9 million pairs, and they're not cheap. A 12-pack of women's ankle socks sell for \$130. Bombas, started in 2013, had its first profit in 2016 and generated nearly \$50 million in sales last year.

Bombas, derived from the Latin for bumble bee, is one of several startups based on a business model pioneered by Toms Shoes in 2006. Tom's started out donating a pair of shoes for every pair it sells, and has expanded to T-shirts and sunglasses. Warby Parker, launched in 2010, does the same for eyewear.

Heath says he's looking at branching out to basic clothing items, embracing the same model. Bombas recently began selling to select Nordstrom and Dick's Sporting Goods stores.

Heath talks with The Associated Press about the inspiration for Bombas, how he looks at competition and his future growth plans. The questions and answers have been edited for clarity and length.

Q. How did you come up with the (socks) idea?

A. The lightning moment was, I saw this quote — "Socks were the most requested (clothing) item for the homeless." And then I saw what Toms was doing and Warby Parker just launched. This one-for-one thing is super-interesting and people seem to really resonate

Pass it On: Entrepreneur's insights on running a business

NEW YORK — David Heath, the co-founder and CEO of online sock company Bombas, was an entrepreneur early on. His advice? Focus on one product before branching out. Don't copy your competition. And Heath, who meditates daily and brings his Jack Russell terrier named Cooper to work, emphasizes the importance of a healthy work culture.

Q. Did you always want to be an entrepreneur?

A. My dad is an entrepreneur. It was definitely in my blood. I was that kid with the toyota stands. I used to walk to neighbors' houses and offered to wash their cars. Really anything I could do to hustle. ... I became a door-to-door knives salesman throughout college.

You learn everything from basic pitching to cold-calling. I found these skills to be incredibly helpful during the fundraising process. This time, instead of selling them a bunch of knives, I was asking them for a \$50,000 check.

Q. What tips would you give business owners looking to raise money?

A. Make sure that your business pitch is super-simple and straightforward. In your first meeting, the objective is to almost sell them as if they were a customer. You want them to

understand exactly what your product is or what your company does at the most simple level.

Q. What advice would you give your younger self?

A. Focus on one product. Sell it through one channel. Make sure that you do one thing incredibly well rather than doing a lot of things poorly.

Q. How do you view competition?

A. I believe the second you look around at what other people are doing, you start to react to what they're doing rather than move forward to what you think you should be doing.

Q. What about your work culture?

A. Really talented people will always have a choice on where they want to work. So the onus is on us to keep them here.

You have to back it up by having a good culture, by having a supportive environment and realizing that life happens outside of work.

Family members die. Dogs go missing. Breakups happen. Take a personal day. Go work from home. Heal yourself. The world is not going to stop just because you take a day off.

Associated Press

with it. I thought maybe we can do this for socks, donating socks as part of the business. But in order to donate our socks, we have to sell a lot of socks, so what is going to be our edge? We looked at the landscape. And took a business school mentality to figuring out where the opportunity was.

Q. What sort of opportunity did you see?

A. There was a massive gap between the commodity bulk buying and then there was the sub-category of ultra-premium individual pairs. You got a running sock for \$15 ... a hiking sock ... a basketball sock. Socks that were marketed toward endemic categories. We started buying all these socks. What separates an \$18 sock from a \$2 sock?

Q. So, what's the difference?

A. There was a ton of innovation happening. Seamless toes, arch

supports, incredible fabric designs. Conformed fits. And so the next "aha" moment? Why don't we take all the technology ... and bring it to the mass market? And not just market to runners but market to anybody who is on their feet all day?

Q. How do you view competition?

A. We look at other companies that are all digital brands. We stick together. We are very close with the people at Warby. We are very close to the people at Bonobos. We share insights with Casper on our marketing. We try to collaborate. We are all trying to disrupt against the big main players in the industry.

Q. What's next?

A. We're launching other product categories. We just launched at wholesale. On the roadmap for 2020: small footprint stores.

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Sneak Preview

FAVORITE REAL ESTATE AGENT-
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DeLaura Gammage



Boasting almost 20 years of experience, countless clients, a professional attitude and an office staff dedicated to better serving the community, it's no surprise that DeLaura Gammage is the Gold Winner of this year's Reader's Choice Awards for Favorite Real Estate Agent in Midland for the third consecutive year.

"Education is key as well! Our market is rapidly changing, it's important to keep my assistants and my clients educated in how the market changes and how that affects the parties involved," Gammage said.

Gammage said she works both sides of the market – buyers and sellers, which has earned her respect and recognition within the Midland community. Her experience over the last 20 years demonstrates an expert understanding of the housing market, clientele and the economy.

DeLaura also works with any interested buyer or seller! First time homeowners to multi-million-dollar transactions or historic homes to new construction, she loves the diversity Real Estate brings and is familiar with all realms.

"I think it's mainly knowledge and experience that sets the standard,"

Gammage said. "What I offer is a more than just an agent. When a buyer or a seller hires me, they hire my staff as well. My office works assisting me with the common goal of creating a smooth transaction for every client."

Besides helping her clients through the rigorous process of purchasing a home, Gammage also understands the importance of staying in touch with clients and following-up with them to ensure their experience is satisfactory. DeLaura's love for serving her clients and providing professionalism and personalized care make her one of the most trusted agents in the business.

Gammage said the most important thing to her is making sure her clients know she is working for their best interest. Assisting DeLaura behind the

scenes insuring smooth transactions is her staff of well-trained personnel which includes a transaction coordinator, a marketing director, a buyer's assistant, a marketing assistant and an administrative assistant, with a combined total of 18 years of experience with DeLaura. Together, they work to provide the best possible service for her clients, which gives them with a more thorough understanding of real estate as well. She calls it the "Gammage Advantage!"

"I know what buyers and sellers expect from me and what I provide them," Gammage said. "Honesty, integrity and professionalism are key." DeLaura possesses those qualities while working through transactions with other agents as well, which has earned her respect within the local board. She has been honored with several awards and elected positions from her peers.

DeLaura brings her own experience as well as the Legacy brand to the table! Legacy Real Estate Brokerage is a staple in the Midland Real Estate Community as a well-respected agency with years of experience selling the most production in West Texas. When purchasing your home, it is possibly the largest financial investment you'll make. Ensure that you have someone knowledgeable on your side! Choose DeLaura and receive the "Gammage Advantage" on your next real estate transaction.

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THE READERS HAVE SPOKEN!

Winners of the 2018 Readers' Choice edition
revealed Sunday, August 26

OPINION

Midland Reporter-Telegram | mrt.com | Monday, August 20, 2018 | Page 6A

America is overdue for Lehman-like episode

Jay Powell, chairman of the Federal Reserve, says fiscal policy is on an "unsustainable path," but such warnings are audible wallpaper, there but not noticed

Eric Sevareid (1912-1992), the author and broadcaster, said he was a pessimist about tomorrow but an optimist about the day after tomorrow. Regarding America's economy, prudent people should reverse that.

This Wednesday, according to the Financial Times' Robin Wigglesworth and Nicole Bullock, "the U.S. stock market will officially have enjoyed its longest-ever bull run" — one that rises 20 percent from its low, until it drops 20 percent from its peak. And Sept. 15 will be the 10th anniversary of the collapse of Lehman Bros., the fourth-largest U.S. investment bank. History's largest bankruptcy filing presaged the October 2008 evaporation of almost \$10 trillion in global market capitalization.

The durable market rise that began March 6, 2009, is as intoxicating as the Lehman anniversary should be sobering. Nothing lasts. Those who see no Lehman-like episode on the horizon did not see the last one.

Economists debate, inconclusively, this question: Do economic expansions die

GEORGE WILL

Washington Post Writers Group



of old age (the current one began in June 2009) or are they slain by big events or bad policies? What is known is that all expansions end. God, a wit has warned, is going to come down and pull civilization over for speeding. When He, or something, decides that today's expansion, currently in its 111th month (approaching twice the 58-month average length of post-1945 expansions), has gone on long enough, the contraction probably will begin with the annual budget deficit exceeding \$1 trillion.

The president's Office of Management and Budget — not that there really is a meaningful budget getting actual management — projects that the deficit for fiscal 2019, which begins in six weeks, will be \$1.085 trillion. This is while the economy is, according to the economic historian in the Oval Office, "as good as it's ever been, ever."

Leavening administration euphoria with facts, Yale's Robert Shiller, writing in The New York Times, notes that since quarter-

ly GDP enumeration began in 1947, there have been 101 quarters with growth at least equal to the 4.1 percent of this year's second quarter. The fastest — 13.4 percent — was 1950's fourth quarter, perhaps produced largely by bad news: The Cold War was on, the Korean War had begun in June, fear of the atomic bomb was rising (New York City installed its first air-raid siren in October), as was (consequently) a homebuilding boom outside cities and "scare buying" of products that might become scarce during World War III. Today, Shiller says, "it seems likely that people in many countries may be accelerating their purchases — of soybeans, steel and many other commodities — fearing future government intervention in the form of a trade war." And fearing the probable: higher interest rates.

Another hardy perennial among economic debates concerns the point at which the ratio of debt to GDP suppresses growth. The (sort of) good news — in that it will satisfy intellectual curiosity — is that we are going to find out where that point is: Within a decade the national debt probably will be 100 percent of GDP and rising. As Irwin Stelzer of the Hudson Institute says, "If unlimited borrowing, financed by printing money, were a path to prosperity, then Venezuela and Zimbabwe would be top of the growth tables."

Jay Powell, chairman of the Federal Reserve, says fiscal policy is on an "unsustainable path," but such warnings are audible wallpaper, there but not noticed. The word "unsustainable" in fiscal rhetoric is akin to "unacceptable" in diplomatic parlance, where it usually refers to a situation soon to be accepted.

A recent IMF analysis noted that among advanced economies "only the United States expects an increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio over the next five years." America's complacency caucus will respond: But among those economies, ours is performing especially well. What, however, if this is significantly an effect of exploding debt? Publicly held U.S. government debt has tripled in a decade.

Despite today's shrill discord between the parties, the political class is more united by class interest than it is divided by ideology. From left to right, this class has a permanent incentive to run enormous deficits — to charge, through taxation, current voters significantly less than the cost of the government goods and services they consume, and saddle future voters with the cost of servicing the resulting debt after the current crop of politicians have left the scene.

This crop derives its political philosophy from the musical "Annie": Tomorrow is always a day away. For normal people, however, the day after tomorrow always arrives.

GUEST VIEW

Dear Nancy Pelosi: It's not about you; forget being speaker

The Republican Party is now clearly the party of Donald Trump.

The Democratic Party cannot be seen as the party of Nancy Pelosi and win in November.

It's getting close to crunch time, and the San Francisco Democrat must put her party and her country ahead of her personal ambition and declare that she will not seek the speakership again.

This is much bigger than her. To retake control of the House, Democrats need to gain at least 23 seats in November. That's no easy task. And it's even more difficult now that Pelosi's future has become a distracting campaign issue for Democrats in key swing districts, where they need moderate and even Republican votes to win.

So far, 45 Democratic nominees (including Andrew Janz, who is running against Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Tulare) and 10 incumbents (including Rep. Linda Sanchez of Whittier) have publicly said they will not support Pelosi for speaker.

For their part, Republicans are running attack ads that feature Pelosi, as they have for years. And she is frequent target for Trump, who tweeted again on Aug. 10: "Democrats, please do not distance yourselves from Nancy Pelosi... She is trying very hard & has every right to take down the Democrat Party if she has veered too far left!"

On the other hand, Pelosi isn't doing herself any favors by playing the victim. Asked during a Sunday interview about Democrats opposing her for speaker, she accused MSNBC of being on a "jag" against her. Better than most, she ought to know that's getting precariously close to Trump calling any critical coverage "fake news."

Pelosi says that while no one is indispensable, she is still the best person for the job. On Monday, her press office sent out a column in which Paul Krugman of The New York Times praised Pelosi as "by far the greatest speaker of modern times," and questioned why she gets so little credit from the media for her accomplishments, which include the Affordable Care Act, and the stimulus package and financial reforms after Wall Street's meltdown. If you'll recall, similar statements were made about the eminently qualified Hillary Clinton — and we know how that turned out.

Pelosi and other party leaders are trying to get the message out that not only will Democrats oppose Trump and his culture of "corruption, cronyism and incompetence," they are "for the people" and will push for better health care and more jobs. But the political reality is that she is not the most effective messenger.

While only 34 percent of voters in a new CNN poll say Pelosi will be an extremely or very important factor in their decision, that number will surely go up as GOP attacks begin to take their toll the closer we get to Nov. 6. And Democrats in Congress could certainly use some fresh faces in leadership.

Pelosi became the first female speaker of the House in 2007 after Democrats won a majority in the 2006 mid-term election, but lost the post when Republicans retook the House in 2010. With her three decades in Congress, Pelosi can still have a voice advocating for California and the issues she cares about.

But if she truly believes what she says about how important it is for Democrats to retake the House so they can stop Trump, she must accept that it can't be with her as speaker.

The Sacramento (California) Bee

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TO OUR READERS

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When it comes to immigrants, what part of 'legal' does Trump not understand?

Never mind the undocumented. Donald Trump has a terribly complicated relationship with legal immigrants.

I'm not talking about the fact that he keeps marrying them, or that his in-laws — legal immigrants Viktor and Amalija Knaws — were sponsored for U.S. citizenship by their daughter, first lady Melania Trump.

And to think, Trump wants to end this kind of "chain migration" and replace it with a merit system that values education and skills. He may be on to something.

What's complicated is that, to borrow a phrase, Trump was in favor of legal immigration before he was against it. And boy, now he is really against it. In fact, he seems determined to punish anyone who dares come to the United States — even if they come legally.

You've seen how hideously the Trump administration treats would-be refugees from Central America who play by the rules by walking up to the U.S.-Mexico border and turning themselves in to U.S. authorities. Some had their children snatched from them before being deported back home, and some of these kids remain in U.S. detention facilities.

Remember when Republicans were the party of family values?

Now the Trump administration is picking on legal immigrants who are already living in the United States, the vast majority of whom work and pay taxes. According to NBC News, the administration is hatching a proposal that would make it harder for these folks to become U.S. citizens or get green cards if at some point they relied on any sort of public welfare program.

This scheme would reportedly represent the biggest change in how the United States handles legal immigration in several decades, and it seems to be part of the master plan devised by White House senior adviser Stephen Miller to reduce legal immigration.

What an insane idea. This country has a lot of problems, but legal immigration is not on the list. We tell people to play by the rules, then we change the rules?

A recent Gallup poll asked respondents: "Do you think legal immigration is a good thing or a bad thing for this country today?"

Eighty-four percent said it was good; only 13 percent said it was bad.

Presumably, the 13 percent includes Laura Ingraham. The Fox News host recently suggested that the country was being ruined by "massive demographic changes" fueled by immigration — both illegal and

RUBEN NAVARRETTE
Washington Post Writers Group



legal. Later, under a hail of criticism, she offered a lame explanation that what she really cares about is securing the border, preserving the rule of law and ensuring that future immigration is merit-based.

Baloney. None of those GOP talking points has anything to do with "massive demographic changes." So why did she use those code words? I think it's because she really believes the country would be better off with fewer immigrants, no matter their legal status.

Nativists like Ingraham have a problem with poor, uneducated, low-skilled immigrants who come illegally from Mexico. But they also have a problem with middle-class, educated, highly skilled immigrants who come legally from India, China or Brazil. How long before people realize that nativists are the problem?

Meanwhile, Trump didn't always have a beef with legal immigrants. He was once kinder and gentler toward them. While running for president, Trump promised a "big beautiful wall." But he also said he wanted to put a "big, fat, beautiful open door" in that wall so that people could come legally.

In May 2017, The Economist interviewed Trump and asked him if he wanted to cut the number of legal immigrants who come to the United States.

"Oh legal, no, no, no. I want people to come into the country legally," he said. "But I want people to come in on merit. I want to go to a merit-based system."

The interviewer pointed out that, even under a merit system, the overall number of legal immigrants could be just as high as it is now. So, he asked Trump again if he wanted to reduce the number of legal immigrants.

"Oh yeah, no, no, no, no, we want people coming in legally. No, very strongly," Trump said. So much for that. Imagine the practical effect of Trump's policies toward legal immigrants. The door keeps getting smaller, thinner, less beautiful and less open.

Ignore the spin. This isn't about border security, or rule of law, or the merit system. By going after legal immigrants, Trump isn't protecting America. He's missing the whole point of America.

From the Left | Doonesbury



From the Right | Mallard Fillmore



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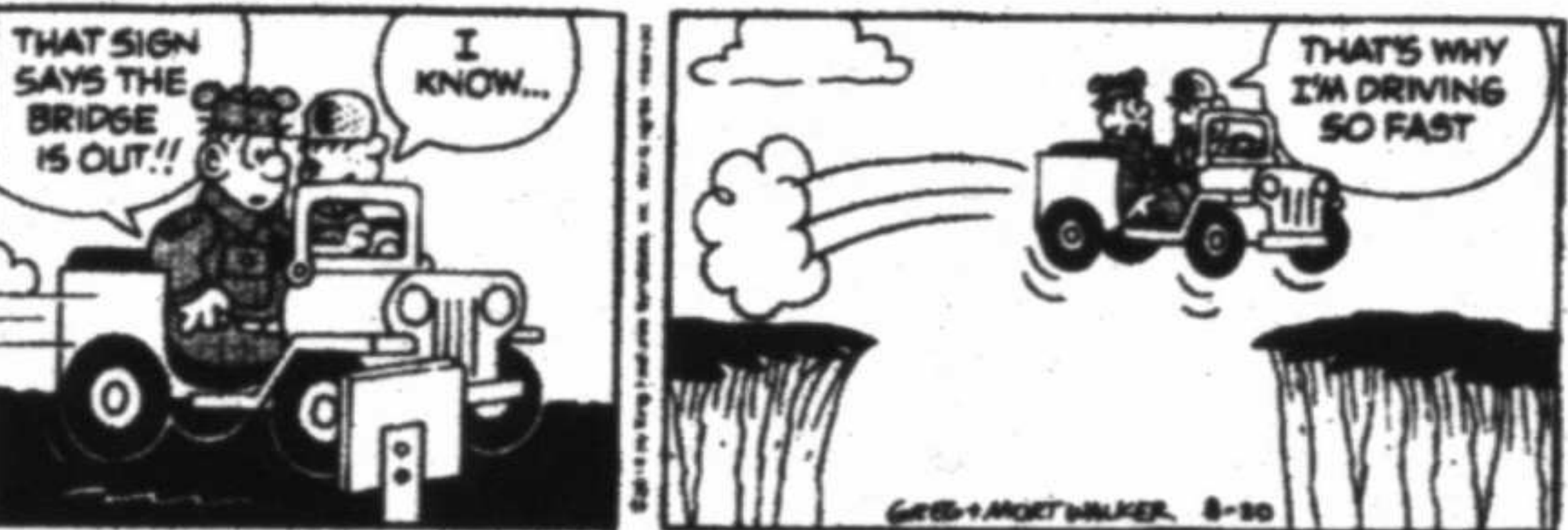
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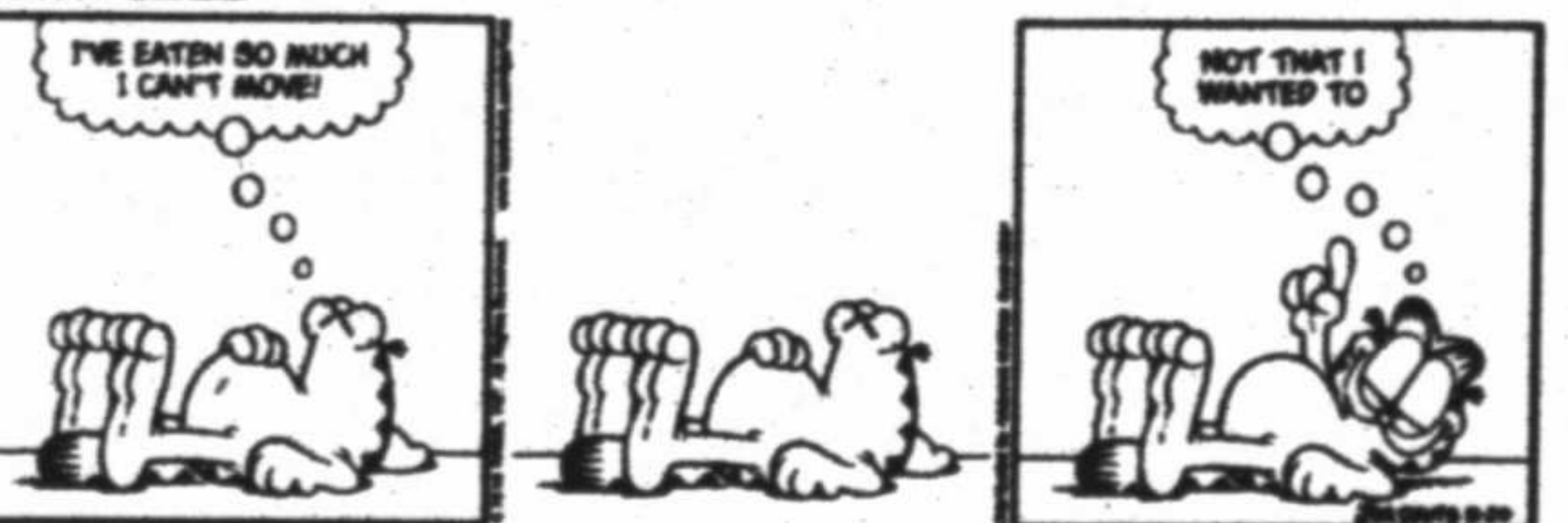
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Sneak Preview

FAVORITE PLUMBING

D&D Plumbing,
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A brother duo of Dwain and David Rotan came up with an idea to open a local business in 1985 and over 30 years later, D&D Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning is running stronger than ever.

The company started as just D&D Plumbing with just two employees and 33 years later, it has grown to 45 employees including fourth generation members of the Rotan family who help carry on the family legacy with the business, including Derek and Diron Rotan who were added later as full-time partners and share holders.

Derek Rotan said the company follows their mission of providing superior customer service, continued growth as an industry leader and service that lasts for generations.

"You just go to work every day and try to do the right thing in helping out our customers when they need it," said Derek. "Our business has been very successful and we're still going strong thanks to our employees who put in the hard work and our customers who have a lot of trust with us to get the job done right."

D&D Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning offers several services including heating and air conditioning, plumbing, water treatment and insulation.

The company has seen changes over the years including air conditioning and heating services being added in 1989, Derek said. They continued to grow with the additions of Scooter's Plumbing in 2003 and May Plumbing in 2010.

D&D Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning has been recognized for its hard work and dedication to the community through several Midland Reporter-Telegram Readers' Choice awards including eight straight from 2010 through 2017. Now they can add a 2018 Gold Award for the best local plumbing service provider to their collection.



Derek said the multiple awards mean a lot to the family and everyone at the business as it shows that hard work and an effort each day to provide the best service to the community pays off.

"The awards are something that make you really feel proud of what we are able to accomplish through our work in the community," Derek said. "We really care about our customers and want to make sure that things are working and running correctly. It's very humbling and we can't thank the community enough."

For more information about D&D Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning, contact their office at (432) 687-1011 or visit their website online at dandmidland.com.

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THE READERS HAVE SPOKEN!

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revealed Sunday, August 26

SPORTS

Midland Reporter-Telegram | mrt.com | Monday, August 20, 2018 | Section B

Odor home run sends Rangers past Angels

By Schuyler Dixon
Associated Press

ARLINGTON — Rougned Odor connected on a go-ahead, three-run homer with rain falling in the seventh inning, and the Texas Rangers beat the Los Angeles Angels 4-2 on Sunday to wrap up a soggy weekend.

Odor's 15th home run of the season came minutes before the second rain delay of a game that started 13 hours after the previous night's game ended. The Angels wrapped up that 11-7 win at 12:59 a.m. local time Sunday after a 2½-hour delay at the start.

The rain had just started for the third time in Sunday's regularly scheduled game when Odor pulled a pitch from reliever Noe Ramirez (4-4) into the seats above the Texas bullpen in right-center field.

Rangers 4
Angels 2

Odor, who had the most RBIs in the majors in August going into the game, added four to give him 23 for the month. His previous career high for a month was 18.

Shohei Ohtani doubled and scored the run that put the Angels up 2-1 in the fourth inning.

Three Texas relievers retired all nine hitters, starting with Matt Moore (3-6) in the seventh. The left-hander, who began the season in the Texas rotation before getting sent to the bullpen, won for the second time in the series.

Cory Gearrin pitched the eighth, and Jose Leclerc worked the ninth for his fifth save.

The delay after Odor's homer lasted 56 minutes following an

18-minute stoppage moments after he grounded out to end the fifth, making the game official with the Angels leading 2-1.

The sun came out before the tarp was in place for the first delay, and it was removed in less than 10 minutes. The game didn't stop during a brief shower between the two delays.

Angels starter Jaime Barria didn't come out after the second delay, allowing seven hits and a run in five innings.

Yovani Gallardo came out for one more inning for Texas after the longer delay. The right-hander allowed six hits and two runs with six strikeouts in six innings.

Shin-Soo Choo had three hits and scored two runs, the first on Odor's RBI single in the first inning.



Associated Press

The Texas Rangers' Rougned Odor and Shin-Soo Choo (17) celebrate after beating the Los Angeles Angels on Sunday in Arlington.

Please see RANGERS/1B

WIN No. 200



Associated Press

Houston Astros pitcher Justin Verlander gets a new ball after giving up a two-run home run to Oakland Athletics' Khris Davis, right, in the third inning Sunday in Oakland, Calif.

Verlander earns milestone; Astros top A's

By Rick Eyrer
Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Justin Verlander pitched just well enough to earn his 200th career win and the Houston Astros hit five home runs, beating the Oakland Athletics 9-4 Sunday to avoid a sweep and retake sole possession of the AL West lead.

The surging A's had won the first two games at the Coliseum to tie the shaky Houston atop the division. But Yuli Gurriel hit a three-run homer in the third inning and Evan Gattis, Alex Bergman, Marwin Gonzalez and Martin Maldonado later homered for the defending World Series champions. Maldonado also tripled and doubled.

Verlander (12-8), who has not given up more than four runs in any of his 20 career games against the A's, entered the day with a major league-leading 1.74 ERA on the road. Matt Chapman and Khris Davis hit solo homers off Verlander in the first inning, and Davis added his 36th homer, a two-run drive, in the third that made it 4-0.

Astros 9
Athletics 4

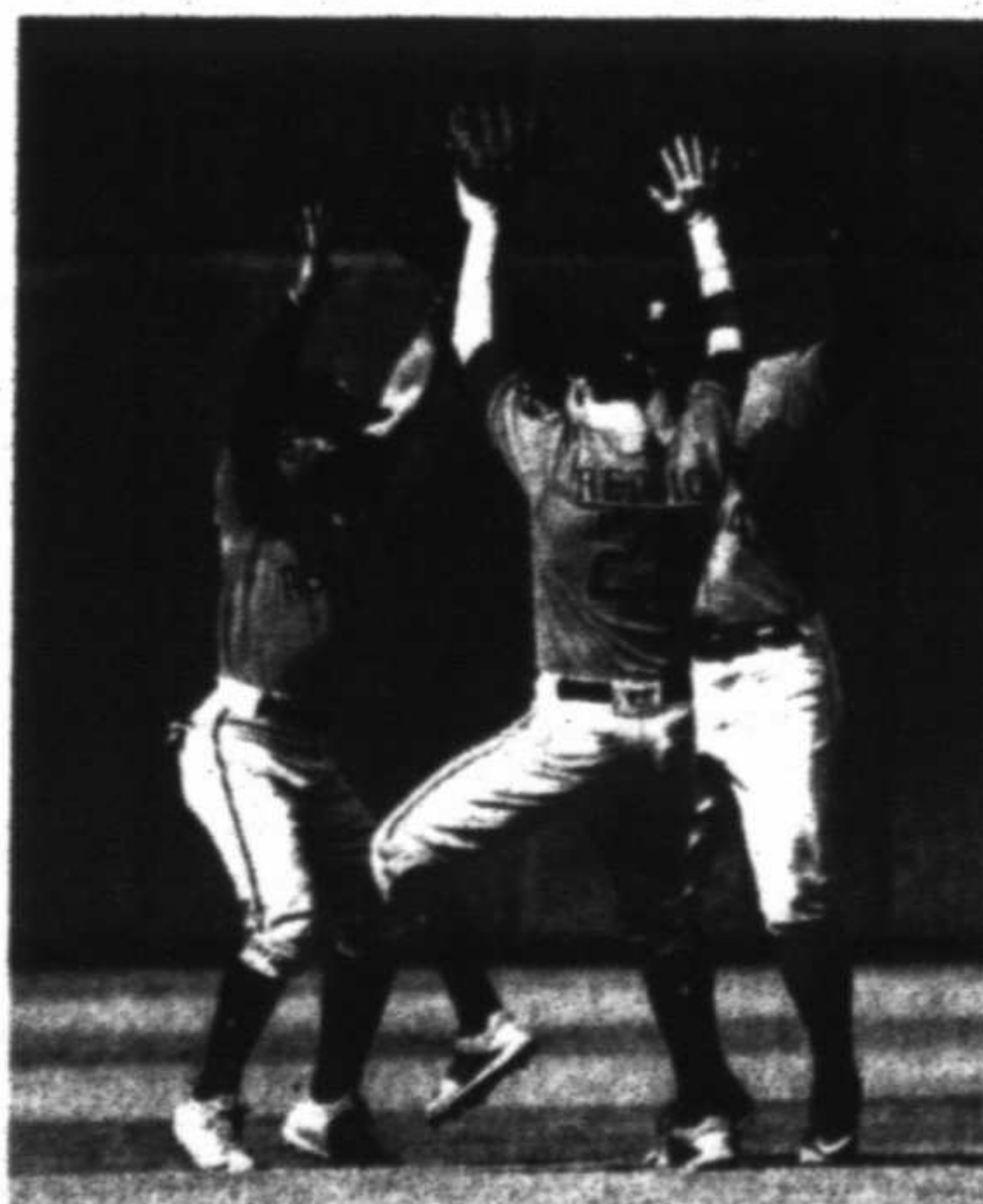
Gattis put the Astros ahead for good in the fourth with his 24th home run.

Verlander gave up four runs on seven hits over 5 1/3 innings. He walked one and struck out six but gave up three home runs and has allowed 25 this season. He became the 114th pitcher with at least 200 career wins.

Brad Peacock took over for Verlander in the sixth, with two runners on and one out. He struck out Stephen Piscotty on a full count, walked Marcus Semien and got Mark Canha swinging on a 2-2 pitch. Four Houston relievers shut down the A's on one hit over 3 2/3 innings.

The Astros won for the second time in nine games. The Athletics had won 13 of their past 16 games to draw even with Houston.

After allowing six runs in three previous August starts combined, Sean Manaea (11-9) gave up six in four-plus innings



Associated Press

From left, Houston Astros outfielders Tony Kemp, Josh Reddick (22) and George Springer celebrate their win over the Oakland Athletics on Sunday in Oakland, Calif.

Please see ASTROS/3B

Snedeker takes victory at Wyndham by 3 strokes

By Joedy McCreary
Associated Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Brandt Snedeker began the Wyndham Championship with history — and ended it with a victory.

Snedeker earned his ninth PGA Tour title Sunday, three days after opening with an 11-under 59.

He closed with a 65 for a three-stroke victory in the regular-season finale, breaking a tie with C.T. Pan on the final hole with a birdie and Pan's double bogey in the group ahead.

Snedeker finished at 21-under 259 for his first win since 2016 and his second at the tournament, but first at Sedgefield Country Club, to close what he called "the most stressful week I've ever had in professional golf."

"Shooting 59 on Thursday, your expectations go through the roof," Snedeker said, also expressing pride that he could "cap it off the way we did today, to play pretty much a flawless round of golf."

Pan shot a 66 to tie for second with Webb Simpson. Simpson matched his career-best with a 62.

"I feel like it was a round I needed to make a push to the leaderboard," Simpson said. "Brandt's obviously had a great week ... so I knew it was going to take something super low."

Snedeker opened the tournament with the 59 that made him the first tour player this year and just the 10th ever to break 60, then on the final day played 29 holes at 5 under to seal it. He's the fifth tour player to shoot in the 50s and then win the tournament.

He was never in danger of missing the playoffs for the first time in his career, but the victory gave him a huge jump on the points list. He climbed 50 spots to No. 30 on the list, after arriving at 80th — which would have been his lowest finish.

"To be perfectly frank, I didn't have any chance at all" to win the FedEx Cup before this week, the 2012 playoff champion said. "After this week, I feel like I have a chance."

For a while, it looked like it might come down to a playoff between Pan and Snedeker, who were even at 20 under entering Pan's final hole.

But the 26-year-old from Taiwan ran into big trouble: Pan shanked his tee shot out of bounds off a cart path down the right side of the fairway and needed four shots, including the penalty stroke, to reach the green on the par 4.

Pan said he heard "a couple noises in my head which caused me to hit a bad shot. 'It's my fault. I can learn something from it,' he said. 'I only played one bad hole, which is fine. You know, I've still got a lot of golf left.'"



Snedeker

Kyle Busch not his usual dominant self at Bristol this time

By Steve Megargee
Associated Press

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Kyle Busch had cars strong enough to contend for his third sweep at Bristol Motor Speedway. Instead, he had two eventful races and left the track without a win.

Busch arrived at Bristol trying to add to his career 21 national victories on the bullring. He led the Xfinity Series race Friday before an early accident knocked him out. He faced even more ups and downs Saturday in the Cup race.

Busch, looking to win a Cup event at Bristol for the eighth time, started a 15-car wreck on the second lap. He later made contact with Martin Truex Jr. to knock his championship rival out of the race, and finished 20th after his damaged Toyota spun to bring out the final caution of the race.

"It just wasn't meant for us this weekend, I guess," Busch said.

That Busch was even challenging for the lead near the end of the race marked a stunning turnaround after such a dispiriting start. It underscored the tenacity of the Joe Gibbs Racing team almost as much as any of

Busch's six Cup victories this season.

The race had barely started when Busch's car drifted up the banking, bounced off Ryan Blaney's car and spun in front of much of the field. Busch's car was affected enough that he could have just called it a race. He was two laps behind and seemingly had little chance of getting back in contention.

The points leader already is locked into the playoffs, so finishing Saturday night was about pride and his love of Bristol.



Associated Press

Kyle Busch (18) gets past Austin Dillon during the NASCAR Cup Series race Saturday in Bristol, Tenn.

Please see BUSCH/2B

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THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mephram Group

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

Level
1 2
3 4

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, please visit sudoku.org.uk

SOLUTION TO SATURDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

UKAQE
 [] [] [] [] [] []

PNIYP
 [] [] [] [] [] []

ZALLYI
 [] [] [] [] [] []

LOBUED
 [] [] [] [] [] []

Print answer here:

[] [] [] [] [] []

[] [] [] [] [] []

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: GOUGE GUPPY NOODLE SQUASH
 Answer: When it came to tilling the soil by hand, he was — GUNG 'HOE'

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

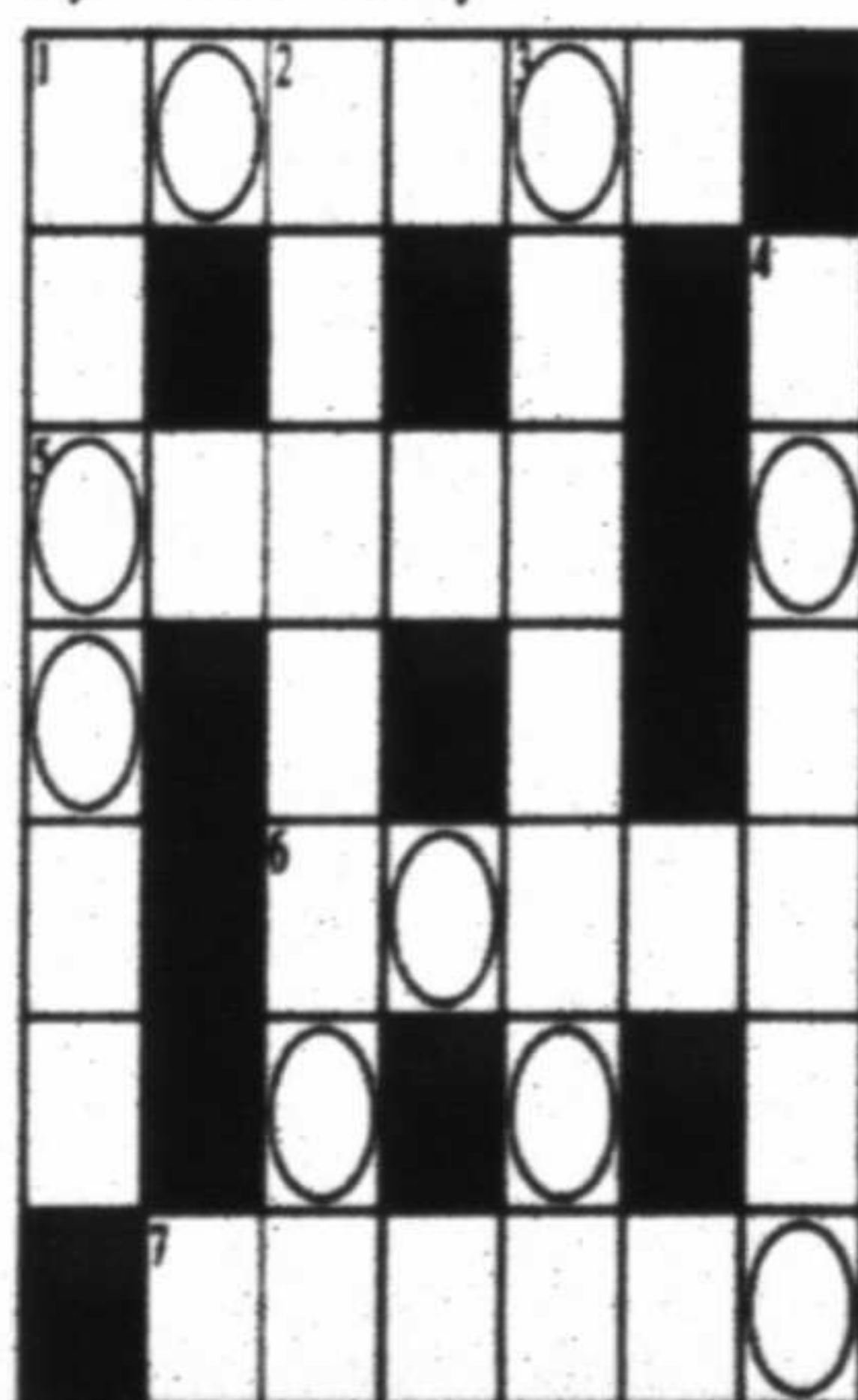


THE BLIND TASTE TEST BETWEEN THE COLA BRANDS WAS A ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

JUMBLE CROSSWORDS

by David L. Hoyt



- | CLUE | ACROSS | ANSWER |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| 1. Unkempt | | GSYGHA |
| 5. One more time | | IANAG |
| 6. Army group | | OPOTR |
| 7. Stray | | RANRET |
-
- | CLUE | DOWN | ANSWER |
|----------------------|------|---------|
| 1. Fastener | | LTSAP |
| 2. Power | | DPAREAT |
| 3. Venice canal boat | | ONLOGAD |
| 4. Kettle | | OETPTA |

How to play - Complete the crossword puzzle by looking at the clues and unscrambling the answers. When the puzzle is complete, unscramble the circled letters to solve the BONUS.

8-20-18 CLUE: The invention of the dates back to the 1830s.

BONUS [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Send comments to TCA - 180 N. Station, Chicago, Illinois 60601 or DLHoyt@aol.com

DAILY CROSSWORD

Edited By Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

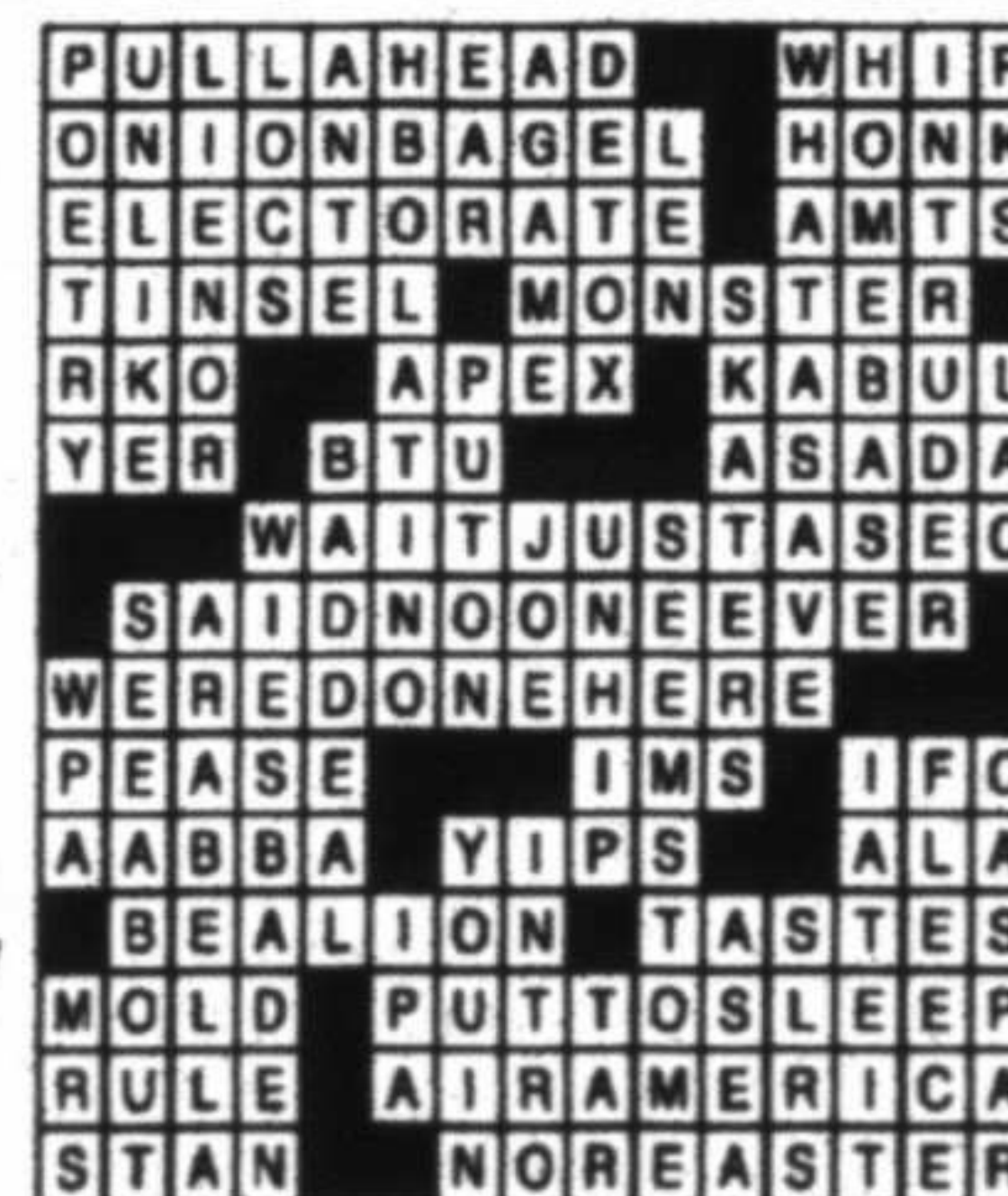
- ACROSS**

 - Chowder bit
 - Conversation
 - Chopped cabbage sides
 - Tree with needles
 - Mine, in Metz
 - Bounce off the wall
 - Online site for making a will
 - Wagner work
 - Not kidding
 - Wards (off)
 - System of connected PCs
 - Ironie exclamation before an unsurprising announcement
 - di-dah: pretentious
 - Suffix with violin
 - Shop Boys hit
 - Fashion's Versace
 - pitch
 - Coil for the prom
 - Fills (someone) in about the latest developments
 - Flat to change, in Chelsea
 - Attempt
 - Profited
 - Some fridges
 - Coop layer
 - Online chats, briefly
 - All people, with "the"
 - Airer of old quiz show reruns, for short
 - San Antonio mission
 - Placate
 - Doodle on the guitar
 - Hollywood pre-award speculation
 - Get up
 - Summer weather word
 - Muffin spread
 - Stuns in an arrest
 - Legend
 - Hawaiian root

DOWN

 - NCO below sgt.
 - False statements
 - Thin spaghetti
 - Anne who teamed with Stiller
 - Starbucks tea brand
 - Total up (to)
 - Running free
 - "Li" rapper
 - Pooch-poochs, with "at"
 - Boutonniere site
 - Sports stadium
 - Lexicographer's love
 - Huge hit
 - Every cloud's silver feature?
 - Go limp
 - Moe or Curly, e.g.
 - Rainbow flag letters
 - Well-ventilated
 - Anne Brontë, to Emily
 - Opposite of SSW
 - One of many in TV's "The Americans"
 - AP competitor
 - Florida, mostly
 - Consider to be
 - Pre-Kentucky Derby postings
 - Heavenly bear
 - Birth control
 - Pointy-hatted garden figures
 - Jazz music fan
 - Attacks
 - Michélob diet beer
 - He broke Ruth's home run record
 - Get a guffaw from
 - "... mighty" has struck out
 - Wooden shoe
 - Way in the woods
 - Weizman of Israel
 - Unit of resistance
 - Animal house

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:



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1.

2.

Print Your Answers Here:

1. [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

2. [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

1. [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

2. [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Created by Tom Underwood
www.wuzzlesking.com

8-20
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8-20

2. Outguesses

Answers

1. Put it on the back burner

WUZZLES

Be sure to check out Sunday's edition to read weekly
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

mrt classifieds

CLERICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

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Active independent looking for a part time "Girl Friday" to help with Geotech work, editing and organizing a book and assistant to the CEO. Might develop into full time. Please send resume P-161 c/o Midland Reporter-Telegram, 201 E. Illinois, Midland, TX. 79701

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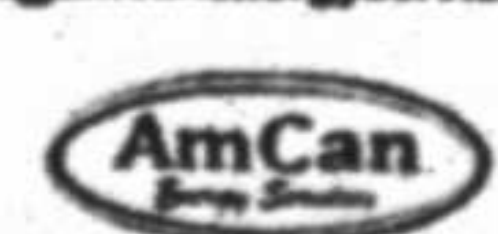
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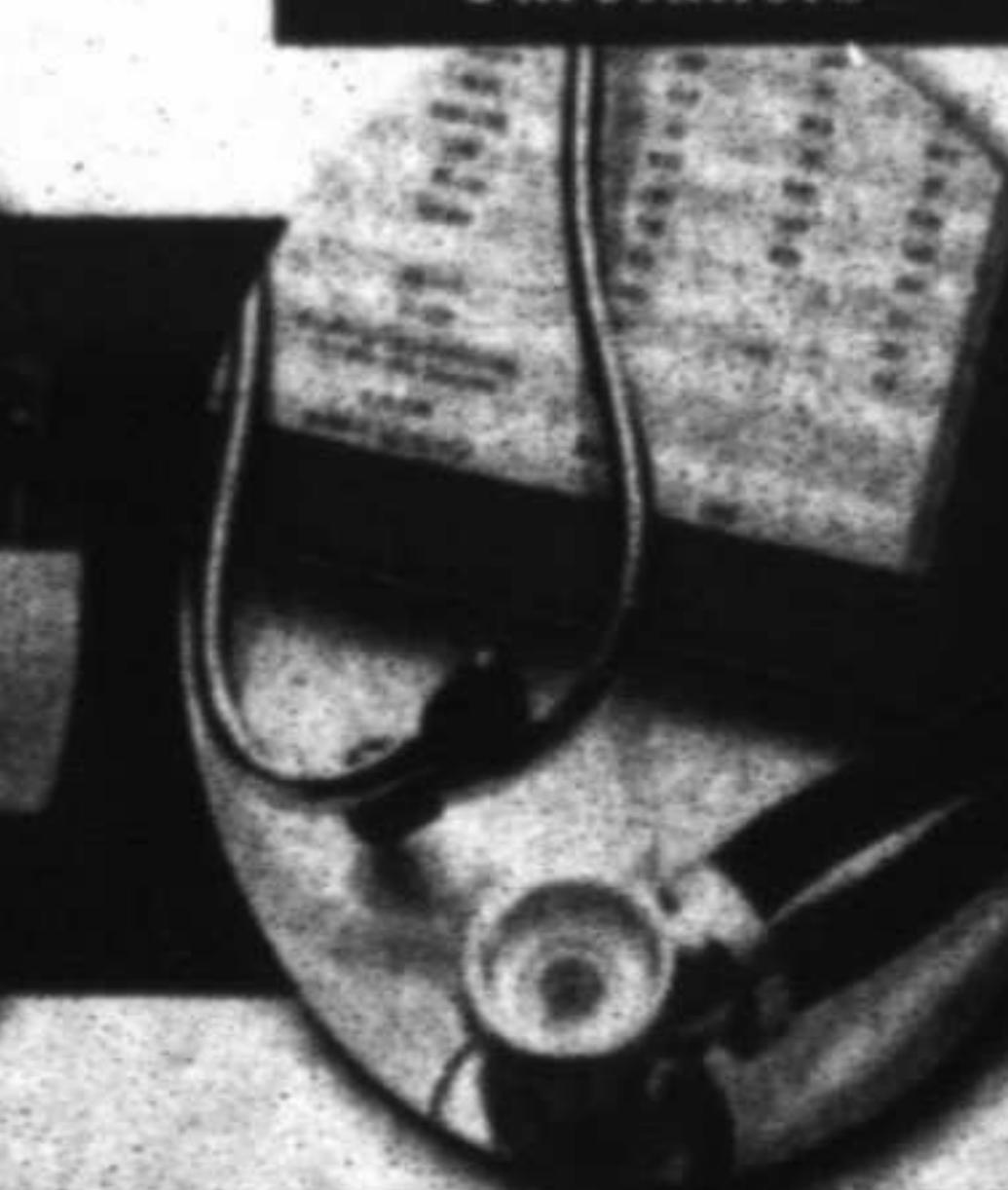
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