

MIDLAND REPORTER-TELEGRAM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2017

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CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Photos from the Midland Soup Kitchen's Christmas lunch.

Page 4A



COACH OF THE YEAR

Lee's Clint Hartman is the Reporter-Telegram's coach of the year.

Page 1B

Midland continues to record low unemployment *Tall City tied with Amarillo for state's lowest for second month*

By Mella McEwen
mmcewen@mrt.com

Unemployment in Midland continued to rank among Texas' lowest in November.

according to figures released Friday by the Texas Workforce Commission.

The commission said unemployment in the Midland metropolitan statistical area was 2.6 percent, up from 2.4 percent in October but well below the 4 percent

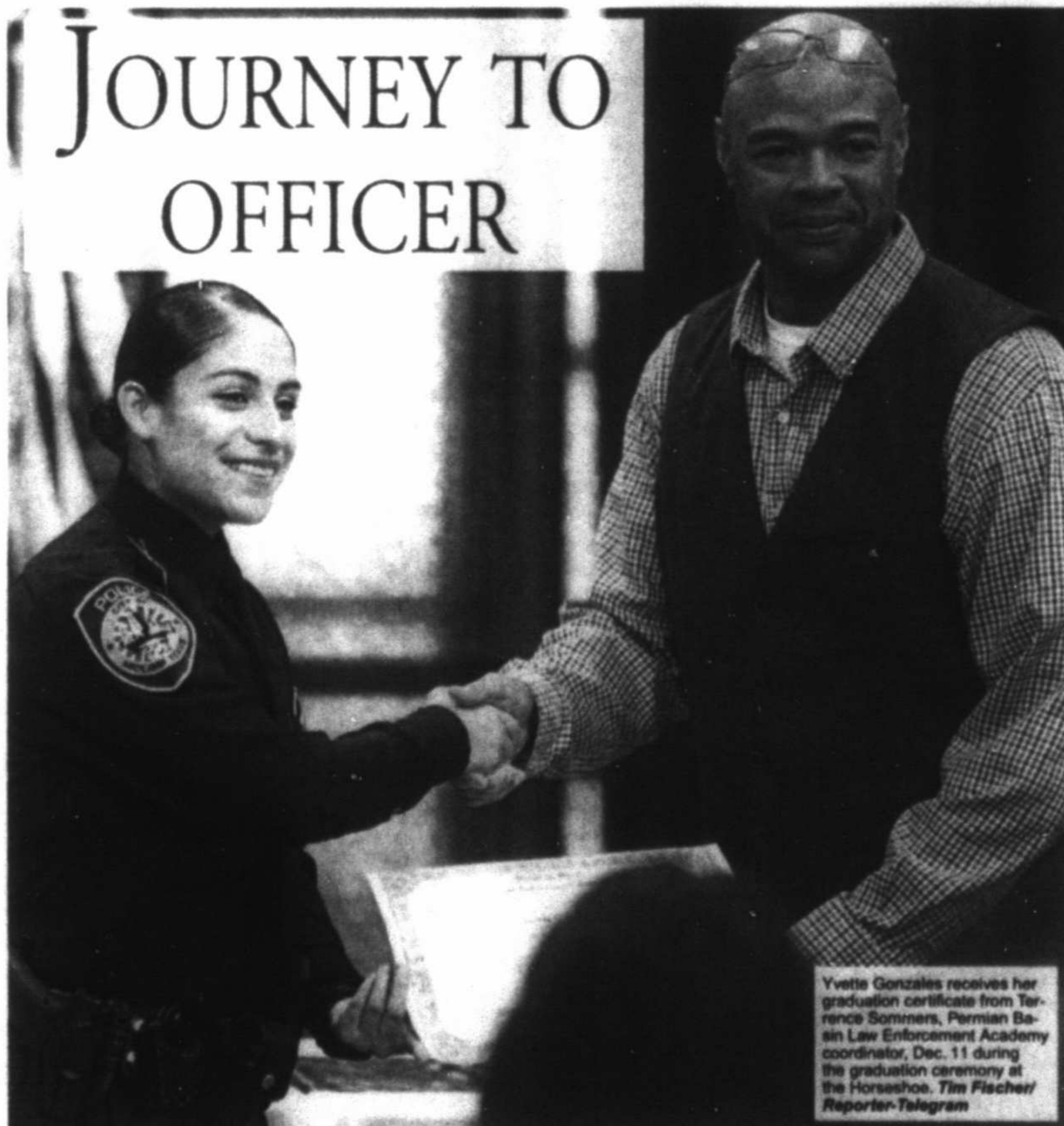
recorded last November. Midland remained tied with Amarillo for the state's lowest unemployment rate for a second month.

Odessa also saw its unemployment rate inch higher in November, up to 3.4 percent from 3.2 percent in October. Odessa's

unemployment rate in November 2016 was 5.9 percent.

"This has been an unusual year from the standpoint that it's been steady in terms of

Please see LOW/5A



Police academy graduate journeys from cadet to officer

■ Program introduces participants to law enforcement duties

By Simone Jasper
sjasper@mrt.com

Early in life, Yvette Gonzales knew she wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement. So when she discovered the Midland Police Department cadet program, she jumped on the chance to

gain knowledge about the field.

"It's just something I've always wanted to do," Gonzales said. "Growing up, I never wanted to be anything else."

Gonzales, 21, joined the cadet program last year in hopes of eventually becoming a police officer. She achieved her dream on Dec. 11 when she graduated from the Permian Basin Law Enforcement Academy.

Sgt. Rosemary Sharp, who works

Please see GONZALES/2A

Oil reverses trend with 2 percent rise this week

By Trevor Hawes
thawes@mrt.com

The price of oil was up 2 percent this week, snapping a three-week streak of losses.

West Texas Intermediate contracts for February delivery closed Friday at \$58.47 per barrel, up 11 cents (0.19 percent) on the day and up \$1.17 (2.04 percent) for the week.

February became the new near-month contract on Wednesday. January settled at \$57.46 per barrel. Friday was the week high.

WTI is up \$6.14 (11.73 percent) this year and has an average price of \$50.71 per barrel. It has been as high as \$58.95 and as low as \$42.53.

Commercial crude oil inventories were down by 6.5 million barrels to 436.5 million barrels, according to the Energy Information Administration. The reporting week was Dec. 15.

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve rose by 400,000 barrels to 663.3 million barrels.

Total motor gasoline stocks were up by 1.2 million barrels to 227.8 million barrels. Kerosene-type jet fuel fell by 1 million barrels to 39.8 million barrels. Distillates were up by 800,000 barrels to 128.8 million barrels.

Domestic production rose slightly by 9,000 barrels per day to 9.789 million barrels per day. Imports were up to 7.834 million barrels per day, up 471,000 barrels per day. Exports jumped by 772,000 barrels per day to 1.858 million barrels per day.

Plains Marketing posted prices were up this week. The Reporter-Telegram tracks WTI "all other areas" and West Texas sour.

WTI posted was priced at \$55 per barrel on Friday, up 25 cents (0.46 percent) on the day and up \$1.25 (2.33 percent) for the week. Sour was fetched \$52.25, up a quarter (0.48 percent) Friday and up \$1.25 (2.45 percent) this week.

Please see OIL/2A

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Price of oil

\$58.47 ▲ \$0.11

January 2018

The big number

More than 4

in 5 Americans enrolled in 'Obama-care' are in Trump states. Page 6A

Word of the Day:

vacillate

Do you know what it means? Find out the definition on Page 3A.

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Vol. 89, No. 287

Daily \$2, Sunday \$3



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Classified 1D | Comics 6C | Dear Abby 7A | Lottery 3A | Obituaries 2A | Puzzles 4C | Stocks 5C | TV 3C



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Permian Basin heads into Christmas just short of 400 rigs

■ Number of rigs up from 262 a year ago

By Trevor Hawes
thawes@mrt.com

The Permian Basin gained one rig in the week leading up to the Christmas holiday.

In total, the nation's most active basin had 398 rigs, according to Baker Hughes data.

Despite the gain, several counties ceased all activity, including Dawson, Fisher, Mitchell and Sterling in Texas and Chaves in New Mexico.

Reeves continued to lead all counties. Located at the heart of the Delaware Basin, Reeves recorded 66 rigs, up three. Midland County, which is centered in the Midland Basin, lost a rig, leaving 50.

Other counties with double-digit rig counts were Lea, New Mexico (40); Loving (37); Eddy, New Mexico (34); Martin (27); Howard (21); Reagan (19); Glasscock (14); Culberson (13); Pecos (11); Upton (11); and Winkler (10).

Railroad Commission District 8, which encompasses many of the most active counties in the Permian, held at 270 rigs. For other areas with activity in the Permian, District 7B held at two, District 7C dropped by one to 34, District 8A fell by two to 18 and New Mexico rose by four to 74.

The Permian had 262 rigs a year ago.

TEXAS & NEW MEXICO

As a whole, Texas was down by two rigs, leaving 455 statewide. The Barnett in North Texas rose by two to six. The Eagle Ford in South Texas was unchanged at 70.

Fourteen of the Haynesville's 47 rigs were in East

Texas. Half of the Granite Wash's 12 rigs were in the Panhandle.

Texas had two rigs offshore.

New Mexico's rig count rose by two to 75. Its lone rig not in the Permian was drilling for oil in Sandoval County, located in the northwestern part of the state.

At this time last year, Texas has 321 rigs and New Mexico had 48.

UNITED STATES

The oil rig count held at 747, but natural gas rigs rose by one to 184, putting the nation's total at 931. All 19 offshore rigs were in the Gulf of Mexico. There were two rigs in inland waters.

By drilling trajectory, there were 801 horizontal rigs, unchanged; 64 vertical rigs, up four; and 66 directional rigs, down three.

The U.S. had 653 rigs a year ago.

MOST ACTIVE

Basins with the highest rig counts were the Permian, the Cana Woodford (73), the Eagle Ford (70), the Williston (49) and the Marcellus (48).

States with the most activity were Texas, Oklahoma (120), New Mexico, Louisiana (62) and North Dakota (48).

CANADA & NORTH AMERICA

Canada's count tumbled by 28 rigs to 210. 14 rigs lower than the year-ago tally of 224. Both oil and natural gas rigs were down 14 apiece, leaving 120 oil rigs and 90 natural gas rigs.

The total number of rigs in the North America region fell by 27 to 1,141. At this time last year, there were 877 rigs.

Rig count: county by county

The following are county-by-county Permian Basin rig counts, with changes in parentheses, for the week ending Dec. 22.

DISTRICT 7B
Fisher.....0 (-1)
Nolan.....2 (+1)
Total.....2

DISTRICT 7C
Irion.....2
Reagan.....19 (-1)
Tom Green.....2
Upton.....11
Total.....34 (-1)

DISTRICT 8
Andrews.....7
Crane.....2
Culberson.....13 (+1)
Ector.....2
Glasscock.....14 (+1)
Howard.....21
Jeff Davis.....1
Loving.....37 (-2)
Martin.....27 (-1)
Midland.....50 (-1)
Mitchell.....0 (-1)
Pecos.....11
Reeves.....66 (+3)
Sterling.....0 (-1)
Ward.....9
Winkler.....10 (+1)
Total.....270

DISTRICT 8A
Borden.....2 (+1)
Dawson.....0 (-1)
Gaines.....4 (+1)
Garza.....1 (-1)
Scurry.....4 (-2)
Terry.....1
Yoakum.....6
Total.....18 (-2)

NEW MEXICO
Chaves.....0 (-1)
Eddy.....34 (+4)
Lea.....40 (+1)
Total.....74 (+4)

OIL

From 1A

The spread between WTI posted and sour was held at \$2.75 for the past 16 days. The spread between WTI futures and WTI posted was \$3.47 this week.

WTI posted has an average price of \$47.18 per barrel and is up \$6.25 (12.82 percent) for the year. Its year high is

\$55.50, and its low is \$39. Sour is up \$9.05 (20.95 percent) this year. It has fetched as much as \$52.25 and as little as \$35.60. Sour has an average price of \$43.43.

In other futures trading Friday, March contracts were up by 14 cents to \$58.54, April rose by 15 cents to \$58.54 and May was down by 18 cents to \$58.48.

Obituaries



Billy Herman Therwhanger

Billy Herman Therwhanger was born on February 16, 1930 in Klondike, Dawson County, Texas, to George Browder, Sr. and Eula (Smith) Therwhanger.

He passed away and entered the presence of his Lord and Savior on December 20, 2017 at the age of 87 years old.

Billy spent his childhood growing up in South and West Texas. He graduated from Weiner High School on May 17, 1948. Billy joined the Military Service in August 17, 1948 where he was stationed at Fort Hood Texas. He earned the rank of Sergeant First Class on March 29, 1951. He was later wounded in action in Korea and received an Honorable Discharge earning the Korean Service Medal with 5 Bronze Service Stars on April 23, 1952.

After being discharged from the Army he spent his career working in the oil industry where he was loved and very well respected by his fellow workers and friends.

Billy was a faithful member of the Pittsburg Avenue Baptist Church in Llano, Texas where he taught Sunday school classes for many years. He enjoyed serving at the Food Pantry and spending time with his church family. Papa loved walking on the sandy shores of the Llano River with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Billy is survived by 3 sons, Randy Latonia Therwhanger of Midland Texas, Lindsey Kyle Therwhanger and wife Jennifer of Millersville Texas and Terry Dean Therwhanger and wife Teresa of Midland Texas. 8 grandchildren, Nicole Gregston of Austin Texas, Chelsey Therwhanger of California, Colby Therwhanger of Greenwood Texas, Lauren Goldsmith of Midland Texas, Shell Kunkel of Lamesa Texas, Brannon Therwhanger of Midland Texas, Megan Therwhanger of Austin Texas and Matt Jordan of Greenwood Texas, 11 great-grandchildren, 1 brother Truman Therwhanger of Sulfur Springs Texas, and several beloved nephews and nieces. He was preceded in death by his parents, 4 sisters, Louise Dossey, Sarah Simmons, Marcelle Zimmerman and Margaret Raney, 3 brothers, John Therwhanger, G.B. Therwhanger Jr. and Bobby

Therwhanger.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 23, 2017 at Pittsburg Avenue Baptist Church, 709 Pittsburg Avenue, Llano, Texas 78643 with Pastor Danny McGan officiating. Graveside services will follow at Llano City Cemetery.

Funeral arrangements made under the direction of Waldrop-Hatfield-Hawthorne Funeral Homes, Inc. Llano, Texas. E-mail condolences may be sent to whfuneral@verizon.net.

Carol Rufner

Carol Rufner, 82, of Midland, passed away December 16, 2017. Services are pending with Avalos-Sanchez & Thomas Funeral Home.



Gloria Martinez Granado

Gloria Martinez Granado, 84, died Wednesday, December 20, 2017 at Midland Memorial Hospital early that morning. She was born in Ojinaga, Mexico, June 8, 1933 and is the daughter of the late Pedro and Carlotta Martinez. In March of 1950, Gloria married Arcadio Galindo Granado, her late husband, and together they moved to Loving, New Mexico. After several years, they found their new home in Midland, Texas and together raised seven sons and celebrated 64 years of marriage.

During her time in Midland, Gloria became a highly-involved parishioner of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church and was a member of the Altar Society and Guadalupeans. For many years, she regularly volunteered at church festivals and enjoyed serving the greater community and utilizing her skills of cooking and catering. Gloria was also a supporter of the United Way of Midland and a devote member of Casa de Amigos where she enjoyed playing bingo, crocheting, dancing, and socializing. She had numerous friends and could always be found laughing, smiling, and enjoying the

company of others.

Gloria is preceded in death by her beloved husband, Arcadio Galindo Granado, two sons, Octavio Granado and Candelario Granado, one sister, Isabel Granado, and one brother, Luis Martinez.

She is survived by five sons and their respective spouses; Fernando and Lucia Granado, Jesus and Lucy Granado, Roberto and Zoila Granado, Arcadio, Jr. and Cristina Granado, and Faustino Granado, two sisters, Leonor Gallegos and Ninfa Garcia, four brothers, Rudolfo Martinez, Alfredo Martinez, Armando Martinez, 23 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren, and 9 great-great-grandchildren, numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

A rosary service will be held Tuesday, December 26th at 7:00 pm at Lewallen-Garcia-Pipkin Funeral Home. The funeral mass will be held on Wednesday, December 27th at 10:00 am at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church located on 1401 E. Garden Ln. Midland, Texas 79701 and burial services will follow at Fairview Cemetery on 1400 N. Pecos. Pallbearers for the service will be Mark Granado, Osbaldo Granado, Celina Granado, Oscar Granado, Roberto Granado, Jr., Jacob Granado, and Emma Granado.

The funeral arrangements have been coordinated by Lewallen-Garcia-Pipkin Funeral Home and Chapel. For those interested in sending gifts and condolences, please address them to The Granado Family, 1725 E. Maple, Midland, Texas 79705. Additionally, any messages and condolences may also be emailed to pipkin@nts-online.com or you may visit the website at www.lewallengarciapipkinf.com.

They say that "The bond between mother and son is a special one. It remains unchanged by time and distance. It is purest love-unconditional and true. It is understanding of any situation and forgiving of any mistake." Now imagine that same bond, 7 times over. That is what Gloria possessed. She cared for her sons like any mother would and that love stretched far and beyond limitations.

The Lord has called forth another angel to stand among Him to help watch over His people. This angel, matriarch of the Granado Family and mother to many sons, lived a bountiful life, full of joy and happiness. Her heart ever-flowing with affection.

On behalf of the Granado Family, we would like to sincerely thank those who have shown such kindness during our time of great loss and we are forever grateful and blessed to know that Gloria was loved by so many caring individuals.

Rest in Peace
Gloria Martinez Granado
12/20/2017

Lewallen Garcia Pipkin Funeral Home
2708 N. Big Spring • Midland, TX • (432) 423-0700

Death Notices

Amelia Hurren

Amelia Hurren, 71, of Midland, passed away Thursday, December 21, 2017. Funeral services will be held at 12:00 pm, Saturday, December 23, 2017 at Nalley-Pickle & Welch Chapel in Midland. Graveside services will be held at 2:00 pm, Saturday, December 23, 2017 at Trinity Memorial Park in Big Spring. Survivors include daughter, Tammy Tittsworth.

Clare F. Kollaja

Clare F. Kollaja, 89, passed away on December 21, 2017 in Midland, Texas.

She is survived by her three sons, Myles J. McDonough, Jr., A. Anthony Kollaja and D. Chris Kollaja; daughter, Nancy Lee Mars; sister, Lois F. Thomas; brother, Richard J. Finnick; three grandsons; one granddaughter; one great grandson; four nieces and four nephews.

Visitation will be held at Ellis Funeral Home Chapel on Tuesday, December 26, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a Rosary at 7:00 p.m. A Funeral Mass will be held at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Midland, Texas at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 27, 2017. Interment will be at Seaside Memorial Cemetery in Corpus Christi Texas on Friday, December 29, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

Gloria Estella Granado

June 8, 1933 - December 20, 2017
Gloria Estella Granado, 84, passed away Wednesday, December 20, 2017.

Viewing will be Saturday, December 23rd from 10:00am - 9:00pm and Tuesday, December 26th from 10:00am - 9:00pm with a rosary starting at 7:00pm at Lewallen-Garcia-Pipkin Chapel.

A funeral service will be Wednesday, December 27, 2017 at 10:00am at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and Shrine Interment to follow at Fairview Cemetery.

She is survived by her sons, Fernando Granado, Jesse Granado, Robert Granado, Arcadio Granado Jr., and Faustino Granado.

Lois Gooch

Lois Gooch, 87, of Midland, passed away Wednesday, December 20, 2017. There are no services planned with Nalley-Pickle & Welch Funeral Home & Crematory of Midland.

We would like to thank the nurses, Johnnie, Delores, Helen and Comfort Keepers that took such good care of Lois.

Nolan George Henry

Nolan George Henry, 87, of Midland, passed away peacefully December 19, 2017. Services are pending with Avalos-Sanchez & Thomas Funeral Home.

GONZALES

From 1A

in personnel and recruiting, was among those who monitored Gonzales' progress. She said Gonzales was always focused on reaching her goals.

"I think she has matured, and she has gained knowledge and experience to become the police officer that she's been wanting to become," the MPD sergeant said.

Sharp supervises the cadet program, which has given participants a glimpse into law enforcement duties for more than four decades. Cadets interact with the community at local events and have rotating work assignments within the department.

Lt. Alfredo Grimaldo was a cadet from 1998 to 2000, and the experience increased his interest in a law enforcement job.

"It's the only way that you actually get first-hand experience of what (the police department) actually does instead of watching it on TV or hearing about it," said Grimaldo, who is now in MPD's office of professional standards.

While cadets work in the department, they are required to wear uniforms and are expected to uphold the same standards as MPD officers.

"The cadet program just grooms us... to show us how to be professional and how to appear in front of superiors," Gonzales said.

About Yvette Gonzales

Interests: painting, shooting
Education: 2015 Andrews High School graduate, 2017 Midland College graduate
Favorite part about cadet program: officer ride-along

For more information about the cadet program, visit midlandtexas.gov.

To become cadets, applicants must pass a physical fitness test and undergo background checks. Sharp said the program usually attracts 18- to 22-year-olds who have interest in law enforcement.

The program isn't a requirement for becoming an MPD recruit but helps participants become familiar with law enforcement duties, according to Sharp. She said it's a privilege to lead cadets through the process.

"They can decide from that point: This is for me, or this is not for me," Sharp said. "At the same time, we encourage their education."

The program offers wages and covers post-secondary tuition, fees and book costs for those who participate. For each cadet, Sharp monitors grades and class credit hours.

Gonzales said the program paid for expenses during her last two

semesters at Midland College. She graduated in May before starting as an MPD recruit.

"When she became a recruit and finished her education, you could see a different side of her where she was now determined to face a challenge," Sharp said.

That challenge came in the following months, when Gonzales studied and exercised to prepare for entering the law enforcement academy.

As the youngest and smallest person in her training cohort, Gonzales said she worked hard to prove she could accomplish tasks.

Now, she feels humbled to have completed the academy and sworn in as a police officer. She looks forward to having new experiences each day while serving Midlanders.

"It's a big responsibility, and I'm honored that I'm able to do that," she said.

WORD OF THE DAY
brought to you daily by

Vacillate

[vas-uh-leyt]

verb

1. to waver in mind or opinion;
be indecisive or irresolute 2. to sway unsteadily;
waver; totter;
stagger.

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AT YOUR SERVICE

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Things to do

■ Santa's Workshop Art Camp,
10 a.m.-2 p.m., Kids and Canvas
Parties, 3303 N. Midland Road, \$55.
kidsandcanvasparties.com
■ Cookies and Cocoa with Santa,
10 a.m.-noon, Opal's Table, 223 W.
Wall St. \$20. opalstable.com
■ Santa's Magic Key Storytime
will also include activities, 11 a.m.,
Barnes and Noble Booksellers, 2617
W. Loop 250 N. barnesandnoble.com
■ Author signing with Suzie Jack-
son signing copies of her new book
"If You Were a Commandment," 11:30
a.m., Barnes and Noble Booksellers,
2617 W. Loop 250 N. barnesand-
noble.com
■ Justin Langston, 8 p.m., Brew
St. Bakery, 4610 N. Garfield St.
■ Shotgun Josephine, 9 p.m.,
Escape Lounge, 3001 E. Business
Loop 20, Odessa.
■ Chance Anderson, 9 p.m., Lone
Star Bar, 621 W. Wall St.
■ Telenova from "RuPaul's Drag
Race All Stars," 11 p.m., Recovery
Room, 2802 N. County Road West,
Odessa.

Holiday closing

Midland County Public Librar-
ies will be closed Saturday through
Tuesday.

Not closed today
U.S. Postal Service,
Graves Station, 3304 W. Wall
Ave., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday

Recycling Container
Locations

Large 30-cubic yard open top
containers:
H-E-B 3325 W. Wall St. (behind
Starbucks), plastic and
cardboard
Centennial Library 2503 W. Loop



James Durbin/Reporter-Telegram

Children dressed up in their favorite Harry Potter-themed attire for the Hogwarts
Holiday event Thursday at the Midland County Public Library Centennial Branch.

250, (Behind IHOP), plastic and
cardboard
Super Mercado 2208 N. Big
Spring St. (Behind Bush's Chicken),
cardboard
Midland College 3600 N. Garfield

St. (Chaparral Center), plastic, alu-
minum and cardboard
Security Bank Ballpark 5514
Champions Drive (southwest corner
of the stadium), cardboard, paper,
plastic and aluminum

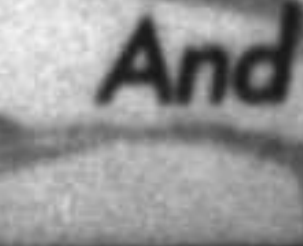
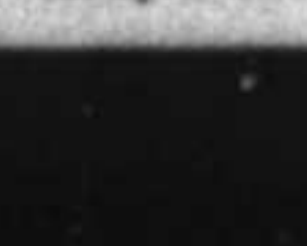
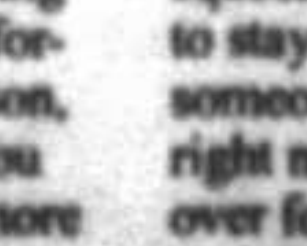
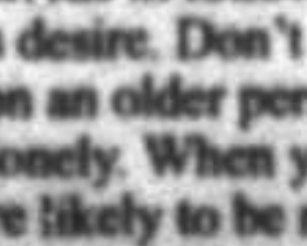
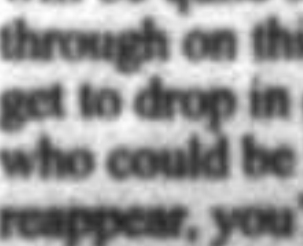
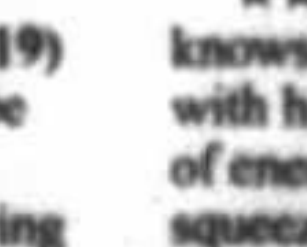
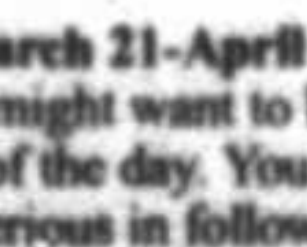
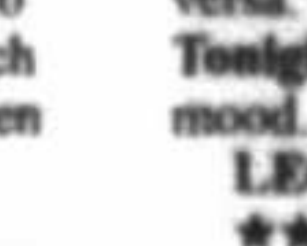
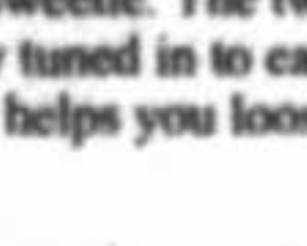
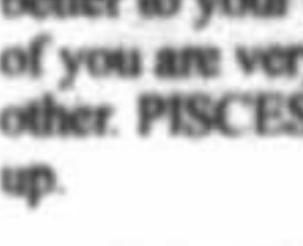
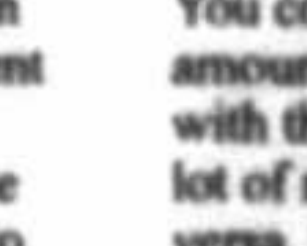
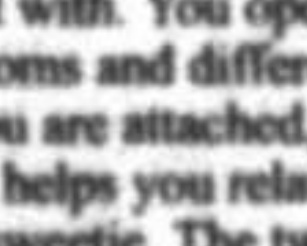
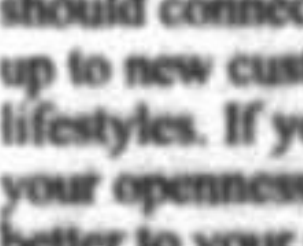
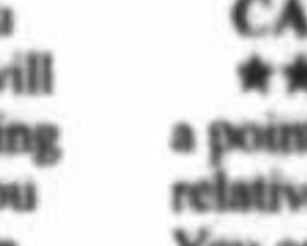
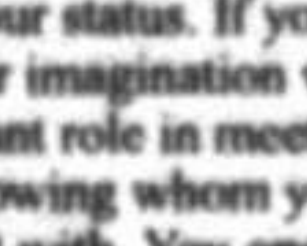
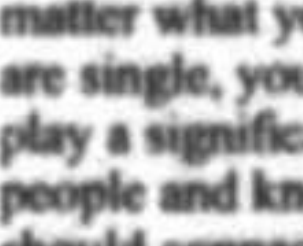
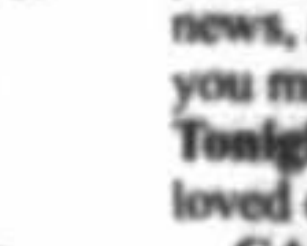
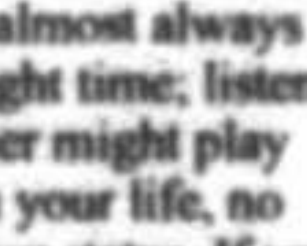
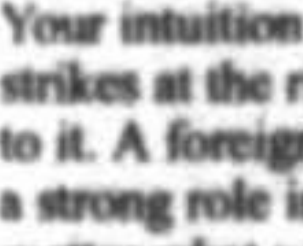
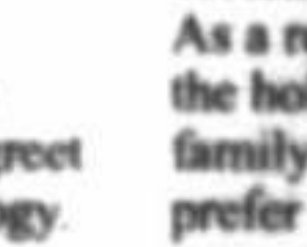
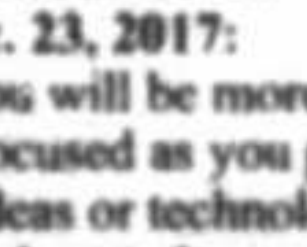
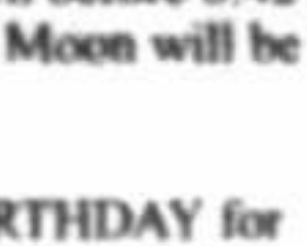
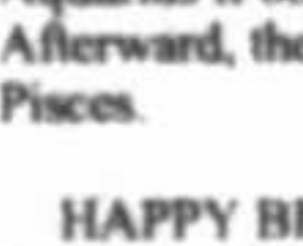
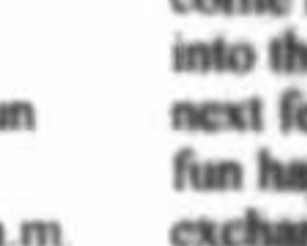
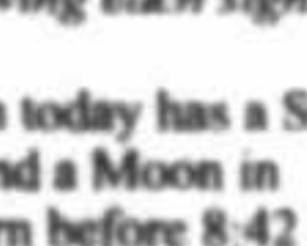
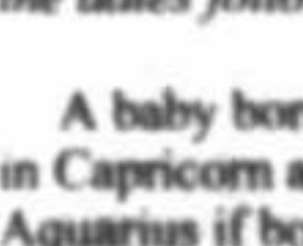
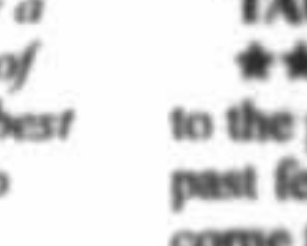
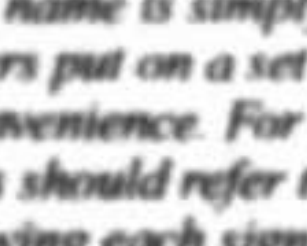
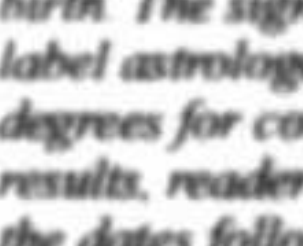
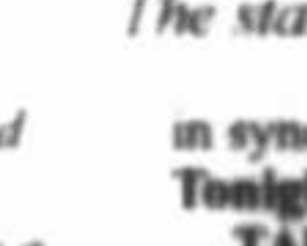
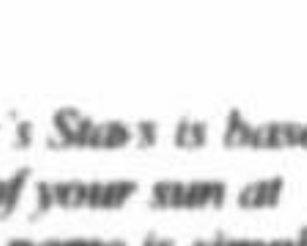
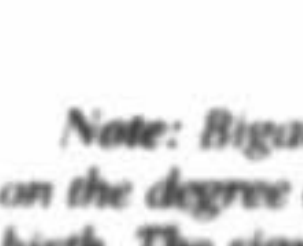
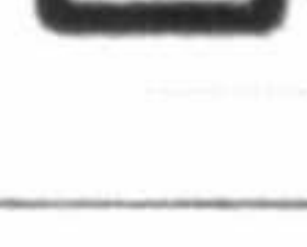
There are also 3-cubic yard
containers at most of the local
elementary schools where you can
recycle cardboard and paper.
All recyclables can be taken to
Butts Recycling Monday through

Saturday Butts Recycling is located
at 26 West Industrial Loop.
For more information call Keep
Midland Beautiful at 688-7745 or visit
KMB's website at keepmidlandbeau-
tiful.org.

Lottery

Pick 3 morning: 2-5-8
Pick 3 day: 3-2-8
Pick 3 evening: 5-7-8
Pick 3 night: 4-1-1
Daily 4 morning: 8-1-3-4
Daily 4 day: 2-6-4-4
Daily 4 evening: 5-6-1-9
Daily 4 night: 5-6-3-0
Cash Play: 5-8-13-14-37
Triple Chance: 2-3-4-9-23-27-
28-39-43-51

Mega Millions: 1-20-30-33-42
BB: 16 MegaMill: 4
All or Nothing morning: 1-3-
6-7-8-10-11-17-18-19-21-24
All or Nothing day: 3-4-7-8-
12-13-15-16-18-20-21-22
All or Nothing evening: 1-2-3-
4-10-12-14-15-19-20-21-24
All or Nothing night: 1-3-8-9-
13-16-17-19-20-21-22-24

Stay
connected

Weather

Friday's temperatures
High.....60
Low.....32
Normal high.....57
Normal low.....30

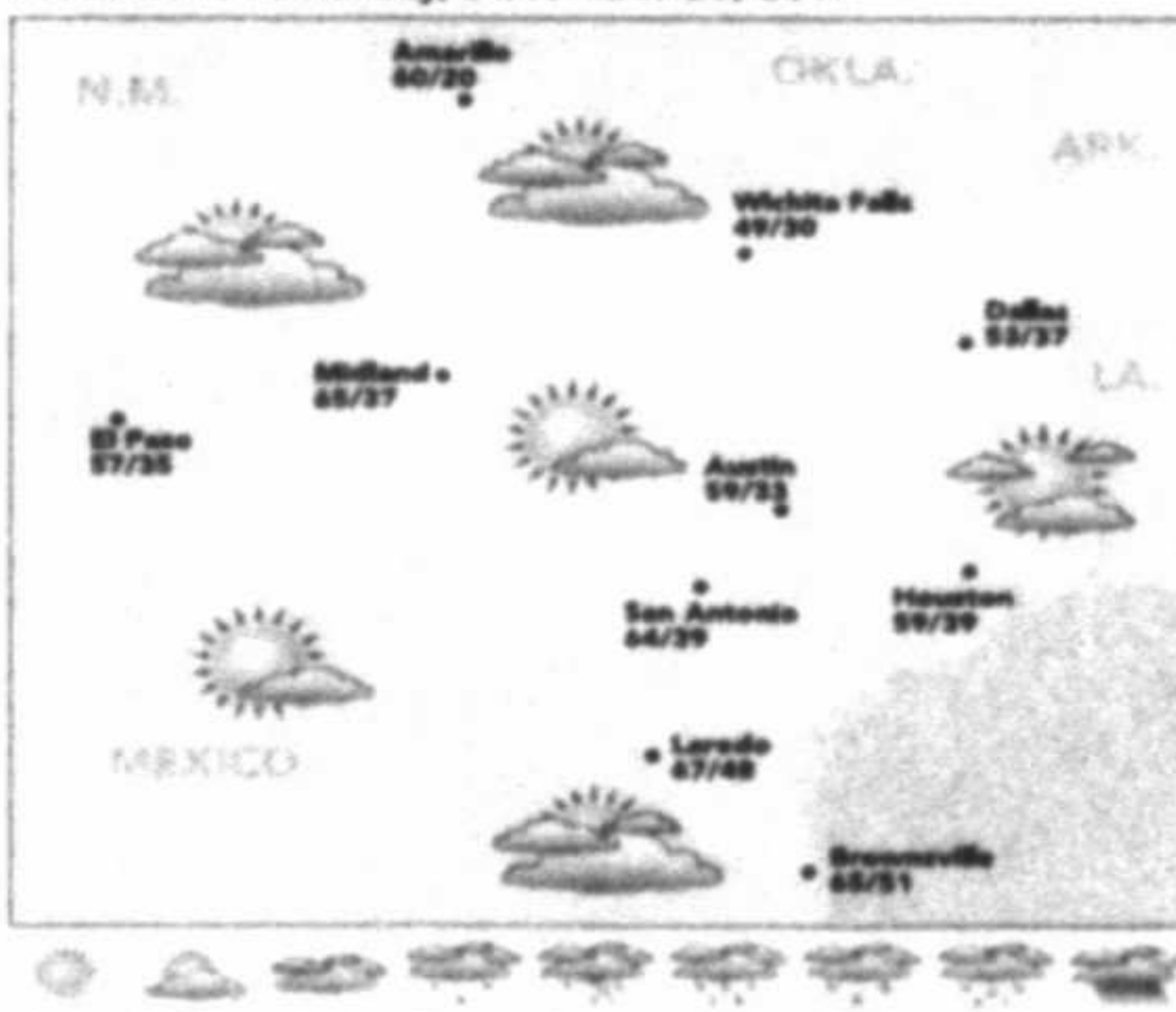
Dec. 22's records
Record high: 79, set in
1933
Record low: 4, set in 1989

Precipitation
Thursday.....0.00 in.
Friday.....Trace
Month total.....0.39 in.
Year total.....17.73 in.
Normal total
(year to date).....14.44 in.

Winds
Average speed: 14.7 mph
Highest speed: 26 mph
Highest gust speed: 33 mph

Today's forecast

Forecast for Saturday, December 23, 2017



High: 64
Low: 38
Conditions: Sunny during
the day/mostly clear at night
Winds: 5-15 mph during

the day and night
Chance of rain: None
Sunrise.....7:46 a.m.
Sunset.....5:50 p.m.

Source: National Weather Service

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have: 5-dynamic; 4-positive; 3-average; 2-so-so; 1-difficult

Note: Bigar's Stars is based
on the degree of your sun at
birth. The sign name is simply a
label astrologers put on a set of
degrees for convenience. For best
results, readers should refer to
the dates following each sign.

A baby born today has a Sun
in Capricorn and a Moon in
Aquarius if born before 8:42 a.m.
Afterward, the Moon will be in
Pisces.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for

Saturday, Dec. 23, 2017:

This year you will be more
centered and focused as you greet
some far-out ideas or technology.
Your intuition almost always
strikes at the right time; listen to
it. A foreigner might play
a strong role in your life, no
matter what your status. If you
are single, your imagination will
play a significant role in meeting
people and knowing whom you
should connect with. You open
up to new customs and different
lifestyles. If you are attached,
your openness helps you relate
better to your sweetie. The two
of you are very tuned in to each
other. PISCES helps you loosen
up.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ You might want to be
alone for part of the day. You
will be quite serious in following
through on this desire. Don't for-
get to drop in on an older person,
who could be lonely. When you
reappear, you're likely to be more

in sync with what is happening.
Tonight: Time for some fun!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You have stepped up
to the plate several times in the
past few weeks. The time has
come for you to let go and get
into the friendly nature of the
next few days. Join friends for a
fun happening and/or some gift
exchanging. Tonight: Off to a
holiday event.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You are likely to
assume a take-charge attitude.
As a result, you'll start to run
the holiday happenings for your
family and/or friends. You might
prefer to catch up on everyone's
news, and you will, but first you
must tackle your to-do list.
Tonight: Deliver presents to your
loved ones.

CANCER (June 21-July 21)

★★★★ You will make
a point of touching base with
relatives and friends at a distance.
You could spend a substantial
amount of time on the phone
with these people. You have a
lot of news to share, and vice
versa. Make plans to go caroling.
Tonight: Get into the holiday
mood.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ A close loved one
knows how to get you to agree
with him or her. You have a lot
of energy, and might need to
squeeze in some exercise in order
to stay centered. Think about
someone who might be alone
right now, and invite this person
over for dinner. Tonight: Slow

down the pace.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Focus on loved
ones and on the building excite-
ment. Some of you will be
amused when the inner child of a
friend emerges at a holiday get-
together or celebration. Put on
some holiday music. Make time
to indulge your own inner child.
Tonight: Off at a fun gathering
with friends.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Embrace a change of
pace. You might want to throw
yourself into a house project,
even if it's only cleaning up the
yard. A roommate or loved one
expresses his or her appreciation
for your efforts. Consider other
ways that you can help out others.
Tonight: Catch up on some zzz's.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Romance weaves
its tendrils around this holiday
season, if you are open to it. Chil-
dren could be involved in creating
a feel-good environment. You

might find yourself attending a
wedding or other big event in the
next few days. Love is in the air!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Your home could be at
the center of some last-minute
holiday activities. Express the
depth of your caring to those
around you. Some of you might
be worried about a family
member; call this person and see
how he or she is doing. Tonight:
Finish wrapping your Christmas
gifts.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You probably feel
as if you can't stay in one place
right now. Visit friends and see
their decorations, or go caroling.
Some of you will meet up for
hot toddies and to swap gifts.
You also might opt to visit with
a neighbor to catch up on some
news. Tonight: All smiles.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You wake up feeling
energized and ready to complete
the details for this weekend. Once
you're done, you could be found
shopping for an item or two that
you want or treating someone to
a late lunch at a favorite spot. Try
not to go overboard. Tonight:
Togetherness is the theme.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ You sense that you
need to make a point of connect-
ing with certain friends while
you still have some time to do so.
Make plans for quick visits and
swapping gifts, or simply enjoy
some egg nog while listening to
Christmas music. Tonight: Out
for dinner; invite some friends
along.

BORN TODAY

Musician Eddie Vedder
(1964), entrepreneur Madam C.J.
Walker (1867), poet Robert Bly
(1926)

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**CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT SERVICES**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24
4:00, 6:00 & 8:00 P.M.
IN THE WORSHIP CENTER
2104 W. Louisiana, Midland, TX

Christmas lunch & fellowship

Midland Soup Kitchen's
annual Christmas lunch
was Friday.

Photos by James Durbin/
Reporter Telegram



ABOVE: Families wait in line to dine. BELOW: Families dine together.



ABOVE: Pat Marez receives a present.
BELOW: Volunteers clean trays in the kitchen.



Families receive presents at the annual Christmas lunch.



Low

From 1A

growth," observed Willie Taylor, chief executive officer of the commission's Workforce Solutions Permian Basin.

"We're placing 300, 400 a month out of our offices," he said, and the offices in the 17 counties he oversees are seeing fewer residents filing unemployment claims.

Taylor applauded the fact that training programs at area schools, including Midland College, Odessa College and the University of Texas of the Permian Basin, are full.

"We need to focus on growing our own workforce," rather than just bringing in workers from outside the area, he said. "We need to bring in families. That's when we begin to also bring in medical personnel, teachers, skilled workers like that."

Before this year, 2.6 percent unemployment in Midland was last seen in April and October of 2014 and in February and March of 2008 and December 2007. Record low unemployment, according to the Workforce Commission, is 2.3 percent in April 2008 and December 2014.

The uptick in the unemployment rate was primarily due to a jump in the civilian labor force as new residents entered the labor market or those who had stopped seeking work were encouraged to try again. The labor force rose by 1,000 to 87,314 from 86,307 in October. The number of employed Midlanders rose to 85,081 from 84,224 in October while the number of unemployed also rose, to 2,233 from 2,083 the previous month.

Midland added 900 non-farm jobs from October to November, for a growth rate of 1 percent. That puts the number at 90,000 jobs. The gains were led by 400 new jobs in the Trade, Transportation and Utilities sector, followed by 200 new jobs in the Mining, Logging and Construction sector and 100 jobs each in the Manufacturing, the

Midland unemployment

January 2017	4.1 percent
January 2016	4.2 percent
February 2017	4.2 percent
February 2016	4.2 percent
March 2017	4.4 percent
March 2016	4.4 percent
April 2017	3.5 percent
April 2016	4.5 percent
May 2017	3.4 percent
May 2016	4.5 percent
June 2017	3.5 percent
June 2016	5 percent
July 2017	3.2 percent
July 2016	4.9 percent
August 2017	3.2 percent
August 2016	4.7 percent
September 2017	2.8 percent
September 2016	4.6 percent
October 2017	2.4 percent
October 2016	4.3 percent
November 2017	2.6 percent
November 2016	4 percent

Preliminary numbers for November with October numbers in parentheses:

Amarillo	2.6 (2.4)
Midland	2.6 (2.4)
Austin-Round Rock	2.7 (2.6)
College Station-Bryan	2.7 (2.5)
Lubbock	2.7 (2.5)
San Antonio-New Braunfels	3.0 (2.9)
Dallas-Plano-Irving	3.1 (3.0)
San Angelo	3.1 (2.9)
Sherman-Denison	3.1 (2.9)
Abilene	3.2 (3.1)
Fort Worth-Arlington	3.2 (3.0)
Wichita Falls	3.3 (3.0)
Laredo	3.4 (3.2)
Odessa	3.4 (3.2)
Tyler	3.5 (3.2)
Waco	3.5 (3.3)
Killeen-Temple	3.6 (3.4)
El Paso	4.0 (3.8)
Texarkana	4.0 (3.8)
Victoria	4.1 (4.0)
Longview	4.2 (4.0)
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land	4.3 (4.1)
Corpus Christi	5.3 (5.1)
Brownsville-Harlingen	5.8 (5.5)
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	6.2 (5.6)
Beaumont-Port Arthur	6.5 (6.3)

Professional and Business Services and the Government sector.

From November 2016 to November 2017, Midland has added 2,100 new jobs for a growth rate of 2.4 percent. The Mining, Logging and Construction sector led with 1,900 new jobs, followed by 200 new jobs each in the Manufacturing and the Government sectors and 100 new jobs in the Other Services sector. Those gains were offset by the loss of 100 jobs each in the Information, the Professional and Business Services and the Education and Health Services sectors.

"Based on what a lot of my board members are

saying, they expect a strong 2018," said Taylor.

Statewide, the unemployment rate posted its seventh consecutive monthly decline, falling to 3.8 percent in November, the state's lowest rate in four decades. Texas added 54,500 seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs in November, increasing the growth rate to 2.7 percent and marking 91 consecutive months of annual growth. Texas has added 330,600 jobs over the last year, according to the commission.

While Amarillo and Midland reported the lowest unemployment, the highest rate was in Beaumont-Port Arthur at 6.5 percent.

Jobless rate for November improves to 3.8 percent

Associated Press

AUSTIN — The Texas jobless rate improved for the seventh month in a row, with November unemployment slipping to 3.8 percent, the Texas Workforce Commission reported Friday.

The figure represents the lowest unemployment rate for the state in four decades. Texas unemployment during October was 3.9 percent, according to the state agency.

The nationwide jobless rate held steady last month at 4.1 percent. Amarillo and Midland had the lowest unemployment rates in Texas last month at 2.6

percent. The Beaumont-Port Arthur area had the state's highest jobless rate during November at 6.5 percent, the agency reported.

The Texas economy in November added 54,500 seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs, according to the commission. Annual employment growth for Texas increased to 2.7 percent in November, marking 91 consecutive months of annual growth.

"The addition of 330,600 jobs over the year demonstrates the consistency with which employers in our state create job opportunities for the highly skilled Texas workforce," said commission Chairman Andres Alcantar.

Please join us at Christmas
as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at

St. Ann's Catholic Church

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432-682-6303

HOLY EUCHARIST

CHRISTMAS EVE
Sunday, December 24, 2017

- 5:00 P.M. Children's Christmas Mass
with Children/Youth Choirs
(Doors open at 4:00 P.M.)
- 8:00 P.M. Vigil Mass of Christmas - Bi-lingual
Preceded by Carols at 7:30 P.M.
- 11:00 P.M. Choral Christmas Eucharist
Preceded by Carols with combined Choirs &
Brass at 10:30 P.M.

CHRISTMAS DAY
Monday, December 25, 2017
Mass for Christmas Day

10:00 A.M.

LIMITED TIME



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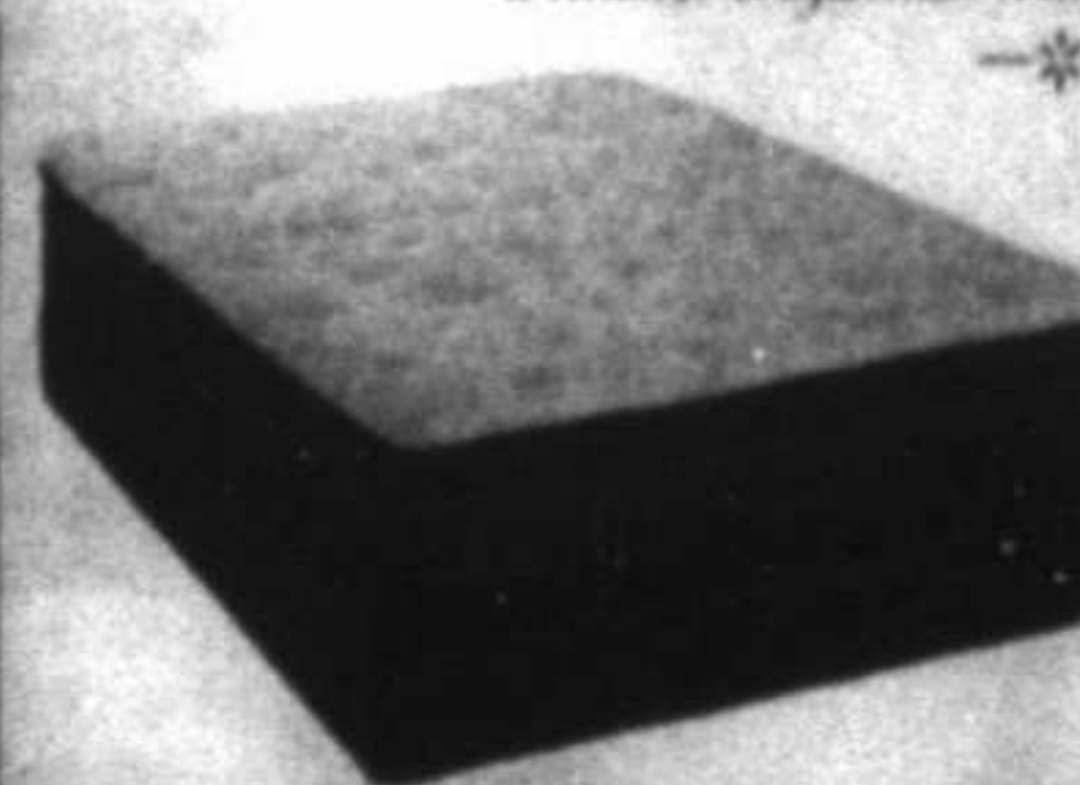
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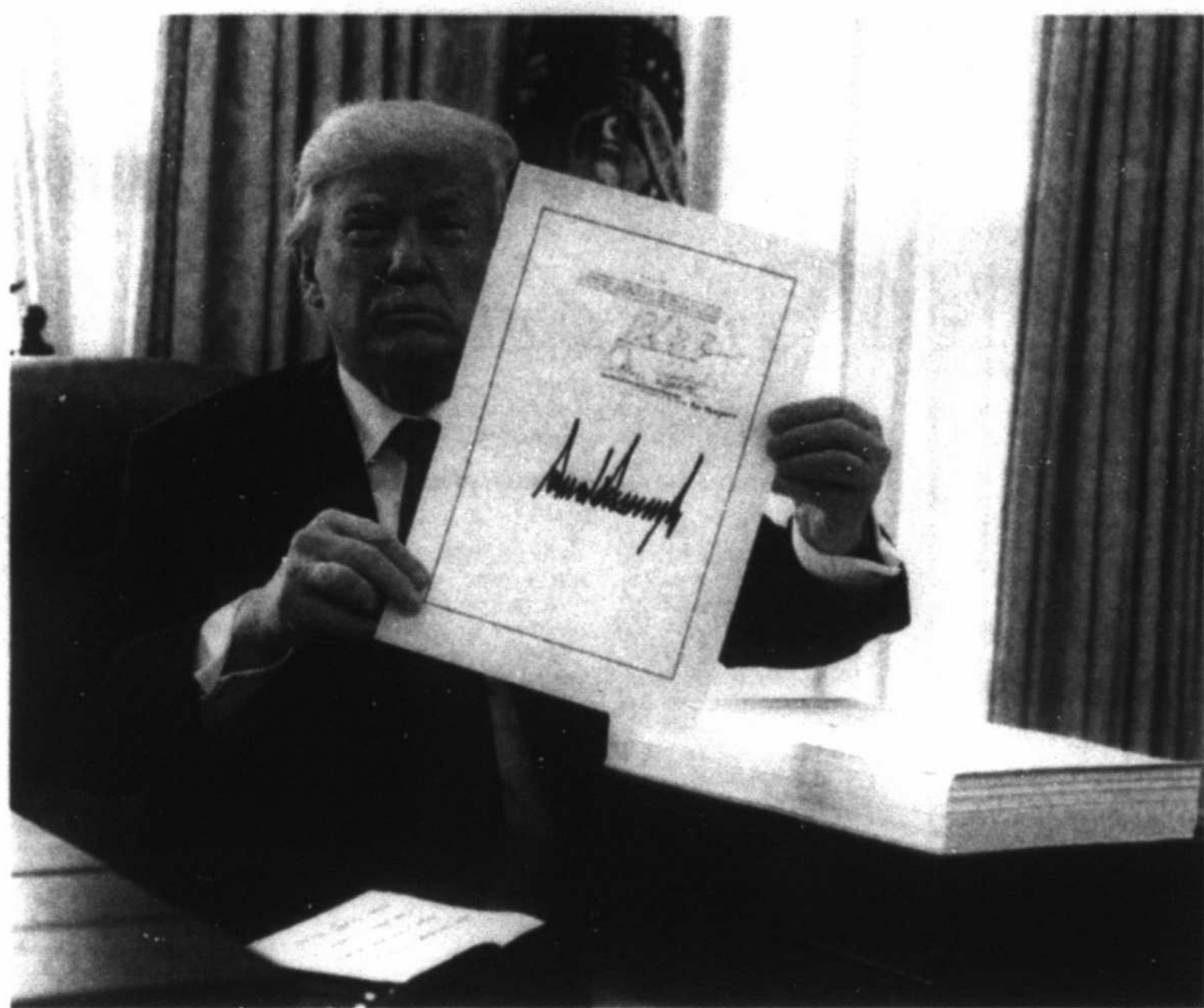


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Evan Vucci/Associated Press

President Donald Trump displays the \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul package he had just signed Friday in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. Trump touted the size of the tax cut, declaring to reporters in the Oval Office before he signed it Friday that "the numbers will speak."

Trump signs tax cut in "rush job" Oval Office signing event

By Laurie Kellman and Jonathan Lemire
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the end, Donald Trump's top achievement as president — a \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul — was finalized in a "rush job" of an affair. And that was OK with him.

None of the members of Congress who muscled through the biggest tax overhaul in 30 years were in the Oval Office on Friday as Trump signed the measure into law. That's because the president was not pleased with news coverage that morning questioning whether he would get the bill signed before Christmas. So he ordered up a spur-of-the-moment signing event where he ticked through what he described as the "tremendous" accomplishments of his first year in office.

"This is the caper," Trump said of the tax package, using his last moments of the year in the White House to sign the bill before flying to Florida for the holidays. He also signed a temporary spending bill to keep the government running and provide money to upgrade the nation's missile defenses.

But the tax cut was at the top of Trump's mind after months of struggling to deliver his agenda through a Republican-controlled Congress. Trump on Friday thanked the absent

GOP leaders and called the bill "something I'm very proud of." Then, with no legislators on hand, he offered to distribute pens from his signing event to reporters assembled in the Oval Office. Clearly feeling some end-of-year cheer, the president who loves to decry "fake news" gave reporters and camera crews credit for "working very hard" and said, "We really appreciate that."

Starting next year, the new tax law will deliver big cuts to corporations and wealthy Americans and more modest reductions to other families. The tax law is the largest since 1986, but far from the biggest in American history, as the president repeatedly claims.

The first major overhaul of the nation's tax laws since 1986 could add \$1.5 trillion to the national debt over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Republican leaders have said they're willing to take that step in pursuit of a boost to the economy. But some in the GOP worry their party could face a political backlash without an aggressive public relations tour.

Trump continued to pitch the new law as a win for the middle class, insisting that even though polling indicates the tax cut is unpopular, the results will win people over.

"I don't think I'm going to have to travel too much to sell it" during the 2018 midterm elections, Trump said.

"I think it's selling itself."

Passage of the tax bill marked a significant victory for a president hungry for a win after chaos and legislative failures during his first year in office. Trump also ended the year with his sights still trained on his treatment by the press, tweeting that the mainstream media "NEVER talk about our accomplishments in the end of year reviews."

"We are compiling a long @ beautiful list," he tweeted.

Trump did celebrate passage of the tax bill at a big ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House earlier in the week. But he scrapped plans for a more formal signing ceremony in the new year to get it signed before heading to his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

"I said that the bill would be on my desk before Christmas," Trump said, as a Marine helicopter whirled outside, waiting to ferry him to Air Force One. "I didn't want you folks to say that I wasn't keeping my promise."

There were more big promises to come, including Trump's suggestion that he'll work with Democrats in the election year to rebuild the nation's roads and bridges. Infrastructure, he said, is "easy."

And there was no looking back. Asked if he had any regrets, Trump shook his head and said, "No."

Sen. McConnell mocks Steve Bannon's 'political genius'

By Alan Fram
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell used a holiday season press conference Friday to deliver a lump of coal to Steve Bannon, mocking the former White House adviser's "political genius" for costing Republicans an Alabama Senate seat.

McConnell, R-Ky., made the remark 10 days after the Bannon-backed Roy Moore lost a special election to Doug Jones, giving Democrats their first victory in an Alabama Senate race in a quarter century. Moore faced multiple allegations of improper conduct with teenagers decades ago and touted extremist views that repelled many women and minorities.

"The political genius on display, throwing away a seat in the reddest state in America, is hard to ignore," McConnell told reporters.

Bannon, who was President Donald Trump's strategist, has returned to the right-wing Breitbart News and has been openly seeking other GOP candidates who like Moore would support toppling McConnell as majority leader. McConnell backed incumbent Sen. Luther Strange in the Republican primary.

McConnell declined to predict how many more GOP primaries there will be next year in which far-right challengers try ousting incumbents. Though Trump also backed Moore, McConnell said he believes the White House "will be in the same place I am, want to nominate people who can actually win."

Following a summer that saw Trump criticize McConnell for the Senate's failure to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law, McConnell described a "really good" working relationship with Trump. He said the \$1.5 trillion tax package Republicans pushed through Congress this week had "brought everybody together."

McConnell echoed earlier remarks in which he's all but ruled out a 2018 effort to overhaul benefit programs like welfare, saying such an effort would need bipartisan support in a Senate that will be divided 51-49 next year.

He said he'd devote floor time to bills "that have enough votes to pass." Of GOP senators who want to continue trying to repeal Obama's statute, McConnell said he'd like to do that but added, "I wish them well."

He also said: ■ He'll meet with Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., in early January to discuss next year's agenda.

■ He's committed to bringing immigration legislation to the Senate floor if a bipartisan group of senators can reach an agreement. He said "there is no emergency" to address the issue before March, which is the deadline Trump has set for lawmakers to reach agreement. McConnell also said Congress should address "chain" immigration, in which immigrants already in the U.S. help bring relatives into the country.

■ He had "not been a fan" of Trump's tweeting until this week, when the president has used Twitter to laud GOP lawmakers for approving the tax bill. "I'm warming up to it," he said.

Asked if he'd visit Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida over the holiday, McConnell said the closest he'll get is attending a college football bowl game in Jacksonville, Florida.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., discusses the GOP agenda for next year and lauds his accomplishments in the first year of the Trump Administration, during a news conference Friday on Capitol Hill. J. Scott Applewhite/Associated Press

More than 4 in 5 enrolled in 'Obamacare' are in Trump states

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldívar and Kevin S. Viney
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Americans in states that Donald Trump carried in his march to the White House account for more than 4 in 5 of those signed up for coverage under the health care law the president still wants to take down.

An Associated Press analysis of new figures from the government found that 7.3 million of the 8.8 million consumers signed up so far for next year come from states Trump won in the 2016 presidential election. The four states with the highest number of sign-ups — Florida, Texas, North Carolina and Georgia, accounting for nearly 3.9 million customers — were all Trump states.

"There's politics, and then there's taking care of yourself and your family," said analyst Chris Sloan of the consulting firm Avalere Health. "You can have political views about a program like the Affordable Care Act, but when you get an opportunity to get subsidized health insurance for you and your family — politics is a distant consideration."

AP's analysis found that 11 states beat 2017's enroll-

ment figures. Of them, eight — Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming — went for Trump, who posted double-digit victories in all but Iowa.

To be sure, Trump states are also home to many people who voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton. But the AP's analysis points to a pattern of benefits from the health law in states the president won. The premium dollars have economic ripple effects, reimbursing hospitals and doctors for services that might otherwise have gone unpaid and written off as bad debt. Also, people with health insurance are better able to manage chronic medical problems, remaining productive, tax-paying members of society.

Such economic and political realities will be in the background when Congress returns in January to another installment of the nation's long-running debate over health care. Republicans and Democrats seem to have battled to a draw for now.

The year 2019 — the effective date for repeal of the ACA's requirement that most people have coverage — is looking like a time of reckoning for the law's insurance markets, which offer subsidized private plans to people who don't have job-based coverage.

Unexpectedly strong enrollment numbers announced this week for the 39 states served by the federal HealthCare.gov website testify to consumer demand for the program and its guarantee that people with medical problems can't be turned away. Yet those numbers still lag behind last season's sign-up total.

It's unclear what the final count for next year will be. HealthCare.gov numbers released Thursday are incomplete, and some states running their own insurance websites will continue enrolling people throughout January.

Separately, actions by the Trump administration and the GOP-led Congress are creating incentives for healthy people to stay out of the health law's insurance markets.

Starting in 2019, people won't have to worry about incurring a fine from the IRS for being uninsured, because the tax overhaul repeals that mandate. At the same time, the administration is taking regulatory action to open a path for the sale of low-cost insurance plans that don't provide the health law's benefits or guarantees.

"The real worry for me is what the health plans do," said Sloan. "If they decide that without the mandate it's not worth staying in this

market, you could end up with swaths of the country having no insurers."

Bipartisan legislation to stabilize insurance markets is still alive in Congress, but its prospects are unclear.

On Friday, Trump said he thinks repealing the mandate as part of the tax overhaul "ultimately leads to the end of Obamacare." The president continued to ignore other parts of the law that remain untouched by the tax bill, including its Medicaid expansion benefiting low-income adults and the popular protections for people with pre-existing conditions. Others say a corner has been turned in the health care debate, but where it will end up is still uncertain.

Former President Barack Obama's law "is more durable and important to Americans in terms of getting affordable health insurance than even its advocates expected," said John McDonough, a professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, who served as an adviser to Senate Democrats during the ACA debate more than seven years ago.

"With the end of the attempts to bring it down and to repeal it, perhaps there will be opportunities in the near future to try to actually build up and improve it, because it could use some work," he added.

Attention Readers:

The Midland Reporter-Telegram Circulation department will not take calls on Sunday, December 24th or Sunday, December 31st.

All vacation stops for Christmas weekend will need to be placed by Wednesday, December 20th. Vacation stops for New Year's weekend will need to be placed by Wednesday, December 27th.

Have a Merry Christmas and Safe New Year's

Midland Reporter-Telegram

DAILY PROMISE
BROUGHT TO YOU BY

HENRY

Luke 2:11
Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Teenage mom still bares brunt of her father's anger

DEAR ABBY: I'm 18 years old and I have a son who's 3. I'm still in school and live with my parents.

My parents treat me like I'm a nobody and always bring up how I got pregnant. They barely allow me to take my son anywhere. I still have to ask them if I can go to certain places.

My dad takes it out on me when someone makes him mad. I'm always getting yelled at for everything, even if I did nothing wrong. My dad sees me as a failure even when I do something good for me and my son. Because I have a kid, he's never proud of me. I don't know what to do or how to make this better. — OLD ENOUGH IN THE SOUTH

DEAR OLD ENOUGH: Your parents are still punishing you for having the baby. I'm glad you stayed in school, because the more education you can attain, the better able you will be to support yourself and your child.

It is important for your future that you quit looking to your father for approval. He's wrong to take his frustrations out on you. You may have disappointed him, but you are not a failure. If there are other relatives with whom you and your child can live while you complete your education, please look into it.

DEAR ABBY

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Her column is distributed by Universal Press Syndicate.



DEAR ABBY: So often we learn from your column what a good marriage is NOT — how not to treat someone we love. Could you please describe for my granddaughter just what a strong, loving marriage IS? Paint a picture of what to look for in a husband and how to create a marriage that will last while bringing joy to both parties. Your experience can help me explain this to her. — PONDERING STILL IN HONOLULU

DEAR PONDERING: I can try. But before I do, I should mention that a good marriage may mean different things to different couples. To me, a good marriage is a solid partnership between two people who respect each other, care about each other and are mutually attracted. It helps if both have similar goals and values, and are willing to support each other in good times AND IN BAD. Like anything that's worthwhile, marriage takes work, patience and willingness to compromise.

And of course, communication — which includes listening — is key.

DEAR ABBY: I have a workplace challenge that requires your expertise. Our company sends greeting cards for every event that you can imagine. It's an effective way to show the employees that we are a team and care about each other. The problem is, one staff member has a habit of writing a "manuscript" (heavy sarcasm) on the inside of every card, whether or not she personally knows the individual. This leaves little space for anyone else.

I have jokingly asked the young lady to please be conscious of space, but she doesn't get it. I don't want to hurt her feelings, but people here are getting fed up. Would it be rude to take the card to her only after everyone else has signed it? — PLEASE SIGN HERE

DEAR PLEASE: Rude? Not at all. It's a practical solution. Bravo!

GOREN BRIDGE

With Bob Jones
Bidding Quiz

Q 1 — Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold	Q 3 — North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♦ K Q 4 ♥ K 2 ♦ A Q 8 ♦ K 8 5 3 2	♦ A 9 6 5 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ K 9 5 ♦ 8 7 5
With the opponents passing, you open one no-trump and partner bids two hearts, transfer. What call would you make?	WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH 1♥ 2♣ Pass ? What call would you make?
Q 2 — East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:	Q 4 — Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♦ A J ♥ A K Q 9 ♦ K J 8 7 5 2 ♦ 9	♦ K J 7 5 ♥ Q 9 7 4 ♦ K Q 2 ♦ 10 3
Partner opens five clubs and right-hand opponent passes. What call would you make?	NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST 1♣ Pass 1♥ Pass 2♥ Pass ? What call would you make?

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Parents give educators wine for 'teaching a kid like mine'

Associated Press

KETTERING, Ohio — Saying their son's teachers deserve more than a coffee mug for Christmas, an Ohio couple decided to give them bottles of wine with the child's picture on the label.

Beavercreek resident Mary Sommers tells the Dayton Daily News she doubted the teachers needed any more mugs, but, she joked, "who doesn't need a glass of wine after teaching a kid like mine?"

She and her husband, Paul, gave the wine to the teachers at their son Jake's school in Kettering. In addition to a picture of Jake's smiling face, the labels carry a message that says, "Our child might be the reason you drink so enjoy this bottle on us!"

The gifts drew widespread attention after the couple's older son posted about them on Twitter.



"On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, eleven pipers piping."

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SPORTS

Legendary broadcaster Dick Enberg passed away at age 82. Page 4B

Midland Reporter-Telegram | mrt.com | Saturday, December 23, 2017 | Section B

South Florida's Strong facing familiar foe in Texas Tech

By John Zenor
Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Charlie Strong is facing a familiar opponent in his first bowl game with South Florida.

The former Texas coach leads the 23rd-ranked Bulls (9-2) into the Birmingham Bowl on Saturday against Texas Tech (6-6), the Longhorns' Big 12 Conference rival. Strong isn't banking too much on that familiarity.

"It's just totally two different teams," said Strong, who was 2-1 against the Red Raiders with the Longhorns. "You look at last year they had a quarterback (Patrick Mahomes) who was a first-round draft pick. In three years at Texas, we had some really good games and Kliff (Kingsbury) has

done a very good job with that team.

"It's a very explosive offense, can score at any time, very aggressive on defense."

Texas Tech's Kingsbury said there's a different look from those Texas teams because of personnel, including a dual-threat quarterback.

"I don't see too much carry over outside the fact that coach Strong's teams are always well coached and play very hard," Kingsbury said.

Strong is trying to finish his first season at South Florida by helping the Bulls reach double-digit wins and finish in the Top 25 for the second straight year.

Both defenses are tasked with defending dangerous quarterbacks, though they have different

styles.

South Florida's Quinton Flowers is a running and passing threat while Texas Tech's Nic Shimonek is a prolific passer. Kingsbury said it's hard to find a scout teamer to simulate a player like Flowers.

"The quickness and athleticism that Quinton brings is a different animal," Kingsbury said. "He's like a very dynamic wide receiver who's a very athletic passer back there, trying to corral him."

The Red Raiders became bowl eligible with a comeback win over the Longhorns, who led by 10 points early in the fourth quarter. Strong said he didn't watch the game except while

Please see BULLS/5B



John Raoux/Associated Press

South Florida quarterback Quinton Flowers (9) throws a pass against Central Florida during the second half of an NCAA game, on Nov. 24 in Orlando, Fla. Central Florida won 49-42.

Second-year success



James Durbin/Reporter-Telegram

Lee head football coach Clint Hartman looks on during the Class 6A Division I regional playoff game against Euless Trinity Dec. 2 at Shotwell Stadium in Abilene.

MRT COACH OF THE YEAR

Hartman brings winning culture back to Lee

By Will Korn
wkorn@mrt.com

When Clint Hartman took the reins of the Lee football program two off-seasons ago, the Rebels were ripe for a turnaround from two straight losing seasons.

At the time of his hire in March of 2016, Hartman called Lee a "destination job." He long desired to coach in west Texas, believed in the storied passion and grit of west Texas football and envisioned the Rebels returning to the forefront of that lore.

Hartman, along with a partially retooled coaching staff, battled through a 3-7 campaign in 2016 that saw the building of the program's new foundation and

mentality. Through a "Plus-1" mantra and the players' relentless drive to succeed, Lee entered the 2017 season with an optimism that hadn't been seen in years.

And with a fearless, unwavering confidence in his players and staff, Hartman directed the Rebels to an unforgettable 10-3 season and to the third round of the playoffs — the first time that far since 2001 — where the Rebels battled state power Euless Trinity to the wire in a 34-23 loss.

For his efforts in the Rebels' return to prominence across the state, Hartman, the 13th head coach in Lee football history, was named the Midland Reporter-Telegram's Coach of the Year for the 2017 season.

Hartman shared the award with the Lee administration and his staff, who he

praised all season long for truly loving their players and each other.

"Anytime you get a Coach of the Year award, there are so many pieces to the puzzle that nobody understands," Hartman said. "I understand it because we do this for a living. But it starts with the administration — you've heard me talk about Mr. (Lee principal Stan) Van Hoozer. When we came here, he said 'Coach, I want you to help change the culture of football and of athletics (at Lee).' That was his challenge to me. It starts with him and then our coaching staff. You could name all of them in there, because this is their award."

Hartman said winning 10 games this season was a result of faith in the patient

Please see HARTMAN/2B

COMMENTARY

The best coach in football is not getting the second chance he craves

By Mac Engel
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

FORT WORTH — The latest round of firings and hirings in college football are nearly complete, and the best available coach remains gainfully unemployed.

Art Briles can be found in Horseshoe Bay, one hour west of Austin. He won't work for food, but close.

Briles waits, hoping for the phone to ring with the chance he covets, to return to the identity and the routine that is missing from his life.

The question is does Art Briles deserve another chance after leading Baylor into the rabbit hole of hell, or is he the second coming of Dave Bliss?

Incarinate Word University in San Antonio with an enrollment of just under 10,000, making it the largest Catholic school in Texas, is pondering the question right now with its football coaching vacancy.

Per a source close to Briles, he wants the job. He wants a job.

Art Briles has his flaws, but he ain't Dave Bliss, the disgraced ex-Baylor basketball coach who is one of the biggest, narcissist frauds to ever grace a sideline.

Bliss got his second chance, and again revealed himself during a documentary shoot and resigned from his position as head coach at Southwestern Christian University.

This is not an open lobby for Briles, but merely an acknowledgment that, fundamentally, we all deserve a second chance. However much you might despise Briles, at some point he should be allowed to re-enter his world. With skepticism, and stipulations.

Every other major or minor figure associated with the Baylor scandal moved on but Briles.

Incarinate Word, or a school on a lower level, is the place to start. Word leaked last week that Incarnate Word, which recently fired head coach Larry Kennan, was considering Briles.

Influential booster Red McCombs, whose millions of dollars are evident at Texas and Incarnate Word, went on record to campaign for Briles. According to a report in the San Antonio Express News, however, Briles is not considered a candidate for the job.

Any time a booster as powerful as McCombs says a guy should be candidate, he's a candidate.

"The man that I know wouldn't even come close to being the kind of guy those people up in Baylor (pointed him out to be)," McCombs told the San Antonio Express News. "I don't think (BU) handled the job right, but that's their business, not mine. But what happens to little Incarnate Word is my business. I want them to do well, but I am afraid they are fighting an uphill battle, and this could be their big breakthrough."

McCombs speaks of Incarnate Word's ambition to move up the Division I/FCS athletic ladder. Transitions like that are expensive, and the football team usually is awful.

Football at UIW has been around since 2007, and the program moved up Division II to FCS in '13. The Cardinals were 20-46 in the past six seasons.

McCombs' forte is business, and he's smart enough to know the only way the school will generate the return on the investment that is football is to win; that's why he wants Briles.

Can a private, religious-based

Please see BRILES/5B

No. 21 Texas Tech rolls past ACU 74-47 in last Big 12 tuneup

Associated Press

LUBBOCK — Zach Smith returned to Texas Tech's starting lineup after coming off the bench for a game for an unspecified violation of team rules.

The senior forward looked ready for the start of the rugged Big 12.

Smith scored a season-high 16 points, freshman Zhaire Smith added 14 and the 21st-ranked Red Raiders beat Abilene Christian 74-47 on Friday in their final tuneup for conference play.

After scoring just four points while not starting for the first time this season in a win over Florida Atlantic, Zach Smith made his first seven shots before his only miss to go with six rebounds, his second-best total of the season.

"There's some things we believe in. Discipline's at the top of that list," Texas Tech coach Chris Beard said. "Guys just got to continue to grow as men. Great people. Just a simple mistake. They pay the consequence. We move on."

Texas Tech (11-1) won its fifth straight game and extended its nonconference home winning streak to 38 games, holding the Wildcats to 17 percent shooting (5 of 31) in the first half and 30 percent overall.

Keenan Evans and Justin Gray had 11 points apiece in the first meeting between the West Texas schools since Dec. 2, 1957, also in Lubbock. The Red Raiders have won 11 straight in the series, a streak that dates to 1938.

Tevin Foster and Hayden

Please see TECH/3B



Brad Tolleson/Associated Press

Texas Tech's Nem Stevenson (10) lays up the ball around Abilene Christian's Drake Green (11) during the first half of an NCAA basketball game Friday in Lubbock.

ON THE AIR

Wagner at Dayton, 2 p.m.,
NBC
FAU at Minnesota, 2:30
p.m., BTN
UCLA vs. Kentucky, 3 p.m.,
CBS
Diamond Head Classic,
3:30 p.m., ESPN2
Green Bay at Wisconsin,
4:30 p.m., BTN
Illinois vs. Missouri, 7 p.m.,
ESPN2
Texas Southern at BYU, 8
p.m., BYUtv
Diamond Head Classic, 9
p.m., ESPN2
San Francisco vs. Nevada,
10 p.m., FS1
Diamond Head Classic,
11:30 p.m., ESPNu

Men's Soccer
PL Everton vs. Chelsea,
6:25 a.m., NBCSN, NBCU
PL Manchester City vs.
Bournemouth, 9 a.m., NBCSN
PL Swansea City vs. Crystal
Palace, 9 a.m., CNBC
PL West Ham United vs.
Newcastle United, 9 a.m.,
NBCU
PL Burnley vs. Tottenham
Hotspur, 11:30 a.m., NBC
PL Leicester City FC vs.
Manchester United FC, 1:50
p.m., NBC, TELE

**National Basketball
Association**
Dallas at Atlanta, 6:30 p.m.,
FS GO

BASEBALL

61 Anthony G. Hax-Brown, \$18,250; 62
 for nonlocal tickets; 63 William Van Gieson 997
 Sterling Stoddard \$2,154 for selling an off-road
 vehicle; 64 William Van Gieson 997
 First Seattle \$2,154; 65 \$1,154 for receiving
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Standings

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	
✓ New England	11	3	0	786	394	78
✓ Buffalo	8	6	0	571	284	100
✓ Miami	4	6	0	357	282	142
✓ N. Y. Jets	5	9	0	357	285	100
South						

West

	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	
✓ Jacksonville	10	4	0	714	374	209
✓ Indianapolis	8	6	0	571	279	111
✓ Pittsburgh	8	11	0	274	258	100
✓ Cleveland	8	11	0	274	258	100
✓ Baltimore	8	6	0	571	245	100
Cincinnati	5	9	0	357	233	105
Cleveland	5	9	0	357	233	105

West

	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	
Kansas City	4	6	0	571	309	100
✓ L.A. Chargers	7	7	0	500	311	100
Oakland	6	8	0	429	281	124
Denver	5	9	0	357	274	128

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	
✓ Philadelphia	12	2	0	857	438	277
Dallas	8	6	0	571	386	111
✓ Pittsburgh	8	6	0	571	386	108
✓ N. Y. Giants	2	12	0	143	229	105

South

	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	
New Orleans	10	4	0	714	401	100
Carolina	10	4	0	714	393	108

	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	
Tampa Bay	4	10	0	286	289	33
✓ Minnesota	7	7	0	580	343	24
✓ Seattle	7	7	0	571	368	29
Green Bay	7	7	0	580	343	24
✓ Chicago	4	10	0	286	234	279
✓ L.A. Rams	10	4	0	714	438	277
✓ Seattle	7	7	0	571	368	29
✓ Atlanta	6	8	0	429	248	135
✓ San Francisco	4	10	0	286	253	33
✓ Cincinnati	4	10	0	286	253	33
✓ Cincinnati	4	10	0	286	253	33
✓ Cincinnati	4	10	0	286	253	33

Scores & Schedule

Today's Games

Indianapolis at Baltimore, 3:30 p.m.
Minnesota at Green Bay, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday's Games

Cincinnati at Chicago, noon
Atlanta at New Orleans, 1:00 p.m.
Denver at Washington, noon
Tampa Bay at Carolina, noon
Miami at Kansas City, noon

Monday's Games

L.A. Chargers at N.Y. Jets, noon
Dallas at Cleveland, 1:00 p.m.
Buffalo at San Francisco, 3:05 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Atlanta, 3:25 p.m.
Chicago at Dallas, 3:25 p.m.

Tuesday's Games

Pittsburgh at Philadelphia, 5:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at Pittsburgh, 8:00 p.m.

Standards

EASTERN CONFERENCE				L		W		L		W	
Atlantic Division				L		W		L		W	
Boston	26	9	743								
Brooklyn	22	8	733								
New York	17	15	531								
Philadelphia	16	14	452								
Washington	12	20	367								
Southeast Division				W		L		W		L	
Miami	26	16	591								
Washington	11	16	531								
Charlotte	11	21	544								
Orlando	11	23	505								
Atlanta	7	25	219								
Central Division				L		W		L		W	
Cleveland	24	9	727								
Minneapolis	17	13	567								
Chicago	14	14	563								
Detroit	10	18	563								
Chicago	10	21	323								
WESTERN CONFERENCE				L		W		L		W	
Northwest Division				W		L		W		L	
Houston	25	6	806								
San Antonio	22	11	667								
New Orleans	16	16	500								
Portland	9	23	291								
Dallas	9	24	273								
Pacific Division				W		L		W		L	
Golden State	23	15	606								
Phoenix	19	19	419								
L.A. Lakers	11	18	379								
Sacramento	11	20	350								
Phoenix	12	23	353								

Scores & Schedule

Friday's Games

Detroit 104, New York 81

New Orleans 111, Orlando 97

San Diego 113, Washington 84

L.A. Lakers 128, Houston 119

Memphis 113, Dallas 101

Minneapolis 109, Charlotte 104

San Antonio City 120, Atlanta 117

Game of Portland, late

L.A. Lakers at Golden State, 4 p.m.

Today's Games

Philadelphia at Toronto, 4 p.m.

Brooklyn at Indiana, 6 p.m.

Memphis at Charlotte, 6 p.m.

Orlando at Washington, 6 p.m.

Chicago at Boston, 6:30 p.m.

Portland at Dallas, 6:30 p.m.

L.A. Clippers at Milwaukee, 7 p.m.

New Orleans at Miami, 7 p.m.

Charlotte City at Utah, 7 p.m.

Denver at Golden State, 7:30 p.m.

Minneapolis at Phoenix, 8 p.m.

Portland at L.A. Lakers, 8 p.m.

San Antonio at Sacramento, 9 p.m.

Standalone

EASTERN CONFERENCE						
Atlantic Division						
Team	GP	W	L	Pts	GP	GA
Tampa Bay	34	25	7	52	30	67
Toronto	36	21	14	43	113	103
Montreal	36	18	16	37	88	89
Buffalo	35	16	15	34	97	94
Detroit	34	13	14	27	93	93
Ottawa	35	12	16	25	102	119
Calgary	34	11	17	23	90	113
Chicago	35	9	19	17	75	118

NORTHWESTERN CONFERENCE						
Team	GP	W	L	Pts	GP	GA
Washington	36	22	12	46	114	104
New Jersey	34	20	9	40	109	103
Philadelphia	36	19	13	41	108	107
N.Y. Rangers	36	19	12	40	112	101
N.Y. Islanders	36	18	14	40	125	108
Pittsburgh	36	18	14	38	104	114
Carolina	34	15	12	37	95	98
Florida	35	13	17	27	97	107

WESTERN CONFERENCE						
Team	GP	W	L	Pts	GP	GA
Los Angeles	37	22	9	46	113	95
San Jose	36	22	9	46	118	105
St. Louis	37	22	9	46	110	99
Dallas	36	21	9	41	103	103
Edmonton	36	20	9	40	102	95
Minnesota	36	19	14	39	102	109
Colorado	34	16	15	33	108	111

NORTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE						
Team	GP	W	L	Pts	GP	GA
Vegas	35	22	9	42	118	101
San Jose	36	21	9	42	118	101
San Jose	36	18	15	39	103	99
Arizona	36	15	13	38	97	100
Vancouver	36	15	16	30	97	105
San Jose	36	17	14	34	104	115
Arizona	37	9	24	21	85	123

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for an overtime loss. The team with the most points and the fewest goals against will qualify for conference advances to playoffs.

Scores & Schedules

Friday's Scores

Florida 4, Philadelphia 2
Buffalo 4, Minnesota 2
Colorado 2, Calgary 1
Arizona 5, Washington 2, OT

Today's Games

Detroit at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Montreal at N.Y. Islanders, noon
Winnipeg at Edmonton, 6 p.m.
Vancouver at Vancouver, 5 p.m.
Chicago at New Jersey, 6 p.m.
Minnesota at Tampa Bay, 6 p.m.
Arizona at Florida, 6 p.m.
Buffalo at Colorado, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Columbus, 5 p.m.
Toronto at N.Y. Rangers, 6 p.m.
Carolina at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Vancouver at Detroit, 7 a.m.
Philadelphia at Washington, 7 p.m.
Los Angeles at San Jose, 6 p.m.
St. Louis at Vancouver, 9 p.m.

Jeff Woo/The Denton Record-Chronicle via AP

himself as a pass-first quarterback who can make plays on the run.

Henigan just finished his fourth season as Ryan's coach, all with Sanders as his starter. Sanders got the job after his first scrimmage as a 14-year-old, and the only games he missed were at the end of his freshman year after the first knee injury.

"You look back on it as a learning point," Sanders said of the injuries. "You just want to push yourself just as if it never happened. You try not to look back on it and be yourself and do what you were doing before."

Now Henigan has to settle on his next quarterback after another loss to

**CLASS 4A DIVISION II
PLEASANT GROVE UPENDS
STARK FOR 1ST TITLE**
ARLINGTON—T.J. Cole scored three touchdowns to propel Texarkana Pleasant Grove to its first state title with a 41-21 win over West Orange-Stark in Friday's Class 4A Division II state championship at AT&T Stadium.

Trailing 28-6 with 10:02 left, the Mustangs (13-1) made the game interesting as Chaika Watson three-point of touchdown passes to pull Stark within seven points with 4:35 remaining.

However, the Hawks (16-0) scored on a pair of interception returns in the final 15 seconds to turn the contest into a three-score game.

Pleasant Grove's Xavier Benson had a 22-yard interception return for a TD with 15 seconds left. Aaron Harmon scored on a 44-yard interception return as time expired.

Hawks quarterback Ben Harmon completed 9 of 14 passes for 248 yards and 2

From staff reports

CRANE – Savannah Garcia scored a game-high 15 points to lead the Crane girls basketball team to its first victory of the season, a 40-35 victory

From 1B

process of improvement. It was about more than just outscoring the other team on the field — it was about creating a winning and loving atmosphere in the Rebel Field House built on trust and accountability for every player and coach. That culture, honed through the program's character development regimen, began in 2016.

"We had to get our kids to believe in the process, that every day is a part of the process and you can't go forward without that part of the process," Hartman said. "During the off-season, you heard me talk about character development, heard me talk about getting our kids to care for and love each other, getting our coaches to care for and love each other. Then, it comes down to having good football players and the kids bought in, played

hard and believed in what their coaches were telling them to do."

One of the springboards of the program's magical 2017 season was the staff's difficult decision to forego spring football practice. But the Rebels, who benefitted from an extra scrimmage and week of practice in August, rocketed to a 6-0 record for the first time since the 1999 state championship team accomplished the feat.

Lee stumbled in a gripping 52-28 loss at San Angelo Central on Oct. 13, but didn't lose faith, as they returned home to edge Odessa High 28-21 the next week at Grande Communications Stadium. Two weeks later, Lee clinched its first playoff berth since 2013 with a record-setting 74-35 win at Wolfforth Frenship.

Hartman said resiliency and laser focus were among the hallmarks of

Team 57 this season. This is a team that refused to back down or quit when down. That's a trait and attitude that the program was lacking before his arrival.

"One thing that had to change here was we had to become stronger, we had to become tougher and we had to gain confidence," Hartman said. "There's a totally different atmosphere in this locker room right now and we all feel like we fell short and should have beaten Euless Trinity. I think what this team did for the community and for the halls of Lee High school—I don't have the words for it. We're all walking around a little taller right now. We're all extremely blessed to have the senior class buy in because they were special."

Hartman, who has already begun preparations for 2018, said there were a number of moments from

2017 that he'll remember the rest of his life. But it was the entire journey he traveled with his players — hand in hand, from offseason boot camp in January to the final bus ride home after the Trinity loss — that made it a truly special season.

"I'll never forget hugging and crying with those guys at the end of the (Trinity) game either. It's a sad memory, but a cool memory because if you're not there, it doesn't hurt as bad. Those moments of shaking those kids' hands, that was huge."

Other coaches considered for the award: Midland Christian's Greg McClendon, Garden City's Jeff Jones, Coahoma's Fred Dietz, Andrews' Ralph Mason.

Follow Will on Twitter:
@Will_MRT

Ellington ties career-best with 28, Heat top Mavs 113-101

By Tim Reynolds
Associated Press

MIAMI — Wayne Ellington tied a career high with 28 points, Josh Richardson scored 24 and the injury-ravaged Miami Heat never trailed on the way to beating the Dallas Mavericks 113-101 on Friday night.

Tyler Johnson scored 19 and Bam Adebayo scored 14 for Miami, which shot 64 percent — second-best in franchise history. The Heat started both halves with 12-0 runs and went 16 for 25 from 3-point range.

Ellington made 3s on back-to-back possessions early in the fourth, pushing what was a two-point Heat lead out to 90-82. He connected on his seventh 3 with about four minutes left for a 99-88 lead, and Miami



Miami Heat guard Wayne Ellington (2) shoots under pressure from Dallas Mavericks guard Devin Harris (34) in the second quarter Friday, in Miami.

stayed in control the rest of the way.

Richardson made 11 of 14 shots for Miami, which has won four of its last five.

Yogi Ferrell scored a season-high 23 for the Mavericks. Dirk Nowitzki and Harrison Barnes each had 20 for Dallas, which

got outrebounded 35-22. The 22 rebounds were the fewest by an NBA team this season.

Miami guard Dion Waiters left in the first quarter after turning his long-problematic left ankle on a drive, meaning the Heat now have seven players dealing with injuries. Hassan Whiteside, Goran Dragic, James Johnson and Justise Winslow all remained out with various injuries. Rodney McGruder and Okaro White are likely not returning anytime soon, and now Waiters is ailing again.

Waiters missed the final 13 games of last season with a left ankle sprain, and it's nagged him at times ever since.

Nowitzki made back-to-back 3s late in the third, pulling Dallas within 77-73.

Career night by Rivers leads Clippers over Rockets 128-118

By Kristie Rieken
Associated Press

HOUSTON — Austin Rivers scored a career-high 36 points with six 3-pointers, and the short-handed Los Angeles Clippers withstood James Harden's second straight 51-point performance to beat the Houston Rockets 128-118 on Friday night.

The Rockets, who had a 14-game winning streak snapped by the Lakers on Wednesday, lost consecutive games for just the second time this season and the first since Oct. 28 and 30.

Rivers made a 3-pointer with just under three minutes to play that pushed the lead to 117-111. Ryan Anderson made two free throws for Houston before C.J. Williams added a layup for the Clippers.

Former Rocket Lou Williams, who had 32 points off the bench, then made his fourth 3-pointer of the quarter after that to make it 122-113 before a turnover by Harden spurred coach Mike D'Antoni to call a timeout.

Rivers made another 3-pointer after the timeout and Harden made a layup before fouling out a few seconds later. He received a technical for arguing



Los Angeles Clippers Austin Rivers (25) shoots a 3-pointer over Houston Rockets Eric Gordon (10) during the second half Friday in Houston.

about the call and was ejected from the game.

It was Harden's third 50-point game this season.

This game lacked much of the intrigue it could have had with Chris Paul sitting out in the first meeting with his former team because of a groin injury. The nine-time All-Star spent the last six seasons with the Clippers before a blockbuster trade brought him to the Rockets this summer. Patrick Beverley, who was the highest-profile Rocket involved in the trade, also missed the game while recovering from knee surgery.

The Rockets were

without two starters, with center Clint Capela missing a second straight game because of a bruised left heel. The Clippers have been dealing with injuries all season after losing Beverley for the season in November and playing without All-Star Blake Griffin for the last 12 games because of a knee injury.

The Clippers, who trailed by as many as 15 points in the first half, were up by nine after a dunk by Sam Dekker with about seven minutes remaining. Harden led Houston with five points during a 10-3 run to cut the lead to

108-106 with about 4 1/2 minutes left.

Los Angeles led by two entering the fourth quarter, and Lou Williams made three 3-pointers in just over a minute to power a 9-2 run that 101-93 with about eight minutes left.

Houston led by 12 early in the third quarter before the Clippers used a 10-2 run, with the last five points from Rivers, to cut the lead to 71-67 with 8 1/2 minutes left in the quarter.

Eric Gordon made a 3-pointer after that before Los Angeles made the next seven points. Rivers led the team in that span, too, scoring the last five points to tie it at 74 with about five minutes left in the third.

Houston had the next six points before the Clippers used a 10-2 spurt, capped by consecutive 3s from Williams to take their first lead of the game, 84-82.

Harden made all of his free throws after being fouled on a 3-pointer to put Houston back out front, but C.J. Williams added a 3 for the Clippers at the buzzer to leave them up 87-85 entering the fourth quarter.

Houston led 65-52 at halftime after Harden made a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

NBA ROUNDUP

THUNDER 120

HAWKS 117

OKLAHOMA CITY — Russell Westbrook hit a 3-pointer with 1.7 seconds left to cap a 30-point, 15-assist outburst, and Oklahoma City held off Atlanta.

Carmelo Anthony added 24 points on 7-of-12 3-point shooting, and Paul George scored 17 points for the Thunder. They have won five of their last six after an 11-14 start.

Marco Beinnelli scored 30 points for Atlanta.

BUCKS 109

HORNETS 104

MILWAUKEE — Khris Middleton scored 28 points, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 26 and Milwaukee overcame a late deficit to beat Charlotte.

After Kemba Walker gave Charlotte a 104-100 lead with 2:24 remaining, Milwaukee closed on a 9-0 run, the Bucks led it on dunks by Antetokounmpo and Middleton and took the lead on Eric Bledsoe's layup.

PISTONS 104

KNICKS 101

DETROIT — Andre Drummond had 18 points and 15 rebounds and Detroit rallied to beat New York.

Tobias Harris scored 24 points to help the Pistons win for the fourth time in five games. Kristaps Porzingis had with 29 points for New York, and Enes Kanter added 22 points and 16 rebounds. Porzingis missed a desperation 3-pointer at the buzzer.

New York had won five of six, including a victory Thursday night over the Boston Celtics.

NETS 119

WIZARDS 84

NEW YORK — Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had 21 points and 11 rebounds in Brooklyn's victory over Washington.

Caris LeVert added 17 points, and DeMarre Carroll, Spencer Dinwiddie and Nik Stauskas added 15 apiece to help the Nets snap a four-game losing streak. Kelly Oubre Jr. had 13 points for the Wizards.

PELICANS 111

MAGIC 97

ORLANDO, Fla. — DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points, 11 rebounds and six assists and New Orleans never trailed against Orlando.

Anthony Davis added 20 points and 11 rebounds, and Jrue Holiday had 24 points for New Orleans. Jonathon Simmons led the Magic with 23 points. They have lost seven straight.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL SCORES

Men

SOUTHWEST

Arizona St. 88, Colby-Sawyer 68
Oklahoma St. 104, North Dakota 79
Oklahoma St. 102, Rio Grande 33
TCU 86, William & Mary 75
Texas Tech 74, Rice 69
Texas Tech 74, Arizona Christian 47
UC Davis 77, Lamar 68
Utah Valley 75, San Francisco St. 64

PAC WEST

Campbell 81, Allen 82
Carmichael 88, Louisiana-Lafayette 65
Cal. at Chabot 67, Coastal Carolina 65
ETSU 79, Georgia Southern 58
Florida St. 104, Incarnate Word 80
George Mason 85, Morgan St. 79
Georgia St. 76, Temple 68
Portland St. 79, FIU 72
Howard St. 80, UNC-Wilmington 75
LSU 104, North Florida 82
Liberty 87, Alabama St. 70
Louisiana Tech 85, Fort Wayne 76
Marshall 91, E. Kentucky 71
Middle Tennessee 69, Princeton 67
Mississippi St. 80, Bradley 59
Mount St. Mary's 85, Creighton St. 53
NC State 116, Jacksonville St. 64
Old Dominion 81, Norfolk St. 50
Radford 86, NC A&T 69
UT Martin 74, Ark.-Pine Bluff 68
VCU 75, VMI 65
Vanderbilt 80, Alcorn St. 51
Virginia 82, Hampton 48
W. Kentucky 79, Austin Peay 53

PAC WEST

Ark. State 111, Johnson & Wales (CO) 68
Arizona St. 104, Pacific 65
New Mexico St. 79, Pacific 78
Southern Cal 84, Alcorn 68
Utah St. 88, Presentation College 48

SOUTHWEST

Bell 75, Johnson 54
Cent. Michigan 79, St. Edwards 52
Duke 81, Del. Eastern Shore 57
East Tenn. 75, Indiana 58
GPIU 87, Indiana-Kosciusko 76
Hampshire St. 81, Detroit 72
Henderson St. 88, Delaware St. 58
Oklahoma St. 85, Morgan 81
S. Dakota St. 85, UMKC 60
Saint Louis 78, SE Missouri 48
St. Mary's 85, Missouri 85

SOUTHWEST

Ark. State 111, Johnson & Wales (CO) 68
Arizona St. 104, Pacific 65
New Mexico St. 79, Pacific 78
Southern Cal 84, Alcorn 68
Utah St. 88, Presentation College 48

SOUTHWEST

Bell 75, Johnson 54
Cent. Michigan 79, St. Edwards 52
Duke 81, Del. Eastern Shore 57
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Hampshire St. 81, Detroit 72
Henderson St. 88, Delaware St. 58
Oklahoma St. 85, Morgan 81
S. Dakota St. 85, UMKC 60
Saint Louis 78, SE Missouri 48
St. Mary's 85, Missouri 85

Top 25 Fared

1. Villanova (12-0) beat Florida 95-71. Next, at Duquesne, Wednesday.

2. Michigan State (12-1) did not play. Next vs. Cleveland State, Dec. 28.
3. Arizona State (12-0) beat Pacific 104-65. Next at Rio Grande, Saturday, Dec. 30.
4. Duke (12-1) did not play. Next vs. No. 24 Florida State, Saturday, Dec. 30.
5. North Carolina (12-0) did not play. Next vs. Ohio State, Saturday.
6. Miami (9-0) at Wake Forest, Dec. 30.
7. Kentucky (9-1) did not play. Next vs. UCLA, Saturday.

8. Texas A&M (11-1) did not play. Next at Atlanta, Saturday, Dec. 30.

9. Xavier (12-1) beat Northern Iowa 77-67. Next at Milwaukee, Wednesday.
10. West Virginia (10-1) did not play. Next vs. Furman, Saturday.
11. Wichita State (10-2) beat Florida Gulf Coast 75-65. Next at UConn, Saturday, Dec. 30.
12. Gonzaga (10-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 13 Virginia (11-1) beat Hampton 88-48. Next vs. Boston College, Saturday, Dec. 30.
13. Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next at Texas, Dec. 30.
14. Texas Tech (12-0) beat William & Mary 86-75. Next vs. No. 17 Oklahoma, Saturday, Dec. 30.
15. Purdue (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 18 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 20 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 21 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 22 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 23 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 24 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 25 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 26 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 27 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 28 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 29 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 30 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 31 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 32 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 33 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 34 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 35 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 36 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 37 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 38 Kansas (10-2) did not play. Next vs. No. 39 Baylor (12-0) did not play. Next vs. No. 40 Kansas (10-2) did not play. 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Dick Enberg, known for 'Oh my!' catchphrase, dies at 82

By Bernie Wilson
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Through six decades, whether it was broadcasting one of John Wooden's basketball championships with UCLA, a no-hitter by Nolan Ryan or a dramatic point at Wimbledon, Dick Enberg excitedly summed up the big moments with two simple words: "Oh my!"

Enberg, a master at calling big events across the sports spectrum but who held a special love for baseball, died Thursday at 82.

Enberg's daughter, Nicole Enberg Vaz, confirmed his death to The Associated Press. She said the family became concerned when her father didn't arrive Thursday on his flight to Boston, and he was found dead at his home in La Jolla, a San Diego neighborhood, with his bags packed.

His daughter said the family believes Enberg died of a heart attack but was awaiting official word.

Enberg's wife, Barbara, already was in Boston and was expecting his arrival.

"It's very, very, very shocking," said Vaz, who lives in Boston. "He'd been busy with two podcasts and was full of energy."

Tributes poured in from around the sports world.

"To me, Dick Enberg was the greatest all-around sportscaster who ever lived and will never be emulated," former Dodgers broadcaster Vin Scully said in a statement. "He had my respect, admiration and my friendship. He will be sorely missed."

Scully was among the first to congratulate Enberg when it was announced three years ago that he had been chosen for induction into the broadcasters' wing of the Baseball Hall of Fame as the 2015 recipient of the Ford C. Frick Award.

Scully read off some names of broadcasters Enberg would be joining in Cooperstown.

"Oh man, what a list. What's this farm boy do-



Lenny Ignelzi/AP File Photo

Dick Enberg, the voice of the San Diego Padres, poses in his booth prior to the Padres' final home baseball game of the season in San Diego. Enberg, the sportscaster who got his big break with UCLA basketball and went on to call Super Bowls, Olympics, Final Fours and Angels and Padres baseball games, died Thursday. He was 82. Enberg's daughter, Nicole, confirmed the death to The Associated Press. She said the family became concerned when he didn't arrive on his flight to Boston on Thursday, and that he was found dead at his home in La Jolla, a San Diego neighborhood.

ing on that list?" Enberg replied.

That was Enberg, who grew up in the Midwest, moved to Los Angeles and got his big break with UCLA basketball before expanding his repertoire to calling Super Bowls, Olympics, Final Fours, Wimbledon and the Breeders' Cup. Besides calling eight of Wooden's 10 national championships with the Bruins, Enberg became known in Southern California for broadcasting Angels and Rams games and, for the last seven years of his career, San Diego Padres games.

"There will never be another Dick Enberg," CBS Sports Chairman Sean Manus said. "As the voice

of generations of fans, Dick was a masterful storyteller, a consummate professional and a true gentleman. He was one of the true legends of our business."

As their careers neared an end late in the 2016 baseball season, Scully and Enberg sat down to reminisce.

"I think we do have one thing in common about our background and I think are so blessed because of that, that we grew up in black-and-white radio," Enberg said. "There wasn't television and so we were able to use our memory and imagine our great heroes and what was happening and how it was being described."

When the Padres hired

him in December 2009,

Enberg explained the genesis of using "Oh my!" to describe big plays.

"It's not something that's part of my normal conversation," Enberg said. "I grew up with a mother who said, 'oh my,' a lot, usually in dismay. 'Oh my, now what have you done?' But it's a Midwestern term of exclamation. People say: 'Have you heard about so and so? Oh my!' Or, 'Oh my, that's exciting!'"

Enberg said he needed a signature call after being hired to do play-by-play at Indiana in 1957, and it stuck.

"It's been a good friend for, well, 50 years," he said.

He also was known for his baseball catchphrase of

"Touch 'em all!" for home runs.

"Dick was an institution in the industry for 60 years and we were lucky enough to have his iconic voice behind the microphone for Padres games for nearly a decade," Padres owners Ron Fowler and Peter Seidler said in a statement.

Raised in Armada, Michigan, Enberg's first radio job was actually as a radio station custodian in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, when he was a junior at Central Michigan. He made \$1 an hour. The owner also gave him weekend sports and disc jockey gigs, also at \$1 an hour. From there he began doing high school and college football games.

During his nine years

broadcasting UCLA basketball, the Bruins won eight NCAA titles under Wooden. Enberg broadcast nine no-hitters, including two by San Francisco's Tim Lincecum against the Padres in 2013 and 2014.

He said the most historically important event he called was "The Game of the Century," Houston's victory over UCLA in 1968 that snapped the Bruins' 47-game winning streak.

"That was the platform from which college basketball's popularity was sent into the stratosphere," Enberg said just before retiring from the Padres. "The '79 game, the Magic-Bird game, everyone wants to credit that as the greatest game of all time."

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A large advertisement for Flowerland. The background is a soft-focus image of a Christmas tree with lights and ornaments. In the foreground, there are several wrapped Christmas gifts of various sizes, some with bows. The text is overlaid on the image, including a large "50% OFF ALL CHRISTMAS STOCK" banner, the store name "Flowerland" in a stylized script, and contact information at the bottom.

Smart directs quick turnaround in second season at Georgia

By Charles Odum
Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — Only one year ago, it was difficult to see the foundation for success Kirby Smart was building at Georgia.

This year's spot in the College Football Playoff seemed like a distant dream when the Bulldogs finished a disappointing 8-5 in Smart's 2016 debut as coach. Among the low points were home losses to Vanderbilt and Georgia Tech.

Wide receiver Terry Godwin says players expected this year's dramatic turnaround. He insists players' belief in Smart never wavered.

"Of course not," Godwin said Tuesday. "As a player, we never had any doubts in that locker room. We knew once everything got clicking and rolling and everyone bought in and knew what they were supposed to do and knew their assignments, it was going to be a special year, and that's what it turned out to be."

Smart has guided No. 3 Georgia to a 12-1 record, its first Southeastern Conference championship since 2005 and a Rose Bowl playoff game against No. 2 Oklahoma on Jan. 1. The Bulldogs are two wins away from their first national championship since 1980.

It was most important that Smart won over the players he inherited from former coach Mark Richt. The crucial vote of confidence in Smart came after last season when four top



David Goldman/AP File Photo

Georgia head coach Kirby Smart celebrates after the Bulldogs defeated Auburn 28-7 in the Southeastern Conference championship NCAA football game on Dec. 2 in Atlanta. In only his second season as coach, Smart has Georgia 2 wins from first national championship since 1980.

players — running backs Nick Chubb and Sony Michel and linebackers Lorenzo Carter and Davin Bellamy — announced they would return for their senior seasons instead of enter the NFL draft.

"For everybody to stay ... it felt special because we knew coming into the season we were going to have something special," Godwin said. "With coach Smart bringing that grudge and physicality, it just went with our swagger and we knew that with this team staying together and those guys coming back we were going to have something special this year. That's what we're doing."

Smart celebrated on the field with his players as confetti fell from the roof of Atlanta's new Mercedes-Benz Stadium after Georgia beat Auburn 28-7 in the

SEC championship game on Dec. 2.

Then Smart went to work to make sure his players understood there are bigger games ahead.

The coach is turning up the volume to make his point.

"That's probably why you hear my voice is hoarse right now," Smart said Monday. "I'm trying to make sure they understand that you can't acknowledge the puts on the back. You can't feel good about yourself because obviously ... winning the SEC championship is a great honor and they'll have that for a long time. It will be on these walls for a long time, but they can't be satisfied."

With a spot in the national championship game on the line, Carter said players have been told to treat the Rose

Bowl "like a business trip."

"Coach does a good job on keeping us locked in and focusing on getting better," Carter said. "A lot of teams get sloppy going into their bowl games, but he just wants us to make sure we are focused on ourselves and do what we need to do."

Business is good for Smart. The season already has earned the coach almost \$1 million in contract incentives with the opportunity for another \$900,000.

Smart, whose contract is worth \$3.75 million annually, has earned bonuses of \$500,000 for a spot in the playoff, \$250,000 for the SEC title, \$150,000 for a spot in the SEC championship game and \$50,000 for being named SEC coach of the year. He'd earn additional incentives of \$100,000 for a spot in the national championship game, \$400,000 for winning the national championship, \$200,000 for Georgia finishing in the top five of the AP or coaches poll and \$100,000 for being named national coach of the year.

Smart's winning formula has been no surprise.

The former longtime Alabama defensive coordinator has helped build one of the nation's top defenses, led by Butkus Award winner Roquan Smith. The Crimson Tide won four national championships with Smart serving as Nick Saban's top defensive coach, and now Georgia's defense is thriving with similar speed and depth.

SDSU's Penny clashes with Army's option in Armed Forces Bowl

Associated Press

FORT WORTH — Two of college football's most dominant rushing attacks will clash when San Diego State faces Army in Saturday's Armed Forces Bowl — even though the offenses are dramatically different.

The pro-style offense used by San Diego State (10-2) is led by the top rusher in the Bowl Sub-division, senior Rashaad Penny. The consensus All-American finished fifth in Heisman Trophy voting, ran for 2,027 yards and needs 107 more to break the school's single-season mark set last year by Donnell Pumphrey.

Army (9-3) leads the nation in averaging 368.1 yards rushing per game and is last with 29.6 yards passing using an option formation that chugs methodically downfield. It's led by senior quarterback Ahmad Bradshaw, whose 1,566 yards rushing rank fifth nationally.

In winning the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy for the first time since 1996, the Black Knights attempted no passes against Air Force, one against Navy (complete for 20 yards) and 19 all season. San Diego State offensive coordinator Jeff Horton said his unit was "like an Air Raid team" compared to Army's grind-it-out, keep-the-ball approach.

"It's a very difficult scheme to stop with any consistency," Aztecs coach



Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP File Photo

San Diego State running back Rashaad Penny runs against San Jose State during an NCAA football game on Nov. 4 in San Jose, Calif.

Rocky Long said of the Black Knights' option. "We are only going to get the ball five or six times for the entire football game. It's very unusual, but for a true football fan, it's going to be very interesting to watch."

San Diego State is the first FBS program with consecutive 2,000-yard rushing seasons from different players. Penny could become the fourth player to compile five straight games of 200 yards, and Army coach Jeff Monken knows his defense will need to slow him down.

"He's proven he's one of the best players in the nation, if not the best," Monken said.

Some other things to watch for in Saturday's game at the home stadium of TCU:

No-sloouch defenses

For all the attention on the offenses, both teams have respectable defenses: San Diego State is 11th in the FBS in total defense and Army ranks 35th.

Bowl pride

San Diego State's 6-0 start included wins over Stanford and Arizona State. Then the Aztecs lost at home to Boise State and Fresno State, realistically ending their chances of winning a third consecutive Mountain West championship, and have since won four straight. SDSU is playing in its eighth consecutive bowl, the last seven under Long.

The program appeared in eight total bowls prior to this streak. Army ties a school record with a second straight bowl appearance, equaling the 1984-85

teams that were the first in West Point history to accept invitations.

Lineman hurt

Aztecs senior right guard Antonio Rosales injured his left ankle early this season and hasn't played since mid-October. Long said he plans to start Rosales in his final college game and see how long he can play in trying to open holes for Penny.

Army's field general

Bradshaw needs just 22 yards to have the best rushing season at a service academy. Navy's Napoleon McCallum ran for 1,587 yards in 1983.

Streaks

San Diego State is seeking 11 wins for the third consecutive season. The only other FBS schools to achieve that during the 2015-17 seasons are Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State and Oklahoma. ... Monken, in his fourth season at West Point, has led the Black Knights to three straight winning seasons for the first time since 1988-90. A victory would equal the West Point record for wins in a season, owned by the 1996 team that went 10-2. "It's a challenge for us, playing a great team like San Diego State, but exciting to have that opportunity," Monken said. "It's something that we're certainly conscious of."

2017-18 BOWL GLANCE

Today Birmingham Bowl South Florida (9-2) vs. Texas Tech (6-6), Noon (ESPN)	Alamo Bowl San Antonio Dartmouth (9-4) vs. TCU (10-3), 9 p.m. (ESPN)
Armed Forces Bowl Fort Worth San Diego State (10-2) vs. Army (9-3), 5:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Holiday Bowl San Diego Washington State (9-3) vs. Michigan State (9-3), 9 p.m. (FOX)
Dollar General Bowl Mobile, Ala. Appalachian State (8-4) vs. Toledo (11-2), 7 p.m. (ESPN)	Friday, Dec. 29 Bell Bowl Charlotte, N.C. Wake Forest (7-6) vs. Texas A&M (7-6), 1 p.m. (ESPN)
Sunday Howell Bowl Humboldt Fresno State (8-4) vs. Houston (7-6), 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Sun Bowl El Paso, Texas NC State (8-4) vs. Arizona State (7-6), 3 p.m. (CBS)
Tuesday Heart of Dallas Bowl West Virginia (7-6) vs. Utah (9-3), 1:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Music City Bowl Nashville, Tenn. Kentucky (7-6) vs. Northwestern (9-3), 4:30 p.m. (ESPN)
Quick Lane Bowl Detroit Northern Illinois (8-4) vs. Duke (8-6), 5:15 p.m. (ESPN)	Arizona Bowl Tucson, Ariz. New Mexico State (5-6) vs. Utah State (6-6), 5:30 p.m. (CBSN)
Carson Bowl Phoenix Kansas State (7-6) vs. UCLA (8-6), 9 p.m. (ESPN)	Cotton Bowl Classic Arlington Southern Cal (11-2) vs. Ohio State (11-2), 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)
Independence Bowl Shreveport, La. Southern Mississippi (8-4) vs. Florida State (6-6), 1:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Saturday, Dec. 30 Tadpole Bowl Jacksonville, Fla. Louisville (8-4) vs. Mississippi State (8-6), Noon (ESPN)
Providence Bowl Bristol, R.I. Boston College (7-6) vs. Iowa (7-6), 5:15 p.m. (ESPN)	Liberty Bowl Memphis, Tenn. UConn (7-6) vs. Memphis (10-2), 12:30 p.m. (ABC)
Forster Farms Bowl Santa Clara, Calif. Arizona (7-6) vs. Purdue (8-6), 8:30 p.m. (FOX)	Florida Bowl Gainesville, Fla. Washington (10-2) vs. Penn State (10-2), 4 p.m. (ESPN)
Texas Bowl Houston Texas (8-6) vs. Missouri (7-6), 9 p.m. (ESPN)	Orange Bowl Miami Gardens, Fla. Wisconsin (12-1) vs. Miami (10-2), 9 p.m. (ESPN)
Thursday, Dec. 28 Military Bowl Annapolis, Md. Virginia (8-6) vs. Navy (8-6), 1:30 p.m. (ESPN)	Monday, Jan. 1 Outback Bowl Tampa, Fla. Michigan (8-6) vs. South Carolina (8-6), Noon (ESPN)
Camping World Bowl Orlando, Fla. Oklahoma State (9-3) vs. Virginia Tech (9-3), 5:15 p.m. (ESPN)	Frost Bowl Atlanta UCF (12-0) vs. Auburn (10-3), 12:30 p.m.

BRILES

From 1B

school take on a man like Briles, and the initial PR nightmare and migraine?

As time passes, the answer is apparently no. As often as Briles tried to go back into coaching last year, every time his name surfaced at a program the chance died.

The Dallas Cowboys were close to hiring Briles as an offensive consultant, but backed out late in the process. The University of Houston issued a statement saying he was not a candidate. Purdue said no. They all said no.

Briles told friends he never expected to be out of a job this long.

Briles was hired Aug. 28 to be the offensive coordinator of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the CFL in the middle of their winless season; that move lasted 24 hours before the outcry prompted the team, and the league, to reverse the hiring.

To hire Briles, administrators are going to have to put their neck out, and be willing to absorb national criticism. Here is the one thing about that criticism, however: It is loud, full of indignation and it always fades. Every time. Fifteen minutes of fame, or infamy, has been reduced to 15 seconds.

And Briles must eventually do a long, sit-down interview and explain himself and address difficult questions. If he believes he was railroaded by his superiors, he needs to show specific examples of how both he and the school failed.

The only interview he has given on this subject was with ESPN, and it

didn't go well.

Briles wanted to talk to the co-authors of the book, "Violated: Exposing Rape at Baylor University Amid College Football's Sexual Assault Crisis," but Baylor said that would be a violation of his buyout.

If he wants to explain himself in an interview, Briles could potentially be in breach of his buyout and risk a lawsuit.

And there is always the chance that nothing he says will help give him the chance he craves. Football might just be saying it's moved on.

Whatever the specifics, he was the face of a program that had serious disciplinary issues at a university that was ill-equipped to deal with sexual assault charges. He routinely rolled the dice on players for their talent, and relied on someone else to take care of the discipline.

Not complicated: He who receives the glory, and the vast majority of the cash, shall too receive the blame.

While the particulars of his oversight could be spread to various other people, he had all of the power to accept, and boot, whomever he wanted for any reason. He chose his path, and while everyone at Baylor shares varying degrees of culpability, this is where he sits.

A winning coach remains gainfully unemployed in Horseshoe Bay, waiting for a phone to ring and the second chance he craves.

Fundamentally, we all deserve a second chance, but this one might not come even if it makes sense.

BULLS

From 1B

studying Texas Tech film. "It was a really good football game," he said.

Here are some things to watch in the Birmingham Bowl:

FLOWERS' RECORDS: With 11,385 total yards in his career, Flowers needs just 47 total yards to break the American Athletic Conference record held by Temple's Phillip Walker. He needs just 28 rushing yards to reach 2,500 passing yards and 1,000 rushing yards for the second time; only Louisville's Lamar Jackson had achieved that entering the postseason.

"It's not on my mind," Flowers said of the league record. "I just go out there and play the game. If it happens, it happens. I'm a team player. I'm always going to be a team player."

NIC IN CHARGE: Texas Tech quarterback Nic Shimonek is expected to be back in the starting spot after coming off the bench to lead that fourth-quarter comeback

in the regular season finale against Texas. It was the only time the senior didn't start this season. Shimonek has passed for 3,547 yards and 30 touchdowns against just eight interceptions.

DEFENSIVE CHALLENGE: Texas Tech's defense, which ranks 99th nationally in total yards, faces an offense that's ninth in total yards at nearly 500 per game.

PROTECT THE BALL: Texas Tech has a plus-11 turnover margin, one shy of the school record set in 1997. South Florida, though, has lost a modest 12 turnovers, which is tied for 14th fewest nationally.

RETURN TRIPS: This is South Florida's second straight Birmingham Bowl game against a Power 5 team. The Bulls beat South Carolina 46-39 in overtime last season with Strong watching from the sidelines before taking over the program. Texas Tech played at Legion Field in the 1989 All-American Bowl, beating No. 20 Duke 49-21.

COLLEGE BOWL ROUNDUP

BAHAMAS BOWL

OHIO 41
UAB 6

NASSAU, Bahamas — Dorian Brown rushed for a career-high 152 yards and four touchdowns, Nathan Rourke threw for two scores and Ohio beat UAB 41-6 in the Bahamas Bowl on Friday.

Ohio (9-4) averaged 38.9 points per game during the season, setting a school record with 467 points scored, and the Bobcats exhibited that prowess in the opening half of this one, using big plays to build a 27-3 halftime lead.

That was too much for the Blazers, a feel-good team seeking its first bowl victory on just its second try. The loss spoiled the end of a remarkable first season back for UAB (8-5), which was predicted to

struggle and didn't. Brown, a redshirt senior, scored on runs of 74, 9, 25 and 14 yards.

FAMOUS IDAHO POTATO BOWL

WYOMING 37
CENTRAL MICHIGAN 14

BOISE, Idaho — Josh Allen threw three touchdown passes in his final game for Wyoming, and the Cowboys took advantage of Central Michigan's eight turnovers to cruise to a 37-14 victory Friday in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl.

During the postgame award ceremony, the game MVP award declared his intention to give up his final season of eligibility to enter the NFL draft. Wyoming (8-5) rebounded after losing its last two regular-season games with Allen

sidelined by a sprained right shoulder.

Allen was 11 of 19 for 154 yards with no interceptions. He showed off his arm strength on a perfect 45-yard pass that hit receiver C.J. Johnson in stride in the end zone.

Central Michigan (8-5) had won five straight. The eight turnovers broke the previous Famous Idaho Potato Bowl record of six.

Wyoming entered the game first in the nation in turnover margin and second in forced turnovers and will likely finish at the top of both rankings after the bowl season concludes.

Wyoming took a 21-7 lead in the first quarter. Wyoming's offense struggled in the red zone after the first quarter, settling for three field goals in three trips.

Central Michigan struggled everywhere on the field, watching promising drives end on turnovers or other drives stunted due to Wyoming's relentless pass rush. The Cowboys had a season-high five sacks.

Late in the third quarter, Central Michigan found a spark and cut the deficit to 30-14. The Chippewas strung together a seven-play, 65-yard drive that ended on a 3-yard run by Jonathan Ward.

But Central Michigan failed to build on that momentum, losing it all on a scoop and score. After a strip sack by Youhanna Ghailan, Wyoming defensive end Carl Granderson took the fumble and rumbled 56 yards for the touchdowns.

Few 5-stars left as early signing period comes to close

By Ralph D. Russo
Associated Press

After the first early signing period for major college football, there are still some big prizes to be had on the recruiting trail.

The three-day window came to close Friday with one more five-star recruit coming off the board. Georgia held what seems to be a commanding lead in the race for the mythical recruiting championship.

Most schools have filled the majority of available spots in their classes. Using the 247 Sports composite rankings, Georgia, Ohio State, Texas, Penn State and Miami will head toward the traditional signing period that starts the first Wednesday of February with the top five classes. Alabama, the recruiting kings for almost a decade, and Clemson are next.

Georgia coach Kirby Smart landed six recruits rated five stars, the same number as Ohio State, Texas and Penn State combined.

Twenty-eight players have five-star rankings from 247 Sports. The latest to sign was Terrace Marshall, a wide receiver from Bossier City, Louisiana, who was deciding between LSU and Texas A&M. Marshall chose to stay in state, a huge get for coach Ed Orgeron and the Tigers.

Unsigned five-star prospects

Patrick Surtain, CB, from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Surtain, whose father was an NFL cornerback, might be the best at his position in the class. His top suitors include LSU, Florida State, Alabama, Ohio State and Clemson.

Amon-Ra St. Brown, WR, from Anaheim, California. The brother of Notre Dame receiver Equanimeous St. Brown. Could



Carl Juste/Miami Herald via AP

Daquaris Wiggins wears a Miami Hurricanes hat after signing with the NCAA college football team at Miami Southridge High in Miami, Fla., on Wednesday.

he end up at Notre Dame with his brother? Or maybe somewhere in the Pac-12. Stanford, UCLA and USC are all in pursuit.

Nicholas Petit-Frere, OT, of Tampa, Florida. Can new Gators coach Dan Mullen keep the top remaining offensive line in state? Michigan, Notre Dame, Alabama and Auburn are also possibilities.

Devon Williams, WR, Lancaster, California. Another player who seems likely bound for the Pac-12. Oregon is the front-runner, though Alabama assistant Tosh Lupoi's connections in the California could give the Tide a shot to steal. He could end up playing defensive back.

Isaac Taylor-Stuart, CB, San Diego, California. A 6-foot-2 cornerback draws a lot of attention. USC will try to keep him in SoCal, while Texas A&M, Alabama and Georgia are trying to lure him to the SEC.

Tyson Campbell, CB, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Surtain's teammate could be the last big addition to Miami's class. Or another

player Georgia and Alabama will tussle over.

More work to do

Most of the Power Five schools signed upward of 15 players. Plenty were in the 20s. Teams with new coaches were predictably behind:

■ Chip Kelly and UCLA had 11 signees and a class that ranked 33rd in the nation, according to 247 Sports' composite rankings.

■ Willie Taggart and Florida State will go into the next stage of recruiting with 10 players signed and class ranked 34th.

■ Jeremy Pruitt and Tennessee has 16 signees and a borderline top 25 class.

■ Scott Frost and Nebraska made a splash by landing four-star quarterback Adrian Martinez of California among its 14 signees.

■ Chad Morris and Arkansas seems to have the most room to grow. The Razorbacks have 11 signees and a class ranked 69th.

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FIRST GAMES - Thursday, Dec. 28th

Thursday December 28 - GIRLS Schedule

9:00 AM Chap Center Bushland vs El Paso Jefferson
12:00 PM Chap Center Plainview vs Midland Classical
3:00 PM Chap Center El Paso Pebble Hills vs Midland Lee
6:00 PM Chap Center Lake Travis vs Midland High

Thursday December 28 - BOYS Schedule

10:30 AM Chap Center Houston Spring Woods vs Odessa High
1:30 PM Chap Center El Paso Pebble Hills vs San Angelo
4:30 PM Chap Center Plainview vs Midland Lee
7:30 PM Chap Center Belton High vs Midland High

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Ron Jenkins/Associated Press

Dallas Cowboys' Ezekiel Elliott (21) and quarterback Dak Prescott (4) run off the field celebrating during an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers Oct. 8, in Arlington.

Motivated Ezekiel Elliott focused on future, not the past

By Clarence E. Hill Jr.
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Dallas Cowboys star running back Ezekiel Elliott doesn't want to talk about the past.

He doesn't want to open up about the lessons he's learned during the NFL's investigation into domestic violence allegations and the subsequent battle in federal court before conceding to a six-game suspension.

He might be more expressive when a documentary on his training and experience during a roughly 40-day stint in Cabo San Lucas, is released.

Elliott just wants to move forward. He will take the first step in the process Sunday against the Seattle Seahawks in what will be his first game back.

His actions during his stint in Mexico and since his return speak for him.

And they reveal a motivated Elliott not only driven to be better than he was before he left but also a player seemingly bent on making amends for letting his teammates down. His absence has made the Cowboys (8-6), who went 3-3 during his suspension, longshots to make the playoffs.

"I respect that," tight end Jason Witten said. "I think when you go through that you want to move on from it. I think he has the ability to process what happened and reflect, learn and move forward. When you have something like that play out in front of us all, when it's over, you are ready to move forward and get back to the normal things that you love to do."

"He has done a good job of getting back to his team and going back to work and not trying to make a bigger deal of it. A lot of

work has gone to that on his end to give himself a chance to play at that level on Sunday."

An intense training regiment on a golf resort in Cabo has resulted in Elliott being trimmer and leaner than he was before he left.

He might weigh the same, but his body is more defined, which might say something about the shape he entered the season in, but says more about the type of work he put in Mexico to make sure he could have a big impact on his return.

Coach Jason Garrett said Elliott didn't miss a beat in his return to practice with the team.

"He certainly looks good," Garrett said Thursday. "Stepped right in there and did what we asked him to do."

Quarterback Dak Prescott chatted with Elliott during his time away and he came

back looking like "a guy who has done the right thing in those six weeks and prepared himself to come back."

"He's in great shape, out there in practice, he's hitting every run, he's taking them all 20 yards or so, finishing them, pass protection, all that, he's doing exactly what he needs to do," Prescott said. "He knows what's important and that's the game of football. I know it motivated him just watching the game and watching his teammates and his boys go out there and play."

While the Cowboys touted Elliott's infectious personality and fun spirit as things they looked forward to him bringing back to the locker room, what they got was a player with the look and resolve of determination on his countenance.

Please see ELLIOTT2C

Brady No. 1 QB by AP NFL panel; gets 9 of 11 No. 1 votes

By Howard Fendrich
Associated Press

There is little doubt the QB any NFL coach or player would want leading the way to win a big game right now is Tom Brady.

So it makes sense he was a nearly unanimous choice as the No. 1 quarterback in the league by an Associated Press panel.

Brady received nine of 11 first-place votes and was second on the other ballots for a total of 108 out of a possible 110 points in the rankings released Friday.

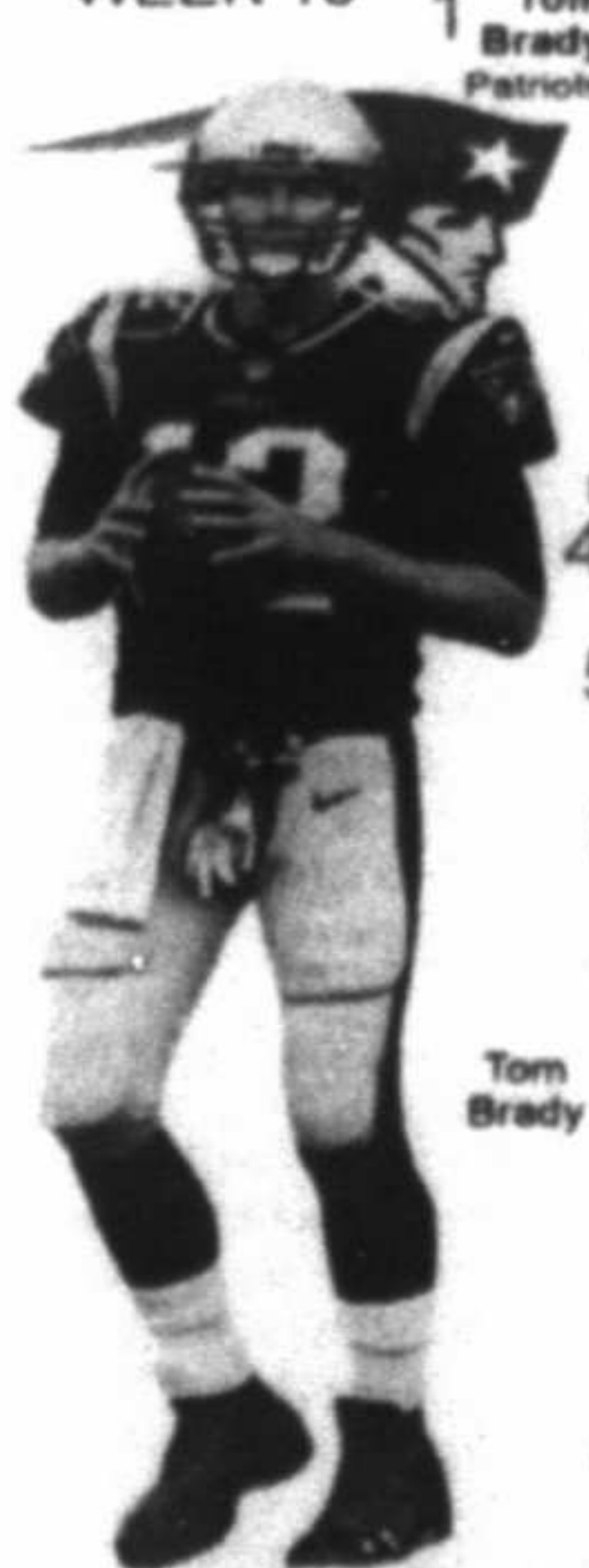
"Brady isn't just No. 1 on this list of active players. He's probably No. 1 on a list of all-time QBs that you'd want to start a game that you needed to win," said the AP's Dennis Waskak Jr., based in New York.

"The likes of Joe Montana, Peyton Manning, Brett Favre and John Elway might have something to say about that, but it's tough to argue against Brady."

Still going strong at age 40, the New England Patriots superstar won by an even greater margin than he did back in September, when he was overwhelmingly voted No. 1 in the first of the weekly AP position

AP position rankings: Brady still the league's top QB
During the 2017 NFL regular season, The Associated Press will vote for the top 10 players at a specific position that week.

WEEK 16



Contributing voters: Pro Football Hall of Famer James Lofton and AP football writers Shanti Butler, Dave Campbell, Schuyler Dixon, Josh Dutrow, Howard Fendrich, Rob Mardell, Annie Stapleton, Teresa M. Walker, Dennis Waskak Jr., Barry Wilner.

rankings for this season. QB is the only position being surveyed twice.

This time, Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints was the runner-up with 81 points in the voting done by Pro Football Hall of Fame member James Lofton and 10 AP football writers on a 10-points-to-1-point system.

Showing zero signs of slipping, Brady heads into Week 16 with his Patriots at 11-3 and already having clinched a record ninth consecutive AFC East title.

"Nobody is better when the game is on the line," said the AP's Teresa M. Walker, based in Nashville, Tennessee.

Brady leads the NFL with 4,163 yards passing, is tied for second with a 104.0 rating, and has an impressive margin of 28 touchdown throws to only seven interceptions.

Brees is tied with Brady in passer rating; the only QB ahead of them is Alex

NFL QUARTERBACK RANKING

So what if he's 40? He's closing in on another MVP award and could reach his eighth Super Bowl. He leads the NFL in yards passing, is tied for second in rating and has 28 TDs with only 7 INTs.

2 **Drew Brees** Saints He's tied with Brady at No. 2 in passer rating this season and at age 36 himself, has his team tied for first place with two weeks left in the regular season.

3 **Aaron Rodgers** Packers Still terrific, capable of any throw, and might have given Brady more of a challenge for No. 1 if healthy. But back on IR this week after missing two months with a broken collarbone.

4 **Ben Roethlisberger** Steelers Owns two Super Bowl titles and has proven to be quite good in the clutch — except when he plays the Patriots. Interceptions up this season, largely due to a 5-pick game against the Jags.

5 **Russell Wilson** Seahawks Second in the league with 30 TD passes, so could top his career best of 34, and has a chance at throwing for 4,000 yards for the third season in a row.

6 **Carson Wentz** Eagles Leads the NFL with 33 scoring throws, despite landing on injured reserve with a torn-up knee. Was right at the forefront of MVP conversation before getting hurt.

7 **Cam Newton** Panthers Solid return to strength for a past league MVP coming off a down year, with 21 TD passes and another 5 TDs rushing, despite not having much wide receiver help.

8 **Jared Goff** Rams Impressive second season for the 2016 No. 1 pick, putting up more than 3,500 yards, 24 TDs and just 7 INTs. He has the Rams on the verge of their first division title in 14 years.

9 **Philip Rivers** Chargers Steered his club back from an 0-4 start to right in the middle of the playoff hunt. Ranks sixth in yards passing per game and tied for seventh in TD throws.

10 **Matt Ryan** Falcons Last season's MVP has not put up the same type of eye-popping stats, despite having Julio Jones and plenty of other good targets.

Smith of the Kansas City Chiefs, who was named on only one ballot, collecting an eighth-place vote.

Aaron Rodgers of the Green Bay Packers finished third with 75 points and one No. 1 vote, followed by Ben Roethlisberger of the Pittsburgh Steelers with 73 points and the other first-place nod. Russell Wilson of the Seattle Seahawks was No. 5 with 61 points.

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Please see RANKINGS2C

ANALYSIS

NFL has issues it must address

By Tim Cowlishaw
The Dallas Morning News

For all the NFL's significant issues, there are really just two that the league must address and resolve in the near future. If they are successful with both, it can remain the ratings behemoth that dwarfs not only all other sports but the rest of television programming.

If it fixes one but not the other, it should remain highly successful and profitable but can expect to continue to show slippage in fan interest and ratings. And if it fails at both, then the naysayers led by Mavs owner Mark Cuban, who right now are ahead of the story in forecasting doom and gloom, will be seen as prophets ahead of their time.

The hardest, and the one I want to spend the least time on today because we have discussed it so much recently, is the safety issue. How to create a framework within an inherently violent game that does everything reasonable to protect players while not resorting to unwatchable flag football is a challenge that will test the game's greatest minds.

For now, they are working on it but not hard enough. One simple helpful suggestion: The Tom Savage concussion that had everyone up in arms a week ago might be avoided if the doctors and neurologists entrusted with monitoring this issue could actually see the network feed behind the bench!

How hard is this? Doctors and trainers have requested this from the league and been met with shrugs. Now that that issue has hit the front pages repeatedly, you could at least avoid a repeat of what happened in Houston where the fans watching on TV could see Savage's arms shaking above his head while the sidelined doctors witnessed none of that on their monitor.

Please see ISSUES2C

13 of 16 games in Week 16 have playoff implications

By Barry Wilner
Associated Press

Holiday cheer could be in order in New Orleans, Carolina, Atlanta, Los Angeles and Kansas City this weekend. They might even be singing playoff praise of the Titans in Music City.

Of the 16 games in Week 16 of the NFL schedule, 13 have some sort of postseason implication. Leading the parade are the NFC South matchups between the Falcons and Saints, and the Buccaneers and Panthers.

"This is definitely a type of game that we'd love to win and roll on to the playoffs," says defensive end Cam Jordan, one of the main reasons the Saints are in such a strong position. "It's crazy to think that 10 wins doesn't (necessarily) get you in. ... But we've got our work cut out for us."

So do the Falcons, who beat the Saints in Atlanta, but trail them and the Panthers by one game.

All three teams are accustomed to contending, particularly Carolina, which has won the division three of the last four years.

"It's a big weekend in the NFC South. It feels like in the NFC South the last few weekends our playoffs have started," tight end Greg Olsen said. "Every game has been critical for playoffs and seeding and alignment. It's fun. This is the time of the year that you hope you are part of the discussion, and we are. We have a chance to make a move to get to 11 wins on Sunday and that is what our focus is on."

Atlanta (9-5) at New Orleans (10-4)

Atlanta has won five of its last six this year, and also has won three straight vs. the Saints. It has been getting balanced performances on both sides of the ball, from star receiver Julio Jones to rookie defensive end Takkarist McKinley.

Ranked first in offense, the Saints are the only NFL team with three players who've each surpassed 1,000 scrimmage yards: running back Mark Ingram has 1,420, rookie RB Alvin Kamara has 1,336, and receiver Michael Thomas has 1,085. Kamara leads NFL rookies with 12 TDs.

The winner clinches a playoff spot. New Orleans could own the division crown with a victory and a Panthers defeat.

Tampa Bay (4-10) at Carolina (10-4)

Carolina also moves into the postseason with a victory, though it can't secure the NFC South title this weekend.

The Panthers are 6-1 in the last seven and have won four straight at home. Tampa Bay has lost its last four.

Cam Newton tears up the Bucs. He has 12 TDs (eight passing, four rushing) in the last four home games against Tampa Bay. Newton needs 31 yards rushing to move into third place all-time among NFL quarterbacks.

Newton unveiled a new target last week when Damien Byrd had two TD catches.

Los Angeles Rams (10-4) at Tennessee (8-6)

A vital game for both squads. The Rams can clinch their first NFC West title since 2003 with a win. Otherwise, losses by Atlanta, Carolina and Detroit give Los Angeles a playoff berth.

Meanwhile, the Titans can clinch playoff spot with a win combined with losses by both Baltimore and Buffalo. To get that victory, Tennessee must slow a Rams team tied for the league lead in scoring (438 points, same as Philadelphia). Todd Gurley last week became the first running back since 2010 with three-plus TDs rushing and a TD receiving in the same game. Jared Goff is averaging 261.7 yards passing and has five TDs and no interceptions in his past three games vs. the AFC. Rams rookie receiver Cooper Kupp has 323 yards receiving in the past four games. Kupp leads NFL rookies with 804 yards receiving and is first among rookie receivers with

58 catches.

Miami (6-8) at Kansas City (8-6)

Despite their midseason swoon, the Chiefs stand ready to clinch the AFC West they led all the way. A win or a Chargers defeat does the trick; they have never won successive AFC West titles.

But the Dolphins have won seven of their last 10 against KC, and their last loss at Arrowhead Stadium was in 2002.

Most dangerous to Kansas City's chances is Dolphins WR Jarvis Landry, who has 98 receptions, second only to Pittsburgh's Antonio Brown (101).

Jacksonville (10-4) at San Francisco (4-10)

Although Jacksonville has lost eight straight in the Pacific Time Zone by an average of 20.9 points — the last win out west came Jan. 2, 2005, at Oakland — these are different Jaguars. They take their first division title since 1999 with a win, which would be a fifth road victory of the season after winning five in the previous four seasons combined.

The Niners no longer are pushovers with Jimmy Garoppolo at quarterback. He passed for 381 yards last week to become the first 49ers QB with back-to-back 300-yard games since Jeff Garcia in 2000. Garoppolo joined Hall of Famer Y.A. Tittle as the only Niners quarterbacks to win their first three starts.

Buffalo (8-6) at New England (11-3)

Did somebody say mismatch?

Most years, this is perhaps the most one-sided of series. Tom Brady has a 27-3 regular-season record against the Bills, his highest win total over any opponent. He has also thrown for more touchdowns (66) against the Bills than any other foe.

But the Bills have some extra incentive: Buffalo is in contention to break a 17-year playoff drought, the longest active streak in North America's four major professional sports.

"Of course, the big picture's there, but you can't move too far ahead," quarterback Tyrod Taylor said. "Take it one practice at a time, empty your tank into one day, getting better that day and going out and executing on Sunday or on game day."

The Patriots wrapped up a record ninth consecutive AFC East title with last week's win over Pittsburgh. They can grab a first-round bye this week with a win combined with either a Pittsburgh or Jacksonville loss. If the Patriots win and both of those teams lose, New England will secure home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

Indianapolis (3-11) at Baltimore (8-6), Saturday

Baltimore has come alive and will get into the post-season with two wins. Over the past seven games, the Ravens rank third with a 30.7-point average and have outscored opponents by 107 points in that span. They lead the NFL with 33 takeaways and a plus-17 turnover differential, and rank second with five defensive TDs.

Indy? Other than Frank Gore's and Adam Vinatieri's pursuits of career marks, not much to look at.

Gore needs one rushing TD to tie Ricky Watters (78) for 21st on the career list. Vinatieri needs nine points for a 20th season with 100.

Los Angeles Chargers (7-7) at New York Jets (5-9)

Even winning out might not be enough to get L.A. into the playoffs. Still, after an 0-4 start, what the Chargers have done is impressive.

Philip Rivers to Keenan Allen has become as dangerous a passing combination as any, and the duo of DEs Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram makes opposing QBs antsy.

New York tends to play good teams close, but not win.

Seattle (8-6) at Dallas (8-6)

The loser here is out of contention. Considering the hopes with which both franchises began this year, that's

stunning.

Ezekiel Elliott returns to the Dallas backfield after serving his six-game suspension — the Cowboys went 3-3, winning the three most recent outings.

The Seahawks have made the playoffs five straight years, but have dropped their last two and are ravaged by injuries, penalties and a lack of on-field discipline.

Detroit (8-6) at Cincinnati (5-9)

While Cincinnati bumbles its way toward the end of the schedule, the Lions have a strong chance of winning out. Whether that will be enough to make the postseason depends on other teams' results.

The Bengals have won five straight and eight of nine in this series. But Detroit, led by Pro Bowl CB Darius Slay with an NFL-high seven picks, and QB Matthew Stafford, is 5-2 on the road.

Pittsburgh (11-3) at Houston (4-10), Monday

The Steelers already own the AFC North crown, but blew it big-time in the overall conference race when they fell to New England last week. That defeat likely cost them home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs, and they could fall to the third seed if they don't stay ahead of Jacksonville, which won at Heinz Field this season.

Even with star WR Antonio Brown, this shouldn't be much of a test for Pittsburgh, unless it has a meltdown. Houston has lost four straight and seven of eight.

Oakland (6-8) at Philadelphia (12-2), Monday

Nick Foles stepped in for injured Carson Wentz and kept the Eagles flying. Still, look for Philly to try to win this one on the ground. The Eagles rank second running the ball, first against the rush. Oakland is 25th in rushing.

Philadelphia already has a first-round bye; it's merely the sixth time that has happened since 1970.

Oakland's Derek Carr joined Dan Marino, Peyton Manning, Russell Wilson and Andrew Luck as the only QBs with at least 100 TD passes in his first four pro seasons.

Minnesota (11-3) at Green Bay (7-7), Saturday

To get home-field advantage for the entire NFC playoffs, the Vikings must win against the Aaron Rodgers-less Packers. Green Bay put A-Rod on injured reserve after his one-game comeback from a collarbone injury; the Pack is out of playoff contention.

Minnesota can secure a first-round bye with a win and Carolina loss.

Cleveland (9-14) at Chicago (4-10)

A year ago, with the same abysmal record, the Browns beat the Chargers to avoid matching Detroit's 0-16 of 2008, the worst single season in NFL history. Considering they finish at Pittsburgh, this probably is their only shot at finding the victory column.

If coach John Fox has any job security left, it would likely disappear by falling to Cleveland.

Denver (5-9) at Washington (6-8)

After an eight-game slide, Denver has won two straight, but against the Jets and Colts. The Broncos have 32 consecutive victories when winning the turnover battle, the longest active streak in the NFL.

The undermanned Redskins come off a victory against Arizona and LB Preston Smith last week became the first Washington player with a sack, fumble recovery and interception in the same game since Monte Coleman in 1993.

New York Giants (2-12) at Arizona (6-8)

This season can't end quickly enough for the tumult-ridden Giants or injury-ravaged Cardinals.

New York allowed 106 points combined in losses to NFC West teams 49ers (31-23), Rams (51-17) and Seahawks (24-7) so far.

An Arizona loss would clinch a second straight losing season after three winning years since coach Bruce Arians arrived.

It's a catch. Wait, there's a catch to the catch.

By Barry Wilner
Associated Press

It's a catch. Wait, there's a catch to the catch.

While coaches, players, fans and broadcasters become puzzled or annoyed by the NFL's "catch rule," the people in charge of developing and refining it through the years also have struggled. They simply couldn't find language to simplify it, leading to the inconsistency and controversy seen for seasons.

Especially this season.

When such NFL personalities as Mike Tomlin and Sean Payton, both with strong ties to the powerful competition committee, seek re-examination and possibly changes to rules,

it moves the issue front and center, just as much as the call on Pittsburgh tight end Jesse James did last weekend.

"I think that we all can acknowledge that all of this needs to be revisited," Steelers coach Tomlin said. "It's not just that play. We're having similar discussions week in and week out, so as a member of the committee, I acknowledge that we've got our work cut out for us this offseason regarding a number of those things."

"I'm just done talking about it, to be quite honest with you. You all know what we teach. Catch the football."

Some players do, yet discover they didn't. They're confused by some of the

calls. Even worse, they aren't sure they understand the rule.

It should be simple, right? Receive the ball, hold onto it, get tackled and never have it move when you get to the ground.

Except there are instances when it can move as long as control is maintained. It's just another example of an NFL rule book with so many tangents that it would crush even the heaviest of offensive linemen if it fell on top of him.

"Yeah, I don't even know what the language is at this point," said Bears tight end Zach Miller, who lost a TD reception by not "surviving the ground" on a play in which he was injured and sidelined for the rest of the season. "I don't think a lot of people ... I don't even know if the rule-makers do at this point know what the language is. But they have it there and it's in place and

they're trying to follow it as closely as they can. I just don't know if it's what it needs to be."

Even the current head of league officials, Alberto Riveron, and the man he succeeded, Dean Blandino, agree that getting the language right is difficult. Many others would add getting the call right is more difficult.

Two years ago, the league consulted with a group of players that included Hall of Famers Steve Largent and Tim Brown, plus current NFLers.

"And we went over this rule, a lot of the catch and no-catch situations, and at the end of the day — we had them in for two days — they decided the best way to keep the rule is where it is right now," Riveron says. "But that does not stop us from going over it again and taking suggestions from any of the clubs."

RANKINGS

From 1C

Each of those top five has won at least one Super Bowl trophy. Brady, of course, leads the group with five, along with four Super Bowl MVP awards, including last season.

The rest of the top 10, in order: Carson Wentz of the Philadelphia Eagles, Cam Newton of the Carolina Panthers, Jared Goff of the Los Angeles Rams, Philip Rivers of the Los Angeles Chargers, and Matt Ryan of the Atlanta Falcons, who was the NFL MVP last season.

This season's initial QB ranking by the AP was much tighter at the top: Brady had eight first-place votes and 107 points, while Rodgers took the other three No. 1s and was second overall at 94 points, with Brees at No. 3.

Rodgers' slip was due to his health issues: He went back on injured reserve this week after returning for one game following a two-month absence with a broken collarbone.

"Rodgers may be the most talented quarterback

in the league," said San Francisco-based AP writer Josh Dubow.

Other players whose standing might have been affected by season-ending injuries were Wentz and Houston Texans rookie Deshaun Watson, who appeared on only two ballots.

This time, a total of 19 quarterbacks received at least one vote, including Colin Kaepernick, who was 10th on the ballot of Rob Maaddi, who is based in Philadelphia. Kaepernick played in a Super Bowl for the San Francisco 49ers, but is not in the league this season after initiating the national anthem kneeling and sitting during last preseason.

"Matthew Stafford has 26 fourth-quarter comebacks but no playoff wins. Matt Ryan is Matty Ice but couldn't protect a 25-point lead in the Super Bowl. Andrew Luck's health is too iffy to trust him to win the annual fantasy Turkey Bowl," Maaddi said. "I take Kaepernick because he's won big games and he can do it with his arm or legs."

ISSUES

From 1C

The other critical issue is less dangerous, less difficult and wholly self-inflicted. It's about the integrity of the game. When fans become convinced that no one understands or perhaps even cares about the rules of the game, a sport is reduced to farce. The WWE might be entertaining to some but no one loves it for its honest outcomes.

To briefly mention a baseball film of a couple generations ago, in *Bang the Drum Slowly*, actors Michael Moriarty and Robert DeNiro would con unsuspecting players out of their money in a card game called TEGWAR (The Exciting Game Without Any Rules).

If you're a Steelers fan today, you're convinced the NFL has devolved into TEGWAR. And if you're not necessarily a Steelers fan but you have watched the replay of Jesse James catching a pass around the goal line and seeing it called incomplete in a costly loss to New England and you contrast it with the Patriots' Brandin Cooks earlier this season making a similar end zone catch in which he loses possession as he hits the ground and it was called a game-winning touchdown over the Texans ... well, you get the picture.

The game is called inconsistently and the rules on catching a football have been complicated beyond all reason.

As a few Twitter followers wrote on my timeline Sunday in the wake of the Steelers getting the no-catch ruling and the Raiders' Seth Roberts getting the "catch upheld" ruling against Dallas:

"The act of a catch in the NFL has become a bigger joke than the fake fouls in soccer..."

"I'm not a fan of either team but the league is ruining football with this nonsense..."

"Changing a rule every few years to appease

owners or fans will do just what it has done. Create confusion and dissent."

Can't argue with any of them.

And former Cowboys President Tex Schramm a.k.a. "The Godfather of Replay" — a man who never tweeted but talked plenty — offered this warning years ago when replay officiating was in its infancy.

"This isn't like baseball where you've got four bases and 95 percent of what happens will take place in those spots," he said.

Schramm might have slightly downplayed the number of questionable calls at the wall and down the lines, but his premise — that expecting replay to officiate everything would lead to greater problems than the tool could ever resolve — was correct.

The idea was to fix obviously wrong calls, not to create a new set of rules that would allow a runner to score a touchdown by getting one inch of the football across the plane of the goal line while a receiver, after catching a pass, could take the ball all the way into the end zone but have the ball scrape the ground long after he had possession and have the play ruled an incomplete pass.

Think of it in these terms.

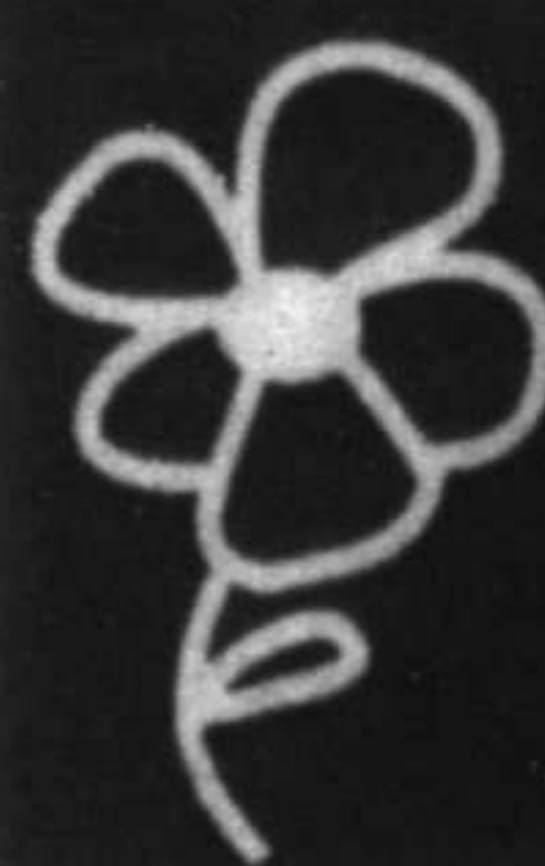
An adult and his or her child go out into the front yard to "have a catch."

It's sports in its purest and absolute simplest form. In the NFL, a "catch" is a monster created by a competition committee invested in the belief that technology must be used to solve all of the game's controversies.

The NFL has a choice. Fix this nonsense this off-season and get out of the TEGWAR business it has foolishly created. Or watch that Cuban smirk grow into an I-told-you-so nod

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SATURDAY MORNING

DECEMBER 23, 2017

[illegible]

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

DECEMBER 23, 2017

	G	S	R	C	N	12 PM	12:30	1 PM	1:30	2 PM	2:30	3 PM	3:30	4 PM	4:30	5 PM	5:30
KMD ABC	3	3	4	2	3	World of 8 Xmas: The Year				The Year 2017				Paid	Paid	Paid	News (N)
KMD CBS	7	7	7	7	7	B-Ball: NCAA Basketball Ohio State/JACK IS				NCAA Basketball UCLA vs. Kentucky (U)						Movie (M)	News (N)
KWTV FOX	5	5	5	5	5	Guns: The Icons				Remade	Wanted	Wanted	Wanted	Elleman	Elleman	Elleman	The Wild Wild West
KFJ FOX	8	14	8	8	8	1010P V: Gulliver's Travels				24/40s	24/40s	Paid	Paid	Mentoring Awards			
KMLN HD	11	12	12	11	11	Essentials: Holmes				Shabbat	Light of Southeast	Light of Southeast	Light of Southeast	Forth	Shapard's Heart	Heart	Crestion
KWES NBC	9	9	9	9	9	1010P LSP: Soccer 101 (M, L)				Goalzone	LSP: Soccer Man, U.S. (L)	Goalzone	Team USA	Awards	Awards	Good Y	News (N)
KFTV PBS	13	13	13	13	13	Garden: Old House				Woodford, Crossing	7. Miss	American	Family	Parke	Parke	Parke	USA
KLTV CBS	4	4	4	4	4	Aces: Hollywood				Winners	For Life	Health	Health	Fun, Fed	Fun, Fed	Fun, Fed	Movie (M)
COSI MNT	15	16	15	15	15	Movie: V *** Away From Her (U) (D) (G)				5:00pm	Cinderella Man (U, M) (M) (M) (G)	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
FLIK	340	375	105	105	105	Cocktail: V: The Legend of Drunken Souls				5:00pm	5:00pm	5:00pm	5:00pm	7:00pm			
HBO	302	315	14	14	14	V: *** About a Boy				7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
HBO	302	315	14	14	14	Movie: V: The Dark Knight Rises				7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
MAX	302	315	14	14	14	V: *** Duplication				7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
MAKI	302	315	14	14	14	V: *** The Informant				7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
PLEX	302	315	14	14	14	V: *** Prime				7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
SHOW	302	315	14	14	14	V: *** The Informant				7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
THC	302	315	14	14	14	V: *** Legends of the Fall (U, D) (G)				7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm	7:00pm			
A&E	37	58	28	35	25	V: To Be Announced				Live PD	Live PD	Live PD	Live PD	Live PD			
AMC	48	74	23	42	51	V: *** Miracle on 34th Street (U) (D) (G)				V: *** Deck the Halls (D) (G) (U) (V)	V: *** Deck the Halls (D) (G) (U) (V)	V: *** Deck the Halls (D) (G) (U) (V)	V: *** Deck the Halls (D) (G) (U) (V)	V: *** The Christmas			
BET	58	-	-	-	-	Martin				Announced	Announced	Announced	Announced	V: To Be Announced			
BRVO	58	75	41	-	-	Relationship				Relationship	Relationship	Relationship	Relationship	Relationship			
CHBC	46	52	39	72	-	V: Paid Program				V: Paid Program	V: Paid Program	V: Paid Program	V: Paid Program	V: Paid Program			
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SATURDAY PRIME TIME

DECEMBER 23, 2017

[illegible]

SUDOKU

THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mephem Group

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, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

SOLUTION TO FRIDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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JUMBLE CROSSWORDS

by David L. Hoyt

ACROSS

1. Paths
5. poem
6. Thick
7. Rubber

DOWN

1. Higher
2. Shorten
3. Business
4. Choose

ANSWER

ALTSRI
CYLRI
SNEED
METNCE

ANSWER

LRLEA
GABDERI
SNEELIC
CLESTE

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.

12-23-17

CLUE: Exhaustion

CLUE: inhabitants

CLUE: Rebel

TRIPLE BONUS

The circled letters can be unscrambled to form three different BONUS answers.

I would love to hear from you... You can email me at: DLHoyt@aol.com

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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Kneurek

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

REYVN

LAIEG

MOTYRS

KRASNH

Check out the new, free JUST JUMBLE app

Wow! That didn't turn out the way we had planned.

Ouch! I'm speechless.

THE WRESTLER THOUGHT HE WOULD WIN THE MATCH, BUT HE WAS --

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

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ANNUL BLEAK DAMAGE SCREWY
Answer: There's a Jumble cartoon each day because the artist has never — DRAWN A BLANK

DAILY CROSSWORD

Edited By Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

ACROSS

1 With 1-Down, "Gadzooks!"
8 The Pleiades of myth, e.g.
15 Football's "Boomer"
16 Oregon city named for a fur merchant
17 Couldn't offer any justification
19 Old Monterey Bay lurt
20 Lipstick marketing word
21 Sizing letters
22 Lot
24 "Music for Airports" producer
25 "Understood" 39-Across
26 Sacha Baron Cohen persona
27 Type of lizard found indoors?
31 Law enforcement support org.
32 "Livin' La Vida"

DOWN

2 Fort Benning, e.g.
3 Knight time
4 Item wielded on "Chopped"
5 Equal start?
6 Rich beverage
7 Ancient spiritual groups
8 "Soldier of Love" Grammy winner
9 Mediterranean land
10 Fuel in tins
11 Burns poem whose subject is "ugly, creepin"
12 Gaelic tongue
13 Lago feeders
14 Lacking
18 TAG Heuer competitor
22 Critical subject in Roman history
23 Natural emollient
28 Like much museum art
29 Small raiding bands
33 Like grapefruit
34 Seeks a better deal
36 Usain Bolt, vis-a-vis virtually everyone
39 Where to hear 25-Across
40 One might be convincing
41 Back again
42 Eco-friendly wheels
45 Major
46 Hockey legend
47 Blood test letters
48 Subtle "Listen up"
49 Stylish jeans feature
50 Data restriction on Twitter usage
54 Camera initials
55 Mamet play featuring a rare nickel
59 Piranhas, in Venezuela
60 Part of the family group
61 As a group

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

W	A	D	E	D	E	B	B	S	A	J	A	R
A	S	I	D	E	A	L	E	E	H	E	R	A
T	I	S	I	V	A	N	O	N	A	V	I	S
T	A	C	T	I	C	G	I	T	I	T	D	S
E	A	T	A	G	E	R	E					
E	G	A	D	N	O	B	O	N	D	A	G	E
L	O	L	T	U	B	S		L	O	V	E	S
S	A	L	K		T	R	A	D	E	S	E	L
A	L	O	H	A		K	E	R	I	N	B	A
W	A	S	I	T	A	C	A	T	I	S	A	W
N	A	N	O		A	S	S	N				
S	E	Z		N	A	R	C		E	L	A	P
T	O	O	B	A	D	I	H	I	D	A	B	O
A	N	N	O		A	N	O	S		T	O	R
T	S	K	S		Y	O	W	L		E	X	T

12/23/17

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WORD PUZZLES BY WOOD TOM

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1. **Mark Shot**

Print Your Answers Here:

1.

2.

Today's Answers:

1. Overshot the mark

2. Sold out

SOLD

Created by Tom Underwood
www.wuzzlesking.com

12-23 North America Syndicate, 2017

Answers

1. Overshot the mark
2. Sold out

WUZZLES

12-23

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GARFIELD



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



CLOSE TO HOME



DENNIS THE MENACE



WIZARD OF ID



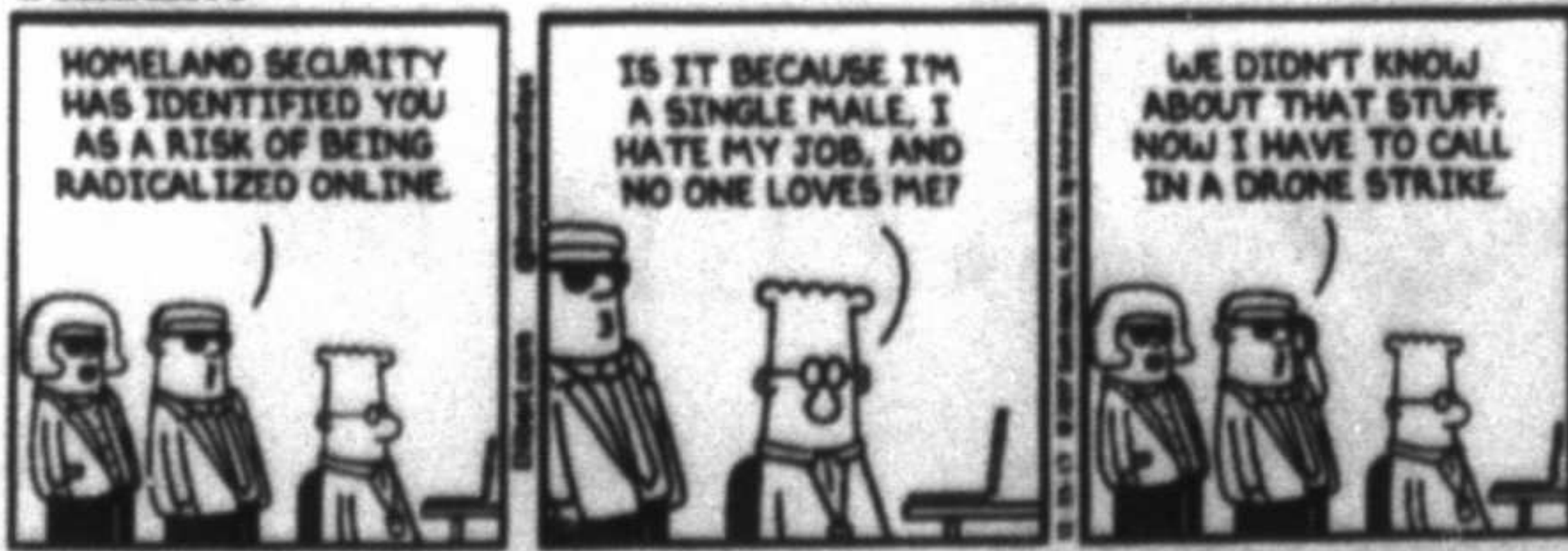
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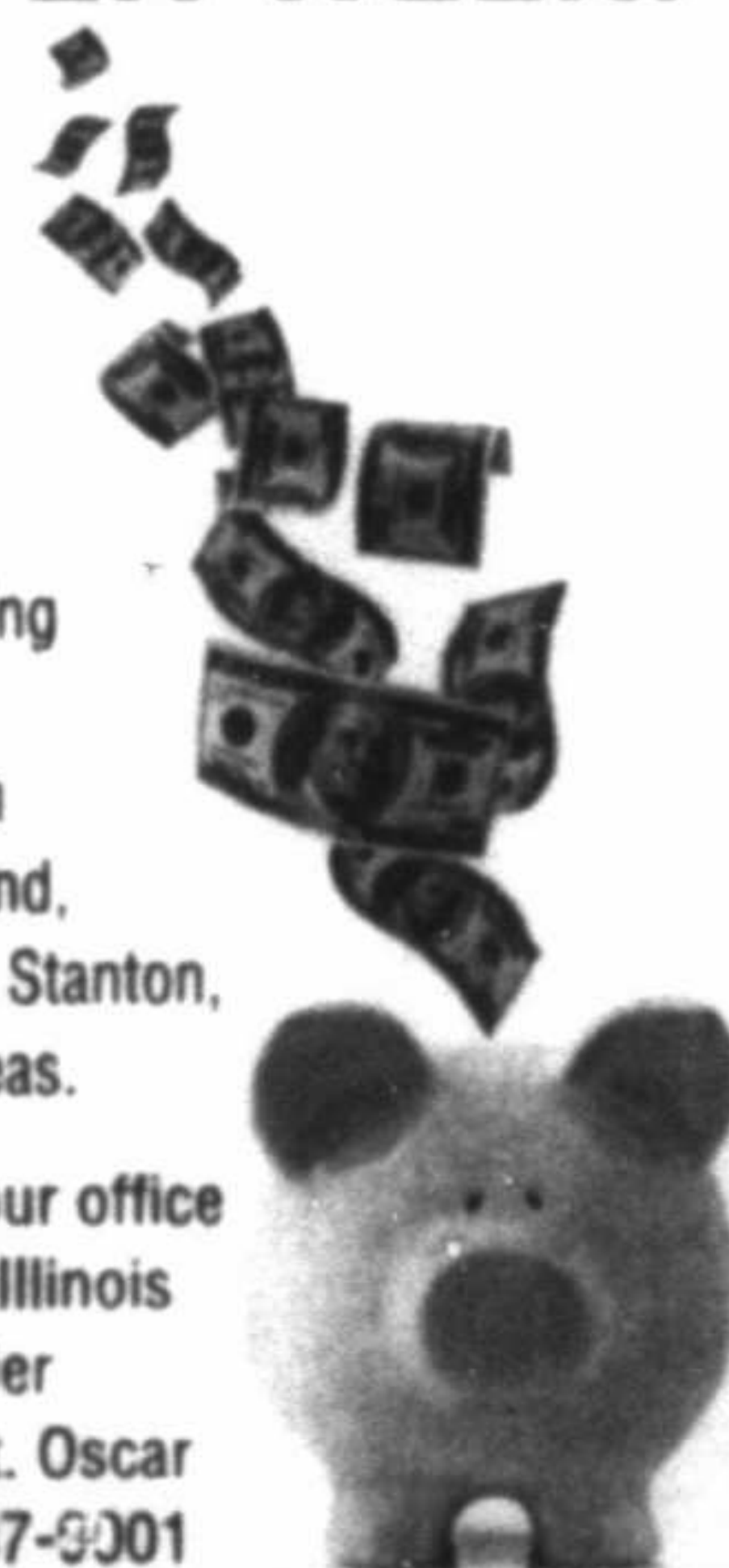
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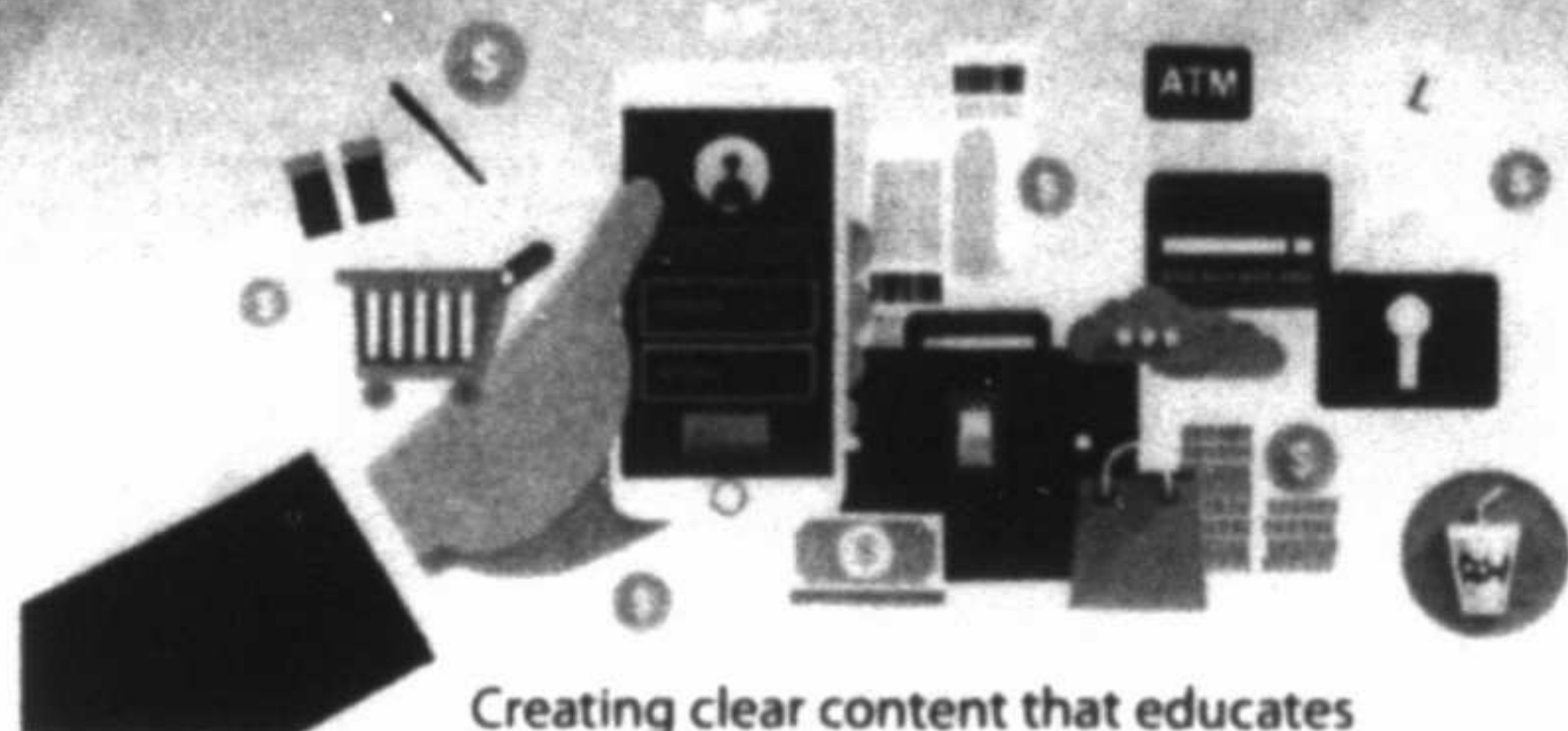
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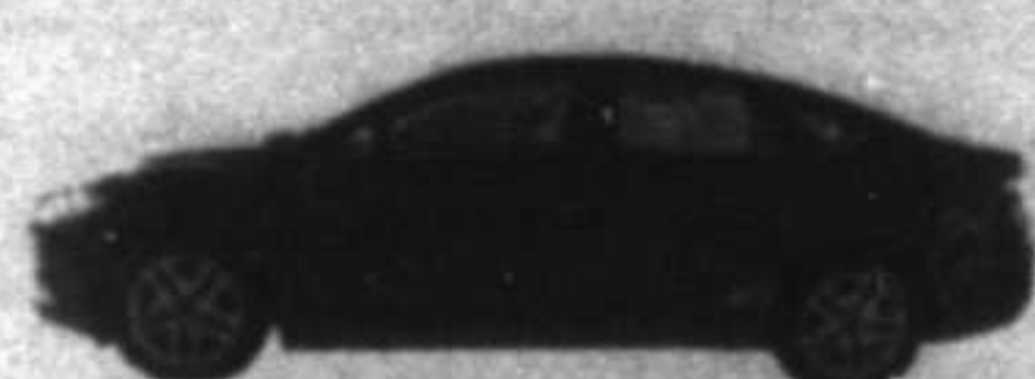
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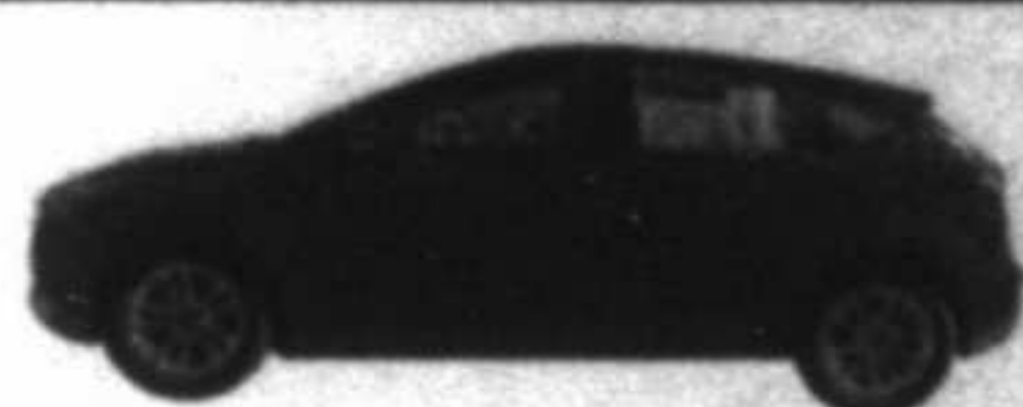
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~~Was \$19,995~~
NOW \$16,995

**2016 Ford
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8,078 Miles
Stk# 17318601



~~Was \$16,995~~
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37,750 Miles
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~~Was \$22,095~~
NOW \$20,995

**2017 Ford
Escape**

28,059 Miles
Stk# 1740066



~~Was \$16,995~~
NOW \$13,995

**2016 Toyota
Corolla**

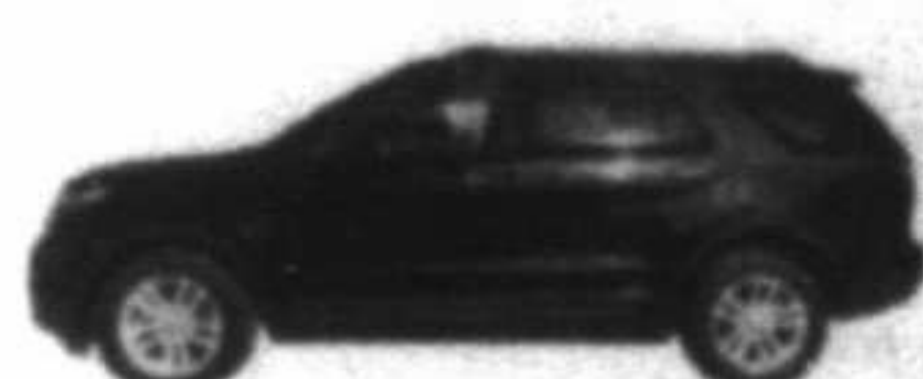
34,242 Miles
Stk# 1740072



~~Was \$22,995~~
NOW \$20,995

**2017 Nissan
Altima**

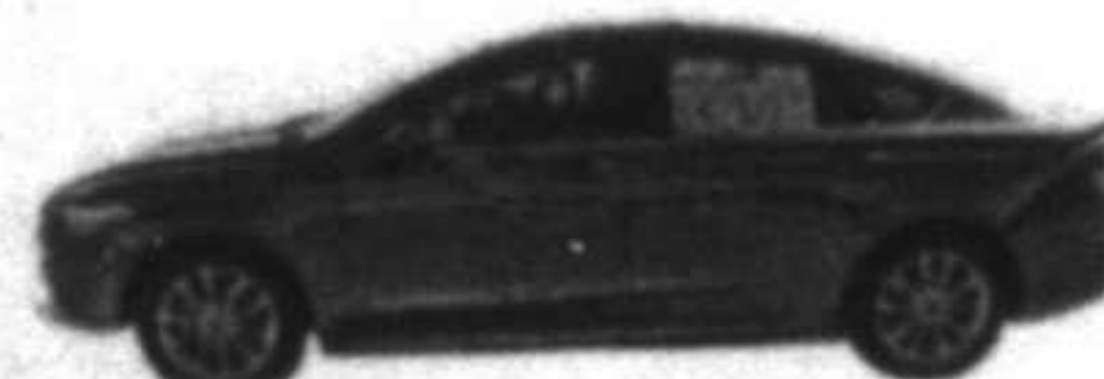
33,436 Miles
Stk# 1740071



~~Was \$30,995~~
NOW \$28,995

**2015 Ford
Explorer**

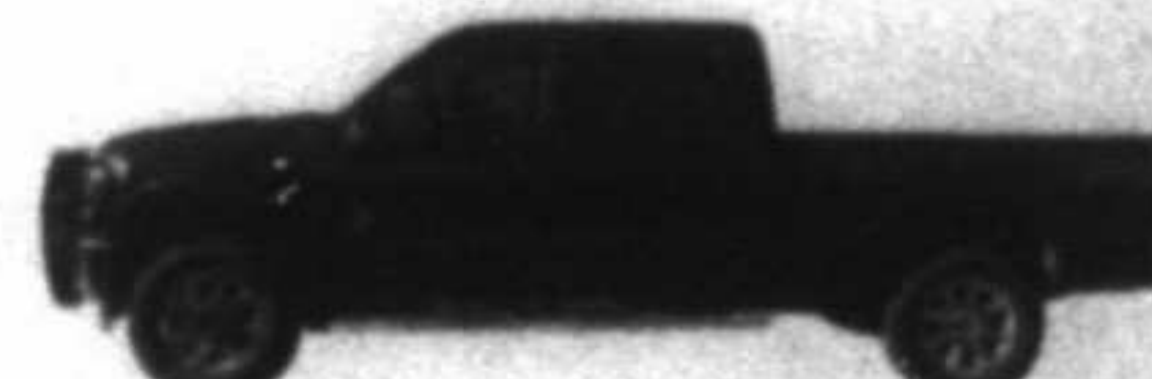
28,929 Miles
Stk# 1750036



~~Was \$17,995~~
NOW \$15,995

**2017 Ford
Fusion**

51,035 Miles
Stk# 1740075



~~Was \$53,995~~
NOW \$47,995

**2015 Ford
F-250**

37,994 Miles
Stk# 17312801



~~Was \$31,995~~
NOW \$29,995

**2013 Ford
Expedition**

62,754 Miles
Stk# 17304742



~~Was \$30,995~~
NOW \$27,995

**2015 Ford
Mustang GT**

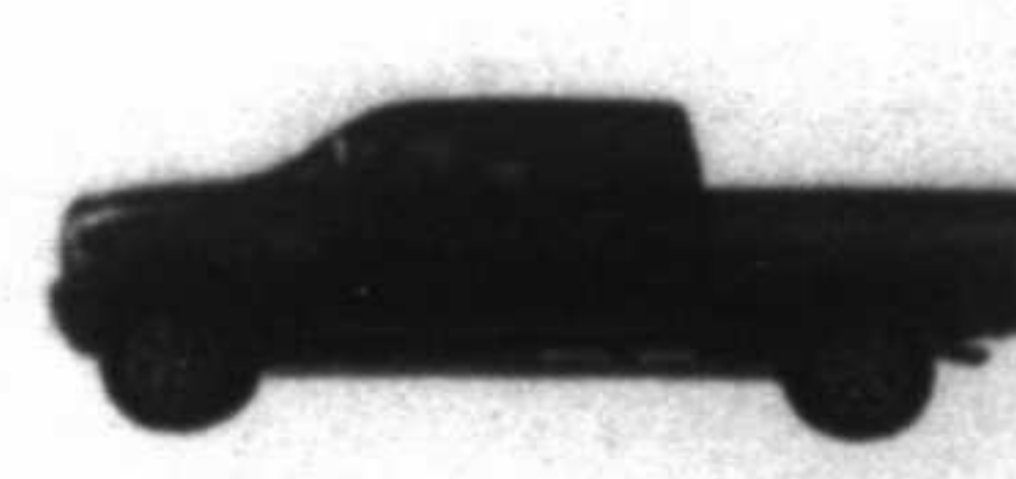
37,039 Miles
Stk# 17314351



~~Was \$31,995~~
NOW \$27,995

**2015 Ford
Mustang GT**

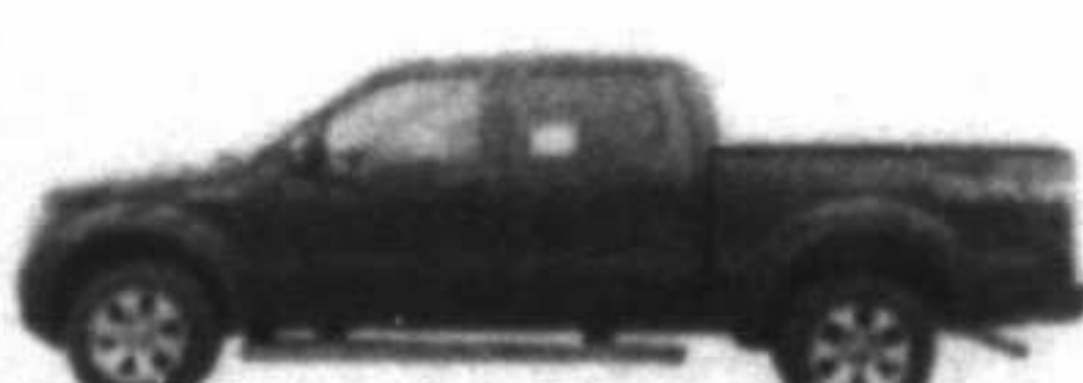
35,949 Miles
Stk# 17301321



~~Was \$62,995~~
NOW \$58,995

**2017 Dodge
Ram 2500**

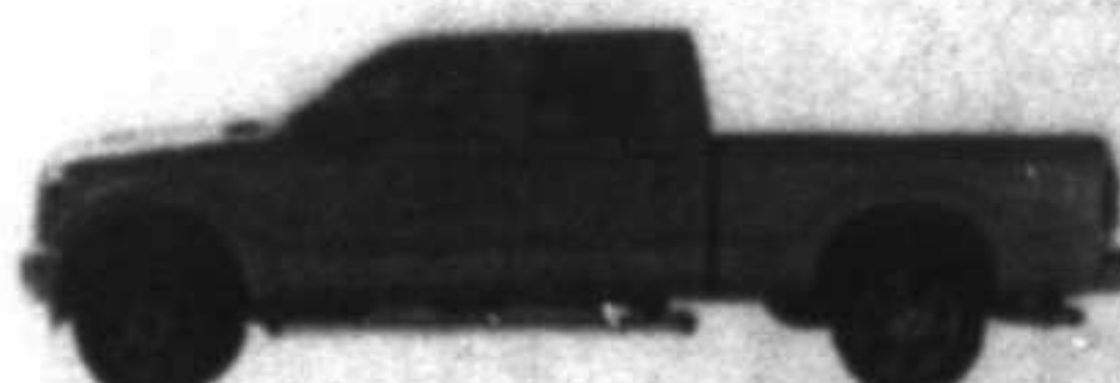
11,161 Miles
Stk# 17318861



~~Was \$32,995~~
NOW \$28,995

**2014 Ford
F-150**

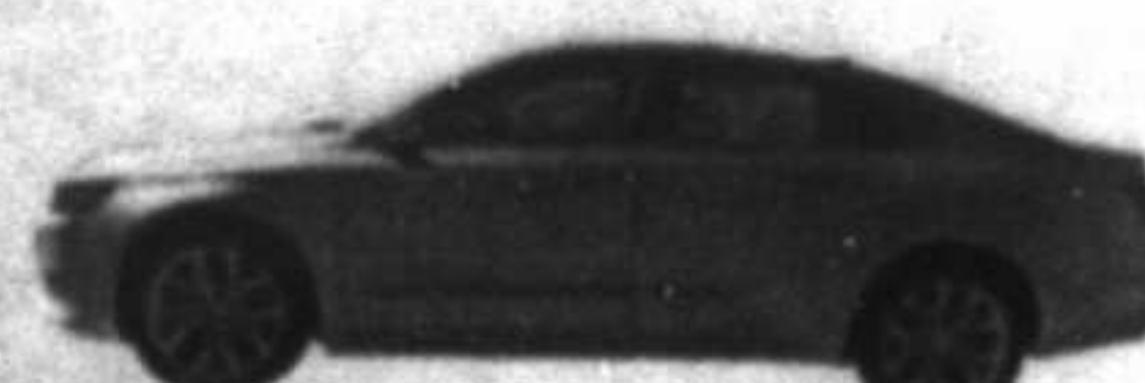
65,981 Miles
Stk# 17314353



~~Was \$51,995~~
NOW \$45,995

**2015 Ford
F-250**

67,039 Miles
Stk# 17309691



~~Was \$27,995~~
NOW \$23,995

**2017 Chevrolet
Impala**

22,173 Miles
Stk# 1740052



~~Was \$15,995~~
NOW \$12,995

**2016 Ford
Focus**

45,394 Miles
Stk# 1740068

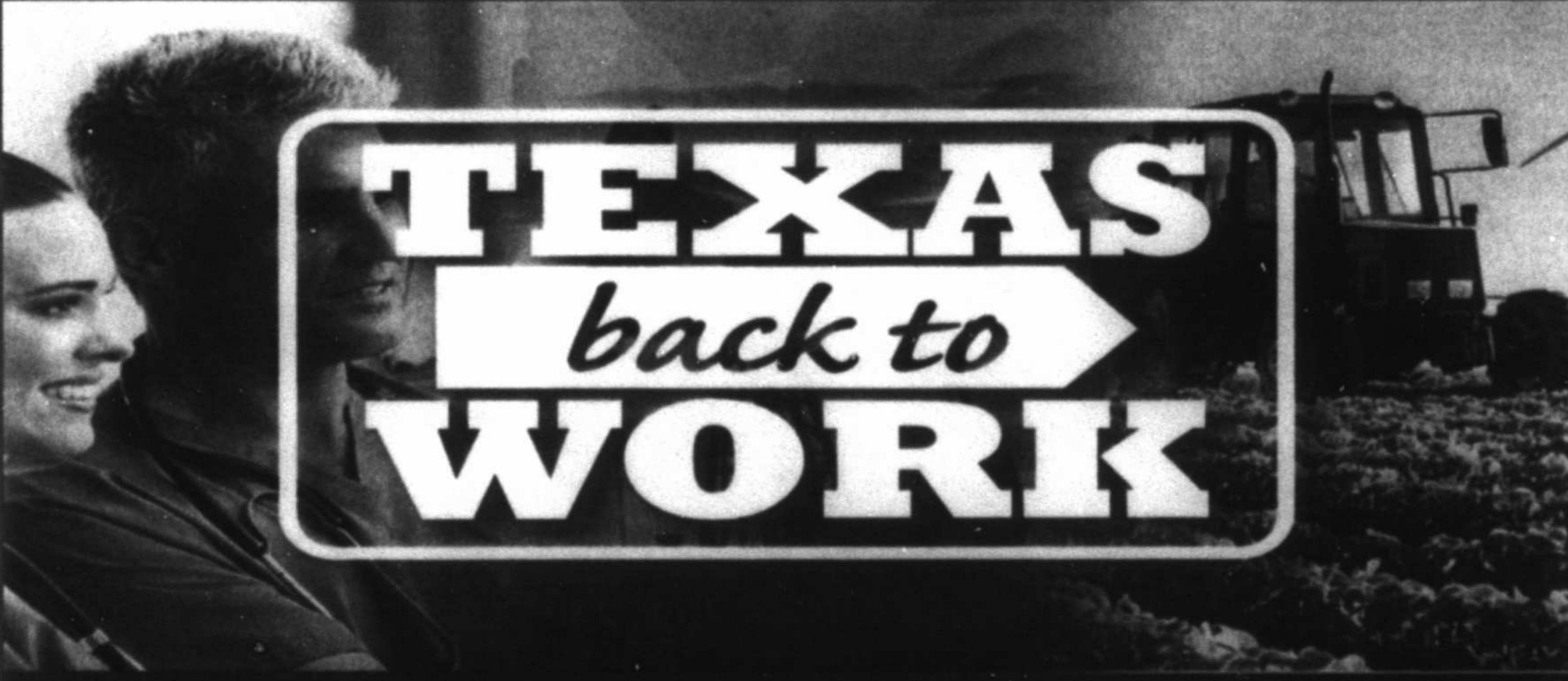
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