

# NEWS HERALD



LOCAL | B1

## YEAR IN REVIEW

Jimmy Patronis' appointment as Chief Financial Officer elevates region's political presence

Monday, December 25, 2017

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# MERRY CHRISTMAS

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First-grade student Mykel Campbell holds therapy dog Mattie as they sit with Santa on Dec. 19 at St. Andrew School.

PATTI BLAKE/THE NEWS HERALD

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TODAY  
Cooler  
57° / 37°

TUESDAY  
Mostly sunny  
63° / 46°

WEDNESDAY  
A few showers  
61° / 50°



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**READER FEEDBACK**

**Bay County has one of the highest child removal rates in the state and relies on a network of foster parents. The News Herald talked to some local foster parents about their stories, the love they felt, and why the area needs more people willing to take on the job.**

**Elaine Everett:** Thanks to all of the loving people who open their homes and hearts to children in need. I loved this story in the paper today. We constantly hear horror stories involving children, nice to read something good for a change.

**Alix Farley:** These kids are just like your children, but have been forced to deal with the unimaginable at such a young age - most adults wouldn't behave half as good as these children if they were forced to go through the events they had to go through. People like to think of these children as "other" but they are your kid's best friends, classmates, sport team members, etc. You likely have known a child who at one point or another have been through "the system" but they were just your kids friend to you. I am glad we opened our hearts to fostering and this year we adopted our foster daughter this year. It hasn't been sunshine and roses the entire time but it is the best decision we have made; I wouldn't change anything. (except the teenage mood swings lol)

**A Bay County woman has been arrested after police say she had marijuana within reach of a child inside an aging house — with sagging floors and exposed nails — filled with bugs and rotten food.**

**Katie Hunley:** So she can afford to buy marijuana but she can't afford to better the living conditions for her child? If you can't properly provide food and clean shelter for your child than you should not be spending money on pot.

**Lacy Majka:** Well I have nails on my porch exposed and I'm sure there's sour milk in a an old sippy cup somewhere in my house is that really all they got!? This is a joke

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Actor **Dick Miller** is 89. R&B singer **John Edwards** (The Spinners) is 73. Actor **Gary Sandy** is 72. Singer **Jimmy Buffett** is 71. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer **Larry Csonka** is 71. Country singer **Barbara Mandrell** is 69. Actress **Sissy Spacek** is 68. Former White House adviser **Karl Rove** is 67. Singer **Annie Lennox** is 63. Country singer **Steve Wariner** is 63. Baseball Hall of Famer **Rickey Henderson** is 59. Canadian Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** is 46. Singer **Dido** is 46. Rock singer **Mac Powell** (Third Day) is 45. Pop singers **Jess and Lisa Origliasso** (The Veronicas) are 33.

To submit birthdays, email [pcnhnews@pcnh.com](mailto:pcnhnews@pcnh.com) with "birthday" in the subject line, or drop off a current photo and fill out a birthday form at the front desk of The News Herald, 501 W. 11th St. The deadline is noon three business days prior to the birthday. Birthday announcements must include the person's first and last name, city and age. The photo is a mug shot and must be a clear photo.

**CELEBRATE COMMUNITY**

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**The new ugly sweater? Cheryl Gainer McCall sent us this picture of a Christmas Suit saying "Owen Pettis of Chipley has the holiday spirit!" We would have to agree.**

**GO AND DO**

**TUESDAY**  
**1 ZUMBA GOLD:** 10 a.m. Tuesdays at the Lyndell Center, 432 Lyndell Lane, Panama City Beach. Great low-impact total body workout for all ages. Latin-inspired dance fitness. Details: 850-236-3033

**WEDNESDAY**  
**2 CRIBBAGE CLUB:** 5:30 p.m. at VFW Post 2185, 2136 Sherman Ave., Panama City. Cost is \$6 for nine games. Prizes for first,

second and third places. Details: [accgrassroots.org](http://accgrassroots.org)

**THURSDAY**  
**3 ZUMBA GOLD:** 10 am. Thursdays at the Lyndell Center, 432 Lyndell Lane, Panama City Beach. Great low-impact total body workout for all ages. Latin-inspired dance fitness. Details: 850-236-3033

**FRIDAY**  
**4 CARL WEBB — "MASKS OF INTUITION":** exhibit

on display through Jan. 20 at Panama City Center for the Arts, 19 E. Fourth St., Panama City. Free admission. Details: [CenterForTheArtsPC.com](http://CenterForTheArtsPC.com) or 850-640-3670

**5 BALLROOM DANCING:** 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Grand Square Hall, 1105 Bob Little Road in Panama City. For all levels. \$5 per person at the door. Details: 850-277-0566 or [dpgordon01@yahoo.com](mailto:dpgordon01@yahoo.com)

**CATCH OF THE DAY**

**We want to see your catch of the day:** Post your photos to the News Herald Facebook page with your name, city of residence and information about the photo. Email photos to [yourpix@pcnh.com](mailto:yourpix@pcnh.com).



**Justin Smith shared this lucky picture on the Panama City Fishing Facebook page. We aren't sure who looks more thrilled at the encounter.**

**TODAY IN HISTORY**

Today is **Monday, Dec. 25**, the 359th day of 2017. There are six days left in the year. This is Christmas Day.

**Highlight in History:** On **Dec. 25, 1776**, Gen. George Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware River for a surprise attack against Hessian forces at Trenton, New Jersey, during the American Revolutionary War.

**On this date:**  
**In A.D. 336**, the first known commemoration of Christmas on Dec. 25 took place in Rome.  
**In 1066**, William the Conqueror was crowned King of England.  
**In 1818**, "Silent Night (Stille Nacht)" was publicly performed for the first time during the Christmas Midnight Mass at the Church of St. Nikolaus in Oberndorf, Austria.  
**In 1926**, Hirohito became emperor of Japan, succeeding his father, Emperor Yoshihito.  
**In 1931**, New York's Metropolitan Opera broadcast an entire live opera over radio for the first time: "Hansel and Gretel" by Engelbert Humperdinck.  
**In 1946**, comedian W.C. Fields died in Pasadena, California, at age 66.  
**In 1961**, Pope John XXIII formally announced the upcoming convocation of the Second Vatican Council, which opened in October 1962.  
**In 1977**, comedian Sir Charles Chaplin died in Switzerland at age 88.  
**In 1989**, ousted Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, were executed following a popular uprising. Former baseball manager Billy Martin, 61, died in a traffic accident near Binghamton, New York.  
**In 1991**, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev went on television to announce his resignation as the eighth and final leader of a communist superpower that already had gone out of existence.  
**In 2006**, James Brown, the "Godfather of Soul," died in Atlanta at age 73.

**YOUNG ARTIST**



**Katelyn**  
Grade 4  
Palm Bay Elementary School

**FLORIDA LOTTERY**

These Florida lotteries were drawn Saturday:  
**Fantasy 5:** 13-21-27-29-30  
**Lotto:** 14-16-17-35-46-50, estimated jackpot \$8 million  
**Lotto XTRA:** 02  
**Powerball:** 01-03-13-15-44, Powerball 25, Power Play 2, estimated jackpot \$300 million  
**Mega Millions:** estimated jackpot \$277 million  
**Pick 2 Evening:** 9-0  
**Pick 2 MIDDAY:** 8-6  
**Pick 3 Evening:** 8-5-7  
**Pick 3 MIDDAY:** 6-4-2  
**Pick 4 Evening:** 2-9-0-1  
**Pick 4 MIDDAY:** 4-1-5-5  
**Pick 5 Evening:** 2-4-3-1-2

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## A closer look at the 12 Days of Christmas

Those swans really drive up the cost of the 12 gifts

By Ryan Schrift  
Special to Gatehouse  
Media North Carolina

'Tis the season! Our financial firm decided to take a closer and more analytical look at the 12 Days of Christmas. These 12 gifts may seem a little unusual today, but a few centuries ago, these gifts would have impressed your true love more than an iPhone X or a Yeti Cooler.

The 12 gifts were first published in 1780 as a rhyme, though it had likely existed for many years before as a children's game in English and French homes. In the game, a leader would recite a verse of the song and each player would repeat the same verse in response. The leader would then add another verse, and so on until one of the players made a mistake, likely costing them a small piece of candy. The familiar melody we know today was introduced in 1909 by English composer Frederic Austin.

In our research, we discovered the PNC Bank Christmas Price Index. This index has been tracking the actual prices of the 12 Days of Christmas gifts since 1984. Per the index, it would cost \$34,588.65 today to purchase all the gifts in the correct quantities, an increase of 0.6 percent since last

year. Comparatively, the Bureau of Labor Statistics is estimating that inflation will be 2 percent in 2017. That is relatively calm compared to Venezuela's inflation, which is expected to reach 1,200 percent this year. These statistics would suggest a loaf of bread would have gone from \$3 to \$3.06 in the United States and from \$3 to \$36 in Venezuela.

The Christmas Index is not always so tame. Prices crashed by as much as 30 percent in 1995 while rising over 20 percent in other years. The swan market was the primary driver of this volatility. The seven swans represent a high percentage of the overall index: 70 percent in 1984 and 38 percent in 2017.

The swan market experienced a significant decline in the mid-90s and only recently recovered. Surprisingly, there isn't much information on the 20-year Swan Recession.

Markets work on the basic economic theory of supply and demand. This theory holds true for individual stocks, bonds, real estate, oranges and even swans. Based on the data, there were several examples of overpopulation in the Northeast, resulting in adoption programs sponsored by municipalities. The market was flooded with free swans, thus forcing retail prices down. Today, Seven Swans-a-Swimming will cost you \$13,125.

# Kansas artist learns the benefits of thinking small

By Jennifer Stultz  
Gatehouse Media Kansas

PRATT, Kan. — Jane Queal, of Pratt, just celebrated a birthday, but the number of years she celebrated were not important to her. Neither is doing what others expect her to be able to do. Queal is a self-taught artist, and though her gifts center around thinking small, her outlook on life encompasses a much larger point of view.

Queal said she has made miniature villages and miniature houses for many years. For her exhibit at the Vernon Filley Art Museum, she inserted a few holiday touches to her art.

"I just added in some miniature Christmas trees and a little nativity set," she said. "I made little wreaths for the homes, and it makes the whole village more Christmasy."

Queal, who is also known in art circles for making exquisite decorative eggs with tiny scenes inside, said anything was possible as long as one could learn to think small.

"I'm always saving small parts of things, like an ink pen that fell apart. I can use the spring and the small tubing for



Tiny beds, rugs, wall hangings and household items bring this miniature Christmas display created by Jane Queal to life. Her exhibit is an entry in the Festival of Trees and Decorations contest at the Vernon Filley Art Museum in Pratt, Kan. [JENNIFER STULTZ/GATEHOUSE MEDIA KANSAS]

something," Queal said. "When I'm shopping I look for very small patterns in fabric or paper or wood. Small things are everywhere if you just learn where to look."

Queal used tiny sheds from her outdoor limestone posts to create authentic siding for the schoolhouse in her recent Christmas village, on display as part of the Festival of Trees at the art museum. She used tiny scraps and slivers of wood to create the nativity shelter in the center of her arrangement.

"The nativity figures came from Hobby Lobby," she said. "They might have been army men or something, but I reshaped and repainted

them to fit." A small church in the center of her Christmas village is complete, including rows of pews fitted with tiny velvet cushions for parishioners.

"It's just a matter of thinking," she said. "The shapes, the colors — it's fun to find and make them fit together."

Queal said she started with pre-cut plywood punch-outs for the building frames. They had windows and doors already stamped out. But all of the details and exterior pieces, as well as any dividers and room decorations inside, were creations that came from her mind.

"I do get items and

ideas from miniature railroad kits," she said. "The trees come from those companies, and some of the figurines I get and remake."

Queal said she never had much encouragement to be creative as a child. It was something she developed as an adult.

"One of the first things I did was to take a cigar box and make musical instruments," she said. "I tiny banjo, dulcimer and a mandolin."

After that experience, Queal said she just found making things smaller seemed like fun. She went through a phase where she frequented craft shows with a friend and together they built an active business.

"You can never really justify the time with the monetary value you get back," she said. "I finally quit going to shows and sales because it just made more sense to give away my gifts to friends and family. I just wanted to be able to enjoy making what I wanted to make, not because I had to make something that would sell."

Queal said she recently discovered the joy of using a wood burner and a magnifying glass to make miniature outdoor scenes.

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# Jerusalem violence puts damper on Christmas

By **Jalal Hassan**  
and **Imad Isseid**  
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — It was a subdued Christmas Eve in the historic birthplace of Jesus on Sunday, with spirits dampened by recent violence sparked by President Donald Trump's recognition of nearby Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Crowds were thinner than previous years, with visitors deterred by clashes that have broken out in recent weeks between Palestinian protesters and Israeli forces. Although there was no violence Sunday, Palestinian officials scaled back the celebrations in protest. Cool weather, and a rainy forecast, also weighed on the holiday cheer.

Claire Degout, a tourist from France, said she would not allow Trump's pronouncement, which has infuriated the Palestinians and drawn widespread international opposition, affect her decision to celebrate Christmas in the Holy Land.

"The decision of one man cannot affect all the Holy Land," she said. "Jerusalem belongs to everybody, you know, and it will be always like that, whatever Trump says."

Trump abandoned decades of U.S. policy on Dec. 6 by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and saying he would move the American Embassy to the holy city.

Trump said the move merely recognizes the fact that Jerusalem already serves as Israel's capital and that he was not prejudging negotiations on the city's final borders. But Palestinians, who seek Israeli-annexed east

Jerusalem as their capital, saw the declaration as unfairly siding with Israel. Last week, the U.N. General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to reject Trump's decision.

The announcement triggered weeks of unrest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including near-daily clashes in Bethlehem, which lies just south of Jerusalem.

By mid-afternoon, hundreds of people had gathered in Manger Square near the city's main Christmas for celebrations, greeted by bagpipe-playing young Palestinian marching bands and scout troops. Accompanying the decorations was a large banner protesting Trump's Jerusalem declaration.

Bethlehem's mayor, Anton Salman, said celebrations were toned down because of anger over Trump's decision.

"We decided to limit the Christmas celebrations to the religious rituals as an expression of rejection and anger and sympathy with the victims who fell in the recent protests," he said.

Next to the square was a poster that read "Manger Square appeal" and "#handsoffjerusalem."

"We want to show the people that we are people who deserve life, deserve our freedom, deserve our independence, deserve Jerusalem as our capital," he said.

The Most Rev. Msgr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the apostolic administrator of Jerusalem, the top Roman Catholic cleric in the Holy Land, crossed through an Israeli military checkpoint to enter Bethlehem from Jerusalem. His black limousine was escorted by a group of men on motorcycles, some of them wearing red Santa hats.



**A man dressed as Santa Claus waves from a sidecar of a motorbike on Christmas Eve in Jerusalem Old City Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017.** [AP PHOTO/ODED BALILTY]

Pizzaballa, who last week rejected the U.S. decision, tried to steer clear of politics. He waved to the crowd, shook hands and hugged well-wishers as he walked to the Church of the Nativity, where he was to celebrate Midnight Mass.

"I already said the message. Now it's time to enjoy," he said. "We as Christians we will enjoy, despite all the difficulties we have. Merry Christmas."

James Thorburn, a visitor from London, said he was determined to enjoy the holiday and show solidarity with Bethlehem's residents.

"I know that a lot of people did cancel," he said. "I felt I should come to support the Palestinians."



**A worshipper prays inside the Church of the Nativity, built atop the site where Christians believe Jesus Christ was born, on Christmas Eve, in the West Bank City of Bethlehem, Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017.** [AP PHOTO/MAJDI MOHAMMED]

## Judge partially lifts Trump administration ban on refugees

By **Martha Bellisle**  
The Associate Press

SEATTLE — A federal judge in Seattle on Saturday partially lifted a Trump administration ban on certain refugees after two groups argued that the policy prevented people from some mostly Muslim countries from reuniting with family living legally in the United States.

U.S. District Judge James Robart heard arguments Thursday in lawsuits from the American Civil Liberties Union and Jewish Family Service, which say the ban causes irreparable harm and puts some people at risk. Government lawyers argued that the ban is needed to protect national security.

Robart ordered the federal government to process certain refugee applications. He said his order applies to people "with a bona fide relationship to a person or entity within the United States."

President Donald Trump restarted the refugee program in October "with enhanced vetting capabilities."

The day before his executive order, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke and Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats sent a memo to Trump saying certain refugees must be banned unless additional security measures are implemented.

It applies to the spouses and minor children of refugees who have already settled in the U.S. and suspends the refugee program for people coming from 11 countries, nine of which



**In this Thursday, Dec. 21, 2017 file photo, Mariko Hirose, right, a litigation director at the Urban Justice Center, speaks to reporters accompanied by Mark Hetfield, president & CEO of HIAS, left, and Rabbi Will Berkowitz, Jewish Family Service of Seattle CEO, in front of a federal courthouse in Seattle.** [ELAINE THOMPSON | AP PHOTO]

are mostly Muslim.

In his decision, Robart wrote that "former officials detailed concretely how the Agency Memo will harm the United States' national security and foreign policy interests."

Robart said his order restores refugee procedures in programs to what they were before the memo and noted that this already includes very thorough vetting of individuals.

In a statement, Department of Justice spokeswoman Lauren Ehrsam said: "We disagree with the Court's ruling and are currently evaluating the next steps."

The ACLU argued the memo provided no evidence for why additional security was needed and didn't specify a timeframe for implementing the changes. The groups say the process for imposing the policy violated a federal law.

August Flentje, a Justice Department attorney, told the judge that the ban is temporary and "is a

reasonable and appropriate way for agency heads to tackle gaps" in the screening process.

The lawsuits from the two groups were consolidated and represent refugees who have been blocked from entering the country.

The ACLU represents a Somali man living in Washington state who is trying to bring his family to the U.S. They have gone through extensive vetting, have passed security and medical clearances, and just need travel papers, but those were denied after the ban.

Lisa Nowlin, staff attorney for the ACLU of Washington, said in a statement they were happy for their client — "who has not yet had the opportunity to celebrate a single birthday with his younger son in person — will soon have the opportunity to hold his children, hug his wife in the very near future, and be together again as a family for the first time in four years."

## North Korea calls latest UN sanctions 'an act of war'

The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea on Sunday called the latest U.N. sanctions to target the country "an act of war" that violates its sovereignty, and said it is a "pipe dream" for the United States to think it will give up its nuclear weapons.

The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved tough new sanctions against North Korea on Friday in response to its latest launch of a ballistic missile that Pyongyang says can reach anywhere on the U.S. mainland. The resolution was drafted by the United States and negotiated with the North's closest ally, China.

"We define this 'sanctions resolution' rigged up by the U.S. and its followers as a grave infringement upon the sovereignty of our Republic, as an act of war violating peace and stability in the Korean peninsula and the region and categorically reject the 'resolution,'" North Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said the sanctions are tantamount to a "complete economic blockade" of North Korea.

"If the U.S. wishes to live safely, it must abandon its hostile policy towards the DPRK and learn to co-exist with the country that has nuclear weapons and should wake up from its pipe dream of our country giving up nuclear weapons which we have developed and completed through all kinds of hardships," said the statement, carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

DPRK is short for North

Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The resolution adopted by the Security Council includes sharply lower limits on North Korea's refined oil imports, the return home of all North Koreans working overseas within 24 months, and a crackdown on ships smuggling banned items including coal and oil to and from the country.

The Trump administration's success in achieving the resolution won praise from the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Ben Cardin of Maryland. "That was a good move," the senator said, "a major accomplishment." Cardin said the stepped-up sanctions should be followed by diplomacy aimed at bringing the U.S. and China together on a sustained effort to ease tensions in that region. Cardin spoke on "Fox News Sunday."

But the resolution doesn't include even harsher measures sought by the Trump administration that would ban all oil imports and freeze international assets of the government and its leader, Kim Jong Un.

The resolution drew criticism from Russia for the short time the Security Council nations had to consider the draft, and last-minute changes to the text. Two of those changes were extending the deadline for North Korean workers to return home from 12 months to 24 months — which Russia said was the minimum needed — and reducing the number of North Koreans being put on the U.N. sanctions blacklist from 19 to 15.

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# 'It's hard having someone deployed' at Christmas

By Amanda Dolasinski  
Gatehouse Media  
North Carolina

Somewhere at an austere outpost in Afghanistan, 1st Sgt. Adam Breeding will be reaching for Christmas cookies in a plastic bag.

The cookies will be at least two weeks old, so his wife, Heather Breeding, back home in North Carolina, hopes the slice of bread she packed with them held in the moisture. She and a few

other wives, girlfriends and mothers of soldiers in the 82nd Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team baked and shipped the cookies in early December so they'd arrive in Afghanistan by Christmas.

It's not how the Breeding family hoped to spend the holiday this year. But when the Army called on the 82nd Airborne Division to deploy to Afghanistan in June, the family, like thousands of other Army families, did

their best to make Christmas special.

"They can have a little taste of home for the holidays," Heather said, patting tape down on shipping boxes. "Christmas cookies is a big thing. We thought it'd be a little nice touch of home, and, trust me, they are going to appreciate it."

The women sealed boxes of 2,500 cookies headed to Afghanistan in a battalion building on Fort Bragg, where framed Army posters line the

walls. Hanging in the hallway is a black flag with the 82nd Airborne Division's logo. The flag reads, "Mess with the best, die like the rest."

Heather, who has grown accustomed to military life during her 10-year marriage, said she is proud of her husband's service. She hopes Americans recognize not only the service of all military members, but the sacrifices their families make, as well.

"I just don't want

people to take for granted what they have here because people are....," she said, trailing off while her daughters play behind her. She pauses as she thinks.

"We are sending our guys cookies to eat out of a bag," she said. "It's difficult."

In a war that's stretched for 16 years, it's easy for Americans to forget that service members are still in harm's way. But for military families — including the thousands

stationed at Fort Bragg — that is a daily reality.

In recent years, the U.S. military has reduced the combat role of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, but service members continue to be involved in those countries' security affairs, training partner forces to fight against insurgents.

The 1st Brigade paratroopers in Afghanistan are part of a force of thousands who deployed amid a small troop surge earlier this year. Some of the soldiers deployed on relatively short notice in September.

The deployments are part of a steady stream of warfighters to and from Afghanistan and other combat areas, such as Iraq and Syria.

Fort Bragg, home to roughly 10 percent of the Army, often supplies those troops, which can put added pressure on local families.

About 60 percent of all Army families are married with children, according to the Department of Defense. On average, a military family has two children, age 5 or younger.

Heather was 19 and living in her hometown of Savannah, Georgia, when mutual friends introduced her to Adam, an enlisted soldier in a Ranger battalion based at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Not long after the couple married, he left for the first of what would become 14 deployments. Unlike his current deployment with the 82nd Airborne Division, deployments with Ranger battalions are shorter, averaging three to four months.

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# 'Merry Christmas' for Trump more than a wish

By Catherine Lucey  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There's no mistaking President Donald Trump's "Merry Christmas" message — he wields it as a weapon against political correctness.

For weeks, he's been liberally sprinkling his public remarks with Christmas tidings. And then pointing it out in case anyone fails to notice.

Trump has long promised that this year would be different after what he saw as a trend toward giving the Christian celebration short shrift in favor of a more generic and inclusive "happy holidays" message.

"Well, guess what? We're saying 'Merry Christmas' again," Trump announced in October at a Values Voter Summit of conservatives.

For all of that, though, it turns out the 2017 holiday rhythms at the White House are similar to those of years past.

The president

participated in the annual lighting of the National Christmas Tree. The house has been decked out for the season with an array of traditional trimmings, including the longstanding crèche in the East Room. There has been a whirlwind of parties — roughly 20 receptions and more than 100 open houses, including a reception to mark Hanukkah.

"It is as beautiful as it has always been. It is as special as it always has been," said Anita McBride, who served as first lady Laura Bush's chief of staff.

The White House holidays under Barack and Michelle Obama also included plenty of Christmas trappings and cheer. Obama offered a more general holiday message on the official greeting card, but wished "Merry Christmas" at the National Tree lighting, on his Twitter account and in his weekly address.

Trump has expressed concern about a diminished "Merry Christmas" message for years. In 2011,



President Donald Trump takes to the stage Dec. 8 at a campaign-style rally at the Pensacola Bay Center in Pensacola, Fla. [SUSAN WALSH/ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO]

he criticized Obama's approach, saying on Twitter that the president had "issued a statement for Kwanzaa but failed to issue one for Christmas." In fact, that year Obama wished people "Merry Christmas" from his Twitter account and gave a video address with his wife in which he wished people a "Merry Christmas and happy holidays." Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton also offered greetings

marking Kwanzaa, the weeklong African heritage festivities in December.

The White House said Trump will also have a statement on Kwanzaa, which the president misspelled in his tweet.

At the official lighting of the National Christmas Tree this year, Trump offered an overtly religious message, noting that "for Christians, this is a holy season." He added that the "Christmas story begins 2000 years ago with a mother, a father, their baby son, and the most extraordinary gift of all, the gift of God's love for all of humanity."

But his predecessor also made remarks grounded in Christian traditions. At his final tree lighting, Obama opened with "Merry Christmas," and spoke about this being a time to "celebrate the birth of our Savior, as we retell the story of weary travelers, a star, shepherds, Magi." He went on to discuss the message of the holiday, saying that

it "grounds not just my family's Christian faith but that of Jewish Americans, Muslim Americans, non-believers — Americans of all backgrounds."

Asked if the White House thought the previous administration did not acknowledge Christmas, first lady Melania Trump's spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said, "We are focused on our administration." Trump's emphasis on Christmas has been welcomed by evangelical Christians who see it as evidence of his commitment to religious liberty.

Robert Jeffress, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, said Trump "has talked about it more frequently and with more intensity."

Conservative angst over a perceived shift away from "Merry Christmas" has long percolated. Former Fox News host Bill O'Reilly talked about the "war on Christmas" on his show for years, highlighting

businesses that opted to say "Happy Holidays."

"Among the conservative Christians, they really do feel embattled," said Mark Alan Smith, a political science professor at the University of Washington. "They have a sense of 'we're being persecuted.' This Merry Christmas thing is part of it."

Jeffress, who attended holiday events at the White House this year, said Trump's Christmas comments were one of many moves supported by evangelical Christians, who have cheered as Trump appointed conservative judges, sought to weaken rules governing political activity by religious groups that received tax exemptions, and declared Jerusalem the capital of Israel.

"I believe a lot of Christians see his willingness to say Merry Christmas as the proxy for religious liberty," Jeffress said.

But critics say Trump is using Christmas as a cudgel in cultural warfare.

"This is like kneeling during the national anthem," said Dan Cassino, a political science professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Cassino, who has polled and written on the issue, said there's no real downside for Trump in keeping up the Christmas talk.

"People who believe it is important feel much more strongly than people who feel you should say Happy Holidays," Cassino said. "The people who are opposed feel much less strongly."

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# VIEWPOINTS

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## Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

Dear Editor—

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon  
115 West Ninety Fifth Street

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

"Is There a Santa Claus?" reprinted from the September 21, 1897, number of The New York Sun.

### ANOTHER VIEW



## Coalition continues worthy fight against agribiz insiders



Jim Hightower

In the 1980s, when I was Texas Ag commissioner, my staff and I proposed a comprehensive set of state rules to protect farmworkers, public health, our water supplies and farmers themselves from the life-threatening consequences of toxic pesticides.

But trying to enact these policies in Texas meant taking on the enormous money and power of the chemical lobby, as well as a hostile Republican governor, and a legislature largely made up of corporate lapdogs. All of the above were howling furiously at us, snarling that they were going to shred the new protections we'd laid out. When I told my legislative director that it seemed like the political odds were against us, his response was not a confidence booster: "Some of the evens are against us, too," he said.

Yet, by rallying a big coalition of family farmers, consumers, environmentalists, labor groups, church leaders, and others, and then bringing these "outsiders" inside the usually closed legislative lair to confront the cozy club of lawmakers and lobbyists — we won!

Fast forward a few decades

and I find we continue to fight these very same battles even today. As his first official act as Trump's EPA chief, industry lapdog Scott Pruitt rejected a petition to ban Dow Chemical's insecticide, chlorpyrifos. The neurotoxin's well-documented and persistent dangers include stunting children's brain development. But never mind: Dow contributed to The Donald's inauguration festivities.

Meanwhile, after Monsanto's RoundUp herbicide and its "RoundUp Ready" GMO seeds sparked a global plague of new superweeds, the company responded by apologizing. (Just kidding.) In fact, Monsanto is now rolling out yet another patented and pricey line of genetically engineered, herbicide-resistant crop seeds that the top weed scientists say will evolve even harder weeds. And both scientists and farmers have also flagged a more urgent problem: The herbicide the company is pushing — dicamba — is volatile and drift-prone. Last summer, Midwestern farmers reported huge losses related to clouds of neighbors' dicamba drifting over and killing their unpatented crops.

"You're going to have to buy their [GMO seeds] because their chemical is drifting around," one Missouri farmer told the New York Times. That's quite a business model.

But there's encouraging

news, too: farmers, scientists and consumers are fighting back, and global health agencies are responding to the threats. Thailand, Brazil and Canada recently banned a range of toxic agrochemicals, and the European Parliament recently reviewed RoundUp's key ingredient, glyphosate, now found in 45 percent of Europe's topsoil, and extended the licensing for the chemical's use for only another five years.

Today's Good Food forces (consisting of the grassroots people and groups worldwide striving to build a sustainable, equitable agricultural system) are under constant attack by the moneyed forces of agribusiness, which view food as nothing but another assembly line product to be fabricated by any means that fatten the corporate bottom line. We're in an ongoing, momentous struggle (cultural, economic, political and moral) over the very nature and future of food, and our best path to victory is to do as we did in Texas three decades ago: to forge coalitions of outsiders to confront and expose the self-enriching cabal of insiders.

The Pesticide Action Network is a tremendous worldwide resource for farmers and consumers alike looking for ways to fight for safe, sustainable alternatives.

Jim Hightower is an author, radio commentator and a columnist with Creators Syndicate.

### SQUALL LINE

For my New Year's resolution, I resolve to increase my criticizing of Trump and his accomplices. Merry Christmas!

Obama's greatest achievement and lasting legacy: the first selfie president

Has anyone really looked at this so-called tax cut? How is this going to save middle class Americans anything. Congress et al are supposed to work to benefits all Americans not just big corporations. Check it out.

Carter blamed Americans for his economic disaster. That's how we got Reagan. Obama did the same and that's how we got Trump.

2018 will see 4% growth. Americans vote

the economy. Republicans will sweep.

The Florbama TV series demonstrates the wisdom of PCB citizens in banning alcohol in March.

Do not fire Mueller. He's uncovering all the Democrat corruption while exonerating Trump.

It took Obama eight years to corrupt every institution in Washington. It will take Trump and Pence 16 years to heal the damage.

America was founded as a classless society. But Dems rank citizens by gender, dozens of sexual orientations, poor, rich, political preference and then bestow benefits based on their own criteria.

So glad to leave a crime-ridden city controlled by Democrats and move to conservative NW Florida. Saving thousands in taxes.

Please Hillary, run in 2020. You too Bernie. Stronger together, I'm with her. What a winning combination.

If GOP actually READ the Bible they would know that their policies would NOT be accepted by Jesus! He was for the poor! They are for the rich!

The answer my friend is blowing in the wind. It was so strong though that I could not catch it. So the answer is still out there. Sorry people. I tried.

For those hard to buy for

gift cards are perfect. It makes sense to me to buy something that I want than get something that will sit in a drawer forever.

What a ridiculous advert! A child thanking Trump for ALLOWING us to say Merry Christmas! What a load of garbage! NO one has ever been told they can't say it. Stupidity on steroids

New Years resolutions are a waste of time. Rarely if ever does anyone keep them. Just save your breath and the embarrassment of not caring through on them.

Trump and Haley! Rule the world!

Bay County Trump voters live in the same alternate universe as their beloved

leader! Truth and facts don't matter in their world. We in the real world insist on both!

Go Nikki Haley! Now can we kick the abominable United Nations OUT of the United States!

A liberal is someone who would deny a poor person getting \$10 if it meant a wealthy person got \$11.

You can tell the govt-employee-hater doesn't get any paid vacation - squalls have become unimaginative and forced.

Workplace rules for men: Do not touch a women, no handshakes or hugs, even if she initiates it. Do not compliment a women. Avoid any interaction. Only then will you be safe.

## PERSONAL FINANCE



# Living lighter

*How to live below your means without feeling deprived*

By **Jeanne Lee**  
NerdWallet.com

Financial experts often recommend living on at least 15 percent less than the amount you earn. We asked several for their best tips on how to live below your means without feeling like you're missing out.

■ **Be your money's boss.**

Assigning a job for every dollar can be empowering. The popular 50/30/20 budget recommended by consumer advocate Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., divides money into the categories of needs, wants, and savings and debt repayment.

"Make financial choices for the month in the quiet of your own head, or with your partner, in advance — not in the moment. That way you can feel great about your spending," says Charlie Bolognino, a certified financial planner in Plymouth, Minnesota.

■ **Save off the top.**

Divert money from each paycheck before you're tempted by it. Once you start, it becomes painless to save through 401(k) paycheck deductions at work, or automatic monthly transfers to a savings or investment account.

"Start small and add a

percent or two every time your income goes up," says Leon LaBrecque, CEO of LJPR Financial Advisors in Troy, Michigan.

■ **Pay yourself.**

When you finish paying off something, whether a smartphone, car or college education, continue making the same monthly payments you're accustomed to — but stash the money in an interest-bearing savings account and let it accumulate.

■ **Live off one income.**

Arranging your household costs so just one person's pay covers the bills provides significant financial freedom. Earmark the second paycheck for maxing out retirement savings, investing or paying off debt. It also provides flexibility for life events like an

unexpected job loss or having one parent stay home with young children for a time.

■ **Cut meaningless expenses.**

Are you eating out too frequently, subscribing to boring cable channels or paying for unused memberships? Eliminating costs you don't care about frees up money for things you truly enjoy.

**Try this:**

Write down what you value in life. Then look closely at your last few financial statements. Do your purchases match your values?

■ **Drive used.**

Do you really need that brand-new car that loses 20 percent of its value as you drive it off the lot and comes with a \$500 monthly payment? Purchasing a previously owned car, and paying cash, means you skip the stress of an auto loan on top of other expenses of car ownership.

"Remember, your car is only transportation. Used cars from rental agencies are good" to buy, Manuel says — "low mileage and under warranty."



BIGSTOCK IMAGES

## Dodge the drama of family loans

By **Amrita Jayakumar**  
NerdWallet.com

Financial advisors don't always agree, but when it comes to lending money to family, there's consensus: Tread carefully.

If an adult child needs help buying a first home or has a promising business idea, a family loan can be a fast and convenient option. But there's a risk of drama down the road.

It can also be a way to help young adults learn about financial responsibility, says Walter Pressey, a retired financial industry executive in Boston who loaned money to two of his four adult children with LoanKin, a loan servicing website.

But loans can be uncomfortable for giver and receiver. If you're the family ATM, you may have trouble saying "no" and thus jeopardize your own finances. If you're the one asking family for money, you may feel a sense of obligation over payments that strains the relationship.

Before loaning money, financial planners recommend considering the impact on your own goals, such as retirement. And while your loved one may have every intention of paying you back, be sure you can afford to part with the money if things go south, says Eric Gabor, a certified financial planner with Eagle Grove Advisors in New Jersey.

Family loans may also come with tax considerations, whether the lender charges interest or not. Charge zero interest, and you may face a gift tax; a borrower who receives a gift may have to report it as taxable income. Tack on an interest charge and you must follow IRS-specified guidelines for the rate you charge and report it as income.

**Exhaust other options first**

When weighing the pros and cons of a family loan, consider alternative options, including a personal loan borrowed from a bank, credit union or online lender that can be used for any purpose. Taking out a personal loan co-signed by a family member who has good credit may require more disciplined payback than borrowing directly from the relative, and paying it back can build your credit score. Bear in mind that not repaying a co-signed loan can ruin your loved one's credit as well as your own, and he or she will have to repay it if you cannot.

**Assess the reason for the request**

If you are lending the money, set your emotions aside and look at the reason for the loan. Has your family member been rejected by banks and other lenders? If so, why? Will your loan help promote good financial decisions? "Good" reasons for a loan could include buying a house or starting a business, while "bad" reasons could be paying credit card or gambling debt, Gabor said.

**Spell out terms**

One way to avoid future problems is to use a family loan agreement, says Derek Tharp, a certified financial planner at Conscious Capital in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Signing a promissory note with the family members involved and getting it notarized may seem impersonal, but it can prevent hurt feelings and disputes.

## Are you paying too much for financial advice?

By **Liz Weston** | NerdWallet.com

Investment management can cost as little as 0.25 percent of a portfolio's value each year. Yet many people still pay 1 percent, or even more, for financial advice.

Whether they're getting a good deal depends on what they get in exchange. Spoiler alert: Many should be getting a lot more, or paying a lot less.

Financial advice can encompass a lot of different services, which fall primarily into two camps:

• **Investment management**, which

includes picking the right mix of stocks, bonds and cash.

• **Financial planning**, which can include everything from budgeting advice to estate planning.

Comprehensive financial planners have traditionally supplied both investment management and planning services, often charging a percentage of the clients' assets that they manage. A recent survey of nearly 1,000 financial planners by Inside Information, a trade publication, found that the bigger the portfolio, the lower the percentage clients paid. The median annual charge was 1

percent for portfolios of \$1 million or less, sliding to 0.5 percent for portfolios of \$5 million to \$10 million. The survey focused on independent advisors who typically charge fees, rather than brokers or insurance agents who are often paid by commissions.

Bob Veres, the Inside Information publisher who conducted the survey and who has tracked the financial planning industry for decades, says any advisor who "merely" provides a well-allocated portfolio and periodic statements is overcharging at anything more than 0.5 percent.

Most advisors handling portfolios

worth less than \$1 million charge between 1 percent and 2 percent of assets under management, Veres found. That may be a reasonable amount, if clients are getting plenty of financial planning services. But some charge more than 2 percent, and a handful charge in excess of 4 percent. It's hard to imagine what might justify those costs.

Advice fees are in addition to whatever the clients pay for the underlying investments, and those costs can vary enormously as well. Costs matter, because they erode how much money a client can accumulate over time.

# 2017 YEAR END CLEARANCE

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# LOCAL & STATE

2017: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## Patronis a 'player in Tallahassee'

**CFO appointment adds to county's political presence**

By John Henderson  
522-5108 | @PCNHJohn  
jhenderson@pcnh.com

*Editor's note: This is one of the year's Top 10 news stories selected by readers and News Herald staff. This series will run daily through Dec. 31, when the year's No. 1 story will appear. A comprehensive Year in Review special section will publish in early January. Find additional related content at newsherald.com.*

PANAMA CITY BEACH — Beach native Jimmy Patronis's phone buzzed with more than 300 texts — a personal record — when news broke in June Gov. Rick Scott had picked him to be the state's chief financial officer (CFO).

It was the first time anyone could remember a Bay County resident nabbing one of the state's three cabinet positions — a big deal politically. As former speaker of the Florida House Allan Bense put it, the appointment showed the region has a "player in Tallahassee."

"It just gives the perception

**INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Bay County's 2017 power players | **B4**

Sports top 10: Blouinstown football has banner year | **C1**

Video from Patronis' hurricane tours of the state | **NEWSHERALD.COM**

that we're strong," Bense said. "It is important to have someone from Panama City or Bay County on the Cabinet. There are issues out there he can help advocate for us."

See **PATRONIS, B4**



Jimmy Patronis speaks Oct. 23 during a celebration for the 50th anniversary of Capt. Anderson's Restaurant and Waterfront Market, which his family owns and operates. [PATTI BLAKE/THE NEWS HERALD]



Rosalyn Marie Mitchell wears an elf hat on Dec. 21, 2017. . [PHOTOS BY PATTI BLAKE/THE NEWS HERALD]

## Santa babies

Gulf Coast gives elf hats to newborns

By Katie Landeck

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PANAMA CITY — Christine and Jonathan Mitchell got their Christmas wish this year — a healthy baby girl.

"It's the perfect gift," said Jonathan, looking at little Rosalyn Marie.

Baby Rosalyn was dressed for the season with a red and white striped elf hat on Thursday, courtesy of the Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center maternity ward.

"Is there anything cuter than a baby in an elf hat? It's just adorable," said hospital spokeswoman Brittany Cole. "It just adds a little something extra to the experience that these parents have while they are here at our facility."

See **BABIES, B2**



New parents, Jonathan and Christine Mitchell hold their daughter Rosalyn Marie. Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center gave over 150 elf hats to babies born at the hospital in December.

## Designing outfits for Mr. and Mrs. Claus



Mrs. Claus Darline Ray displays her "New Orleans Mrs. Claus" design in her shop at her home. [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

**Suits by Washington County's Mrs. Claus make mark on Christmas around the world**

By Jacqueline Bostick  
850-630-6167 | @JBostick  
jbostick@chipleypaper.com

CHIPLEY — There's nowhere the Ray family travels locally that doesn't garner wishful glances and faith-filled whispers, perhaps because being a Claus is more than wearing the costume.

"The first suit I ever made ... was for Santa Rex, about 20 years ago," said "Mrs. Claus," Darline Ray of her husband, standing next to a dress form that held a visibly heavy muted-red corduroy suit.

The church had picked

Rex Ray to do "the kneeling Santa" scene in a Christmas play, where Santa delivers the Christ child. It was Santa Ray Rex's first time acting as Santa.

"They put him in some K-Mart suit," Darline Ray said with a grimace. "So, the next year, I decided I would make him a Victorian suit."

"And that's my favorite," she added. "I don't think I'll ever get rid of it."

Rex and Darline Ray have converted their home into a sort-of Santa's workshop to tailor costumes for thousands of Mr. and Mrs. Clauses across the world.

"We don't want to pull away from the image that most people have of Santa and Mrs. Claus," said Rex Ray, a professional Santa

Claus of 20 years. "But Santa and Mrs. Claus are people. You know how ladies are, especially, about wanting a new outfit every now and then. (Changing costumes) also helps to give that image of Santa and Mrs. Claus as more of a normal person."

Now trending on the Claus fashion scene is the Santa COOL Suit, design patent pending.

"It's very comfortable to wear," Ray Rex said. "Most Santa suits come lined with satin — very heavy, very hot. We line this whole suit with the same material used to line men's swim trunks — kind of a netting, so it breathes, very light-weight."

The all-machine washable

See **OUTFITS, B3**

POLITICS | B3

### ROLL CALL

It was a big for Congress. See how local representatives voted.

## Handmade quilts are donated to sheriff's office

By Tyra L. Jackson

850-522-5121 | @TyraJackPCNH  
tjackson@pcnh.com

BAY COUNTY — A Bay County woman is making sure children who are encountered by deputies from the Bay County Sheriff's Office are comforted one stitch at a time.

Haley McConnell of Southport began sewing a few years ago, after two special women in her life inspired her to pick up a sewing needle.

"My grandmother sewed a lot," she said. "When I met my husband, his mother sewed a lot."

Tuesday, she donated 70 trunk quilts to the Bay County Sheriff's Office for children who deputies might meet during a

See **QUILTS, B4**



HISTORIC PRESERVATION B6

### RESTORING HISTORIC HOUSE

An Apalachicola eco-tourism company, with a grand plan to revitalize the now-shuttered Harbormaster House, has secured a 10-year lease.



## LOCAL & STATE

# ROLL CALL

Thomas Voting Reports

WASHINGTON — Here's how area members of Congress — Reps. Matt Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, and Neal Dunn, R-Panama City, and Sens. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., and Marco Rubio, R-Fla. — voted on major issues in the week ending Dec. 22.

### HOUSE

**REPUBLICAN TAX OVERHAUL:** Voting 227 for and 203 against, the House on Tuesday adopted the conference report on a GOP-drafted bill (HR 1) that would permanently reduce the top corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent; temporarily lower personal income taxes for most Americans; permanently cut the inheritance tax; open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling; repeal the 2010 health law's individual mandate and make numerous other changes to the tax code and domestic programs, many of them not yet publicly identified in the almost 500-page measure. The bill would reduce business and personal taxes by about \$1.5 trillion through fiscal 2027 and add at least \$1 trillion to the \$20.6 trillion national debt over 10 years, according to official projections. Because the bill triggers a pay-as-you-go rule, it is likely to require cuts over time in safety-net programs including Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, according to the Congressional Budget Office. A one-year, \$25 billion Medicare spending cut is factored into the bill.

The bill would allow a \$10,000 deduction for various combinations of state and local income taxes, property taxes and in some cases sales taxes. This would replace provisions in current law that allow most if not all non-federal income taxes and property taxes to be deducted on federal returns. Under the bill, the \$4,050 personal exemption would be ended and the standard deduction permanently doubled to \$12,000 for individuals and \$24,000 for joint filers, while the child tax credit would be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and made refundable for low-income families. Exemptions from the estate tax would be permanently doubled to \$11 million for individuals and \$22 million for couples, leaving fewer than 2,000 Americans subject to the federal tax on inherited wealth. The bill reduces the top personal tax rate from 39.6 percent to 37 percent while specifying seven brackets with rates of 10, 12, 22, 24, 32, 35 and 37 percent. The bottom bracket applies to incomes under \$19,050 and the top one to single incomes over \$500,000 and joint incomes over \$600,000. Most households earning less than \$75,000 would face higher tax bills starting in 2027 than they do under current law, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation. By requiring most Americans to obtain health insurance or pay a penalty, the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate helps spread healthcare costs throughout the population. Its repeal in 2019 under

this bill is projected to add 13 million individuals to uninsured rolls by 2027 and immediately trigger increases in health insurance premiums. The bill ends the Alternative Minimum Tax for corporations but retains it for single incomes over \$500,000 and joint incomes over \$1 million. The purpose of the AMT is to prevent affluent filers from using loopholes to avoid federal income taxes. A yes vote was to approve the conference report. Voting yes: Gaetz, Dunn **\$81 BILLION FOR HURRICANE, WILDFIRE RELIEF:** Voting 251 for and 169 against, the House on Friday passed a bill (HR 4667) that would appropriate \$81 billion to fund recovery from hurricanes Maria, Harvey and Irma and this year's wildfires in California. Because this is emergency spending not offset elsewhere in the budget, it would be added to federal deficits. The bill provides \$28 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster-relief fund; \$26 billion in grants to communities, \$12 billion for infrastructure projects and hundreds of millions for loan programs and wildfire recovery. A yes vote was to send the bill to the Senate. Voting yes: Gaetz, Dunn **FOUR WEEKS' STOPGAP FUNDING:** Voting 231 for and 188 against, the House on Friday adopted a bill (HR 1370) that would fund the government on a stopgap basis through Jan. 19, giving lawmakers more time to negotiate issues such as renewal of

Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), the future of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for "dreamers" and the lifting of domestic as well as military spending caps on fiscal 2018 appropriations. The bill also would temporarily extend the Children's Health Insurance Program and fund community health centers. A yes vote was to send the bill to the Senate. Voting yes: Dunn Voting no: Gaetz

### SENATE

**REPUBLICAN TAX OVERHAUL:** Voting 51 for and 48 against, the Senate on Wednesday joined the House (above) in approving the conference report on a GOP bill (HR 1) that was headed to President Trump for his signature. The bill includes these provisions in addition to ones noted above: For owners of pass-through entities such as S corporations, partnerships and limited liability companies — whose income is taxed at personal rather than corporate rates — the bill allows 20 percent of earnings to be deducted from taxable income. In addition to helping owners of small businesses with payrolls, the pass-through provision will yield tax major savings to developers with large holdings of depreciable real estate and investors in real estate instruments. The bill would impose a 1.4 percent excise tax on the earnings of college and university endowments valued at \$500,000

or more per enrolled student, affecting about 30 institutions. The bill expands so-called 529 college savings plans to allow tax-free withdrawals of up to \$10,000 per child per year for paying expenses at religious and private K-12 schools. In addition, the bill permits balances from 529 education accounts to be rolled over to so-called ABLE accounts that allow tax-free withdrawals for expenses for caring for people with disabilities. Alimony payments starting in 2019 can no longer be claimed as a deductible expense, and recipients of alimony will no longer have to pay taxes on the payments they receive. The bill reduces from \$1 million to \$750,000 the cap on mortgage debt for which taxpayers can deduct interest payments and ends deductions for interest paid on home-equity loans. For 2017 and 2018 tax returns, the bill allows medical expenses above 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income to be deducted from taxable income, compared to the current 10 percent threshold. The threshold will revert to 10 percent in 2019 and later years. The bill allows deductions for losses attributable to floods, fires and other catastrophes only if the event is a presidentially declared natural disaster, and it extends rules that allow per-event losses topping \$100 to be deducted only if collective losses from disasters total at least 10 percent of adjusted gross income. In addition, the bill suspends through 2025

the deductibility of fees that high-end filers pay to investment advisers; tightens rules for converting individual retirement accounts to Roth IRAs; ends the deductibility of most moving expenses; exempts forgiven student debt from taxation in the event of permanent disability or death; ends the deductibility of tax-preparation expenses including accountants' bills and outlays for software; ends deductions for costs associated with riding a bicycle to work and tightens rules for deducting gambling losses. The bill replaces the Consumer Price Index as a measurement for adjusting tax brackets for inflation, instead using the less generous "chained CPI" for protecting earners against the bracket creep that results when incomes rise because of inflation. Voting yes: Rubio Voting no: Nelson **FOUR WEEKS' STOPGAP FUNDING:** Voting 66 for and 32 against, the Senate on Friday joined the House (above) in passing a bill (HR 1370) that would fund the government on a stopgap basis through Jan. 19, averting a partial government shutdown slated to occur several hours later at midnight. A yes vote was to send the bill to President Trump for his signature. Voting yes: Rubio, Nelson

### KEY VOTES AHEAD

The House and Senate have adjourned until the opening of the Second Session of the 115th Congress on Jan. 3.

## OUTFITS

From Page B1

suit with removable white fur, matching shirt, and removable buttons starts out at about \$950.

It was introduced in 2015 to professional Santas at a convention in Branson, Mo., and has since kept Mrs. Claus rather busy this time of year, with her creations

having been shipped to Japan, Germany and to U.S. destinations from California to Virginia, the Clauses said.

The COOL suit is a design of one of the original Santa Claus designs, known as the "C. W. Howard suit" after its designer Charles W. Howard who popularly portrayed Santa Claus in the mid-1900s.

Darline Ray's design is also featured in the Philadelphia Thanksgiving

Parade, which is the nation's oldest parade.

Besides suits, the couple makes a variety of custom-made accessories, including, garment bags, boot bags, ball caps, vests and patches.

Another dress form in the shop holds a design Darline Ray dubbed the "New Orleans Mrs. Claus" - a Victorian-style candy-apple red suede jacket and skirt with white fur trimming and embroidery and a custom

designed gold belt buckle. An equally red white-laced trimmed hat with an elaborate veil finished the ensemble.

"I just want something new for the kids to see," Darline Ray said, "but I want them to see that image of Mrs. Claus that they have pictured in their minds."

While some designs have an adaptable flair, the Rays are resolved to present the classic Santa and Mrs. Claus within

each style.

"Santa is a very modest person ... he's there for the children," Darline Ray said.

"For me, I like to keep it calm and simple so that the kids can recognize him" and "I am totally covered from my neck down" because Mrs. Claus "is a grandmotherly figure, very lady-like."

Just as the old Christmas play suit, Ray Rex hasn't let go of his Santa persona.

It's in the baby powder he lightly sprinkles in his beard to soothe babies when parents place them in his arms. It's in Mrs. Claus' polar bear puppet Snow Flake, who welcomes toddlers to tell Santa Claus what's on their wish lists.

"You don't pick the suit, the suit picks you," Rex Ray said. "Santa's here," he said, placing his hands over his heart.

"It's not in the suit, it's not in the beard,"

## OBITUARIES

### ERNEST RYALS "BUCK" MARTIN

Ernest Ryals "Buck" Martin, age 78, of Ocala, FL, passed peacefully from this world into the loving arms of his Savior Wednesday, December 13, 2017.

Buck enjoyed worshipping the Lord at Alford Baptist Church for many years prior to moving to Ocala where he attended Trinity Baptist Church. He was a member of the Florida Army National Guard. Buck loved fishing, hunting, and looking for treasures at garage sales.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 52 years, Nan Martin. He was a loving father to Walt and Kim Martin of Colorado Springs, CO, and Lee and Courtney Martin of Ocala, FL.

Left to cherish his memory are his sister Josephine Tharp of Dothan, Alabama, his three grandchildren; Kristopher, Jacob, and Owen, as well as numerous other family members and friends.

A celebration of life will be held at 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 28, 2017 at Alford Baptist Church in Alford, FL, with the Reverend Bob Johnson officiating.

Visitation will be held one hour prior to the service. In lieu of flowers the family request that donations be made in his memory to the Alford Baptist Church, 1764 Carolina St, Alford, FL, 32420. Friends and family may sign the online register at forestmeadowsfh.com.

### MARY FELSOCI SELGRATH

Mary Felsoci Selgrath passed away peacefully on December 22, 2017. Mary was born on April 29, 1931 in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, the third of six children. Her father, Michael was a coal miner and her mother, Susan was a homemaker. Both Mary's parents and her older brother and sister emigrated from Slovakia.

Mary attended school in the Tamaqua, Pennsylvania area and graduated from high school in 1949. Having lost her father to black lung six years earlier, Mary worked to help support the family by babysitting and modeling bathing suits for a local swimwear manufacturer.

In 1957, Mary married James J. Selgrath from nearby Mahanoy City and moved to Key West, Florida for Jim's first of many naval base attachments.



In the 22 years of being a naval officer's wife, Mary lived twice in Monterey, California, twice in San Diego, California, Virginia Beach, Virginia and in Beeville, Texas. The life of a naval officer's wife truly suited Mary for she loved the social aspect - parties, socializing, and dancing, living in California after growing up in a small town, and the camaraderie of wives and families supporting

each other while the men were in Vietnam.

Upon retirement, Jim and Mary moved with their three children back to Hometown, Pennsylvania near both sets of relatives. Years later Mary and Jim moved to Panama City, Florida to be near their daughter Susan (Cliff) and their first two grandchildren, Lynne and Mary Higby. A lifelong practicing Catholic, the church sustained Mary especially during her husband's tours of duty during the Vietnam war. Mary was a member of St. John Catholic Church in Panama City.

Mary was predeceased by her loving husband of 51 years, Jim, and leaves behind her youngest and only surviving sibling Andrew (Marilyn) Felsoci, daughter Susan (Cliff) Higby, James (Jessica)

Selgrath, Eric (Gina) Selgrath, granddaughters Lynne and Mary Higby, Nora Selgrath, and 17 nieces and nephews.

Mary will always be remembered for her love of animals and compassion for those less fortunate. She loved to be outdoors and was an avid walker. She will be remembered as a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt, and will be missed by all.

A Mass will be celebrated in Pennsylvania for both Mary and Jim in the spring of 2018 and interment will be at Indiantown Gap National Cemetery in Pennsylvania.

If desired, contributions may be made to Mary's favorite charity, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital or your local humane society.

### Guidelines and deadlines

Obituary notices are written by funeral homes and relatives of the deceased. The News Herald reserves the right to edit for AP style and format. Families submitting notices must type them in a typeface and font that can be scanned into a computer. Deadline for obituaries is 3 p.m. daily for the following day's newspaper. Obituaries may be e-mailed to [pcnhobits@pcnh.com](mailto:pcnhobits@pcnh.com) or delivered to The News Herald, 501 W. 11th St., Panama City. View today's obituaries and sign today's obituaries and sign the online guest books of your loved ones at [newsherald.com/obituaries](http://newsherald.com/obituaries).

# PATRONIS

From Page B1

As CFO, Patronis, a former state legislator whose family owns Capt. Anderson's seafood restaurant in Panama City Beach, is in charge of the state's checkbook while overseeing an agency with about 2,000 employees and a budget of \$298 million.

It's a prestigious position with a lot of traveling — since his official start date on July 1 he has put more than 20,000 miles on his car — and a lot of complex problems.

But ultimately it boils down to the reason Patronis originally got into politics: helping people.

"I wake up every day and go to work for Florida families," Patronis said in a statement. "Everything I do focuses on fighting for firefighters and first responders, cultivating economic growth, and protecting our state from fraud. Since July 1,



**Hillsborough County residents speak with CFO Jimmy Patronis as he tours the county to view damage and help affected residents in September.**  
[CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

our Division of Investigative and Forensic Services made 305 insurance fraud arrests with 243 of those successfully prosecuted; our Division of Consumer Services helped recover \$11.9 million for Florida consumers; and our Division of Unclaimed Property returned \$113.5 million to Floridians."

Patronis long has been a political star in the county. From 2006 to

## BAY'S 2017 POWER PLAYERS

With his new title as CFO, Jimmy Patronis was one of Bay County's most visible politicians this year, but the county also saw several other locals take positions with state and national reach.

**Allen Bense:** First elected as a state representative in 1998, Bense has been a Florida political powerhouse for decades and is most well known for his term as Speaker of the House from 2004 to 2006. While he's retired from the legislature, he currently serves as the inaugural chairman of Triumph Gulf Coast, giving him a powerful voice on the fate of \$1.5 billion worth of oil spill funding. Bense will hand the reins to former Florida senate president and Niceville resident Don Gaetz in 2018 but will remain on the board.

**Rep. Neal Dunn:** In his first term in Congress, Dunn, a veteran, has emerged as a strong voice on military issues, sitting on the Committee of Veterans Affairs. He introduced several pieces of legislation this year meant to improve the treatment of veterans, including one to protect veterans from opioid abuse and another to help them further their education.

**State Sen. George Gainer:** A county commissioner turned state senator, Gainer has spent his first term in Tallahassee advocating for local voices to be heard. One of his biggest wins this year was ensuring county governments would have a say in determining how oil spill money is spent.

**State Rep. Jay Trumbull:** Another key voice on oil spill funding, Trumbull, the chairman of the House Select Committee on Triumph Gulf Coast, also had a heavy hand in how oil spill money is spent. He also has positioned himself to become a leader on local mental health and opioid issues heading into the new year.

**Bo Rivard:** While his day job isn't in politics, people likely will be hearing more from local attorney Bo Rivard in the upcoming year. Rivard recently was voted the chairman of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, making him one of the most important voices in the state on conservation, fishing and hunting.

2014, he served four terms in the Florida House of Representatives. After that, he was an early supporter of Scott, who in turn appointed him to the Public Service Commission, the Constitution Revision Commission and now, CFO.

"He was born a politician. He would welcome everyone into the restaurant as a child," his mother, Helen Patronis,

said in June. "It's in his blood. I always told him if there was a choice between the restaurant and politics, 'You chose politics because it's in your blood.' He loves helping people."

Patronis was appointed to the position when Jeff Atwater stepped down to take a post at Florida Atlantic University, but the CFO normally is an elected position. As such, Patronis

is currently campaigning to keep his spot in 2018.

He has dashed out ahead of the two other candidates who have filed to run in fundraising, Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Margate and Republican Antwanet Iotova of Hollywood. Patronis began December with \$1.26 million in the bank through his campaign account and a political action committee. Patronis said in a prepared

statement that people are seeing the results of his term so far in office, and it's been an honor to serve as Florida's CFO.

"Florida is in good fiscal health and I commend Governor Rick Scott for his work to ensure we have a stable economic climate that supports job creation," he said.

*Katie Landeck contributed to this report.*

# QUILTS

From Page B1

call. The quilts are called trunk quilts because they are stored in the trunks of deputies's vehicles in case they encounter children who've been involved in a traumatic incident like a car accident, said BCSO Public Information Officer Ruth Corley.

"There are calls in which a deputy will come across children which will need to be placed in a safe home," she said.

"These children are very scared, or sad. By giving them a quilt to wrap up in, the young child is comforted."

Individuals from Quilting By the Bay and McConnell's mother-in-law pitched in some blankets to add to the pile of quilts that featured astronauts, butterflies, turtles, Disney characters and other designs.

This is the first year McConnell donated the quilts, but it isn't her last year.

"[The quilts] will go on through the year. When they run out, they will

contact me," she said. "I'll sew the whole time. I'm making quilts now."

The sheriff's department appreciates the warm gifts.

"We are so appreciative of the hard work that went into making each quilt, and the generosity of those that donated materials and then spent their time putting them together. They are bright and cheery, and will surely help comfort a child facing what may be their most awful experience," Corley said.

Corley said the department has used donated quilts and teddy bears from

the community in the past. She said the donations are another tool for deputies to do their jobs effectively.

"Sheriff Ford and our deputies are so appreciative of this kind of support from members of the community," Corley said. "Bay County residents have always been so generous and kind. This is just another example. It is an honor to serve and protect this community."

If anyone is interested in donating quilts sized 36"X48", fabric or batting, they can drop off the items at Quilting by the Bay, 2303 Winona Drive.



**Haley McConnell of Southport donated dozens of quilts to the Bay County Sheriff's Office last week.** [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

## COASTAL SKIN SURGERY AND DERMATOLOGY WELCOMES...



Since 2010, Coastal Skin Surgery and Dermatology has provided the most up-to-date skin care techniques and procedures. We believe that healthy, beautiful skin is attainable and that skin cancer can be treated easily and effectively. This mission has allowed our practice to be named "Best Dermatology Practice On The Emerald Coast" for six consecutive years (2012-2017).

We are pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Jessica Clark to our healthcare team. Dr. Clark is board certified by the American Board of Dermatology and specializes in adult, pediatric, and cosmetic dermatology. Originally from Pennsylvania, Dr. Clark received her medical degree with honors from Texas A&M. She performed her dermatology residency and served as an academic dermatologist at Tulane University. Dr. Clark is a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology.

With the addition of Dr. Clark, Coastal Skin Surgery and Dermatology has six board-certified dermatologists, including one fellowship trained MOHS surgeon, & four board-certified physician assistants.

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## Notice of Medical Practice Change

Dr. L. Scott Ennis will not be affiliated with Destin Plastic Surgery and will be relocating as of January 1, 2018 to:

Address: **City Market Bayside  
4495 Furling Lane  
Destin FL 32541**

Phone: **850-634-3830**

Email address: **info@ennismd.com**

Requests for medical records after 12/31/2017 should be directed to 850-634-3830 or through the website [www.EnnisMD.com](http://www.EnnisMD.com).

If Medical Records are needed prior to that time, call 850-654-1194.

**Dr William Burden,**  
the Destin Plastic Surgery founder,  
Bill Edelman, PA, Joan Pleat, RN, BSN,  
and staff will remain at  
Destin Plastic Surgery's current location.





# Emerald Coast Behavioral Hospital

*Providing Comfort in Crisis*



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# City to lease Harbormaster House

By David Adlerstein  
653-8894 | Apalachicola Times  
dadlerstein@starfl.com

APALACHICOLA — An Apalachicola eco-tourism company, with a grand plan to revitalize the now-shuttered Harbormaster House at Scipio Creek, has secured a 10-year lease on the facility.

By a unanimous vote at a special meeting Dec. 14, Apalachicola city commissioners unanimously approved the lease terms with Florida Geotourism

Associates LLC (FGA), a four-year old ecotourism company owned by retired firefighter Mike Vroegop and his wife Robin. The lease is now being drawn up by City Attorney Pat Floyd.

With an extensive display of colorful bar charts on display on easels in the city commission room, and a 20-page summary of the project distributed to commissioners, the Vroegops contended their plans embodied a public-private partnership that would reap extensive benefits for

the community at large and taxpayers in particular.

The Vroegops' proposed contract, which had been modified following a back-and-forth with Floyd ever since commissioners during the September budget hearing gave the Vroegops the go-ahead to negotiate, called for a \$1,000 a month rent for each of the next five years, and then five one-year extensions which would allow for a 3 percent annual rent hike.

In addition, the Vroegops

propose to invest about \$16,000 the first year for heating, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing and window repairs, including painting the interior, replacing the refrigerator and rekeying the 28-year-old building, which has been vacant ever since the St. Vincent Island National Wildlife Refuge moved its offices out three years ago.

The Vroegops' investment would be about \$13,500 the second year, with more improvements to the heating and air conditioning system, as well as repairs to the exterior decking and siding. About \$10,000 would be invested in the third year of the contract, said the Vroegops, including treating and staining the exterior wood siding and decking.

In the fourth year of the deal, the Vroegops said that as part of \$30,000 in improvements, they would work to secure a state grant for the city to replace the ramp so that it complies with Americans for Disability Act requirements, as well as do renovations of the exterior stairs and landscaping.

The fifth and sixth years call for a total of about \$14,000 in improvements, including major repairs to the restrooms, work on fixtures and carpet replacement.

"It's a really terrific property in a terrific location, with a lot of potential," said Robin Vroegop. "We intend to make it a destination. It will be spectacular."

She stressed that their vision encompasses keeping the center area, about 468 square feet, as community space that could feature an exhibit on the river's maritime heritage. Vroegop mentioned connecting the space to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Florida Youth Conservation Centers network, to the nationwide Project WILD conservation education program, and to the Florida Disability Outdoors Association's SportsAbility program.

"It's a great venue to introduce kids to fishing," said Robin Vroegop. "To let them fish while their parents are shopping."

The FGA, which had been located in office space in the Slice restaurant building, adjacent to the Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce, offers kayak rentals and water-based tours, as well as workforce training and



The Harbormaster House [ DAVID ADLERSTEIN | THE TIMES ]

student education, with the aim of "forging a 'geotourism' destination brand identity and tool-box for Florida tourism marketers."

"Geotourists are those seeking a deeper understanding and appreciation of the unique natural assets, history, and cultural heritage of Florida's Coastal Plain, as well as a readily accessible means to experience those assets firsthand through knowledgeable guided interpretation; carefully planned infrastructure for the facilitation of independent exploration; activities and experiential learning for diverse age and interest groups; and opportunities for meaningful cultural participation," according to Robin Vroegop's LinkedIn profile.

"We don't foresee that there will be conflicts with existing commercial vendors," she told commissioners.

Mike Vroegop stressed that dating back to the budget hearings, in anticipation of inking a deal, he and his wife have contributed about 338 volunteer hours to the project, in assessing and working on the building, and that in the first three years they will contribute over 1,000 such hours, an important component of any grant application. The Vroegops said creation of a Maritime Heritage Center, open to the community, on the first floor is in keeping with the vision outlined in a 2008 feasibility study, part of the city's Waterfronts Florida program, which helped secure stimulus money that led to the creation of the pavilion that now houses the twice-monthly Farmers Market.

"I think we're going to do it a lot cheaper (than originally outlined in the study)," said Robin Vroegop. "We think we're the people to do it."

Mayor Van Johnson pressed for a deal on the 2,400-square foot space, which encompasses all the offices as well as public space. Johnson

went over the proposed contract item by item to see if commissioners had problems with any portions of it.

The Vroegops said they did not intend to profit from any possible sublease of portions of the space, and it was agreed that any future sublease, and its terms, would require agreement by both they and the city.

Two commissioners sought ways to break down the Vroegops' investment by year, and to stipulate in the contract the scope of what they would be committed to doing each year.

One said she would prefer a shorter lease term, perhaps a three-year lease, with additional options, but the Vroegops were insistent on the longer term, given their investment.

"If it's not a 10-year lease, then we can't do it," said Robin Vroegop.

"Is there a way to amortize (your investment)," asked Commissioner Anita Grove. "To put a value on the repairs and make them feel that it's being counted."

Floyd noted that the terms of the agreement would mean the Vroegops would be paying the equivalent of 38 cents per square foot per month.

In the end the commission agreed to make the initial contract for six years, with no increase in rent from the \$1,000 a month, and that after that the terms would be a 4 percent increase per year, not the 3 percent initially proposed. The insurance costs will be covered by both the city and the Vroegops, who will have to pay for all utilities, with a water meter added in the future to account for water and sewer use.

In addition, the contract will leave the space under the building available for public access, although there will be no smoking or storage of flammable materials. Also, there will be one parking space available for handicapped parking, and one for the Vroegops, with the rest on a first-come, first-served basis.

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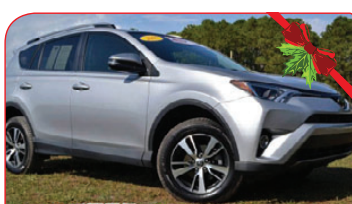
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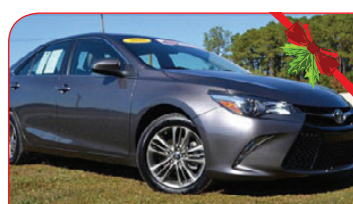
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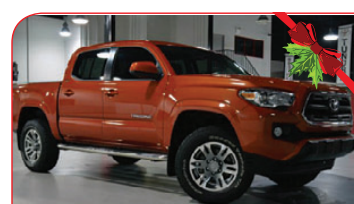
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# SPORTS



NFL | C2

## GAME ON

Steelers prepare for Texans without Brown

NCAA | C5

## GEORGIA SEMIFINAL

Smart directs quick turnaround in second season with Bulldogs

2017 A YEAR IN REVIEW

# No. 7: Banner season

**Blountstown advances to 1A state championship game in football**

By Pat McCann  
The News Herald

Entering the 2017 football season, Blountstown had lost 13 seniors from a class that won 40 football games over four years.

The cupboard wasn't bare, however, as head coach Greg Jordan was quick to point out about his returning players.

"We've got a good senior class," Jordan said. "We're going to go as far as those guys take us. But we've got a

good group again to lead us."

The Class of 2018 eventually took the Tigers within 24 minutes of the Class 1A state championship. Blountstown led a loaded Madison County squad 17-14 at halftime of the title game in at Camping World Stadium in Orlando.

It was then that a roster featuring 60 players was too much for a school with 34 players taking the school flag into battle.

Madison County rallied to dominate the second half for a 35-20 verdict to finish the season undefeated. Blountstown settled for an 11-2

See **BANNER**, C3



Blountstown's KK Godwin (2) tries to break free from of a Port St. Joe tackle during their playoff game on Nov. 17. [JOSHUA BOUCHER/THE NEWS HERALD]

# PLAYOFF BOUND

## Defense propels Saints past Falcons

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Rookie cornerback Marshon Lattimore corralled an unusual, momentum-turning interception off his back, New Orleans made two defensive stands from inside its own 2-yard line, and the Saints clinched their first playoff berth since 2013 with a 23-13 victory over the rival Atlanta Falcons.

Ted Ginn caught a 54-yard pass for a touchdown, which came just a few plays after Lattimore's interception and shortly before halftime. Mark Ingram used a sharp cutback to break loose for a 26-yard touchdown for New Orleans (11-4), which kept its tenuous hold on first place in the NFC South heading into the final week of the season.

While the loss eliminated the Falcons (9-6) from the NFC South race, Atlanta can clinch a wild-card berth by beating Carolina in the final regular season game on New Year's Eve.

The Falcons entered the game with a second straight division crown in their grasp, but they needed to beat the Saints. They squandered chances spectacularly, much to the delight of a deafening Superdome crowd [-] and certainly to the chagrin of scattered fans wearing Falcons red. The Falcons were taunted on their way to the game by a plane towing a banner that read "28-3 Merry Xmas," a reference to Atlanta's Super Bowl collapse.

Atlanta trailed just 6-0 when Lattimore's interception of Matt Ryan set the Saints up to double their lead.

But early in the third quarter, Atlanta linebacker Deion Jones intercepted a pass that deflected off of Ginn's hands and returned it 41 yards to the New Orleans 2. But Devonta Freeman fumbled on a hit by Tyeler Davison two plays later and linebacker Manti Teo recovered.

Early in the fourth quarter, Freeman was stopped short on fourth-and-goal

See **PLAYOFFS**, C3



New Orleans Saints running back Mark Ingram (22) carries in the first half. [AP PHOTO/BILL FEIG]



Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan (2) slides to the turf as he is pursued by New Orleans Saints defensive tackle Sheldon Rankins.

[AP PHOTO/GERALD HERBERT]

## Fitzpatrick on No. 4 Bama: 'Some people just don't like us'

The Associated Press

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Alabama is embracing a different role going into these playoffs.

The fourth-ranked Crimson Tide players can't technically call themselves underdogs since they're actually slight favorites over No. 1 Clemson in the Sugar Bowl, but they know some view them as interlopers who don't belong in the playoffs this time. They had to sweat it out for more than a week before getting a postseason reprieve.

All-America safety Minkah Fitzpatrick believes that period of uncertainty [-] and contentions by Ohio State fans and others that Alabama wasn't the most worthy No. 4 seed [-] can fuel the Tide.

"People were counting us out that didn't want us in there," Fitzpatrick said. "Some people just don't like us. It's true. But I think it definitely helped as motivation and fuel, especially if we do what we're supposed to do and get to where we want to be, I think it will help us a lot."

When you've won four national titles in the past nine years, you latch onto whatever motivational source you can find. Quarterback Jalen Hurts, asked if Alabama feels like an underdog, pointed out: "They're the national champions, we're not. So..."

The Tide (11-1) hasn't ranked lower than No. 2 in three previous playoff appearances, twice holding down the top spot.

This Alabama team was a much-debated playoff pick after failing to make the Southeastern Conference championship game. The Tide closed the regular season with a 26-14 loss at No. 7 Auburn in the Iron Bowl.

Cornerback Levi Wallace said the team, which wasn't challenged all that much the rest of the season, has to learn from that feeling after a loss.

"It's just something internally," Wallace said. "We know we didn't finish the season the way we wanted to and we want to make sure that never happens again. We want to show the younger guys, now you know what it

See **BAMA**, C3

# Vikings shut out Packers 16-0

The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — While winning at Lambeau Field means a lot to the Minnesota Vikings, the NFC North champions have bigger goals in mind.

A first-round playoff bye is well within reach.

The Vikings took care of business on their end with a 16-0 victory Saturday night over the injury-depleted Green Bay Packers, the team's first shutout in 24 years. Having already clinched the division title, Minnesota (12-3) can wrap up a first-round bye if the Carolina Panthers lose or tie on Sunday against Tampa Bay.

"I'm hoping we can get one more win, work on some things we need to work on ... and then go out and play our rear ends off in the playoffs," Vikings coach Mike Zimmer said.

Stefon Diggs caught a 4-yard pass from quarterback Case Keenum just inside the back line of the end zone in the first quarter for the only touchdown. After the game, Keenum stopped before heading up the tunnel at Lambeau, clapping his hands above



Minnesota Vikings' Harrison Smith intercepts a pass during the first half. [AP PHOTO/JEFFREY PHELPS]

his head while Vikings fans chanted "Skol! Skol!"

They felt right at home in Titletown.

"Defense played absolutely incredible today, and we did enough. It doesn't matter how, it matters how many," Keenum said.

The Packers (7-8) managed to hold a 239-236 edge in total yards. They were still shut out twice in a season for the first time since 2006.

"I never felt more defeated, more embarrassed by a performance. Yeah, we had

opportunities, and we didn't connect when we did," receiver Randall Cobb said.

In its defense, the team fielded a lineup that often looked like one coach Mike McCarthy might send out for a game late in the preseason. The Packers had already been eliminated from playoff contention.

Brett Hundley was 17 of 40 for 130 yards with two interceptions in taking over at quarterback again for Aaron Rodgers, who returned to injured reserve this week after

missing seven games earlier in the year with a collarbone injury.

"It's so frustrating just because of the fact that I know what I can do," Hundley said. "But to go out there and not be consistent — which is my number one goal — and just give our team an opportunity to win each game, that hurts."

**MINNESOTA MILESTONES:** The Vikings forced an incompletion into the end zone on fourth-and-4 from the 14 early in the fourth quarter to turn away the Packers' last best effort to cross the goal line. Minnesota safety Harrison Smith ended another Green Bay drive with an interception at the Vikings 5 late in the second quarter. Minnesota left frigid Lambeau Field with its first shutout since a 13-0 win over Detroit on Dec. 5, 1993. It was the first shutout over the Packers since Nov. 14, 1971.

**THAT HURTS:** Starting outside linebackers Clay Matthews (hamstring) and Nick Perry (ankle/shoulder) missed the game for Green Bay, along with cornerback Damarius Randall (hamstring). The Packers didn't have leading receiver Davante Adams, who

is in the concussion protocol, and then lost wideout Jordy Nelson and tight end Richard Rodgers to shoulder injuries in the first half.

"Injuries are unfortunate. We had a lot of opportunities tonight. We didn't make the plays," McCarthy said.

**FROZEN TUNDRA:** The hard turf at chilly Lambeau didn't help, either, as some players had trouble with their footing early in the game. With the Packers unable to connect on medium-to-long-range passes, their best plays came when Hundley broke free for big gains on the run.

In the stands, fans bundled up in parkas, huddled under blankets and sipped on free hot chocolate to stay warm. Purple-clad Minnesota backers celebrated on a night when temperatures were in the single digits.

**STAT WATCH:** Diggs finished with five catches for 60 yards. Keenum was 14 of 25 for 139 yards. ... The Packers were also shut out 23-0 by Baltimore on Nov. 19. ... Hundley finished the home schedule having thrown no touchdowns and seven interceptions in six games at Lambeau.



Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles (9) throws a pass as quarterback Nate Sudfeld looks on during practice. [AP PHOTO/MATT ROURKE]

## Foles facing Raiders for first time since historic game

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Since the last time the Philadelphia Eagles saw the Oakland Raiders, Nick Foles was traded, released, contemplated retirement and returned as a backup quarterback.

Foles tied an NFL record with seven touchdown passes in Philadelphia's 49-20 win at Oakland on Nov. 3, 2013. His performance sparked an impressive turnaround and the Eagles went 7-1 in the second half after a 3-5 start to win the NFC East title in Chip Kelly's first season.

"Our team was trying to figure out our identity at that point," Foles said. "We had ups and downs and we were trying to put it all together. I look back at that day as sort of our 'aha' moment, like we can do this, we know who we are, we know we can be explosive, and we took off at that point."

Kelly traded Foles after the 2014 season and was fired the following year. Foles spent one season in St. Louis, another in Kansas City and returned to Philadelphia to back up Carson Wentz.

Here are some things to watch for when the Raiders visit Philadelphia tonight:

**FILLING IN:** The Raiders will be missing a key piece on the offensive line after Pro Bowl left tackle Donald Penn underwent surgery on his injured right foot. Penn had started 170 straight regular-season games before

the injury, but did miss Oakland's playoff game a year ago with a knee problem. The Raiders haven't decided whether they will replace Penn with rookie David Sharpe or by moving right tackle Marshall Newhouse to the left side and inserting Vadal Alexander. Sharpe has played three snaps on offense all year and struggled in that brief time earlier this month against the Giants when Penn went down.

"It made me want more," he said. "If I get the opportunity, I can't wait to get out there. It wasn't the best of snaps, but it was definitely a learning experience."

**LACK OF URGENCY:** The Eagles haven't missed a beat on offense since Wentz tore his ACL against the Rams on Dec. 10. But the defense has allowed 36 points in five quarters. Defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz blamed it on a lack of urgency.

"We needed to come out with more fire," Schwartz said about the defense giving up three consecutive TD drives to start the game in last week's 34-29 win at the Giants.

Coach Doug Pederson suggested guys overlooked New York (2-12).

"We've all been in situations where sometimes you know you're probably going to win the football game, but at the same time, you either look past it or whatever," Pederson said.

**IMPROVED D:** The

Raiders' defense has shown major signs of improvement since firing defensive coordinator Ken Norton Jr. last month and replacing him as play caller with John Pagano. The change has been dramatic as Oakland has as many sacks the past four games (14) as in the first 10, and has all four interceptions this season since the change. The passer rating against the Raiders has dropped from 113.3 to 75.9.

"I think he's done a good job of providing clarity on assignments," coach Jack Del Rio said. "I think he's a good teacher. I think he does a good job with the group. I'm pleased with the way he's worked at it, but it's exactly what I expected him to do."

**RUN FOR IT:** Raiders quarterback Derek Carr used his legs for a change last week in a development that pleased Del Rio. Carr scrambled four times for 47 yards in the loss to Dallas, including a 32-yarder that set up a touchdown. That run was his longest since a 41-yarder against Houston in the second game of his career in 2014, and the 47 yards were the most he's had since gaining 58 in that game against the Texans. Carr hadn't had more than one run in a game this season, excluding kneel-downs.

"That was an example of him being him, being aggressive and taking off and making some plays with his feet," Del Rio said.

## Steelers prepare for Texans without Brown

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Already in the playoffs after winning the AFC North, the Pittsburgh Steelers still have plenty to play for in their last two games, starting with today's matchup with the Houston Texans.

A win over the struggling Texans combined with a loss or tie by the Jacksonville Jaguars would assure the Steelers a first-round bye. They could also clinch the bye with a tie against Houston and a loss by Jacksonville.

Pittsburgh also has a chance to secure home-field advantage throughout the postseason if the team wins out and the Patriots lose at least one of their last two games.

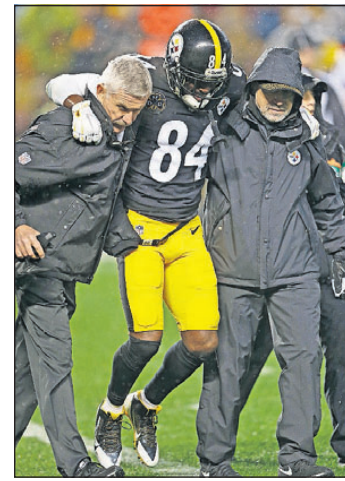
The Steelers will have to try and do it without star receiver Antonio Brown, who leads the NFL with 1,533 yards receiving and is out indefinitely after injuring his left calf last week.

"A.B., you can't replace him with one man," Pittsburgh quarterback Ben Roethlisberger said. "A.B. is not human, so we will have multiple guys trying to fill that spot, but I know that we have guys that are excited, willing to try and fill those shoes."

Rookie JuJu Smith-Schuster, Eli Rogers, Darrius Heyward-Bey and Justin Hunter are among those who will try to pick up the slack with Brown out. Smith-Schuster has had a solid season, and ranks third among NFL rookies with 699 yards receiving. Heyward-Bey, Hunter and Rogers have been used sparingly this year, with Heyward-Bey grabbing just two receptions for 47 yards, Hunter with three catches for 17 yards, and Rogers with 16 receptions for 142 yards.

Roethlisberger could also rely more heavily on tight end Jesse James, who has 363 yards receiving, highlighted by a 97-yard performance in a win over Baltimore two weeks ago. Pittsburgh's powerful offense also has Le'Veon Bell, who leads the NFL with 1,222 yards rushing and has 80 receptions for 627 yards.

Houston cornerback Johnathan Joseph expects Pittsburgh's offense to be a little different without Brown, but knows slowing it down



Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown (84) is helped off the field after being injured against the New England Patriots. [AP PHOTO/KEITH SRAKOCIC]

will still be a tall task.

"There's no shortage of weapons," Joseph said.

Some things to know about the first meeting between the Steelers and Texans since 2014:

**ENDING THE SKID?:** The Texans need a win Monday to avoid their first five-game skid since dropping the last 14 games of their 2-14 season in 2013. Houston has lost seven of its last eight games, including going 1-6 since rookie quarterback Deshaun Watson sustained a season-ending knee injury. The Texans (4-10), who won the AFC South in each of the last two seasons, will finish with a losing record for the first time since 2013 after going 9-7 in each of the first three seasons under coach Bill O'Brien.

**NO BREAK FOR BELL:** With the Steelers still needing wins, Bell is unlikely to get much rest before the playoffs. Bell leads the NFL in touches with 387 and is within striking distance of finishing in the top five for most touches in a single season.

The Steelers are dealing with depth issues behind Bell after rookie James Conner was lost for the season with a right knee injury. Pittsburgh signed Stevan Ridley in case of emergency, but fans should expect to see a lot of Bell, the NFL's highest-paid running back.

"Whatever my team asks me to do, I'm going to go out there and do," Bell said. "That's the biggest thing about me. I want to win a Super Bowl. We win these next two games, we'll get a one or a two seed."

# Successful system

By Robbie Andreu  
GateHouse Media

Everyone seems to agree that dual-threat quarterback Emory Jones, who signed with Florida on Wednesday, appears to be a perfect fit for Dan Mullen's offense.

But Mullen was quick to point out that when it comes to his system, it's not about the quarterback fitting the offense, it's all about the offense fitting the quarterback.

"One of the things that's most important at the quarterback position is understanding as a coach what they do well and try to put them in a position to do things that they do well," he said.

"You have to have the flexibility that your system fits around the strengths of that quarterback, and that's the most important thing for us, identifying these strengths for all the guys that we have and put them in the right position to be successful."

This is something Mullen has successfully done throughout his coaching career. He has developed a long list of excellent quarterbacks as a coordinator and head coach. But no two quarterbacks have been exactly alike. They've had varying skills sets, and Mullen has taken those particular skill sets and built his offense around them.

Take, for example, the situation when he was the offensive coordinator at Florida. Mullen helped the Gators win a national championship in 2006 with a dropback passer (Chris Leak) and again in 2008 with a dual-threat quarterback (Tim Tebow).

Those two offenses certainly were different. But the results were the same: the Gators scored a bunch of points and won a bunch of games.

"If I lined up all of my quarterbacks throughout the years and they all stood in a line up here, you would say there's no way those guys all had success running the same offense for the same coach,"



At Mississippi State, coach Dan Mullen fit his offense around the different skills quarterback Dak Prescott (15) brought to the team. It was the same way Mullen handled things from the start of his career. [ROBERT SUTTON/GATEHOUSE MEDIA SERVICES]

Mullen said. "And you'd probably be right in one part of it, because even though they didn't all run the identical offense, the flexibility within the offense to build around the strength of the quarterback is really important, and you're not going to ask guys to do things they don't do well.

"Even in recruiting, in talking with Emory, how are we going to change and do things that he does well, and we went back and explained and looked at the difference of the different quarterbacks."

Mullen pointed out that each quarterback he's coached has had a different skill set from the others.

"From what a Nick Fitzgerald was doing well was different than what Dak Prescott did well, which was different than what Chris Relf did well, which was different than what a Tebow did well, which was different than what Chris Leak did well, which was different than what Alex Smith did well," he said.

"The key is putting them in a position to be successful, not have the quarterback have to fit your system."

At this stage, Mullen can't tell you exactly what his offense is going to look like next season. He won't know

that until he establishes who his starting quarterback is going to be.

It could be this spring. It could be in late August. When he identifies his guy, he'll fit the offense around his skill set, whether it's Jones, Feleipe Franks, Kyle Trask or Jake Allen.

The competition for the job will be wide open in the spring.

When it's come to his quarterbacks, Mullen has been flexible down through the years.

At his early signing day news conference, he talked a great deal about flexibility, about players being flexible enough to play different roles, and coaches being flexible in the systems they run.

Mullen said his defense will be similar to his offense in that it will be built around the skill set of the players.

"We're going to be flexible," Mullen said. "You'll see us be in the 3-4, you'll see us be in the 4-3. We're not going to sit in one defense. We're going to move in and out of defenses and use different personnel groupings.

Contact Robbie Andreu at 352-374-5022 or [robbie.andreu@gvillesun.com](mailto:robbie.andreu@gvillesun.com). Also check out Andreu's blog at [Gatorsports.com](http://Gatorsports.com).



Blountstown's defense had another strong showing in 2017. [JOSHUA BOUCHER/THE NEWS HERALD]

## BANNER

From Page C1

record and its second 1A finals loss in five years.

That hardly could dampen the accolades from a series of running-clock triumphs that underscored the Tigers' dominance in the Panhandle. Their only defeat during the regular season was 35-21 to 3A Florida High on Sept. 1.

"We've got some skill kids," Jordan said in August. "We could use three sets of skill kids and not lose a lot which is a good luxury in 1A."

Running back Denzel Washington rushed for 1,000 yards, junior quarterback Trent Peacock tossed 15 touchdown passes in his first year as a starter and wideouts Jamal Howard and Kevon Godwin provided elusive targets and breakaway threats.

Jordan also followed his mantra of putting his 11 best players out on defense and the Tigers were solid on special teams.

It was a special season, especially considering Blountstown was able to

overcome longtime nemesis Port St. Joe twice, once in a memorable 3-0 decision during the regular season and later in a 41-21 playoff victory.

The Tigers vanquished Jefferson County, Port St. Joe and unbeaten Baker, which it has lost to twice in 2016, to advance to the showdown in Orlando.

When Peacock threw a touchdown pass to Howard, ran 66 yards for another score and James Shores booted a 41-yard field goal on the final play of the second quarter the Tigers led 17-14 at halftime.

Madison County rallied to gain the advantage in the third quarter, but Blountstown was in a one-possession battle until the Cowboys drove to the clinching touchdown with 4 minutes, 40 seconds remaining.

"Their depth kind of took over," Jordan said. "Our kids played their butts off. We poured a little gas on the fire with the fumbles and giving up the punt return and they kind of took over."

Tomorrow: No. 6, John Miller of Mosley becomes the third county prep athlete to rush for more than 2,000 yards in a season.

## Deion Sanders tells son his FSU jersey is staying in retirement

By Safid Deen  
Orlando Sentinel

TALLAHASSEE — Deion Sanders was excited to share the news of his son getting a football scholarship offer from Florida State.

But he had one important message for him, too.

"Guess what," Sanders said to his son. "No. 2 ain't coming out of retirement. You have to be your own man!"

New coach Willie Taggart and the Seminoles extended a scholarship offer to Shedeur Sanders, a Class of 2021 athlete who plays quarterback, on Thursday.

Shedeur Sanders was getting a haircut when his famous father showed him a text message with exciting news.

"I am blessed to receive an offer from my dad's alma mater Florida State University," Sanders later wrote in a Twitter post.

"I just want to thank God, FSU and @real-coachtaggart, my coaches, teammates and the faculty at Trinity Christian. This is truly a blessing because this is where the legacy begun. Don't think for one minute the hard work stops, I lose my passion, I forgo my purpose or I get distracted by

people, places and things.

"I am built for this moment. It is in my bloodline."

Sanders, a 6-foot, 165-pound prospect, attends Trinity Christian School in Cedar Hill, Texas, and has scholarship offers from three other schools: Baylor, Oregon and Syracuse.

Sanders will have about three years before he makes a final decision on a potential school he wants to play college football.

But if he picks Florida State, his father has already made it clear he will have to wear another jersey number.

## PLAYOFFS

From Page C1

from the 1, preserving a 20-3 Saints lead. One play earlier, Julio Jones caught a third-down pass with his feet in the end zone, but he was unable to pull the ball across the goal line after reaching back to make the catch and being quickly driven down. Atlanta challenged the spot, but the call on the field was upheld.

Drew Brees completed 21 of 28 passes for 239 yards.

Ginn finished with 76 yards receiving and Michael Thomas — who'd been listed as questionable with a hamstring injury — caught four passes for 66 yards. Brees became only the third quarterback in NFL history to eclipse 70,000 career yards passing, joining Peyton Manning and Brett Favre.

Ryan was 22 of 36 for 288 yards. He was sacked five times, twice by Cameron Jordan.

Jones had seven catches for 149 yards, but the Falcons' running game struggled. Freeman was held to just 36 yards on 11 carries.

## INJURY REPORT

Falcons: Tight end Levine Toilolo was sidelined by a knee injury in the second half.

Saints: Left tackle Terron Armstead left the game in the second half with a thigh injury.

## UP NEXT

Falcons: Finish regular season at home against the Panthers.

Saints: Try to wrap up the division title at Tampa Bay on New Year's Eve.



Alabama defensive back Minkah Fitzpatrick helps tackle Arkansas wide receiver Brandon Martin. [AP PHOTO/BRYNN ANDERSON]

## BAMA

From Page C1

feels like. It's a different city after you lose."

And it left Alabama players in the rare position of trying to prove they belong in the playoffs. Linebacker Anfernee Jennings said they're "absolutely" thinking of themselves as underdogs.

"I think a lot of people felt like we didn't deserve to be in the playoffs," Jennings said. "But we felt like we should the whole time and we're ready to go in and dominate."

Wallace thinks the Tide has another role, that of the villain in college football. He said it doesn't bother him "even a little bit" that some people don't like 'Bama.

"We're seen as the villain," Wallace said. "I'm sure a lot of people don't like Alabama because we're always so good each and every year. That's something Coach (Nick) Saban has instilled in us. Trying to be the best we can be. Just being the University

of Alabama, whatever you guys (the media) say we are, that's what we are but we're definitely the bad guys in college football."

This team doesn't enter the playoffs with an impeccable resume partly because an opening win over No. 3 Florida State lost its luster when the Seminoles struggled the rest of the way.

The Tide's only other wins over ranked teams came against No. 16 LSU (24-10) and No. 24 Mississippi State (31-24).

Now, Alabama gets a rematch against the team that toppled the Tide in the national championship game, a defeat that fueled them through the offseason.

"Our whole motto was finishing, so I think that really helped us in the offseason," Alabama tailback Damien Harris said. "But now, we're just focused on us and we're focused on playing our best football. I know we're playing a great team and they're going pose a lot of challenges to us, but we feel like if we play our best football, it gives us a good chance to win."

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Miami's Malik Rosier (12) looks to pass against Clemson. [BOB LEVERONE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

## Miami's Malik Rosier welcomes competition from Wisconsin

The Associated Press

He has started 13 games during his Hurricanes career, winning 11 of them. He engineered the game-winning drive that helped Miami snap a seven-game losing streak to rival Florida State and helped lead the Hurricanes to their first Coastal Division title.

As No. 10 Miami prepares for its Dec. 30 matchup against Wisconsin in the Orange Bowl, his 25 touchdown passes are tied with two Miami greats — Ken Dorsey and Bernie Kosar — for sixth-most in a single season. And yet, there are still questions about whether quarterback Malik Rosier will be able to keep his job beyond the end of the season.

Perhaps more surprising than that? The fact that Rosier — a redshirt junior — is fine with the idea of having to compete to remain Miami's starter. In fact, he embraces it, knowing the more young quarterbacks such as N'Kosi Perry, Evan Shirreffs, Cade Weldon and the newly signed Jarren Williams push him, the more he'll develop and the better he'll play.

"If you talk to any of the greats, they always talk about competing. That's what makes them great. I don't want to come here and not compete," said Rosier, who has thrown for 2,917 yards this season. "When me and (former Miami quarterback) Brad (Kaaya) came in together, everyone knew the starting job was going to be a competition. (Former offensive coordinator James Coley) even told us we were going to come in and compete. The reason you come to Miami is to compete, to earn your position and win it every year. I love to compete ... At the end of the day, it's not just going to make me better. It's going to make N'Kosi, the new freshmen, Evan, Cade, it's going to make all of us better."

Though he's led the Hurricanes (10-2) to some significant wins — including over Florida



Miami's Malik Rosier (12) warms up before the Atlantic Coast Conference championship. [MIKE MCCARN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS]

State, Virginia Tech and then third-ranked Notre Dame — Rosier has had his struggles this season.

He's been occasionally streaky, missing some targets then connecting on well-placed passes. Those connections never really came in Miami's last two games, a stunning 24-14 loss at Pittsburgh that ended the Hurricanes' quest for an unbeaten regular season and a 38-3 loss to Clemson in the ACC Championship Game that knocked the Hurricanes from national championship contention.

Against Pittsburgh, Rosier struggled so badly he was briefly pulled from the game by coach Mark Richt, eventually returning to finish 14 of 32 for 180 yards in his first loss as a starter. In the ACC Championship, he was 14 of 29 for 110 yards with two interceptions.

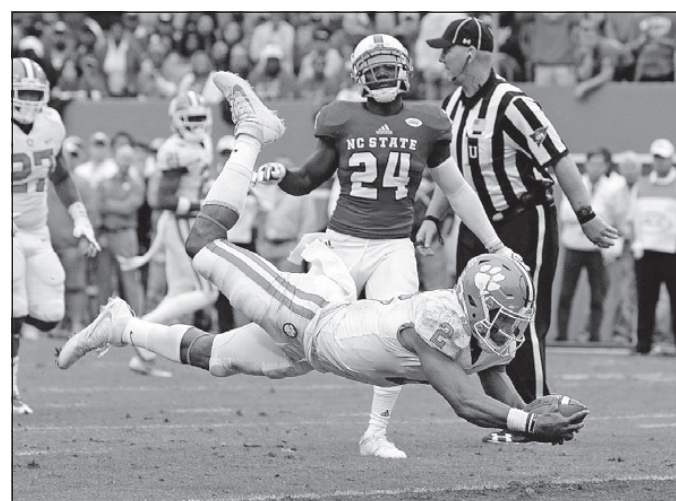
Since, Miami's coaches have wanted him to focus on some of the little things in his game and having him adopt a sort of training camp-like mentality as the Hurricanes prepare for the sixth-ranked Badgers (12-1).

Rosier said he's been working on putting more air under his passes and paying attention to

details like his footwork, noting, "sometimes you get so focused on the season, you miss the small details which actually help you in the bigger picture."

So far, his coaches say he's embraced that challenge, too. After that, they're looking forward to seeing what he can do when pushed by Miami's younger quarterbacks in spring practice and beyond.

"He's got to secure that spot by playing better and by doing things this offseason to make him a better quarterback. Now, he's having to figure out exactly who he is and what he can do right now, not necessarily what he wants to do in the future ... and then do it, do it to the best of his ability," quarterbacks coach Jon Richt said. "He's done a great job of that this week. He's a guy that is very smart, can control our offense, runs our offense great and when he really is on — throwing the ball like against Notre Dame and Virginia Tech — he did a great job of putting the ball on the money. Later on, he got a little bit off target and I think it got to his head a little bit and he's done a great job of rebounding and coming back and fighting through it."



Clemson quarterback Kelly Bryant (2) dives into the end zone for a touchdown while North Carolina State's Shawn Boone looks on. [AP PHOTO/GERRY BROOME, FILE]

## Clemson has playoff experience, with some exceptions

The Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Clemson might be making its third trip to the College Football Playoffs, but not all the Tigers have big game experience.

Almost the entire offensive line and key members of the nation's second best scoring defense started last season when the Tigers (12-1, No. 1 CFP) beat Alabama to win the national championship. But quarterback Kelly Bryant and nearly all the skill players will get their first experience in the playoff pressure cooker Jan. 1 in the Sugar Bowl in a semifinal rematch against the Crimson Tide.

That's how Clemson coach Dabo Swinney wants it — instead of a senior-laden team finally marching to a title, he wants a mix of experience and youth always in the mix to win a title.

"We've never focused on having a great team. We've focused on having a great program," Swinney said.

The only back or wide receiver starting against Alabama (11-1, No. 4 CFP) again is Hunter Renfrow — the guy who caught the winning pass with one second to go in that 35-31 championship victory. He thinks he knows how Bryant will feel, because he felt that way too. But Renfrow also knows he and his more experienced teammates can help.

"I was scared out of my mind, for one. I was super nervous. I sat in my bed thinking, I'm never going to be back here," Renfrow said, recalling the night before the title game. "It's a neat experience. It's something we've been able to do year after year."

And Bryant said while he hasn't taken a snap in a playoff game, he was locked in on the sideline last season, calling the plays into quarterback Deshaun Watson.

"When I was the signal caller, I was pretty much playing the game mentally in my head," the junior said.

But just because the

players in the backfield are new, doesn't mean Clemson isn't used to this. The Tigers are in the playoffs for the third year in a row. Twelve of their starters in last season's Alabama game will likely start on New Year's Day.

Alabama is accustomed to big games too. The Crimson Tide is 27-7 against top 10 teams since the start of the 2008 season, coach Nick Saban's second year. Saban's 19 victories against a top-5 team are the most in college football history.

And for the juniors and seniors on both teams, this is the third time they've met in the playoffs. Alabama won the national title two years ago with a 45-40 win.

"Both teams are familiar with the other. We know what type of game this is," Crimson Tide running back Damien Harris said.

This was supposed to be a reloading year for Clemson. The Tigers only have six seniors and were replacing all that offense from Watson receiver Mike Williams and running back Wayne Gallman. But the defense has carried the Tigers through.

And guys like second-team All-American defensive tackle Christian Wilkins are making sure the atmosphere of the playoffs doesn't overwhelm the newcomers.

"Once you spot that ball after the first kickoff, it's all just feels like a normal game no matter how high the stakes," Wilkins said.

For Bryant, this whole past year has been pressure. He had to win the quarterback job in spring practice. He has been consistent, if not spectacular. He has just seven interceptions, and only one of his picks has been against a Top 25 team.

That defense has also kept Bryant from doing too much. He has attempted just 24 passes in fourth quarters and didn't even play in the final quarter of the Tigers' 38-3 win over Miami earlier this month in the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game.

## Smart directs quick turnaround in second season at Georgia

The 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. "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 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 pats on the back. You can't embrace that. 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.

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# DIVERSIONS

## WORD SCRIMMAGE: JUDD HAMBRICK

**WORD SCRIMMAGE™**  
BY JUDD HAMBRICK © 2017 UFS / Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication for UFS

**1<sup>st</sup> DOWN**  
O<sub>2</sub> N<sub>2</sub> O<sub>2</sub> S<sub>2</sub> L<sub>2</sub> G<sub>3</sub> A<sub>2</sub> +20 PTS

**2<sup>nd</sup> DOWN**  
3rd Letter +7 PTS  
C<sub>6</sub> P<sub>6</sub> N<sub>2</sub> S<sub>2</sub> A<sub>2</sub> U<sub>3</sub> L<sub>2</sub>

**3<sup>rd</sup> DOWN**  
3rd Down +40 PTS  
M<sub>6</sub> C<sub>6</sub> S<sub>2</sub> S<sub>2</sub> E<sub>1</sub> I<sub>2</sub> I<sub>2</sub>

**4<sup>th</sup> DOWN**  
E<sub>1</sub> S<sub>2</sub> L<sub>2</sub> T<sub>2</sub> T<sub>2</sub> E<sub>1</sub> O<sub>2</sub>

**JUDD'S TOTAL = 378**  
**AVERAGE GAME 240-250 PTS**

**TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN**  
Directions: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters on each yardline. Add points to each word or letter using scoring directions. Seven-letter words get a 60-point bonus. All words can be found in Webster's New World College Dictionary.  
12-25-17 **JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW**

**WORD SCRIMMAGE™ SOLUTION BY JUDD HAMBRICK**  
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**1<sup>st</sup> DOWN = 99**  
I<sub>2</sub> L<sub>2</sub> L<sub>2</sub> O<sub>2</sub> G<sub>3</sub> I<sub>2</sub> C<sub>6</sub>

**2<sup>nd</sup> DOWN = 56**  
G<sub>3</sub> A<sub>2</sub> M<sub>6</sub> I<sub>2</sub> E<sub>1</sub> R<sub>2</sub>

**3<sup>rd</sup> DOWN = 89**  
O<sub>2</sub> V<sub>6</sub> E<sub>1</sub> R<sub>2</sub> L<sub>2</sub> A<sub>2</sub> P<sub>6</sub>

**4<sup>th</sup> DOWN = 89**  
S<sub>2</sub> N<sub>2</sub> O<sub>2</sub> O<sub>2</sub> K<sub>6</sub> E<sub>1</sub> R<sub>2</sub>

**BONUS DOWN = 80**  
F<sub>7</sub> L<sub>2</sub> E<sub>1</sub> E<sub>1</sub> C<sub>6</sub> E<sub>1</sub> S<sub>2</sub>

**AVERAGE GAME 265-275 PTS**  
**JUDD'S TOTAL = 413**  
12-24-17

## ACES ON BRIDGE: BOBBY WOLFF

"Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. Three times is enemy action."  
— Ian Fleming

At the Dyspeptics Club, South may enjoy the luck of the cards, but he normally manages to find a way to make up for it in the play. On occasion, though, he does achieve a coup — not by employing masterful technique, but with his lucky rabbit's foot.

Here, when South heard his partner respond one spade, instead of raising to three spades, he allowed his balanced shape to tempt him into a rebid of two no-trump. When North raised to three no-trump, South decided to pass rather than convert to four spades — a fortunate decision today.

Against three no-trump, West led the club five, and declarer won cheaply in hand. Now South could sensibly have played on either red suit. Instead, though, declarer cashed three top spades, then got off lead with the ace and another club. West won and started to cash his clubs.

You can see the effect — while North parted with two hearts, South could throw a spade and a heart. Then West would be stuck on lead, and would either have to concede a trick to the heart king or solve declarer's problems in diamonds.

Alas, South ruined a good story by claiming to have won the fourth round of clubs with his small spade in hand. It emerged that South was trying to declare four spades, and it was only inadvertently that he had found the perfect play to ensure nine tricks in no-trump. It is sometimes better to be lucky than good, I suppose.

<b>NORTH</b>	12-25-A
♠ K Q 7 2	
♥ J 7 2	
♦ K J 5	
♣ 7 6 2	
<b>EAST</b>	
♠ 10 9 6	
♥ 10 9 8 4	
♦ Q 8 7 2	
♣ J 9	
<b>SOUTH</b>	
♠ A J 5 3	
♥ K 5 3	
♦ A 10 3	
♣ A Q 4	

Vulnerable: Both  
Dealer: South

The bidding:  
South West North East  
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass  
2 NT Pass 3 NT All pass

Opening Lead: Club five

**LEAD WITH THE ACES** 12-25-B

South holds:  
♠ 9 5 4 3  
♥ A J 5 4  
♦ Q 3 2  
♣ 9 5

South West North East  
Pass Pass Pass 1 NT  
3 NT All pass

**ANSWER:** Whether playing teams or pairs, it helps to decide before you lead if you are looking to go aggressive or passive. Here, since dummy is a passed hand, I'd opt for a relatively passive approach. That said, you are surely going to choose between the majors, but a spade combines leading a long suit with a much smaller chance of blowing a trick. I'd lead the five, second-highest from four small.

## DEAR ABBY

### Resentment over brief affair has divided family for years



Jeanne Phillips

**DEAR ABBY:** Seventeen years ago, I had a (minor) tryst with my wife's sister. Months later, it came to light during an unfortunate phone conversation. Since then, my wife and I have gone through years of counseling.

Our family has recovered and all is well — except with my wife's brother-in-law (the husband). He considers me "persona non grata," and I have been excluded from all family functions, at least those he is involved in.

I took my counselor's advice and sent him a written apology, delivered by my wife. My parents-in-law have forgiven me (as well as their daughter) for the

errant behavior, but still a massive wedge remains in our family. My father-in-law is ailing now and is desperate for reconciliation. I've done what I can (I think). What now? What more? — PERSONA NON GRATA IN ILLINOIS

**DEAR P.N.G.:** You have already apologized. You can't force your brother-in-law to accept it. Because your father-in-law is desperate for reconciliation, he is the one who should appeal to your brother-in-law to heal the breach.

**DEAR ABBY:** In a world so vast and beautiful, do you think one person could somehow see it all? I've often dreamed of doing so, but most of the time I sit in front of a computer doing schoolwork. So many days I have wanted to drop out and be a hippie or something, but in these times, there are so many requirements to get to where we want to be and have what we've always

wanted or needed.

You know what, Abby? I've got a better question for you. Can you invent a time machine so I can go back to the '50s? Forever wondering ... — GABRIELLA IN SOUTH CAROLINA

**DEAR GABRIELLA:** I wish I could provide one, but if I did, I have a hunch it would become very crowded. Your yearning for the '50s may be happening because life in the 21st century has become stressful. It isn't just you — for many people, the cycle of life seems to spin increasingly faster.

There's nothing wrong with dreaming about visiting faraway places. Once your studies are completed, you may be in a position to do that. In the meantime, make an effort to block out time to go to a gym, do yoga, meditate. If that's not possible, break up your routine with some other form of exercise. I can tell you from experience, it works.

## TRIVIA BY WILSON CASEY



Wilson Casey

"Trivia Fun" with Wilson Casey, Guinness World Record Holder from Woodruff, S.C., is published in more than 500 newspapers across the country. Comments, questions or suggestions? WC@TriviaGuy.com

- 1. What does finding a spider web in the house on Christmas morning mean?**  
Misfortune, Good luck, Pending snowfall, Elf at work
- 2. Which state in 1836 was first to recognize Christmas as an official holiday?**  
New York, Alabama, Virginia, Delaware
- 3. In what famed novel does the Pequod set sail on Christmas Day?**  
"The Sea Wolf," "Moby Dick," "Mr. Roberts," "The Caine Mutiny"

- 4. During which century was the first Christmas celebrated on Dec. 25?**  
Fourth, Seventh, 10th, 13th
  - 5. Arizona and which other state have a town named "Christmas"?**  
Arkansas, Idaho, Florida, Hawaii
  - 6. Which fir has been voted the U.S.'s most popular holiday tree?**  
Spruce, Balsam, Douglas, Fraser
- ANSWERS:** 1. Good luck, 2. Alabama, 3. "Moby Dick," 4. Fourth, 5. Florida, 6. Fraser

## HOROSCOPES BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)** — Home isn't a location; it's a heart space -- and one that you'll carry with you wherever you happen to be. Tonight features a scenario that's both unexplainable and poetic.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)** — A happy family can come in many forms, some of them not genetic in the least. You'll reach out to family of all kinds and in various ways. A reach-out can be an intention of the spirit, or it can involve a phone or maybe a hug.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21)** — The implications of the holiday will soften the behavior of all, regardless of age or religious persuasion or any other category. It's as if there's niceness on the breeze that sooner or later touches everyone.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22)** — In the very best sense, what's happening is a direct result of what you thought about, created and built. You'll stand back and be satisfied and maybe a little proud of the sweetness of the

moment.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)** — There's a buzzy, excited feeling that perhaps has to do with getting to be around people who make you happy. A few laughs together -- enchanting memories are being made.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)** — The day will be characterized by warmth, extra smiles, unexpected kindness and good cheer. Relax. Be nice to yourself these last days of the year. Your heart can be light if you let it be.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)** — You feel as though you are very much wanted but not desperately needed. It's the ideal dynamic -- no pressure, just joy and appreciation. You're free to really be yourself.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)** — Beautiful music will set the right tone on this day to pull loved ones closer, enjoy one another and, above all, give a free pass on all the petty stuff that gets in the way of pure love.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)** — Things will go according to plan and unfold with the feeling you had hoped for. Two things are true: 1) All is well at the moment, and 2) if it's not, you'll fix it later; until then, refer back to 1.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)** — The action swings in and out of the fairy tale zone. Though there's a fantasy quality to the setting, the basics bring you back and ground you in what's real and the very practical ways of sharing your love.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)** — It's a cozy, drama-free day. Even the people who usually find something to be unhappy about will settle in for some contentment. Expect love, sharing, music, good food and more love.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)** — You're looking for the brightest potential in each person you encounter (and in yourself, too), which is exactly what you'll find. Inside everyone is something to celebrate, and celebrate you will.

## JUMBLE

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

ROSNW

WOYHD

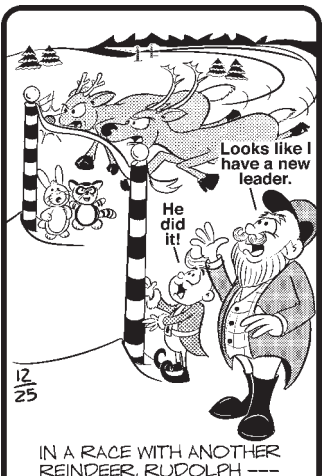
PAYSPN

KENUBR

(Answers tomorrow)

## THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



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

Saturday's Jumbles: NERVY AGILE STORMY SHRANK  
Answer: The wrestler thought he would win the match, but he was — SORELY MISTAKEN

## SUDOKU

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

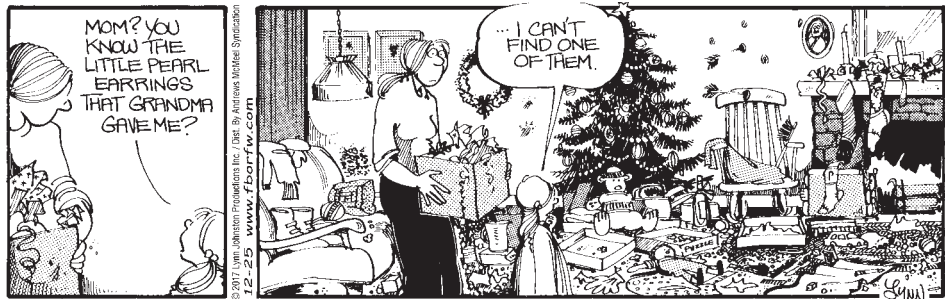
**Level of difficulty (Bronze - easy, Silver - medium, Gold - difficult):**  
Monday - Bronze; Tuesday - Silver; Wednesday - Gold; Thursday - Bronze; Friday - Silver; Saturday and Sunday - Gold.

Answer to yesterday's sudoku

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

# COMICS & PUZZLES

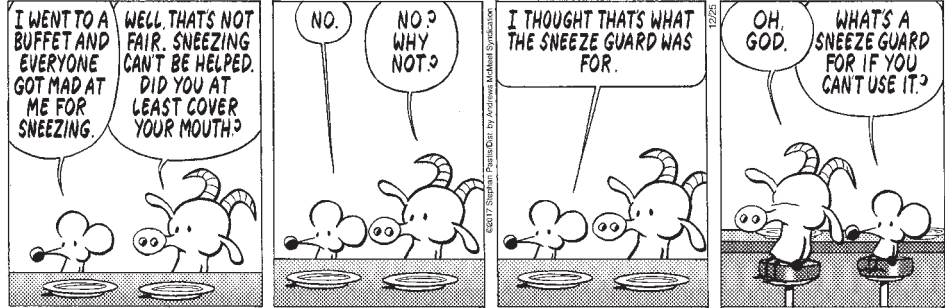
## FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE



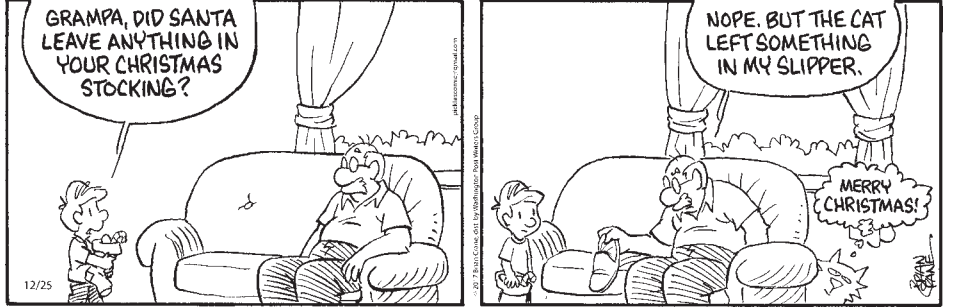
## GARFIELD



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



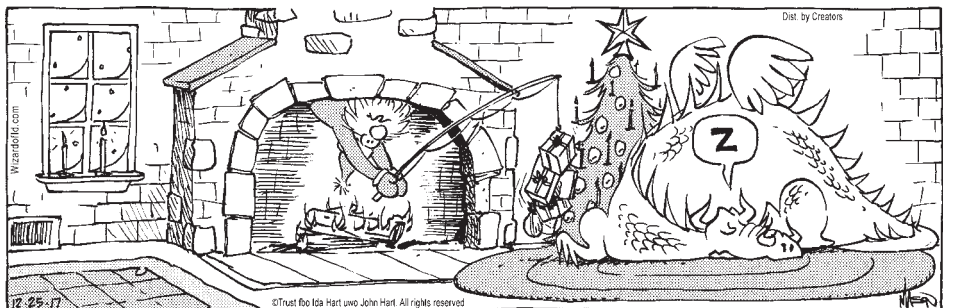
## PICKLES



## BEEBLE BAILEY



## WIZARD OF ID



## BLONDIE



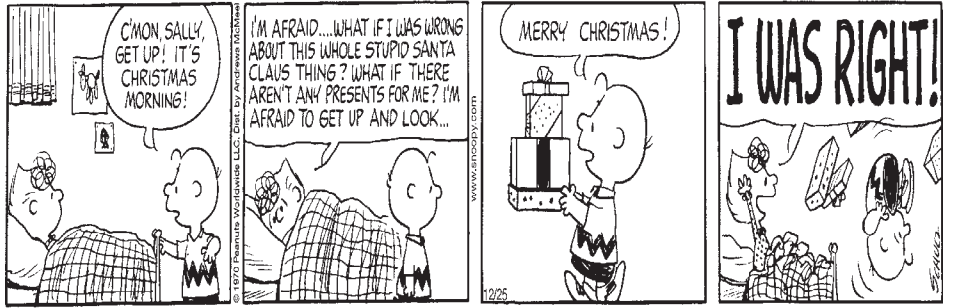
## ZITS



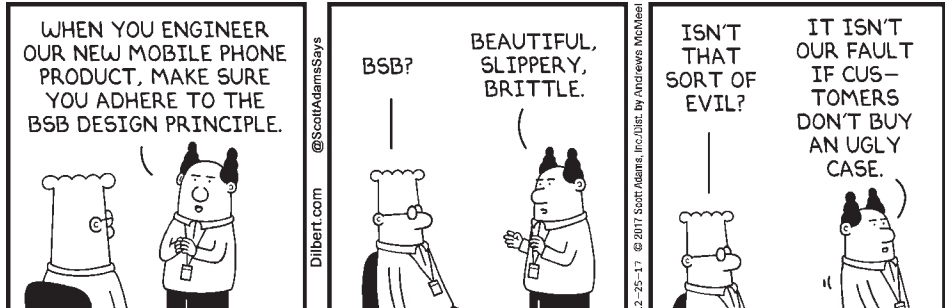
## THE BORN LOSER



## PEANUTS



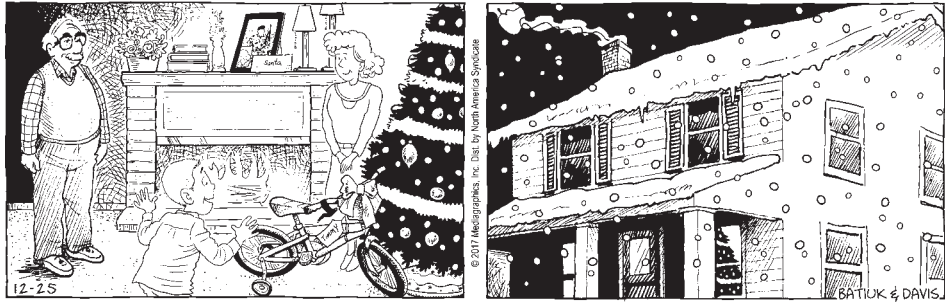
## DILBERT



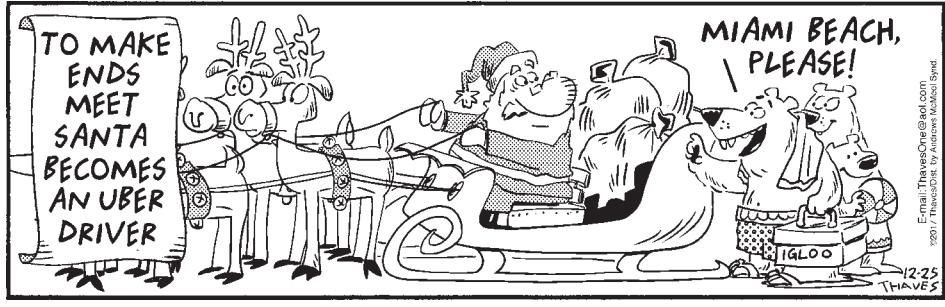
## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## CRANKSHAFT



## FRANK & ERNEST



## HERMAN



## PLUGGERS



## Daily CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

- Dutch airline
- Tusked animal
- Banked no.
- Lady of the haus
- Cathedral part
- Of the Arctic
- Jar tops
- Spouse (2 wds.)
- Turn into bone
- Bow shape
- Felt grateful
- A — for news
- Electrical units
- Trekkers to Holy Places
- Western movies
- day now
- Cornered (2 wds.)
- Come clean
- Happy rumble
- George of "Blume in Love"
- Mr. Arnaz
- Tunes from an opera
- Fix up a house
- Beatty or Florem
- Zone
- Casino wheel
- Mon. follower
- Pointed arch
- Mr. Ducommun
- PD dispatch
- Shelled, as corn

**DOWN**

- Kringle
- Highland youths
- Woolgathering
- Minds a kid (hyph.)
- Unbar, in poetry
- Nick and Nora's dog
- Of an earlier style
- IRS time
- Like Sajak and Vanna did
- Crab appendage
- Bedtime story
- "Alice" waitress
- P.O. service
- Canyon reply
- Town meetings
- Grill remnant
- Bad prefix
- Hemingway and others
- Accustom
- Songlike
- Less ignorant

**PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED**

I	N	S	P	R	D	A	F
L	O	A	L	E	V	E	L
K	E	P	U	T	I	C	A
S	L	A	L	O	M	E	S
S	C	E	N	E	S	L	I
C	H	U	G	S	F	R	A
O	A	R	S	L	U	N	G
U	F	O	K	A	T	E	S
R	E	S	A	L	E	S	C
M	E	N	A	C	E	S	B
I	R	I	S	T	A	B	O
F	I	L	E	O	N	I	O
F	E	E	D	N	A	S	T

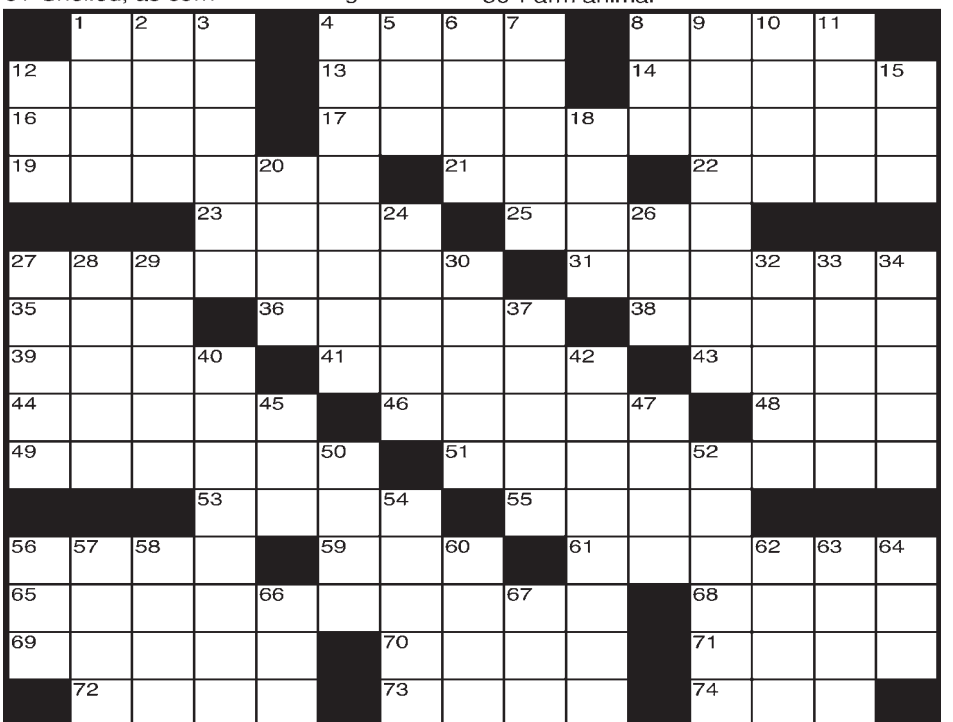
12-25-17 © 2017 UFS, Dist. by Andrews McMeel for UFS

**ACROSS**

- Contest
- Odometer button
- Lose traction
- Brutish one
- Played the fink (2 wds.)
- Merriment
- wester
- Salad-dressing cheese
- Nurture
- Conger catchers
- Leave, slangily
- Farm animal

**DOWN**

- Hog fat
- About, in memos (2 wds.)
- Leafs out
- Oahu cookout
- Canal of song
- Pentagon grp.
- FN stations
- Octopus abode





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### NEWS HERALD:

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The News Herald  
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# The Mini Page

Issue 51, 2017

Founded by Betty Debnam

**Next Week:**  
Know your snow!

## Winter Reading



Photo by David van der Mark

Your winter break from school gives you plenty of time to get wrapped up in great stories! Let's get started with The Mini Page's winter reading suggestions.

• The title character in **"The Wonderling"** by Mira Bartók lives in Miss Carbunkle's Home for Wayward and Misbegotten Creatures — part animals, part humans. It's the only home he's known until he finds a friend named Trinket, and together they escape.



Image courtesy Candlewick Press

• In 1925, a British explorer named Percy Fawcett set off into the Amazon jungle in search of a "lost city" he believed existed. Weeks later, he was gone and never heard from again. **"The Quest for Z: The True Story of Explorer Percy Fawcett and a Lost City in the Amazon"** by Greg Pizzoli tells the exciting story of Fawcett's adventure.



Image courtesy Viking

• In **"Malala's Magic Pencil"** by Malala Yousafzai, and illustrated by Kerascoët, the young Nobel Peace Prize-winner presents a picture book of her story of wishing for and achieving an education in Pakistan, where many girls were not allowed to go to school.

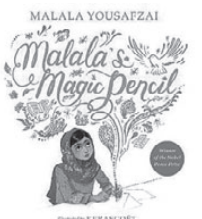


Image courtesy Little Brown

• **"Come With Me"** by Holly M. McGhee, and illustrated by Pascal Lemaître, is meant for younger readers. But its positive message about reaching out to others and being brave, one step at a time, is for anyone who is overwhelmed with negative news.



Image courtesy Putnam

• **"Journeys: Young Readers' Letters to Authors Who Changed Their Lives"** is a collection by the Library of Congress Center for the Book of letters written by students in grades 4 through 12 to authors from Laura Ingalls Wilder to Mark Doty.

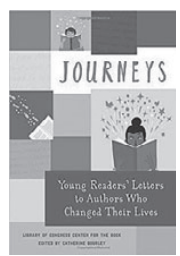


Image courtesy Candlewick Press

• Linda Bailey's **"Under the Bed Fred,"** illustrated by Colin Jack, offers a new approach to dealing with a monster under the bed: Just talk to him!

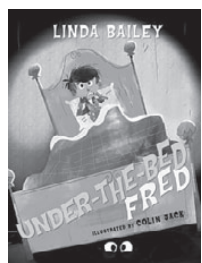


Image courtesy Tundra Books

• Markus Motum gives readers a whole new perspective on space travel in **"Curiosity: The Story of a Mars Rover."** This large-scale book is packed with facts and cool illustrations about the rover that touched down on Mars in 2012.

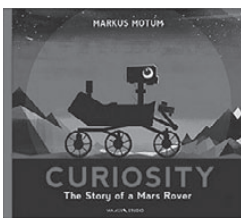


Image courtesy Candlewick Press

• **"I'm Just No Good at Rhyming"**

by Chris Harris, and illustrated by Lane Smith, turns words into playthings and tickles readers' funny bones. If you thought poetry was boring, this book will change your mind.

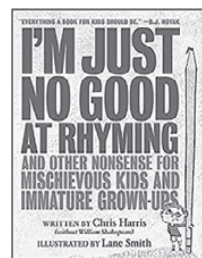


Image courtesy Little Brown

• In April 1963, just months before President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, he traveled to Ireland, the home of his great-grandparents. **"Patrick and the President"** by Ryan Tubridy, and illustrated by P.J. Lynch, tells the story of a young boy who gets the chance to meet the American president.

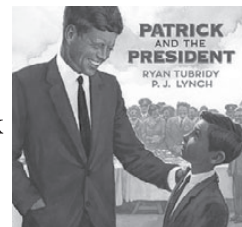


Image courtesy Candlewick Press

• **"The Care and Feeding of a Pet Black Hole"** by Michelle Cuevas introduces 11-year-old Stella, who has lost her dad but somehow gained a pet black hole. At first, Stella likes the idea of feeding things into the black hole, where they disappear. But then it gets complicated.



Image courtesy Dial Books

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/MPbooklist](http://bit.ly/MPbooklist)
- [bit.ly/MPALA](http://bit.ly/MPALA)

### At the library:

- "So, You Want to Be a Writer?" by Vicki Hambleton
- "Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry" by Jack Prelutsky

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of winter reading are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ADVENTURE, AUDIO, BLACK HOLE, BOOKS, BREAK, FAWCETT, FICTION, FRED, FUN, HISTORY, JOURNEY, MALALA, POETRY, POSITIVE, READ, RHYMING, SCHOOL, TRAVEL, WINTER, WONDERLING.

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

## Cook's Corner

### Easy Pita Chips

#### You'll need:

- 3 whole-wheat pita breads
- 1 tablespoon seasoned salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- butter-flavored cooking spray



\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

#### What to do:

1. Cut 3 whole pita breads into halves, then quarters, then eighths.
2. Separate each triangle into two single pieces. You will have 48 triangular "chips."
3. Mix seasoned salt and other spices in a small bowl.
4. Place chips in a single layer on a large cookie sheet or baking pan. Spray lightly with cooking spray. Sprinkle spice mixture evenly over the chips and spray again.
5. Bake in a 450-degree oven for 7 to 9 minutes until slightly brown and crispy.
6. Cool chips. Serve with salsa, soft cheese spread or other dips.

## Puzzling

Unscramble the words below that remind us of the holiday season.



nrtwei \_\_\_\_\_  
mlfiay \_\_\_\_\_  
smicu \_\_\_\_\_  
esvitef \_\_\_\_\_

Answers: winter, family, music, festive.

## Mini Jokes



**Noelle:** What is Santa's elves' favorite drink?  
**Ned:** Minnesoda!

## Eco Note



Winter's first frost arrived in the U.S. about one month later than it did a century ago. A NOAA meteorologist says the average first freeze over the past decade is a week later than it was between 1971 and 1980, adding that this spring's last frost occurred nine days earlier than normal. He and other scientists say global warming is causing the shrinking winter.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

## For later:

Make a list of books you'd like to read over the winter break. Share and compare your list with a friend.

## Teachers:

For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: [bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching\\_guides.html](http://bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html)

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<b>2017 Chevy Equinox</b> Auto, 4 Cyl., LT! #618 <b>\$22,994</b>	<b>2018 Mini Cooper</b> Auto, 3 Cylinder, Sunroof! #018 <b>\$24,990</b>	<b>2008 Chevy Corvette</b> Manual, 6.2L, Convertible! #294 <b>\$23,994</b>	<b>2016 Honda Accord</b> EX Leather, Sunroof! #360 <b>\$25,992</b>	<b>2015 Mazda CX-9</b> Auto, V6, Grand Touring! #434 <b>\$28,991</b>	<b>2015 Nissan 370Z</b> Manual, V6, NISMO! #016 <b>\$31,990</b>	<b>2017 BMW X5</b> Auto, Inline 6! #213 <b>\$50,992</b>

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