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NORTHEAST NEWS

At Stephens Elem...



Lt. Governor Dan Patrick gets some pointers on public speaking from Stephens student Danielle Ramirez, who introduced the TEA program. See MORE, page 3

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VOL. 43, NO. 33 TUESDAY, AUGUST 20, 2019 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

NEWS NOTES

Walle & GFCC Town Hall Aug. 27

State Representative Armando Walle will hold at Town Hall in partnership with the Green Forest Civic Club, on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the East Aldine District offices, 5333 Aldine Mail Rte. The meeting will discuss upcoming legislative session, and other district priorities. Call Walle's office at 713-694-8620 for more information.

Free Mammogram Screening

The Rose will provide free Mammogram tests on Saturday, September 7 at the Greater Pure Light Church, 12330 Vickery Drive at Aldine Mail Route. This is for insured and Uninsured women, age 35 years or older. You must not be pregnant or breastfeeding, not had a mammogram in 12 months, and have no preexisting symptoms or problems. ONLY 25 POSITIONS OPEN. Call Connie Graham at 832-453-3837 for an application and to schedule an appointment.

Stephens Elementary and Aldine ISD get high ratings, says TEA

ALDINE – Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath, along with Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, visited Aldine ISD's Stephens Elementary School on Thursday, Aug. 15 as part of their trip across Texas to feature schools that made tremendous gains in the state's A-F accountability rating system during the 2018-19 school year. Stephens Elementary moved from a 'D' to an 'A' campus in the state's A-F accountability ratings in one year. Joining Commissioner Morath and Lt. Gov.



Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath presents the new A to F evaluation system, while Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick listens.

Patrick at the event were Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, AISD Board President Steve Mead, Board Vice President Connie Esparza, Board Secretary Dr. Kimberley Booker, Board Asst. Secretary Paul Shanklin and Board Members Patricia Ann Bourgeois and Rose Avalos.

Morath applauded the work Stephens principal Shauna Showers and her staff performed turning the school around in just a year's time, and lauded Aldine for moving to a 'B' district.

"Aldine has about 65,000 students (there are 20 districts of this size in Texas, called 'very large districts') and of these very large districts Aldine gained the most in student achievement, second most in school progress, and second most overall," Morath said. "Perhaps even more interesting, 87%

See TEA Ratings, page 8

New facilities to be built at Squatty Lyons Park

\$3.1 Million Squatty Lyons Park Renovation to Provide Sports Improvements for Northside residents

Mayor Sylvester Turner; State Representative Armando Walle, District 140; Council Member Karla Cisneros, District H; Matthew Fougerat, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Local Park



Mayor Turner with Armando Walle, and other officials at the dedication ceremony Wednesday.

Grants Coordinator; Alex Aguilar, Vice-President, North Houston American Little League, and the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) will break ground on a \$3.1 million sports field and park amenities improvement project at Squatty Lyons Park, 1701 Chamberlain Street, 77093, on August 15th at 12:30 pm.

The Phase II renovations to this new sports-experience complex will complete the Squatty Lyons Park Master Plan and re-design all outdoor recreation amenities to increase participation and engage neighborhood residents in outdoor activities. Ballfield ren-

See PLAN and Story, page 8

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★ OPINION PAGE ★



Social Security Matters

by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty – About Survivor Benefits

Social Security Matters by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty – About Survivor Benefits

Dear Rusty: I am looking for information on my benefits. I am 60 years and 5 months old, and still employed. My spouse died in 2017 and would have been 61 years and 9 months old on July 31, 2019. My husband was the more highly compensated employee and was employed longer than myself. Signed: A Survivor

Dear Survivor: You are eligible for a survivor benefit from your deceased husband because you are now 60, but that survivor benefit will be considerably reduced (by about 28.5%) if you take it now. The survivor benefit is reduced if taken before your widow's full retirement age (which is 66 ? for you). Taken at your widow's full retirement age (FRA) you'd be entitled to 100% of the benefit your deceased husband had earned at his passing. But if you take the survivor benefit now - before your normal full retirement age (66 years and 10 months) - and you are working you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings limit." If you exceed the limit, it will cause Social Security to withhold some of your survivor benefits. The 2019 earnings limit is \$17,640 and it will increase slightly each year until the year you reach your normal FRA, when it will increase by about 2 ? times; then when you reach your normal FRA there is no earnings limit. What all of that means is that if you take the survivor benefit now and continue to work and earn, your survivor benefit will be reduced from what it could be, and Social Security will take back some benefits if you exceed the earnings limit (they'll take back \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit).

Assuming you have earned the requisite 40 credits from your own career, you will be eligible for your own Social Security retirement benefit at age 62, though your own benefit would also be reduced if you take it early (the reduction for your own benefit at age 62 will be about 29.2%). Since at 62 you will have a choice to take either the survivor benefit or your own benefit, you may want to set a goal of getting the highest possible benefit for the rest of your life. To do that I suggest you determine whether the maximum benefit you can get on your own work record (at age 70) is more than the maximum survivor benefit you can get at your widow's FRA, and then follow a strategy which yields the highest benefit. You can get those numbers by contacting Social Security directly and asking for your own Statement of Estimated Benefits, and also asking for what your maximum survivor benefit will be. You can get the statement for your own estimated benefits online by creating a "My Social Security" account, but you will need to contact Social Security directly to get your maximum survivor benefit amount.

Once you are 62, you will have a choice of which benefit to choose and when to choose it. So, if your own SS benefit on your own work record will be more at age 70 than your survivor benefit will be at your widow's FRA, you should consider taking the survivor benefit first and delaying your own benefit until it reaches maximum, at which point you would switch to your own benefit. However, if your own maximum benefit at age 70 will be less than the maximum survivor benefit you can get at your widow's full retirement age, then you may wish to wait until you reach your widow's full retirement age (66 ?) to claim the maximum survivor benefit. If you wait until your widow's FRA to claim the maximum survivor benefit, and you need additional income while you're waiting, you can claim only your own SS benefit at age 62 but remember that if you do so the earnings limit will still apply to your own SS retirement benefit until you reach your normal full retirement age.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Dusty Surprises

The surprises just kept coming.

When I moved in with Peter a few years back, I brought my clothes, a few books, and some artwork. I rented out my house, gave away my furniture, and everything else was consigned to "things I'll deal with later," a pile which—mysteriously—did not shrink with time. These stacked plastic boxes were still in my barn, still waiting for me, long after I'd forgotten what was in them or cared.

But I am going to put the property up for sale and it was time for a reckoning with the barn. It took two dumpsters, four days, and two hard-working guys from the appropriately named, "Git-er-Gone Junk & Clutter Removal," to see it to the end.

And, yes, I did think, "Why not just dump it all, sight unseen?"

But then, what to do with all the surprises found in the boxes of photos and letters and trinkets? Obviously, most of them would be thrown away, recycled, or given to the thrift store. But what about that piece of blown glass from Norway, the postcard from grandpa when he served overseas, the bright red wool jacket handsewn by my aunt that was still stylish. Anyone who's done this knows—it's not that easy.

So, I piled a few boxes in my car ("kicking the can down the road" Peter called it, "saving my sanity," is how I described it) to sort through after everything else was out of the barn.

Yesterday I sorted through a box entirely filled with letters. I discovered that I had saved every postcard and letter I had received since childhood. No, I did not read every one. It turns out that descriptions of what happened in school or how someone spent their vacation makes for extraordinarily dull reading forty years later. But I sampled a few letters in each of the neatly stacked piles that filled the huge storage box before I put them in recycling.

"Oh my gosh," I kept saying, "I had forgotten about that entirely."

I forgot my younger sister wrote to me with such regularity when I went away to college. I forgot friends I'd spent a summer with and never saw again. I forgot the letters sent by a friend after our little high school group went off to college and he was left alone, still living at home.

I'm living in the Twilight Zone, he wrote, and don't even have Rod Serling to comfort me. To the obvious response, "Meet new people," I can only remind you of the great difficulty I have in doing just that.

But, I have a solution, the letter went on, I'm going to marry a princess of some European country that they forgot to tell us about in 11th grade. Maybe it didn't fight in either of the world wars, or is really small. Anyway, I going to find this country, marry this princess and show all you women a thing or two. So there!

My heart hurt, reading this forty-year-old letter. I wondered if I wrote back. I hoped he was doing well. Then I realized, (unlike forty years ago) this was relatively easy to determine. I logged onto Facebook.

And there he was, looking remarkably the same—but with a smiling dark-haired wife and two grown daughters and what appeared to be a very happy life.

As the last pile of letters went into the bin, I stood still for a moment and smiled—with dusty hands and a full heart. "You didn't need Rod Serling after all," I thought.

Till next time,

Carrie
Carrie Classon's memoir, "Blue Yarn," was released earlier this year. Learn more at CarrieClasson.com or www.Facebook.com/CarrieClassonauthor.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Ed Sterling

Officials meet to discuss public safety following deadly shooting in El Paso

AUSTIN — Following the Aug. 3 shooting that claimed the lives of 22 people and injured 24 others at a popular El Paso shopping venue, Gov. Greg Abbott and a group of officials met in the border city to discuss ways to address violence.

Joined by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, House Speaker Dennis Bonnen, state Sen. Jose Rodriguez, and area state Reps. Cesar Blanco, Art Fierro, Mary Gonzales, Joe Moody and Lina Ortega, Abbott and the group talked about how to improve public safety.

"The entire state of Texas continues to grieve the tragedy in El Paso," Abbott said. "While our hearts remain broken, it is our responsibility to show the resolve that is needed to address this shooting and begin the process of working together to lay a groundwork of how we are going to respond. The people of Texas — including the people of El Paso — deserve to be safe and it is our responsibility to ensure that safety," he added.

Sen. Rodriguez, in a statement on behalf of the El Paso legislative delegation, said: "State leaders pledged to work with the El Paso delegation to address gun violence driven by white nationalism. We all agreed that gun violence and white nationalism are pressing issues. Gov. Abbott, in his remarks, was frank about calling the shooter a white supremacist and his actions domestic terrorism. All leaders, from local to state to federal, must reject the ideology of white supremacy."

Abbott announced the state would provide more than \$5 million in immediate financial assistance through the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Public Safety Office for law enforcement agencies and the community of El Paso.

According to a governor's office news release, the financial assistance will take these forms:

- Psychological first aid and crisis counseling;



- Behavioral health services, including needs assessments, strategic planning and care coordination with local service providers;

- County reimbursements for expert witness and juror fees, investigation, increased security and more;

- School-based mental health services to support students affected directly or indirectly and referrals for youths with certain behavioral health and psychological needs;

- Post-critical incident seminars, emphasizing peer support to assist first responders suffering from traumatic stress; and

- The establishment of a "family resiliency center" to be a focal point for community services including mental health needs, legal services, faith-based assistance and public information.

NEW ACCESSIBILITY RULES SET

House Bill 3163, establishing new rules for accessible parking spaces in Texas, will become law Sept. 1.

According to a governor's office news release, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation will draft rules that implement the legislation to amend Government Code Sec. 469.052, as follows:

- The international access symbol must be painted on the parking space;

- The words "NO PARKING" must be painted on access aisles next to accessible parking spaces;

- The signs marking accessible parking spaces must include the penalty for parking illegally in the space. Fines and towing are examples of possible

penalties.

Notably, current signs and parking spaces do not need changes until the new rules go into effect. The new rules will be open to receive comment in the Texas Register after drafting and approval, and importantly, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation anticipates the rules to take effect near mid-2020.

TAX REVENUE IS DISTRIBUTED

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on Aug. 7 announced he would send cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts \$876.8 million in local sales tax allocations for the month of August. That is 4 percent more than the amount distributed in August 2018.

Allocations are based on sales made in June by businesses that report tax monthly and on sales made in April, May and June by quarterly filers.

Details on sales tax allocations to individual cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose districts can be found online in the comptroller's monthly sales tax allocation comparison summary reports at comptroller.texas.gov.

BATTLESHIP VISITS TO STOP

The Battleship Texas State Historic Site in La Porte will close to the public Aug. 26, allowing staff and contractors full accessibility to the ship to safely perform necessary preparation work ahead of a repair project.

The last day the public may explore the 573-foot dreadnought-class vessel will be Aug. 25, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department announced Aug. 7.

During the closure, thousands of artifacts on board the Texas will be catalogued and secured and exhibit collections removed before it is towed to another site for repair.

Visitors will continue to have access to the nearby San Jacinto Monument, the San Jacinto Battleground and the park's nature trails during the closure.

NORTHEAST NEWS
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NFL celebrates its 100th anniversary: College football celebrates its 150th anniversary

The 2019 college and NFL season will be ones of celebrations and remembrances as the college game celebrates its 150th anniversary and the NFL celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

The game has evolved into the No. 1 spectator sport in the country at both levels and fans can't seem to get enough of it. Thanks to television, football fans can watch their favorite sport Thursday-Monday, and some college games are played on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

The 2019 college season will culminate with the College Football Playoff (CFP) national championship on Monday, Jan. 13 at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in New Orleans, while the NFL season will conclude on Sunday, Feb. 2 with Super Bowl LIV at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami. The CFP semifinals will be played on Dec. 28 and will feature the Peach Bowl and Fiesta Bowl.

The question is, who will be playing in each of the respective title games in 2020? University of Texas fans are optimistic fourth-year head coach Tom Herman has the Longhorns poised to take the next step and land one of the four CFP playoff spots. Texas closed the 2018 season on a high note upsetting Georgia 28-21 in the Sugar Bowl and returns a loaded offense led by quarterback Sam Ehlinger (3,292 passing yards, 25 TD passes/482 rushing yards, 16 TDs), sophomore running back Keontay Ingram (708 yards rushing, 3 TDs) and big-play wide receiver Collin Johnson (68 receptions, 985 yards, 7 TDs). Herman is building a potential powerhouse in Austin and upset archrival Oklahoma in the regular season before losing to the Sooners in the Big 12 title game.

Texas, ranked No. 10 in the country in preseason polls, has a favorable schedule this year to make a serious run for a CFP bid. UT hosts No. 6-ranked LSU on Sept. 7, and plays OU on a neutral site in the Cotton Bowl. There is a stretch between Oct. 26 and Nov. 23 where the 'Horns play at TCU, at Iowa State and at Baylor. Not daunting, but none of those teams can be taken for granted.

It appears OU and UT are the front runners again in the Big 12, but keep an eye on Iowa State, Baylor and TCU to also be in the hunt. Texas Tech will have a new head coach in Matt Wells, the former Utah State head coach, who replaced Kliff Kingsbury after he was dismissed after a second straight losing season. As usual, Tech will have a load of offensive talent for Wells to dicker with, but it's all about defense, or lack thereof, in Lubbock if the Red Raiders are going to be a surprise team this year.

Oklahoma will once again feature a high-scoring offense (head coach Lincoln Riley has produced the last two Heisman Trophy winners in quarterbacks Baker Mayfield and Kyle Murray, who both went on to become the No. 1 overall draft pick in the 2018 and 2019 NFL draft) and this time former Alabama quarterback Jalen Hurts (765 yards passing, 8 passing TDs 2 rushing TDs as the backup to Tua Tagovailoa) will be the man under center. He brings a wealth of big-game experience to the Sooners and saved 'Bama's bacon in the SEC title game last year when he replaced an injured Tua and led the Crimson Tide to a come-from-behind victory. Hurts will have plenty of talent to work with on offense, but it's the OU defense that needs to improve. How far the Sooners go this year will depend on how improved that unit is in 2019.

In the SEC it appears it will be business as usual with Alabama being the team to beat and looking to win another conference title and a sixth national championship for head coach Nick Saban. Tagovailoa (3,966 passing yards, 43 TD passes/5 rushing TDs) should be recovered from the ankle injury that slowed him in the SEC title game and CFP championship game that saw Saban's team get blown out by Clemson, 42-16.

Tagovailoa has a host of talented receivers to throw to in Jerry Jeudy (68 receptions, 1,315 yards, 14 TDs), Henry Ruggs, III (46 receptions, 741 yards, 11 TDs) and Jaylen Waddle (45 receptions, 848 yards, 7 TDs). Alabama lost its two top runners, but sophomore Najee Harris (783 yards, 4 TDs) should be a capable replacement and you know there is



KEENEY'S KORNER
By
MIKE KEENEY

plenty of young talent on hand to help in the running game. Defensively, the Tide lost a host of players to the NFL, but there will be plenty of 4-star and 5-star players on hand to take over and continue the tradition of quality defense in Tuscaloosa.

Texas A&M and LSU should both be improved, but will it be enough to unseat 'Bama in the SEC West? Probably not.

Jimbo Fisher begins his second year as the Aggies head coach and has a veteran quarterback to count on in Kellen Mond (3,107 passing yards, 24 TDs/474 rushing yards, 7 TDs). The Aggies will learn a lot about themselves early when they travel to Clemson in Week 2 to face the defending national champions. Last year, the Aggies gave the Tigers all they could handle in a 28-26 loss in College Station.

LSU fans are hoping their win over Central Florida in the Fiesta Bowl will be the springboard to another double-digit win season (LSU finished 10-3 in 2018). The Tigers have a solid quarterback returning in Joe Burrow and a talented defense.

The SEC East should be a battle between Georgia and Florida. The Dogs are led by quarterback Jake Fromme (2,761 yards passing, 230 TDs) and a two-headed running game led by D'Andre Swift (1,049 yards rushing, 10 TDs) and Elijah Hollyfield (1,018 yards rushing, 7 TDs). Florida enters its second year under head coach Dan Mullen who led the Gators to a 10-3 record in his first year, which included a 41-15 route of Michigan in the Peach Bowl.

Clemson should be the class of the ACC and will be setting its sight on a second straight national title and a third in a four-year span. Sophomore quarterback Trevor Lawrence (3,280 passing yards, 30 TDs) and running back Travis Etienne (1,658 rushing yards, 24 TDs) will lead a potent Tiger offense that will have to carry the load while a young and inexperienced defense gets its legs underneath it. Clemson's defense, especially its defensive line, was decimated by the NFL draft as four Tiger defenders were drafted in the first round. Head coach Dabo Swinney has enough talent in reserve to once again rule the ACC.

In the Big 10, it's time for Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh to put up a big season and finally beat Ohio State (he's 0-4 against the Buckeyes) and earn a spot in the Big 10 title game. He has a veteran quarterback in Shea Patterson (2,600 passing yards, 22 TDs) to lead the way and a stout defense.

Ohio State will usher in a new head coach in Ryan Day, who replaced the retired Urban Meyer. Day served as head coach for the Buckeyes first three games in 2018 while Meyer was suspended and led OSU to an average of 56 points in the three games he served as head coach. He'll break in a new quarterback in Georgia transfer Justin Fields, considered one of the top five recruits in the class of 2017.

Locally, the University of Houston begins the Dana Holgorsen era as the former West Virginia head coach left the Big 12 for the American Athletic Conference. Holgorsen has a dynamic player at quarterback in D'Erig King, who passed for 2,982 yards and 36 touchdowns and rushed for another 674 yards and 16 TDs before being lost late in the season with a knee injury. King is fully recovered and will be a key cog in the Cougars' quest to land a New Year's Six bowl game.

In the NFL, Texas' two pro franchises, the Houston Texans and Dallas Cowboys, both have lofty goals of earning a trip to the Super Bowl. Both teams will have tough sledding to see their dreams become a reality.

Bill O'Brien's Texans have a tall task in their first seven games, as they will face these quarterbacks in succession: Week 1. Drew Brees (New Orleans), Week 2. Nick Foles (Jacksonville), Week 3. Phillip

Rivers (LA Chargers), Week 4. Cam Newton (Carolina), Week 5. Matt Ryan (Atlanta), Week 6. Patrick Mahomes (Kansas City) and Week 7. Andrew Luck (Indianapolis). The Houston defense will see Foles and Luck twice since they play in the AFC South and a guy named Tom Brady in prime time on Dec. 1. That's a tall order for a secondary that was torched down the stretch last season.

The offense will probably have to carry the load and is in good shape with third-year quarterback Deshaun Watson (4,165 yards, 26 TD passes, 5 rushing TDs) and the league's best receiver in DeAndre Hopkins (115 receptions, 1,572 yards, 11 TDs) leading the way. The offensive line must do a better job of protecting Watson than it did in 2018 when the former Clemson star was sacked a league-high 62 times and took numerous hits. Houston drafted Titus Howard in the first round and will probably play him at guard. He'll get tested early and often, but he appears to have the strength and size to play in the NFL.

Defensively, the Texans will once again be lead by defensive end J.J. Watt and Jadevon Clowney. Clowney missed all of the offseason workouts and a majority of training camp as he looks for a new contract. Rumor has it Clowney will report after the third preseason game. O'Brien had better hope Clowney reports in playing shape and ready to chase Brees around the Mercedes-Benz Superdome in the season opener on Sept. 7 on Monday Night Football.

The Texans will have a tough time defending their AFC South title due to the fact the Indianapolis Colts should have quarterback Andrew Luck (he did miss most of training camp with a calf injury) back in the fold. Luck decimated the Houston secondary in the playoffs a year ago and should be the team to beat in the South. Jacksonville should be improved with Nick Foles under center and the Tennessee Titans will be good on defense, but might struggle once again on offense.

The Texans, like the rest of the AFC, know the road to the AFC title runs through Foxborough, home of the defending Super Bowl champion New England Patriots. As long as head coach Bill Belichick is running the controls and quarterback Tom Brady is running the offense, the Patriots should be the odds-on favorite to represent the AFC in Super Bowl LIV. The Pats won their sixth Super Bowl last February making Belichick and Brady the only head coach and quarterback to win six Lombardi Trophies (the Steelers also have six, but accomplished it with two different quarterbacks, Terry Bradshaw and Ben Roethlisberger, and three different head coaches, Chuck Noll, Bill Cowher and Mike Tomlin).

Brady will be without one of his biggest weapons as Rob Gronkowski opted to retire at the ripe old age of 29 instead of pursue a seventh title. Gronk's absence could hurt Brady in the Red Zone, but I'm sure he and Belichick have been working on replacing the big tight end's production since the offseason. Look for New England to throw more to running backs when they get near the end zone and don't forget, Brady will have dependable wide receiver Julian Edelman (he was suspended for the first four games of last season) for the entire campaign. Edelman was the MVP of the Super Bowl.

Le'Von Bell has moved to the Jets and while they should be improved, don't expect them to challenge the Patriots for the NFC East title.

In the AFC North, the Cleveland Browns are everybody's favorite to win the division and while they are a much improved team, don't expect Pittsburgh and Baltimore to just hand them the division. The Browns finished 7-8-1 a year ago, which was outstanding after going 1-31 the two previous years. They should have one of the best offenses in

the league led by second-year starter Baker Mayfield at quarterback and Odell Beckham at wide receiver. Beckham was acquired in a trade from the Giants and will pair with his former college teammate Jarvis Landry to give the Browns a powerful one-two punch at the wide out position. Cleveland should also be good running the football behind second-year back Nick Chubb and they get Kareem Hunt back in Week 9 after he serves an eight-game suspension for domestic abuse.

The Steelers will have a new look after parting ways with Bell and play making (but a pain in the-you-know-what) wide out Antonio Brown, who they traded to the Raiders. James Conner filled in exceptionally well in Bell's absence and look for JuJu Smith-Schuster to become Big Ben's new go-to guy in the passing game. The defense should be improved because it can't play much worse than it did a year ago. Pittsburgh is a prideful franchise and I have a feeling they will give the Browns a run for the money in the AFC North.

The AFC West should be a fun race to watch. Kansas City and record-setting QB Pat Mahomes (2018 league MVP) won it last year, but look for the Los Angeles Chargers to give them a run for their money this year. Mahomes threw for 50 touchdowns and over 5,000 yards and has two 1,000-yard receivers back in wide receiver Tyreek Hill and tight end Travis Kelce. With Hunt gone, the running game might be a concern, as could the defense that got blistered by New England in the AFC title game.

The Chargers have a fair offense as well led by the ageless QB Phillip Rivers, wide receiver Keenan Allen and running back Melvin Gordon. Gordon wants a new contract and has vowed not to report until he inks a new deal. It will be interesting to see how long Gordon remains out once he starts missing game checks. LA gets the edge on defense over the Chiefs, which might be the difference maker in who takes the division.

In the NFC East, Dallas is the defending division champs but is also dealing with a disgruntled star running back as Ezekiel Elliott held out of training camp and preseason games seeking a new multi-million dollar contract. Quarterback Dak Prescott is also seeking a big payday and reportedly wants a \$40 million deal. Sorry, but Prescott is a good, not a great QB. You can't tell me he deserves a bigger deal than Brady, Brees, Aaron Rodgers or Mahomes. Owner Jerry Jones knows this team is better offensively when Elliott is on the field. I have a feeling Zeke will get his money, as will Prescott and wide receiver Amari Cooper. Cooper came over in a mid-season trade from Oakland and gave Dallas and Prescott the vertical passing game they had been lacking. Prescott also gets back reliable tight end Jason Witten who returned to the game after serving a year in the Monday Night Football booth. TV viewing fans across the country

thank Witten for giving up the TV gig (he wasn't very good) and returning to the field.

Dallas also has a solid defense and it will need to perform at peak form again this year as a healthy Philadelphia team will contend with the Pokes for the NFC East title. The Eagles, two years removed from winning the Super Bowl, get quarterback Carson Wentz back and loaded up on offensive talent in the offseason. Philly's ability to unthorne Dallas atop the division will depend on how well the defense, especially the secondary, performs. The Giants and Redskins should not be factors in the division or Wild Card race this year.

In the NFC North, look for Minnesota to battle defending division champ Chicago for the title this year. Kirk Cousins has another year under his belt at the helm of the Vikes offense and has two solid WRs to throw to in Stefan Diggs and Adam Thielen. Look for running back Dalvin Cook to have a breakout season. The Minnesota defense will once again be solid, but so will the Bears who acquired linebacker Mack prior to the start of the 2018 season and he was a game changer for what was a very good until before his acquisition. The question mark for the Bears will be how much third-year quarterback Mitch Trubisky has improved. He lost starting running back Jordan Howard to the Eagles, which means rookie Sam Montgomery will be counted on to carry the rushing load along with versatile runner/receiver Tarik Cohen.

The NFC West should be a two-team race between Los Angeles and Seattle. The Rams finished 13-3 a year ago and won the NFC title. Head coach Sean McVay has assembled one of the most explosive offenses in the league led by quarterback Jared Goff, running back Todd Gurley and wide receivers Brandin Cooks, Robert Woods and Cooper Cupp. The Rams are decent on defense, but so are the Seahawks who got better and younger on that side of the ball in 2018. Seattle still has Russell Wilson under center, but lost one of his top weapons when wide receiver Doug Baldwin retired due to health issues. Look for running back Chris Carson to be a key cog as the 'Hawks look to retake the division title. The 49ers should be improved but might not have enough on defense to remain in the race while the Arizona Cardinals will pin their hopes on rookie quarterback Kyle Murray. Good luck that!

Perhaps the best division in the league is the AFC South, where New Orleans took the division last year and will enter the 2019 season looking for revenge after they felt they were robbed of the NFC title by a bad non-call in the title game. You can bet head coach Sean Payton will use that play as a rallying cry heading into this season. This should be a historic year for Brees, who last year passed Peyton Manning as the all-time passing yardage leader in NFL history. He needs 20 touchdown passes to pass Manning on that list, so look for him to set a new mark in Week 8 or 9. Brees has a ton of talent to throw to and hand off to in running back Alvin Kamara and wide receiver Michael Thomas. Look for Kamara to have a huge year now that Mark Ingram is in Baltimore. He could become a true three-down, back which should only

increase his offensive numbers.

Look for Carolina and Atlanta to bounce back and battle NO for the division title. Cam Newton should be back to full health after missing a good portion of last season with a shoulder injury. He has a dual threat in running back Christian McCaffery who is a danger on the ground and in the passing game. Look for the Panthers young wide receivers to make a move this year to give Newton some help downfield in the passing game. The Falcons should have another explosive offense led by quarterback Matt Ryan, wide receivers Julio Jones and Calvin Ridley and a return to health by running back Davante Freeman. Atlanta must improve on defense or head coach Gus Bailey may be looking for a new job come 2020.

The 2019 college and pro seasons should be interesting and full of big plays, big numbers and big moments. So, without further ado, here are one man's picks for the upcoming college and pro seasons.

NCAA BIG TEN

EAST - Michigan
WEST - Wisconsin
BIG TEN CHAMP - Michigan: Harbaugh finally gets his signature season!

ACC

Atlantic - Clemson
Coastal - Miami
ACC CHAMP - Clemson: Step 1 in Tigers defense of their title.

PAC 12

NORTH - Oregon
SOUTH - USC
PAC 12 CHAMP - Oregon: QB Justin Hebert will be difference maker in title game.

SEC

EAST - Georgia
WEST - Alabama
SEC CHAMP - Alabama: Saban continues to master his former assistants

CFP PLAYOFFS

Peach Bowl - No. 1 Clemson over No. 4 Texas
Fiesta Bowl - No. 2 Alabama over No. 3 Georgia

CFP TITLE GAME

Alabama over Clemson - Saban and Tide extract revenge for last year's 42-16 drubbing at Clemson's hands. 'Bama defense will be difference maker this time around.

NFL

AFC EAST - New England
AFC NORTH - Pittsburgh
AFC WEST - Los Angeles Chargers
AFC SOUTH - Indianapolis
AFC WILD CARDS - Cleveland and Kansas City
AFC TITLE GAME - New England over Los Angeles
NFC EAST - Dallas
NFC NORTH - Minnesota
NFC SOUTH - New Orleans
NFC WEST - Los Angeles Rams
NFC WILD CARDS - Philadelphia and Seattle
NFC TITLE GAME - New Orleans over Los Angeles

SUPER BOWL LVI

New England over New Orleans - Belichick and Brady win No. 7, but will this be the end?

King Crossword

ACROSS

- Bygone Peruvian
- Decibel increaser, for short
- Jewels
- Greenhouse structures
- On
- Caviar provider
- Volcanic outflow
- "Eureka!"
- Not as short
- Dishes
- Ratio phrase
- Little one in the litter
- Tough puzzle
- Affirmative
- Diarist Nin
- Beta
- Kappa
- Learner
- Adolescent
- Prod
- Cause, as havoc
- Expose, in a way
- Hawaiian garment
- Any minute now
- Immoderate
- Obdurate
- "Zounds!"
- Cook on a grill
- Novelist Jaffe

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- "This tastes awful!"
- Leftovers recipe
- Down
- "Monty Python" opener
- Seine
- French vineyard
- Any minute now
- Immoderate
- Neighborhood
- "O Sole —"
- Woman's two-piece?
- Fast gait
- And others (Abbr.)
- Relocate
- Practice boxing
- Turkish title
- \$ dispensers
- Weep
- Colors
- "Meet Me — Louis"
- "Try — see"
- Passes
- furtively
- Duel tool
- Actress
- Perlman
- Comotions
- Pen filler
- Kampala's country
- "Survivor" squads
- "MacArthur Park" composer Jimmy
- Addict
- Nixed, at
- NASA
- Complain
- Hide in the bushes
- Greek cross
- Autumn mo.
- Regret
- Fresh

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BY AL SCADUTO



TOP TEN MOVIES

1. **Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw** (PG-13) Dwayne Johnson, Jason Statham
2. **Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark** (PG-13) Zoe Margaret Colletti, Michael Garza
3. **The Lion King** (PG) animated

4. **Dora and the Lost City of Gold** (PG) Isabela Moner, Eugenio Derbez
5. **Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood** (R) Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt
6. **The Art of Racing in the Rain** (PG) Milo Ventimiglia, Amanda Seyfried
7. **The Kitchen** (R) Melissa

8. **Spider-Man: Far From Home** (PG-13) Tom Holland, Samuel L. Jackson
9. **Toy Story 4** (G) animated
10. **Bring the Soul: The Movie** (NR) BTS, J-Hope (c) 2019 King Features Synd., Inc.

top ten

GIRL BABY NAMES

1. Emma
2. Olivia
3. Ava
4. Isabella
5. Sophia
6. Charlotte
7. Mia
8. Amelia
9. Harper
10. Evelyn



*2018

Source: Social Security

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top ten

BOY BABY NAMES

1. Liam
2. Noah
3. William
4. James
5. Oliver
6. Benjamin
7. Elijah
8. Lucas
9. Mason
10. Logan



Source: Social Security

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BIBLE TRIVIA
by Wilson Casey

—1. Is the book of Ezra in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Proverbs 29, "But whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be ..." Made whole, Blessed, Safe, Wise
3. What's known as the first book of the kings? Judges, 1 Kings, 1 Samuel, 1 Chronicles

4. Upon which mountain did Balaam build seven altars? Olives, Sinai, Pisgah, Carmel
5. What does God want us to keep as the apple of our eye? His law, Brotherly love, Faithfulness, Righteousness
6. What did David do to Goliath once he slew him? Stole his armor, Robbed him, Cut off his head, Buried him
ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Safe; 3) 1 Samuel; 4) Pisgah; 5) His law; 6) Cut off his head (Goliath's)
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

"The Devil or the New Jersey Dance" (1797)

JAMES 4:6-8

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