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NORTHEAST NEWS

Redistricting Precincts...



Judge Hidalgo points out details of the Redistricting process. See Article below.

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VOL. 45, NO. 49 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

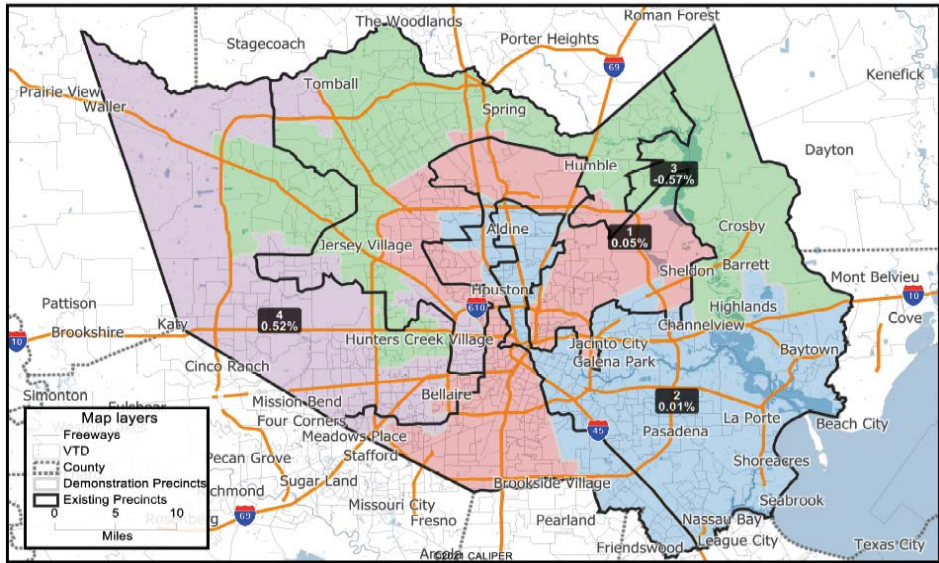
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Harris County Commissioners Approve New Precinct Lines



NEW PRECINCT BOUNDARIES ARE INDICATED IN COLOR. OLD BOUNDARIES ARE INDICATED WITH LINES.

Driver All-Inclusive Park opens Saturday

ALDINE – One year ago, Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia held a groundbreaking for a new type of public park, that he named “all-inclusive.” This Saturday, the public is invited to the Grand Opening of that park, with a ribbon cutting ceremony that starts at 11:00am at the park on Bentley, adjacent to the Northeast Community Center.

James Driver Park will be a regional destination for persons of all ages and abilities.

Commissioner Adrian Garcia said “We have to make sure that we recognize the fact that people, children in particular, with physical and cognitive disabilities are among the largest under-represented minority groups in the Houston/Harris County area, and we need to do more for them.” “This park will be addressing an entire spectrum of special needs – a space where children with disabilities can play

Continued. See Driver Park, Page 4

By Judge Lina Hidalgo
HARRIS COUNTY – Based on the new census data released earlier this year, Harris County is required to redraw its commissioner precinct maps to reflect changes in population and comply with the “one person, one vote” principle. As one of the fastest growing communities in America, redistricting is important because it ensures that each elected precinct commissioner represents a roughly equal

number of residents as populations shift over time.

The County undergoes this process every ten years and it is important to know what redistricting does and does not do. This redistricting process will ensure that every resident in our community has fair and equal representation in our county government. Redistricting will not cause any interruption of road and bridge maintenance. Your access to

parks, community centers, libraries and other county facilities is not affected by which precinct you live in. Ambulance and police services likewise are not impacted by any changes to commissioner precinct redistricting. Additionally, any changes to precinct boundaries will be accompanied by proper and timely planning across Harris County government to ensure a smooth and seamless transition.

Over the past several

months, Harris County has hosted over eight public meetings throughout the county, including allowing the public to present their own maps and comments to inform the process. Following this process, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Commissioners Court considered and approved a new district/precinct plan on October 28th. This adopted map and the current map can be viewed here.

KEENEY'S KORNER
By **MIKE KEENEY**

Cowboys face another tough road test against WFT: Regular college season over, but there's plenty of news

While we wait for what four teams will make up this year's College Football Playoff (CFP) bracket, our focus will be on the NFL season as teams begin their stretch drives with hopes of landing playoff berths.

As college teams prepare for their bowl games, there has been plenty of news in the coaching circles as a number of big names have left for new gigs. On Nov. 28, the first shoe dropped when Oklahoma head coach Lincoln Riley bolted the Sooners to become the new head coach at USC. One day later, Brian Kelly shocked the Notre Dame faithful by accepting an offer to become LSU's new head coach. OU and ND are two major programs that are now looking for new head coaches.

With the Notre Dame job now open (it could very well be filled by the time this column appears on Dec. 7), it's anyone's guess who will land that coveted job.

Cincinnati's Luke Fikell, Iowa State's Matt Campbell and even former Texas head coach Bill O'Brien have been linked to the job. Fikell would

Continued. See Keeney's Korner, page 4

Aldine ISD Opens New Young Women's Leadership Academy

On Friday, November 19, the district held an official opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for its newest school Aldine Young Women's Leadership Academy (YWLA). The all-girls campus opened its doors to sixth and seventh-grade girls on August 16.



YWLA Student Katelyn Herrera, Assistant Superintendent Latonia Amerson, Board Trustee Rose Avalos, Board Trustee Connie Esparza, YWLA Principal Dr. Jericah Jackson, Former Aldine ISD Board of Trustee and Campus Namesake, Otice Parker, Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, CEO of YWPN Lynn McBee, Board of Trustee Paul Shanklin, Chief Transformation Officer Adrian Bustillos and YWLA Student Joelena Danful.

business and community partners.

YWLA has been a two-year journey. Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney first mentioned a single-gender school during the 2020 State of the District ceremony.

“I promised that I would create a school for girls. We wanted our young women to have a space where they felt empowered. We wanted our young women to have leadership opportunities and unique learning experiences, including a

chance to hear directly from women working in STEM fields. Allowing them to explore career pathways and thrive academically and socially. It

Continued. See Aldine YWLA Academy, Page 4

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★ OPINION PAGE ★

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Samsung taps Taylor for new semiconductor plant

Electronic giant Samsung announced last week that it will build a new semiconductor manufacturing facility in the Central Texas town of Taylor, about 40 miles northeast of Austin.

Samsung already operates a facility in Austin, its lone U.S. manufacturing plant. The deal was helped along with a \$27 million Texas Enterprise Fund grant, according to Gov. Greg Abbott's office.

The project will create more than 2,000 high-tech jobs, thousands of indirect jobs and at least 6,500 construction jobs. Construction is slated to begin early next year with a target completion date in the second half of 2024.

"Samsung Austin Semiconductor has been proud to call Texas home for more than 25 years," said Dr. Sang Sup Jeong, president of Samsung Austin Semiconductor.

WINTER STORM URI'S IMPACT ON PINE TREES STUDIED

The damage caused by Winter Storm Uri to the state's trees is still being assessed. While many hard-



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

woods whose crowns turned brown after several days of bitter cold have recovered, pine trees in East Texas are now suffering from an invasion of beetles. The beetles attack both stressed and healthy pine trees, but can only successfully invade severely stressed pine trees, such as those recovering from Uri.

"Looking back at the past nine months, the fact that these beetles are now taking center stage in the decline and death of our pine trees is inevitable," said Allen Smith of the forest service.

Standing beetle-killed trees should be removed and burned or otherwise disposed of to stop the emergence of beetles. Smith said the best-case scenario for pine trees is for a wet winter in East Texas so that trees have ample soil moisture when they start growing again in the spring.

STATE TO GET \$408 MILLION FOR CHARGING STATIONS

Texas is slated to receive \$408 million for electric car charging stations under the recently passed federal infrastructure plan and could apply for additional grants, according to The Dallas Morning News. The money comes under a Biden administration plan to shift half of passenger vehicle sales in the U.S. to electric vehicles by 2030.

The state needs more than 14,000 charging stations to support the number of electric vehicles projected to be traveling on Texas roadways by 2030, according to a 2018 report from Environment Texas. The state had just over 52,000 registered electric vehicles as of last June, according to the Morning News story.

COVID-19 CASES DROP, AS DO DEATHS

While new cases of COVID-19 are spiking again in the Upper Midwest and Northeast, the number in Texas dropped during the past week to 14,745 — down 36% from the previous week. The number of new deaths reported in Texas by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University in the past week totaled 254, down 57% from the previous week.

However, the number of hospitalizations of lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients in the state was virtually unchanged at 2,681, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The number of Texas who are fully vaccinated contin-



ues to inch upward, with 15,838 million reported by DSHS as of Sunday. That is 54.3% of the state's total population.

Still, while noting hospitalizations are at their lowest levels in many months, officials are still cautious. "We're certainly in a better place right now than we have been in quite a while," Chris Van Deusen, spokesperson for the Texas Department of State Health Services, told the Texas Tribune.

Meanwhile, another variant of COVID-19 named "Omicron" has been discovered in South Africa and several other countries. Experts are concerned that the new variant may spread more aggressively than previous versions and could prove to be resistant to current vaccines.

EXPERTS URGE TEXANS TO GET FLU SHOTS

A resurgence of influenza this winter is overdue, and Texans are urged to get vaccinated.

"Flu is overdue right now," Dr. Donald Murphey, an Austin pediatric infectious disease specialist and chair of

the Texas Medical Association Council on Science and Public Health, told the Texas Newsroom.

"We should be concerned about flu returning. Flu is here every year consistently and last year, with mitigation for COVID, we didn't have a flu season at all," he said.

Murphey added that this year's flu season could be

even worse as the decline in COVID-19 cases leads to an increase in public gatherings with fewer people wearing masks. The Texas Medical Association encourages flu shots for everyone 6 months of age and older. TMA says Texans can safely get vaccinated for the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

MacArthur HS student arrested for gun possession

HOUSTON — A MacArthur High School student was taken into custody Thursday after pulling a loaded gun on another student during an argument, school officials say.

According to Aldine ISD, two students were involved in a verbal altercation in the gymnasium locker room. One of the students brandished a gun, but did not fire the weapon. The student left the campus and has since been arrested without incident.

Aldine ISD released a statement that read, in part:

"As a precaution, MacArthur High School was placed on secure status and additional Aldine ISD police officers were dispatched to the campus. Please know that Aldine ISD takes these situations very seriously, as the safety of our students and staff is always our top priority. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against the student according to the district's student code of conduct. In addition, the Aldine ISD Police Department is conducting an investigation. The student could also face criminal charges."

—Courtesy of KPRC

Letter to Santa

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Age: _____

School: _____

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SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Message from the Superintendent, November 30, 2021

Dear Aldine Community,

Welcome back! I hope each of you had a relaxing Thanksgiving week and enjoyed time with friends and family. It's hard to believe that we are now counting down to the end of the semester. We have just 15 days remaining, and I am looking forward to making every day count.

Over the next three weeks, we will all be facing different levels of stress: studying for semester exams, planning holiday gatherings, preparing for sporting events, and more. Amid the hustle and bustle, I want to encourage each of you to find something kind to do for someone else. It doesn't take much, and the benefits far outweigh the effort put into doing so.

During the Thanksgiving break, we received both good and not-so-good news regarding COVID. A new COVID-19 variant, Omicron, was discovered. While no cases have been found in the U.S., its spread is being closely monitored. On a positive note, Houston's threat level was lowered from Level 3 (Orange or Significant) to Level 2 (Yellow or Moderate) due to decreased cases and lower positivity rates. The decrease in numbers is another milestone in the right direction. We will continue to monitor county and local cases to adjust our protocols accordingly.

Now, more than ever, it is crucial that we stay on top of taking the right steps to keep ourselves and our loved ones healthy. With the colder weather coming in, more activities will move indoors. Let's continue to wash our hands, watch our distance, and, most importantly, get vaccinated.

In district news, I am proud to state that we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Aldine Young Women's Leadership Academy at Parker (YWLA) on November 19. It was incredible to see the young ladies of YWLA express how an opportunity to explore different STEM pathways and career choices is having a positive impact on their educational journey. YWLA is a single-gender secondary campus focused on college prep, leadership, and STEM. Click here to read about the event and watch



a video featuring Aldine Young Women's Leadership Academy at Parker students and staff.

Additionally, All The Things: The Aldine ISD Podcast released a new episode about Postsecondary Outcomes. In this episode, Aldine ISD College Access Advisory, Michael Rogers, and Davis High School seniors, Anderson Branch and Nycolis Prudhomme discuss postsecondary outcomes, preparing for college, university, trade school, military, and beyond. You can listen to To College and Beyond on aldineisd.org/podcast or any podcast streaming service.

With Aldine Pride,

Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney Superintendent

UPCOMING EVENTS

November: Early Head Start Program — Open enrollment for the Early Head Start program is at the Child Development Center. The program serves children from six weeks to three years of age and focuses on building their school-ready skills. No deadline to apply, but seats are limited. Click here for details.

November: The district is undergoing an audit focused on equity as it continues to evaluate how best to serve every student. Click here to learn more about the five-minute phone interview.

November/December: Choice



School Showcase Events

OBSERVATIONS November Picture Book Month National Scholarship Month-GenTX Month

December

December 2: Special Education Day

December 6-12: Computer Science Education Week

December 7-10: December 2021 STAAR end-of-year (EOC) administration for eligible students

December 9: Deadline to submit an application for enrollment in a Choice School.

REMINDERS

Middle schools and high schools will have early dismissal on December 15-17. Students will take final/semester exams on these dates. High schools will dismiss at 11:10 a.m., and middle schools will begin dismissal at 12:00 p.m.

The district encourages families with children who are bus riders to sign up for the **Here Comes the Bus App** and to download it if they haven't already. With

the free app, families can track their child's school bus. Click here for details.

Aldine's Family and Community Engagement Department launched the **Family and Community University**. It aims to provide knowledge and resources to empower families to support students academically, socially, and emotionally. All programming is free and open to all Aldine families. Learn more and register today.

The state requires high school seniors to apply for financial aid to graduate. The FAFSA application opened on October 1.

Aldine ISD's top priorities continue to be the safety and academic success of all students. We will post all information related to our operations along with any updates at www.aldineisd.org/health-alerts.

Please **stay connected** by visiting the District News and District Podcast pages to stay up to date on all the great things happening in our district. You can also connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY NEWS

By Jennifer Nandal Sr Adult Program Specialist

LIBRARY CAPACITY INCREASED:

The High Meadows has had an increase in capacity to 75%. Programming is still virtual, but please check back with us occasionally for any changes.

SPICE OF THE MONTH:

The December Spice of the Month will be Cinnamon. Stop by the li-

brary beginning Tuesday, December 7th and pick up your free spice.

UGLY SWEATER CRAFT:

Stop by the library and help us decorate paper ugly sweaters to decorate our display wall.

ARTIC ANIMAL CRAFT KIT:

Create an arctic scene with arctic animals using your handprint! Pick up an Arctic Animal craft today. Available while supplies last.

For information on any of the above events or programs, please call us at 832-927-5540 or stop by the library.

HIGH MEADOWS LIBRARY 4500 ALDINE MAIL RTE HOUSTON, TX 77039

Library Hours:
Mondays-Thursdays: 10am to 6pm
Fridays: 1pm to 6pm
Saturdays: 10am to 5pm
Sundays: Closed

Kelsey-Seybold Joins Dynamic Community, Opens Doors to New North Channel Clinic

On Aug. 23, Kelsey-Seybold celebrated the much-anticipated opening of its North Channel Clinic. Patients living nearby and residents in and around the North Channel area now have a convenient location close to home and work. The new 7,500-square-foot clinic is located at 5820 E. Sam Houston Parkway North in The Shops at Stone Park. Ample parking is available in front of the clinic.



Clinic Administrators Jackie Baker and Alvin Payne welcomed patients to the bright, modern clinic.



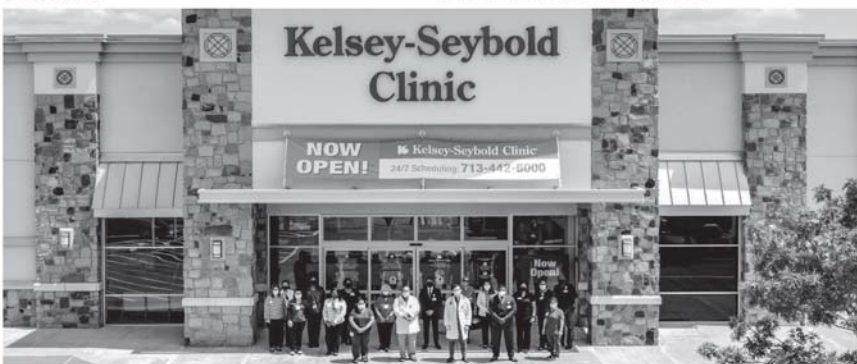
Ambulatory Services Representatives Daniella Jackson (left) and Amanda Stringer checked patients in for their appointments on opening day.



New Kelsey-Seybold Physician John Ruelas, M.D., Family Medicine, saw patients on opening day and said they all were excited to have a new clinic so close to home.



Adam Mitchell, M.D., Managing Physician at North Channel clinic, has been with Kelsey-Seybold for 13 years and is delighted to welcome new and current patients to the newly opened clinic.



Clinic staff and providers commemorated opening day at North Channel Clinic with a group photo.

Left to right: Jackie Baker, Clinic Administrator, Amanda Stringer, Ambulatory Services Representative, Febe Campuzano, C.M.A. I, Bianca Joseph, Nursing Supervisor I, Daniella Jackson, Ambulatory Services Representative, Fallon Wiggins, Nurse Supervisor II, Emma Escamilla, R.M.A. II, Terri Harwell, L.V.N., Adam Mitchell, M.D., Managing Physician, John Ruelas, M.D., Family Medicine, Cecilia Fowler, Senior Director, Ambulatory Clinics, Bianca Gutierrez, Director, Radiographic and Mammographic Imaging, Alvin Payne, Clinic Administrator, Summer Creek, Denise Gomez, Radiology Technician, Reeshemah White, Patient Service Technician II, Christopher Newton, Supervisor, Patient Service Center, and Nancy Muldowney, Radiology Supervisor.

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Aldine ISD Opens New Young Women's Leadership Academy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

has truly been a labor of love. This school and this environment will further support our girls as they journey towards success," Goffney said.

Aldine ISD Board President Paul Shanklin expressed that the district has been working on numerous projects to increase student access to high-quality schools and that YWLA is just one more example. He invited those in attendance to partner with the school to create and expand partnerships to create more experiences to help benefit Aldine ISD students.

Chief Transformation Officer Adrian Bustillos works with the district leadership team to create new choices and opportunities for students in Aldine. He helps to develop partnerships and resources to make those choices and opportunities a reality for students and families.

"This fall, YWLA became the tenth public school for girls in Texas as a unique public-private partnership with young women's preparatory network. We opened the doors of the campus with 186 sixth and seventh graders, and next year we are looking to open with 477 students," Bustillos said.

Young Women's Leadership Academy at Parker will eventually serve girls in grades 6-12, adding a new grade level each school year. The inaugural class of YWLA will graduate in May of 2027. The campus focuses on college prep, leadership, and STEM. The campus offers students multiple opportunities to engage in year-round programs including summer learning camps, academic STEM challenges, AVID, and other STEM-based college preparatory programs. The campus is built on the foundation of a STEM curriculum with a focus on four pillars:

STEM COLLEGE PREP HEALTH & WELLNESS AND SISTERHOOD

Young Women's Preparatory Network CEO Lynn McBee was present to help celebrate the opening of YWLA.

"We are proud to have Aldine ISD join us as our tenth school in Texas. Our schools over the years have been successful and have a 100% graduation rate, a 100% college acceptance rate, and our young women are graduating at 3 times the national average of their cohort groups. We know that Aldine ISD will have the same success once the campus has grown out. Our partnerships are strong, our

program is rigorous, and our girls will succeed," McBee said.

Sixth-grade student Katelyn Herrera shared how much Young Women's Leadership Academy meant to her.

Herrera and sixth-grader Joelena Danful presented namesake Otice Parker with a thank you basket for the students and staff for his continued support of their campus and Aldine ISD.

Principal Dr. Jerichah Jackson recalled her childhood and why her conviction is so strong to look for girls who yearn to work at advanced levels. She expressed her wishes for each student who passes through the doors of YWLA.

"Every girl at YWLA will be encouraged to take risks and ask questions. They will be supported to develop the necessary skills to be a leader and perform at an advanced level. Our educators will help them continue to exceed their own expectations. So yes, every girl belongs here at Young Women's Leadership Academy," Jackson expressed.

Jackson passionately stated that the students of YWLA will be future trailblazers that will leave a legacy behind.

Driver All-Inclusive Park,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

alongside with friends and siblings, as well as their parents, caregivers, physical therapists, educators, or even physicians."

The \$7.6 million project, has already been recognized as having an important role in the county. Texas Parks and Wildlife awarded the park a \$1.5 million grant to transform James Driver Park to a space for residents of all ages and abilities to exercise, socialize, and play. Located in an underserved part of Harris County, this expansion project should also help to revitalize the surrounding community and will serve as a destination to visitors of the city.

"One of the things that this park will do is provide opportunities for other children who grew up just like us. If it weren't for these parks, we would not have a place to go hangout, to go play basketball, to come bring family members that may have special needs," said Representative Walle, an Aldine area native.

The expansion will in-

clude an improved and widened walking trail that will accommodate people in wheelchairs, a playground specially designed for people of all abilities, both physical and cognitive, an outdoor gaming and fitness area featuring bocce, shuffleboard, chess tables, corn hole, bean bag toss and fitness equipment. It will also include a misting area and plenty of shade to providing relief from the heat, covered dining space and outdoor picnic areas, sensory garden featuring indigenous perennials, an event lawn and pavilion for musical and other entertainment, and so much more!

"This [park] will be put to good use for generations and generations to come. The kids are going to be able to feel welcome, to feel at home, to feel safe, and this is just another jewel in the cap of Precinct 2," said Senator Alvarado.

James Driver Park is a 29-acre park and community center located in northeast Houston along US Highway 59 with plenty of premier greenspace.

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SPORTS PAGE

Cowboys face another tough road test against WFT: Regular college season over, but there's plenty of news

seem to be the best fit. Like Kelly, he turned the Bearcats into a national power, has a solid defensive background and has had success recruiting in the Midwest. Campbell is another interesting candidate. He resurrected a dormant Iowa State program and is a heck of a coach. If you're an ND fan, you have to be hoping the good Father's don't select O'Brien.

While we wait for the powers that be in South Bend to name a new coach, let's focus on this week-end's NFL schedule.

The Cowboys have another tough road test when they face a hot Washington Football Team on Sunday. After winning six of their first seven games, Dallas dropped three of its last four entering last Thursday night's game at New Orleans. The Pokes should have starting wide receivers Amari Cooper and CeeDee Lamb, along with defensive ends Randy Gregory and DeMarcus Lawrence back for this game, which should be a huge boost to the offense and defense.

Other key games have a reeling Pittsburgh team visiting Minnesota on Thursday Night Football, Buffalo playing at Tampa Bay on Sunday, while the Texans host a down-and-out Seattle team at NRG Stadium.

Baltimore and Cleveland meet for the second time in three weeks in a key AFC North contest, especially for the Browns.

Before we take a look at those games and a handful of others, let's review last week's record. A 7-5 week (I picked like a turkey!) brought the season record to 89-50 (64%).

Now, onto this week-end's NFL games.

NFL

Pittsburgh at Minnesota: Steeler fans have to figure this team is at a crossroads and it might be time for Ben Roethlisberger's swan song. Two weeks ago, Pittsburgh was embarrassed 41-10 at Cincinnati.



nati. Big Ben (2,522 yards, 14 TDs) had little time to throw as the offensive line was dominated by the Bengals front seven. The Steelers face another tough test on Thursday night when they face a Vikings team that is playing for its play-off life. QB Kirk Cousins (3,013 yards, 23 TDs) and wide receivers Justin Jefferson (67 receptions, 1,027 yards, 6 TDs) and Adam Thielen (63 receptions, 686 yards, 10 TDs) will look to exploit a suspect Pittsburgh secondary. The Steelers will need a big night from rookie running back Najee Harris (708 rushing yards, 5 TDs/52 receptions, 351 yards, 2 TDs) if they hope to win on the road. My pick, Minnesota 30, Pittsburgh 26

Baltimore at Cleveland: Two weeks ago, these two teams played an ugly game in Baltimore, with the Ravens holding on for a 16-10 win despite four interceptions from Ravens QB Lamar Jackson (2,612 yards, 15 TDs/707 rushing yards, 5 TDs). Jackson must do a better job in the passing game. But then again, he has one legitimate target in tight end Mark Andrews (60 receptions, 761 yards, 5 TDs). The Browns have struggled on offense most of the season as QB Baker Mayfield (2,413 yards, 11 TDs/6 interceptions) has also struggled in the passing game. Look for the Browns to turn to its one-two punch of a running game as they count on Nick Chubb (867 yards, 6 TDs) and Kareem Hunt to control the clock and help out Mayfield in the passing game. This should be another tough, defensive battle. My pick, Cleveland 17, Baltimore 16

Atlanta at Carolina: The Panthers can't afford to lose many more games if they hope to land a Wild Card slot, but if quarter-

back Cam Newton (289 yards, 3 TDs) plays like he did against Miami (just 5 completed passes and 2 picks), the Panthers might be making plans for 2022. Carolina will be without star running back Christian McCaffrey (442 yards, 2 TDs) who is out for the season for the second straight season, this time with an ankle injury. The Falcons haven't exactly been setting things on fire, but they do have a veteran QB in Matt Ryan (2,617 yards, 16 TDs) and a dangerous runner/pass catcher in Cordarrelle Patterson (411 rushing yards, 4 TDs/41 receptions, 500 yards, 5 TDs). Look for the Carolina defense to be the difference maker in this one as the Panthers keep their playoff hopes alive. My pick, Carolina 23, Atlanta 20

Dallas at Washington: The Cowboys need to get back on track, but they face a stern test when they play a hot Washington Football Team (WFT) on Sunday. Two weeks ago on Thanksgiving, Dallas was upset at home by the Raiders, 33-30 in overtime. The Cowboys were flagged for 14 penalties, and corner back Anthony Brown was called for four pass interference penalties, two where were suspect. The final one set up the Raiders for the game-winning field goal. Dallas should have Cooper (44 receptions, 583 yards, 5 TDs) and Lamb (50 receptions, 740 yards, 6 TDs) back for this one, which should be a boost to QB Dak Prescott (2,932 yards, 22 TDs). Dallas might not have star running back Ezekiel Elliott (720 yards, 5 TDs) for this game as he is dealing with a knee injury. Backup Tony Pollard (531 yards, 1 TD/1 kickoff return for a TD) will be a capable replacement. WFT is led by scrappy QB Tyler Heinicke (2,613 yards, 16 TDs), run-

ning back Antonio Gibson (712 yards, 5 TDs) and wide receiver Terry McLaurin (58 receptions, 786 yards, 5 TDs). Dallas can pretty much wrap up the NFC East with a win on Sunday. It says they find a way to get it done. My pick, Dallas 26, WFT 20

Las Vegas at Kansas City: The Raiders kept them playoff hopes alive with an upset win over the Cowboys two weeks ago, while the hot Chiefs enjoyed their bye week. KC entered the bye with four straight wins and it appears QB Patrick Mahomes (3,200 yards, 25 TDs), wide receiver Tyreek Hill (84 receptions, 932 yards, 8 TDs) and tight end Travis Kelce (67 receptions, 821 yards, 5 TDs) are rolling at just the right time. While the offense has gotten its act together, the defense has been playing very well during the winning streak. Look for that to continue this week when Derek Carr (3,414 yards, 17 TDs), Hunter Renfro (64 receptions, 658 yards, 4 TDs) come calling on Sunday. My pick, Kansas City 31, Las Vegas 23

Seattle at Houston: Talk about an ugly game. The struggling Seahawks take on the pathetic Texans at NRG Stadium on Sunday in what should be a real yawner. Two weeks ago, Seattle saw its playoff chances pretty much ended with a Monday Night Football loss at Washington, while the Texans fell to the lowly New York Jets, 21-14 at home. These are two teams that are going nowhere. Look for Seattle QB Russell Wilson (1,811 yards, 12 TDs) and wide receivers Tyler Lockett (50 receptions, 813 yards, 3 TDs) and DK Metcalf (47 receptions, 650 yards, 8 TDs) to light up a porous Houston secondary. My pick, Seattle 33, Houston 17

San Francisco at Cincinnati: This might be one of the best games of the weekend when two of the hottest teams do battle in the Queen City. After getting off to a rough start, the 49ers have turned their season around and are squarely in playoff contention. The same can be said

about the Bengals. The 49ers are getting it done with wide receiver Deebo Samuel (203 rushing yards, 5 TDs/56 receptions, 1,006 yards, 5 TDs), QB Jimmy Garoppolo (2,342 yards, 13 TDs) and a solid defense. The Bengals are the feel-good story of the year. After struggling for years, Cincinnati has put together an explosive offense led by QB Joe Burrow (2,835 yards, 22 TDs) running back Joe Mixon (924 yards, 11 TDs) and big-play wide receivers Ja'Marr Chase (82 receptions, 906 yards, 8 TDs) and Tee Higgins (43 receptions, 560 yards, 3 TDs). The Bengals play well at home and will do so again on Sunday as they slow down the 49ers momentum. My pick, Cincinnati 27, San Francisco 23

Buffalo at Tampa Bay: Another good one pits the Bills against Tom Brady (3,403 yards, 30 TDs) and the Buccaneers. Two weeks ago on Thanksgiving night, the Bills dominated the Saints in New Orleans, 31-6. QB Josh Allen (3,071 yards, 25 TDs), wide receiver Stefon Diggs (67 receptions, 847 yards, 7 TDs) and tight end Dawson Knox (31 receptions, 415 yards, 7 TDs) will face a TB team that looks like it's ready to make another late-season run. In addition to wide receivers Chris Godwin (67 receptions, 806 yards, 5 TDs) and Mike Evans (50 receptions, 695 yards, 10 TDs) to throw to, Brady now has his security blanket back in tight end Rob Gronkowski (29 receptions, 378 yards, 4 TDs). He also has a hot running back in Leonard Fournette (621 yards, 7 TDs), who scored four touchdowns in the Bucs 38-31 win at Indianapolis two weeks ago. Look for TB to continue to roll on Sunday. My pick, Tampa Bay 31, Buffalo 26

Chicago at Green Bay: Another yawner for the Sunday Night Football crew pits the struggling Bears against the Packers, who might just be the best team in the NFC. Chicago head coach Matt Nagy is probably coaching for his job and he won't get any pity from the Packers. This is the oldest and nastiest

rivalry in the NFL and when the Packers have a chance to embarrass their long-time rival, they will gladly do so. Look for GB QB Aaron Rodgers (2,878 yards, 23 TDs) to carve up the Chicago defense with strikes to wide receiver Davante Adams (80 receptions, 1,083 yards, 5 TDs), while running backs Aaron Jones (564 yards, 3 TDs) and A.J. Dillon (543 yards, 4 total TDs) take care of things on the ground. The Green Bay defense has been doing a good job of forcing turnovers and look for that trend to continue against a struggling Bears offense. My pick, Green Bay 33, Chicago 16

Los Angeles Rams at Arizona: This is a big one in the NFC West and will be played on Monday Night Football. The Rams need this game more than the Cardinals do, but don't expect Kliff Kingsbury's team to be gracious hosts on Monday night. Two weeks ago, the Rams dropped their third straight game when they lost at Green Bay, while the Cards had the week off, which gave QB Kyler Murray (2,276 yards, 17 TDs, 3 rushing TDs) and wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins (35 receptions, 486 yards, 7 TDs in 8 games) time to recover from their injuries. Look for both of them to be back for this one. LA QB Matthew Stafford (3,316 yards, 27 TDs) has had a bad habit of turning the ball over during the three-game losing streak. He needs to make better decisions, because if he doesn't, the Rams slid could continue. LA needs a big night from Stafford and wide receiver Cooper Kupp (92 receptions, 1,237 yards, 10 TDs). Look for Murray to be back for this one and he will look to make plays to Hopkins and fellow wide receiver Christian Kirk (49 receptions, 628 yards, 4 TDs), while rejuvenated running back James Conner (555 yards, 13 TDs) continues his assault on the end zone. Arizona can send a message to the rest of the NFC that they are the best team in the conference and teams will have to go through Arizona to get to the Super Bowl. My pick, Arizona 31, Los Angeles Rams 27

CHURCH PAGE

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey —

1. Is the book of Luke in the Old Testament or New Testament or neither?
2. From Matthew 1:18, when Mary became pregnant, she and Joseph were ...? Married, Engaged, Just friends, Strangers
3. How many times is "nativity" mentioned in the Bible (KJV)? Zero, 1, 2, 7
4. At the birth of Jesus, who was king of Judaea? Solomon, Herod, Balak, Belshazzar

5. What was the home city of Mary and Joseph? Capernaum, Nazareth, Apeh, Shechem
6. Which of these wasn't a gift from the wise men (Magi)? Silver, Myrrh, Gold, Frankincense

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Engaged; 3) 7 (4 times in Ezekiel); 4) Herod; 5) Nazareth; 6) Silver
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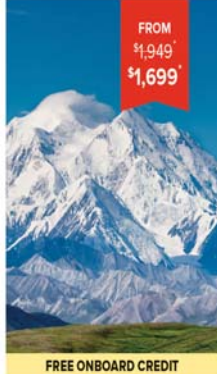
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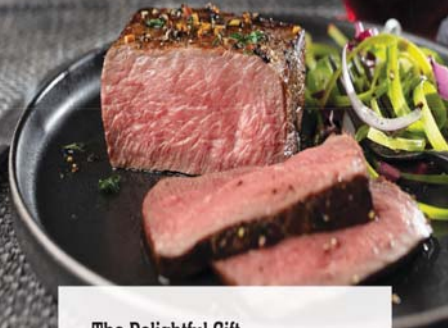
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