

INTELLIGENCE

Report

your guide to health, life, money, entertainment, and more



Remember the Alamo

ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE SANTA ANNA learned the hard way that you don't mess with Texas. The Mexican general defeated rebellious settlers at the Battle of the Alamo 175 years ago today, only to have Sam Houston's ragtag band of soldiers vow revenge and win independence less than two months later. Nine years after that, Texas became America's 28th state—good news for the rest of us! After all, what would life be like without these Lone Star originals? Willie Nelson, who was born and raised in Abbott, has become an American icon as much for his raspy renditions of hits like "On the Road Again" as for his salt-and-pepper braids, squabbles with the IRS, and embrace of the high life. Mariano Martinez built the first frozen-margarita machine in his Dallas restaurant, an invention now housed in the Smithsonian. And with J.R. Ewing returning to TV in the upcoming reboot of *Dallas*, that everything's-bigger-in-Texas spirit shows no sign of abating. It seems everyone wants a piece of the magic: Over the past decade, Texas has seen its total population increase more than any other state in the union. For a Texas A to Z, go to Parade.com/texas. —Brian D. Sweany

Parade Picks

Books

THE NIGHT SEASON

by Chelsea Cain, fiction, \$25

The floodwaters are rising in Portland, Ore., and so is the body count. Cain's fourth Detective Archie Sheridan novel has headlong pacing, endearing characters, twisted humor, and scalpel-sharp descriptions of murder and mayhem. It grabs you like a deadly undertow and doesn't let go.

Music

21 from Adele, \$12

Grammy-winning Brit singer-songwriter Adele avoids the sophomore slump with this bold, bluesy follow-up to her 2008 debut, *19* (named for the age at which she wrote it). The first single, a foot-stomping breakup anthem called "Rolling in the Deep," is already climbing the charts.



But the best track is the bittersweet piano ballad "Someone Like You," on which the soulful songstress proves beyond a doubt that there is no one like her.

Television

THE EVENT NBC, March 7,

8 p.m. ET/PT One of the year's most mysterious and suspenseful series returns with two hours that feature guest stars Virginia Madsen and Chris Matthews, playing himself. Check it out—this could be the show that'll scratch your *Lost* itch.

Manner Up!

Modern etiquette made easy

I'm looking for a new job and want to ask my former boss for a reference. I believe he thought well of me, but I'm not sure. What's the best way to ask?

—Jason P., Los Angeles

Though it may be hard to tell what your ex-boss truly thinks of you, it's doubtful he would agree to give a recommendation, then say you were about as

competent as Inspector Clouseau. Still, it does pay to word your request carefully, says Juanita Ecker, an executive coach in Columbia, S.C. "Contact your previous boss and say, 'I'm looking for someone who'll be a great reference for me. Do you have the time?'" If he doesn't feel comfortable doing it, he'll probably say, "I'm a little busy at the moment." If that happens, resist pleading—my default response to every rejection—and move on.

—Judith Newman

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