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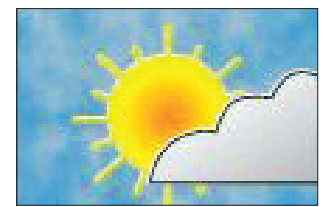


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# HIGH SPRING HERALD

**MONDAY**

**DECEMBER 27, 2010**



VOLUME 105, NUMBER 325

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## Steer Park renovations to be ready, despite cost

By **STEVE REAGAN**  
Staff Writer

It cost more than originally anticipated, but the new artificial surface on Big Spring High School's baseball field should be ready for use by the middle of January.

Big Spring Independent School District trustees recently approved final expenditures for renovations at Steer Park. Aside from the artificial turf, several structural and



Waggoner

accessibility issues were addressed.

The final price tag for the improvements is \$290,000, as compared to initial projections of slightly more than \$230,000. Money for the project comes from the district's reserve funds, Chief Financial Officer Sandra Waggoner said.

Initial estimates covered just the purchase and installation of the new

turf, but officials discovered other work had to be done at the field, as well.

Assistant Superintendent Danny Ferrell said installing the turf necessitated that crews also perform work to improve accessibility issues so the field would comply with Americans With Disability Act (ADA) requirements, while other structural issues were addressed to modernize the facility.

"The restrooms had to be made

ADA accessible and the wheelchair ramps had to be modified," Ferrell said. "That drove the costs up, plus the bids for concrete work and the architectural bids were higher than anticipated."

Aside from the new turf, restrooms and dugouts at the field were renovated to make them more accessible. In addition, the chain link backstop will be replaced with netting

See **FIELD**, Page 3

## FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS CONTINUES



HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Christmas may be over, but one of the season's biggest Christmas season attractions — the Comanche Trail Festival of Lights — continues through Friday at Comanche Trail Park. Organizers said more than 10,000 visitors from more than 20 states have visited the event since it opened its 14<sup>th</sup> annual run Dec. 15.

## East Coast storm has travel at a standstill

**GLEN JOHNSON**  
and  
**ULA ILNYTZKY**

Associated Press Writers

NEW YORK — A powerful East Coast blizzard menaced would-be travelers by air, rail and highway Monday, leaving thousands without a way to get home after the holidays and shutting down major airports and rail lines for a second day.

Officials urged anyone who did not have to drive to stay off roads in the region, where high winds pushed snow into deep drifts across streets, railroads and runways. Nearly a foot and a half of snow was expected to fall by the time the storm wore out later in the day.

In Monmouth County, N.J., state troopers carried water and food to diabetics marooned on two passenger buses carrying about 50 people on the Garden State Parkway, where stranded cars cluttering ramps stymied snow

See **STORM**, Page 3

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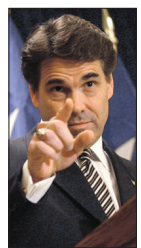
## Dallas paper: Perry is Texan of Year

DALLAS (AP) — The Dallas Morning News announced Saturday it had chosen Gov. Rick Perry as the newspaper's annual "Texan of the Year" and recognized him for his "Texas tough-guy" image and firm grip on the state's highest office.

Perry, the state's longest-serving governor, is the eighth recipient of the award. Last year, the heroes of the Fort Hood shootings were recognized.

The newspaper said it selected Perry because he has become the quintessential Texas politician and face of the state. In 26 years in public office, he has never lost an election.

Perry appeared vulnerable as the year started, but he trounced popular Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison in the Republican primary and a formidable Democratic opponent, former Houston Mayor Bill White, in the general election.



Perry

In winning an unprecedented third full term as governor, Perry successfully cast himself as an outsider and framed the campaign as a states' rights battle against an overreaching Washington, represented first by Hutchison and then by White, who worked in the Clinton administration.

Now Perry will preside over a state legislature that has a GOP supermajority in the House that, if united, can trump any Democratic opposition.

"While his record as governor remains open for discussion, Perry's political instincts have been nearly infallible. With cowboy swagger and bold declarations, he has carved his own path, ducking debates and flirting with secession," the newspaper wrote. "Foes and fans of our polarizing governor both acknowledge Perry's impact on Texas politics. In a weak-governor state, he has seized a bullhorn, making himself heard across Texas and beyond."

Supporters laud him as a consistent,

dependable conservative. He protects business interests and is committed to keeping taxes low in Texas — even if the resulting cutbacks are painful.

Perry's detractors point to the consequences of fiscal austerity, including the state's bottom-of-the-barrel rankings in categories from the number of children without health insurance to the number of adults without high school diplomas. They say the governor is overly concerned about political fallout and alarmingly unconcerned about developing and pushing through a coherent legislative agenda.

First elected as a Democratic lawmaker from West Texas, Perry was among the House's young Pit Bulls, a small group known for budget-cutting zeal. In his third term, Perry shifted to the GOP as the state moved in that direction.

Perry moved up the political ladder, landing two terms as agriculture

See **PERRY**, Page 3

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**SHERIFF**

Continued from Page 2

- revoke probation for driving while intoxicated.
- ADRIAN PATRICK VALENCIA, 22, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension.
- JAMES WELDON WATSON, 33, was arrested Thursday by the HCSO on motions to revoke probation for two counts of forgery of a financial instrument and a bench warrant for judgment/sentence for theft.
- ROLANDO MOORE-RODRIGUEZ, 30, was arrested Thursday by DPS on a Waller County warrant for failure to appear – traffic.
- LANCE BROCKMAN, 24, was arrested Thursday by the HCSO on charges of criminal trespass and driving while license invalid.
- CRISELDA CHAVERA, 23, was arrested Thursday by the HCSO on charges of no driver's license, no liability insurance and parent contributing to the non-attendance of a minor.
- JOSE LIONEL CERDA, 41, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of assault – family violence.
- DENISE MARY GOMEZ, 26, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of evading arrest or detention with a vehicle.
- LATASHA QUIVETTE WOODSON, 30, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on municipal warrants for no driver's license (two counts) and violation of a promise to appear (two counts).
- CHARLIE JAKE TURNER, 31, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- JOSHUA PENDLETON, 27, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on charges of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension and a McLenna County motion to revoke probation for driving while intoxicated.
- APRIL LYNN MARTINEZ, 27, was transferred to the county jail Thursday by the BSPD on a charge of driving while license invalid with a previous conviction or suspension.
- JACON IAN STRAIN, 30, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on charges of forgery of a financial instrument, evading arrest or detention with a previous conviction, driving while license invalid (three counts), no seat belt for passenger, failure to appear and violation of a promise to appear.
- JUSTIN M. RAMIREZ, 23, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on charges of theft and evading arrest or detention (two counts).
- NICOLAS ZEPESA, 37, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- MELISSA YOUNG, 41, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- JAMES MARTON HINKLE, 62, was arrested Friday by the HCSO on a charge of driving while license invalid.
- TIM BECK, 50, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of theft by check.

- DAVID LYNN DOW, 27, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of violation of county burn ban.
- MERIAH MEGHAN GARCIA, 18, was transferred to the county jail Friday by the BSPD on a charge of cruelty to non-livestock animals – failure to provide.
- ANGELA COLLINS LEE, 47, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- ROBERT SOLIS JR., 29, was arrested Saturday by DPS on a charge of driving while intoxicated.
- JOSHUA URIAS, 20, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less and a municipal warrant for failure to maintain financial responsibility.
- ROGER JEROME KAUSS, 21, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- AUSTIN JAMES SANCHEZ, 17, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- DANIEL BENJAMIN NEW, 19, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- CHRISTOPHER KENT BROOKS, 20, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on a charge of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less.
- ZACHARY RAY WILLIAMS, 29, was transferred to the county jail Saturday by the BSPD on charges of harassment and terroristic threats.
- JUAN ANGEL TORRES, 36, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- APOLONIOA NICOLE VALENCIA, 21, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of ride not secured by safety belt, no driver's license, displaying expired registration, no driver's license, failure to maintain financial responsibility and theft.
- TYSON DEMETRIUS BARKER, 19, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of theft – more than \$1,500 less than \$20,000, and prohibited weapon.
- CHRISTOPHER DANIEL MARQUEZ, 17, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of minor consuming alcohol and theft – more than \$1,500 less than \$20,000.
- LORENZO DELUNG WESLEY, 33, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on a charge of assault – family violence.
- ISRAEL ALVAREZ, 24, was transferred to the county jail Sunday by the BSPD on charges of possession of marijuana – two ounces or less, no driver's license, failure to appear (two counts), failure to maintain financial responsibility and child safety seat violation.
- DARREL DAVID BROWN II, 38, was arrested Sunday by DPS on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of a dangerous drug and possession of a controlled substance.
- ALLYSIA DAWN HECKART, 28, was arrested Sunday by DPS on charges of possession of a controlled substance, possession of a dangerous drug and possession of drug paraphernalia.
- MALINDA DAWN SALAZAR, 36, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of failure to maintain financial responsibility.

- ity.
  - ESEQUIEL PARADEZ FLORES, 55, was transferred to the county jail Monday by the BSPD on a charge of public intoxication.
- Fire/EMS**
- The Big Spring Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services reported the following activity:
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the intersection of Highway 80 and Mobile. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported near the 174 mile marker of Interstate Highway 20. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Simler. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Lark. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Lincoln. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 2900 block of Interstate Highway 20. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Stadium. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1000 block of N. Main Street. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - TRAUMA was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 200 block of Kenzie. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. Service refused.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1600 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Alabama. Service refused.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1900 block of Alabama. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 2000 block of Lynn. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1000 block of Moss Lake Road. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 3600 block of Chanute. Service refused.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 9700 block of Opal Lane. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - TRAUMA was reported in the 1900 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - TRAUMA was reported in the 3200 block of Parkway. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 100 block of ValVerde. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - MEDICAL was reported in the 1800 block of N. Highway 87. One person was transported to SMMC.
  - TRAUMA was reported in the 1000 block of E. 20th Street. One person was transported to SMMC.

**STORM**

Continued from Page 1

plows and ambulances, state police spokesman Steve Jones told NBC's "Today" show. One bus was freed by 7 a.m. and the other was expected

to be out soon, he said. Passengers reported no major medical problems. In New York City, hundreds of travelers dozed Monday in Long Island Rail Road train cars frozen at the platform. Others lay like refugees at the entrance

to the train link to Kennedy Airport and stood helpless at the ticket office, waiting in vain for good news to flash on the schedule screens. Hours went by without a single train leaving with passengers. Buses were knocked out as well, cabs were

little more than a myth and those who tried walking out of the station were assailed with a hard, frigid wind that made snowflakes sting like needles. "They tried, but they can't do much with this snow. It's just not stopping," said Sharray

Jones, 20, headed home to Long Island after visiting friends. In Philadelphia, cab driver Farid Senoussaoui, 33, described navigating the slippery conditions as "like a video game." Senoussaoui had worked overnight dur-

ing the storm and said passengers were universally grateful when he would stop to pick them up.

**PERRY**

Continued from Page 1

commissioner before eking out a win to become lieutenant governor in 1998. Two years later, he ascended to governor when George W. Bush was elected president, and he kept his winning streak alive with an easy

re-election in 2002. But four years later, Perry lost steam. He shared the ballot with four other candidates, and more than 60 percent of voters indicated they wanted someone else to lead the state. Hutchison, dubbed the most popular politician in Texas, was likely to run against him the next time, leading some to wonder whether Perry

would call it quits after two full terms. Early polls showed Hutchison with as much as a 25-point lead, and Perry sometimes appeared to be stumbling toward election season. During the 2009 legislative session, he pursued a limited agenda and exerted little leadership. He started talking about the 10th Amendment and state sovereignty

— hardly hot-button issues at the time. And he was ridiculed for playing along with a secession discussion of a tea party rally. Perry's message resonated, though, and he sold voters on his claim that Hutchison was part of the problem because she was a Washington politician. Then he went on to handily defeat White, his most

formidable Democratic challenger yet. Perry campaigned from lectern to lectern and reached out to shoppers and through social media and paid advertising. He refused to debate White and ignored the longstanding tradition of meeting with newspaper editorial boards.

**MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL**  
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Alisha Ann Brewer, 32, died Thursday. Funeral Services were at 2 p.m. today at Myers & Smith Chapel with burial at Mt. Olive Memorial Park.

**FIELD**

Continued from Page 1

and a concrete base and the first base dugout will be moved to improve fans' sight lines, Ferrell said. The district was able to trim the final price tag somewhat by having BSISD crews perform some of the work.

"I'm amazed with what our district personnel did at the field," Trustee Tony Kennedy said. "It will look 100 times better than it did." Despite the increased costs, officials say having the new field will prove to be an advantage for the district. Architectural consultant Jay Edwards told trustees earlier this year that the cost of installing the artificial turf would be roughly

the same as maintaining the original surface over the life of the new field. The advantage for the district comes from the increased usage the new field will allow, Edwards said. Work at the baseball field should be completed by Jan. 15, Ferrell said. Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331 ext. 234 or by

e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com

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# EDITORIAL

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

-FIRST AMENDMENT

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the Editorial Board of the Big Spring Herald unless otherwise indicated.

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Publisher

**Bill McClellan**  
News Editor

**John A. Moseley**  
Managing Editor

## OTHER VIEWS

### Transition time

The prohibition on homosexuals serving openly in the U.S. military deserved to end. But the way it ended also was important. It was the difference between an orderly retreat and a rout — Dunkirk vs. Little Big Horn.

Congress last week voted to repeal the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that has been in place since 1993, and President Obama will sign the legislation into law this week. But the seeds of its demise already had been sown in the courts.

It appeared inevitable that had the legislative and executive branches not acted, DADT would have been invalidated by the judicial branch (in September a federal judge ruled that DADT was unconstitutional) — and that could have produced logistical difficulties in making the transition to a more-inclusive military.

The repeal legislation addressed the legal and policy issues of allowing homosexuals to serve openly, and it phases in the changes over time, giving officials the ability to adjust rules and regulations. For example, David Rittgers of the Cato Institute notes that the definition of "sexual intercourse" in the Uniform Code of Military Justice only includes sex between a man and a woman, so the offenses of adultery, prostitution and patronizing a prostitute under Article 134 of the UCMJ don't apply when committed in a homosexual manner. That should be made to apply to gay service members as well, making the UCMJ truly uniform.

There's also something to be said for changing law via our elected representatives instead of judicial fiat. Contentious social issues are best settled through politics, when most sides believe they have received a fair hearing — and know they can effect change at the ballot box.

When judges impose solutions from the bench, it can leave one side feeling embittered and disenfranchised (see: *Roe v. Wade*).

The nation now knows this change was achieved democratically and the legislation reflects the input of skeptics and opponents. That's a more palatable outcome than a judge overturning it and demanding Congress act.

DADT was always an imperfect compromise between those who wanted to maintain a ban on gays in the military and those wanted open service. It has resulted in more than 14,000 servicemen and women being discharged for their sexual orientation, including 800 "mission critical" troops such as Arabic and Farsi linguists, medics, pilots and intelligence analysts. That's a high price to pay while fighting two wars in the Middle East.

Opponents' concerns about adverse effects of a changed policy have not materialized in other nations that allow homosexuals to serve openly. The Government Accountability Office studied Canada, Israel, Germany and Sweden and found that "military officials from each country said that, on the basis of their experience, the inclusion of homosexuals in their militaries has not adversely affected unit readiness, effectiveness, cohesion or morale."

Finally, societal attitudes toward homosexuality have changed significantly in 17 years. In May 1993, just 44 percent of Americans believed gays should be allowed to serve openly in the military; now, 77 percent of Americans think so, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll released this month. Many members of the military under the age of 40 have grown up with openly gay and lesbian friends and family members. Serving with them would not be foreign or threatening.

It's time to begin the transition.

THE NEWS HERALD  
PANAMA CITY, FLA.

## A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

With You, Lord, we are not alone.

Amen

# Some dreams refuse to die

As millions of Americans toiled, Republican senators complained about having to work so close to Christmas. "Disrespecting one of the two holiest of holidays for Christians," Sen. Jon Kyl boomed.

"Sacriligious," Sen. Jim DeMint thundered.

Two days later, these self-anointed champions of Christianity joined too many other senators to defeat the DREAM Act, which would have helped thousands of innocent children who were born in another country but raised here in America. In the Senate gallery, teenage immigrants wore graduation mortarboards and stricken faces.

Had the bill passed, an estimated 65,000 children — most of whom have no memory of the countries of their birth — could have earned citizenship after completing a rigorous round of requirements, including a minimum five-year residency and service in the military or two years of college.

Instead, their futures were gutted, and for one reason: Their parents are not American citizens.

What footnote to Jesus did I miss?

Here's what Jesus says in every copy of the Bible in our home: "Love one another, as I have loved you."

Nowhere can I find this asterisk: But only if they are born in America.

For months, I've sat on the story of an 11-year-old girl who could have benefited from the DREAM Act.

I really wanted you to see the picture of her sitting in her

bedroom full of bright colors, Barbies and books. I wanted you to see the tiny flower painted on her cheek for Easter Sunday, too, and the gentle smile on her pretty face. But I feared the consequences to her family if I identified her and them.

Now the movement to dehumanize children like this little girl has gained congressional endorsement — and in the holy season of Christmas. So in the spirit of Christ, I'll share her story and change the names.

Let's call her Emma, which is one of the most popular names for girls born this year in the U.S. We'll call her parents Mary and Joe.

Emma's parents are Mexican. In 2002, they illegally crossed the U.S. border in search of a better life for their two daughters, 3-year-old Emma and her 9-year-old sister. They paid strangers \$6,000 to ride in windowless vans from Arizona to Northeast Ohio.

Mary and Joe found steady jobs, rented a house and had three more children.

They lived fearful lives in a county that routinely rounded up people like them. But they were willing to risk arrest for the sake of their children, who were thriving.

One foggy evening early this year, Joe was driving home from work, when police pulled him over for using high-beam headlights. By the time Mary got to the police station, Joe was already gone. He was deported a few days later.

The family struggled in Joe's absence. Mary went on medical leave but eventually returned to work. Emma, a stellar student and a daddy's girl, felt her world contract. She grew increasingly morose and combative.

In a phone call on the morning of April 17, Mary told her husband she was worried about Emma. "She needs her father," Mary said.



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## Dubai: The temple of greed

You may be a bit hazy on the Persian Gulf. Basically that's where a lot of the world's oil comes from.

The Gulf is a long, slim, shallow dead-end sea connected to the Indian Ocean by the distressingly narrow Straits of Hormuz. Those straits are likely to be a battle zone in the next war since that's how the oil gets out.

On the east side of the Gulf lies Iran. To the west is Saudi Arabia, its shore pocked with Lichtenstein-sized Arab sultanates, all smirking with oil and protective U.S. bases.

Each of these states boasts a very small native population, commensurate with their pre-oil life as pearl divers and goat herders, stranded on the edge of an inhospitable desert. But that thin population density will no longer do. As with the very rich everywhere, there is an appropriate lifestyle to be maintained. This requires hordes of immigrants.

U.S. and European visitors handle the oil duties. The rest, varying from 30 percent to an amazing 75 percent of the population, come from Asia. Those workers often pay a ransom to various scoundrels who arrange the necessary work visas. The

workers are referred to as "expats" (expatriates) and have virtually no chance of citizenship, even those born in the Middle East. The largest immigrant community comes from India.

Governing this strange amalgam of humanity are the sultans, largely unfettered by such inconveniences as parliaments, elections, critics, free press, or human rights. They should not, however, be underestimated. The king of Kuwait, for example, promised the United States that democracy would flourish if we would only rescue his land from Saddam Hussein. We did, but he didn't. Still no democracy. Only glistening skyscrapers and oozing oil wells.

The savvy Sultan of Qatar created Al Jazeera, a very influential global television network. And Abu Dhabi is the financial boss that invests in and bails out the other emirates as needed. (It also sports an \$11 million Christmas tree bedecked in gold and gems this holiday season, the most expensive ever reported.)

But the public relations king is Dubai. That's the place with the world's tallest building, the palm-shaped artificial island, the sail-shaped hotel with the \$100 lunch, the new subway system, the 95,000 hotel rooms, and the working indoor ski slope. All this may seem a bit over the top for a sliver of sand that ran out of pearls long ago, and which ranks at the bottom of the region's oil reserves.

That, of course, is the genius

"Everything will change when I get back up there," he assured her. "Emma and I will watch baseball and soccer again. We'll play on the computer together. She'll be fine."

That afternoon, Mary left Emma with her younger siblings while she and her eldest daughter ran errands. Emma protested. Mary insisted.

It was the last time Mary saw Emma alive.

The coroner ruled Emma's death a suicide. She had wrapped a cord around her neck, tied it to a banister and slid down the stairs.

Police reported no signs of struggle but noted several scrapes on the backs of Emma's thighs and calves.

"It appears that (Emma) may have tried to release the tension on the rope by trying to push herself back up the stairs," their report reads. "The scrapes were comparable to a rug burn."

Her mother is inconsolable.

"She was a good girl," she said, sobbing. "She loved her family. She loved her friends. She loved her school. She was just sad. She was too sad because she missed her father."

For six months, Emma's grave was marked by a makeshift altar, until her mother could pay off the headstone.

Now Mary lives in constant fear that she and her eldest daughter will get deported. If that were to happen, she said, she might leave behind her three American children.

"Maybe they could be in foster care," she said. "Maybe they could still grow up in America."

Some dreams refuse to die. Which brings us back to the meaning of Christmas.

Connie Schultz is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for *The Plain Dealer in Cleveland* and an essayist for *Parade* magazine.

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WILLIAM A. COLLINS

of the plan. Just as Las Vegas has transcended gambling to become a citadel of entertainment, so Dubai is transcending oil to become a citadel of greed. The shrewd sultan understands that the top attraction for really rich people is to be around other really rich people. Thus he has created all the features listed above plus the Tiger Woods golf course, the Formula 1 race track, the ATP tennis tournament, the world's glitziest shopping malls, the landmark office buildings, and the exclusive residential estates.

Oil is always a good bet, but when it finally runs out, smart planners want obscene wealth to carry the kingdom forward.

That's a tall order for a land where the mercury regularly tops 120 degrees F in summer, where beaches have no surf, and where grass and wildlife don't grow. But then really rich people own other homes where they can summer. They don't need the Gulf. And despite the heat, at the height of the building boom, Dubai alone hosted more construction cranes than any nation but China. Even today it makes Manhattan seem a tad shabby.

All those empty condos and office buildings can summon flashbacks to Wily Coyote running off a cliff, before plummeting into the economic chasm below.

OtherWords columnist William A. Collins is a former state representative and a former mayor of Norwalk, Conn. He recently traveled to Dubai.

# THE WORLD BRIEFLY:

## South Korea's president vows relentless retaliation against North Korea if provoked

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's president vowed relentless retaliation against North Korea if provoked again, saying Monday he is not afraid of war with the communist North.

The two Koreas have ramped up their rhetoric since North Korea shelled front-line Yeonpyeong Island near the tense western sea border last month, killing four South Koreans. Both sides accuse the other of triggering the Nov. 23 exchange of artillery.

On Monday, President Lee Myung-bak used his regular radio address to vow to get tougher with any new provocation by North Korea.

"We have now been awakened to the realization that war can be prevented and peace assured only when such provocations are met with a strong response," Lee said. "Fear of war is never helpful in preventing war."

He said South Korea's military "must respond relentlessly when they come under attack."

## Suspected U.S. missiles hit Pakistan's North Waziristan, killing 18, say officials

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan (AP) — Suspected U.S. missiles struck two vehicles in a Taliban stronghold on Pakistan's side of the border with Afghanistan on Monday, killing 18 alleged militants, Pakistani intelligence officials said.

The attack in the North Waziristan tribal region came in the final days of a year that has witnessed an unprecedented number of such strikes from drone aircraft flying over Pakistani soil, part of a ramped-up U.S. campaign to take out al-Qaida and Taliban fighters seeking sanctuary outside Afghanistan.

At least 110 such missile strikes have been launched this year — more than doubling last year's total. Nearly all have landed in North Waziristan, a region that hosts several militant groups battling U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, including the feared Haqqani network.

The six missiles fired Monday struck the vehicles in the Shera Tala village of North Waziristan. Shera Tala lies in Mir Ali district, where militants are heavily concentrated. The exact identities of the 18 dead were not immediately certain.

The vehicles were apparently leaving a compound, and one was carrying a large load of ammunition, magnifying the blasts from the missile strikes, the intelligence officials said.

## Allies of Ivory Coast's recognized leader calls for strike to force Gbagbo from office

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — Allies of the man who the international community says won Ivory Coast's disputed presidential election vowed to begin a general strike Monday that would last until the incumbent hanging on to power concedes defeat and leaves office.

It was the latest form of pressure to try to force Laurent Gbagbo from the presidency nearly a month after the U.N. said his political rival, Alasane Ouattara, won the runoff vote. Gbagbo has refused to leave despite international calls for his ouster, and West African leaders say they will remove him by force if necessary.

In an interview with Associated Press Television News on Sunday, Gbagbo said he was not concerned

about world opinion, insisting he was duly elected. He said of his detractors: "Maybe they do not want me, I admit it, but I am not looking to be loved by them. I respect and abide by the Ivorians' vote."

Djedje Mady, the head of Ouattara's electoral coalition, called on those who "believe in peace and justice to cease all their activities" starting Monday until Gbagbo leaves power.

The U.N. has said at least 173 people have been killed in violence over the vote, heightening fears that the country once divided in two could return to civil war. The toll is believed to be much higher, though, as the U.N. mission has been blocked from investigating other reports, including an allegation of a mass grave.

## Jailed oil tycoon Khodorkovsky guilty of stealing oil, may be in prison for years

MOSCOW (AP) — Mikhail Khodorkovsky was convicted of theft and money laundering charges Monday, a verdict that will likely keep the jailed oil tycoon who was once Russia's richest man behind bars for several more years.

The verdict came less than two weeks after Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Khodorkovsky was a proven criminal who should sit in prison, a blunt statement reflecting his stance against the man who challenged his power — remarks denounced by critics as interference in the trial.

Putin, who was president during Khodorkovsky's first trial, has shown no sign of softening his attitude toward the former oligarch. Putin has not ruled out a return to the presidency in 2012 and critics suspect him of wanting to keep Khodorkovsky incarcerated until after that election.

It was clear from the opening pages of his verdict that the judge had found Khodorkovsky and his business partner Platon Lebedev guilty. Reading the full verdict and announcing the sentence was expected to take several days.

Khodorkovsky, 47, is nearing the end of an eight-year sentence after being convicted of tax fraud in a case seen as punishment for challenging the Kremlin's economic and political power, in part by funding opposition parties in parliament.

## Car bomb near police compound in southern Afghan city kills 3, wounds many

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) — A car bomb exploded in the heart of the southern city of Kandahar on Monday, killing three people, an Afghan policeman at the scene said.

The blast also wounded 26 people, most of them policemen, officials said.

Southern Afghanistan, a traditional Taliban stronghold, has seen some of the worst fighting this year between the militants and foreign and Afghan troops.

The car detonated at midday near a police compound and a branch of Kabul Bank in the crowded center of the city, said policeman Noor Mohammad, who was guarding the bank.

"I was sitting near the gate when this explosion occurred. We fell to the ground and we couldn't see anything for five minutes" because of the dust and smoke caused by the blast, he said.

## Miller says he won't block Murkowski Senate certification, but will keep fighting

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Republican Joe Miller said he won't stand in the way of incumbent Sen. Lisa Murkowski being certified the winner of Alas-

ka's U.S. Senate race, but he vowed to continue his legal fight over the state's handling of the vote count.

Miller's announcement late Sunday paves the way for Murkowski — a write-in candidate after losing the Republican nomination to Miller — to eventually be declared winner of the race.

Election officials determined Murkowski had the most votes in the November election but were barred from certifying a victory by a federal judge, who issued a stay to give the courts time to rule on Miller's claims the vote count was mishandled.

Sunday's decision means Miller won't file any motions to stop the court from lifting the stay.

Miller said he wants to ensure Alaska has full representation when senators are sworn in for the new term of Congress on Jan. 5.

## 9 charged with terror conspiracy in UK; face other terror-related charges as well

LONDON (AP) — British police early Monday morning charged nine men with conspiring to cause explosions in what they described as an extensive terror plot against UK targets. The men are expected in a London court to answer charges later Monday.

The men were among 12 suspects taken into custody one week ago during dawn police raids in London, Cardiff and Stoke-on-Trent in central England.

Police said Monday the other three detainees had been released without charge.

The suspects who have been charged are scheduled to appear in the City of Westminster Magistrates Court Monday morning.

"I have today advised the police that nine men should be charged with conspiracy to cause explosions and with engaging in conduct in preparation for acts of terrorism with the intention of either committing acts of terrorism or assisting another to commit such acts," said Sue Hemming, head of the Crown Prosecution Service Counter Terrorism Division.

## Motown singer Teena Marie, known as 'Ivory Queen of Soul,' dies at 54

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Teena Marie's last album, "Congo Square," was titled after a historical meeting place for slaves in New Orleans, featured a tribute to Martin Luther King's widow and also song "Black Cool," written for President Barack Obama.

No matter that Marie, 54, was white. The R&B legend revered and fully immersed herself in black culture — and in turn was respected and adored by black audiences, not only for her immense soulful talents, but for her inner soul as well.

"Overall my race hasn't been a problem. I'm a Black artist with White skin. At the end of the day you have to sing what's in your own soul," she told Essence.com in an interview last year while promoting "Congo Square." That album would turn out to be her last.

The self-proclaimed "Ivory Queen of Soul," whose many classic hits included "Lovergirl," "Square Biz" and the scorching duet "Fire and Desire" with mentor Rick James, was found dead in her Pasadena home on Sunday at the age of 54. Authorities said her death appeared to be of natural causes.

In an interview with The Associated Press last year, Teena Marie said she had successfully battled an addiction to prescription drugs; she had been performing over the last year.

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# Bighorn sheep start new year in Texas

**BETSY BLANEY**

Associated Press

**BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK** (AP) — Dozens of majestic bighorn sheep have moved into a Texas state park as part of wildlife restoration efforts aimed at returning the sheep to their historic range.

Twelve curly-horned rams and 34 ewes plucked by helicopter from one rugged area of West Texas now call the Bofecillos Mountains along the Rio Grande in Big Bend Ranch State Park home. The capture and release days before Christmas was the latest step in a decades-long restoration project to bring the mountain sheep back to their range after unfettered hunting, fencing and disease from other animals decimated their numbers.

All but gone from Texas by the 1960s from more than 1,500 in the late 1800s, efforts to restore them in Texas' Trans-Pecos region have proved successful. This fall, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists tallied 1,115 sheep in Texas, up from 822 in 2006 and 352 in 2002.

The 29 sheep captured on the first of the two-day endeavor sprang away from the trailers and crates they traveled inside for about 80 miles and

quickly scampered up one mountain's steep terrain. About 80 volunteers, conservation supporters and state and federal wildlife officials cheered them on and applauded.

Soon one could see only a parade of white-gray dots bounding near the top of their first mountain in their new home. The release was their first re-introduction into a Texas state park.

"The bighorn belong here," Mike Pittman, the area's wildlife manager, said Tuesday. "They're part of the ecosystem."

Bighorn sheep, which can bounce up to 20 feet from ledge to ledge, some as narrow as 2 inches, prefer bluffs and steep slopes with sparse vegetation and an unobstructed view. They can travel up to 30 mph on level ground and 15 mph up steep mountain slopes. Rams fighting for mates often butt heads for hours during breeding season, which begins in November.

The 46 animals needed to be moved from Elephant Mountain Wildlife Management Area, about 25 miles south of Alpine, a small town of about 6,500, because of a surplus of sheep for the available habitat. Most of the ewes are pregnant and will lamb in several months, officials said.

Work began early the first day as

the helicopter scoured the top of Elephant Mountain. Trappers in the chopper fired net-guns on top of each sheep, which then were hobbled and blindfolded for the ride back to the work areas.

Once the pilot laid each sheep gently on the ground, workers removed the slings around them and carried them to be placed into specially designed stretchers. Biologists went to work, taking blood samples, swabbing their noses and ears and attaching radio-transmitting collars to track the animals. Their teeth were checked to age them.

The unseasonably warm weather gave biologists concern and the animals' temperature was monitored throughout the exams. Water was sprayed on some of the sheep to try to cool them.

The ewes were then carried to a livestock trailer where their blindfolds were removed as they were put inside. Rams went into more sturdy crates.

The two-day operation costs as much as \$40,000. Donations to the Bighorn Sheep Society and other nonprofit groups along with revenue from 16 hunting permits — 12 on private land — issued this year covered the cost.

## TEXAS NEWS BRIEFS:

### Bill proposes deferred adjudication in DWI cases

**AUSTIN** (AP) — A state lawmaker is proposing that first-time drunken drivers in Texas could be acquitted of the offense if they complete supervision and treatment.

Supporters — including Mothers Against Drunk Driving, prosecutors and defense attorneys — say the plan could ease court backlogs by getting such cases out of courtrooms. They say it could also improve efforts to track and punish repeat DWI offenders.

If the offense were repeated, it would become grounds to increase future punishments.

The Austin American-Statesman reports that Rep. Todd Smith, R-Eules, filed the proposal that would allow for deferred adjudication.

Deferred adjudication for such offenses was abolished in the state in the mid-1980s. At the time, opponents of deferred adjudication had argued that prosecuting offices and judges were accepting the form of probation for repeat offenders.

### Three in Texas family dead in Wyoming plane crash

**CHEYENNE, Wyo.** (AP) — Authorities say three members of a Texas family have died in a plane crash in Wyoming's Wind River Mountains.

The Fremont County Sheriff's office tells Casper's KCWY-TV that the three were found dead in the wreck-

age of the aircraft that went down Christmas Eve.

The office confirmed the crash, the deaths and the victims' home state to The Associated Press but declined to provide any other details.

KCWY reports that officials received a call about a downed plane in the mountains after a commercial plane picked up an emergency locator transmitter signal.

After hours of searching, the wreckage was found with the bodies.

Both KCWY and Jasper, Texas, station KJAS say authorities identified the dead as 56-year-old Ralph Day, 53-year-old Doris Day and 12-year-old Connor Day. KJAS says the family was from Jasper.

The cause of the crash is still under investigation.

### Police: Off-duty officer uses Taser on patient at hospital

**BEDFORD** (AP) — Police say an off-duty officer working at a Dallas-area hospital used a Taser to subdue an unruly patient who allegedly assaulted two employees.

Bedford police Lt. Kirk Roberts said the officer and other employees responded to a report of a "violation situation" about 6:15 a.m. Dec. 14. Roberts said the officer gained control of the man with the Taser so that staff members of Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Hurst-Eules-Bedford could restrain him.

Roberts told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram that the officer used a technique in which an electric charge is administered without firing the

Taser's projectiles.

Roberts said possible charges against the unidentified man are under investigation.

A hospital spokeswoman declined to discuss details of the case, citing privacy laws.

### Doctor: Stabbing suspect likely mentally unfit to stand trial

**TYLER** (AP) — A forensic psychologist says there is a "low probability" that a teenager accused of fatally stabbing his teacher in an East Texas classroom last year can maintain a level of competence required for trial.

Dr. Emily Fallis wrote in a recent report to a juvenile court that the 17-year-old boy remains delusional and dangerous. The report was obtained by The Dallas Morning News and reported Sunday.

The suspect's mental health leaves him in legal limbo 14 months after 51-year-old Todd Henry was killed at John Tyler High School. Prosecutors want to try the teen as an adult, but his attorney is fighting to keep proceedings in juvenile court.

Fallis re-interviewed the teen in October after determining months earlier that he was too psychotic for a transfer to adult court.

### Man trying to save dogs dies in Christmas fire

**SAN ANTONIO** (AP) — A man has died in a pre-dawn fire Christmas morning near San Antonio after going back into his burning home to try to rescue his dogs.

Bexar County officials said the man was alerted to the fire about 3:30 a.m. Saturday by relatives who lived next door in a rural area east of San Antonio.

After helping his wife and a niece escape, 62-year-old Frank "Poncho" Kruse died trying to find his 13-year-old Labrador, Sugar, and another dog.

Both dogs died in the blaze.

Permits are issued when scientists determine there is a surplus of older rams which now longer help in building the animal's population.

The company's wildlife coordinator, Bonnie McKinney, said bighorn are integral to the region's wildlife's landscape.

"When you bring them back, you're putting it back in balance," she said. "It was man that messed it up but we can fix it."

Desert bighorns live in dry, rugged, mountainous terrain, and eat seasonally available plants such as yucca, prickly pear and wild onions. Their predators include mountain lions, black bears, and golden eagles.

In 1954, Texas, other states and federal wildlife agencies and private conservation groups developed a cooperative agreement to begin restoring the bighorn. They got desert bighorns from states including Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Mexico, and set up brooding sites in far West Texas.

The last capture-and-release event happened in 2000, when about 20 were moved from Elephant Mountain to another wildlife management area.

"It never gets old," Pittman said of the release events through the years. "It's always exhilarating."

Bexar County Detective Frank Stubbs said arson wasn't suspected. County fire marshal spokeswoman Laura Jesse said the cause was undetermined.

Stubbs said firefighters found Kruse's body in the kitchen. Relatives said Kruse was a retired plumber frequently seen in the neighborhood with Sugar by his side.

### Teen killed by stray bullet in East Texas shooting

**TYLER** (AP) — A 15-year-old East Texas girl has died after she was struck by a stray bullet during a shooting on Christmas Eve.

Authorities say Nicole Cartwright of Longview was with friends in the parking lot of a Tyler fast food restaurant when gunshots were reported about 1:30 a.m. Friday.

Tyler police Sgt. Matthew Smyser tells the Tyler Morning Telegraph that officers found the victim at the scene with a single gunshot wound. Smyser said the girl was taken to a hospital, and police were later told she had died from injuries sustained in the shooting.

Sgt. Bobby Perkins said witness accounts indicate two groups got into a disturbance somewhere else and met again at the restaurant, where one person fired at another.

Perkins said investigators are trying to determine a suspect.

### Police investigate apparent murder-suicide in Arlington

**ARLINGTON** (AP) — Arlington police say that it appears a man shot his adult grandson and then himself.

Police say that the men were found Sunday afternoon on the ground outside of a car.

They say a man who appeared to be in his 50s was dead and the scene and another man who was in his mid-20s died later Sunday from his injuries.

The names of the men have not yet been released. Police continue to investigate.



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# Season can't end soon enough for Cowboys

**The Associated Press**

IRVING — Here's how the Dallas Cowboys are likely to close a season that can't end soon enough: with a third-string quarterback making his first career start and everyone holding their breath on extra-point attempts.

Just when it seemed the Cowboys might salvage something from the final months of this season, their fortunes turned again. All the screwball mistakes that drove them to being 1-7 and got their coach fired, and had mostly disappeared under interim coach Jason Garrett, returned with a vengeance Saturday night in Arizona.

They threw two interceptions that were returned for touchdowns. A cornerback blew an assignment, clearing the way for a 74-yard touchdown pass. They made a valiant comeback anyway, yet continued to do things like get penalized for celebrating a touchdown and kicking an extra point wide

left. That last goof gave the Cardinals a chance to win it with a field goal and that's exactly what they did, but only after converting a fourth-and-15 against a defense that had played well most of the second half.

"This has been quite a year of disappointment — real disappointment, real surprise," Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said. "Some of those things we were doing out there have been with us since the day we walked out of training camp, unfortunately."

This kooky 27-26 loss did such a good job of capsulizing everything that's made 2010 so forgettable, there was even an injury to the starting quarterback.

Jon Kitna strained an abdominal muscle — while throwing a touchdown pass, of all things — and may not be ready to start the finale Sunday at Philadelphia. That would mean Stephen McGee would get the chance to show what he can do with a whole week of preparation.

McGee was forced into action for the first time in his two-year career Saturday night and looked nervous. He had reason to be.

Garrett made it clear the team lacked faith in McGee by declaring him an emergency-only option even though the playoff hopes were gone. The Cowboys preferred using the 38-year-old Kitna against another team already eliminated from the playoffs, valuing a better chance of winning over the chance to see what the kid could do. Then Garrett called mostly running plays.

Finally allowed to throw, McGee went 11 of 17 for 111 yards and a spectacular touchdown to Miles Austin. It covered 37 yards and put the Cowboys ahead 26-24 with 1:41 left. That's when David Buehler jerked the extra point to the wrong side of the left upright.

"I think I just rushed it a little bit," said Buehler, who became the first Dallas kicker with two missed PATs in a season since 1995.

McGee was sacked once and didn't have any turnovers. He threw some balls in the dirt and had poor timing with Austin and Jason Witten, but that was to be expected since he'd never thrown to them in a game or even a practice.

"There was a little bit of getting comfortable, just getting the feel of it, getting the cadence, getting the guys moving, getting the play in and out quickly, little things that I wanted to be on top of and that were going through my mind," he said. "Other than that, I felt like I was out there playing ball again."

The Cowboys thought Kitna had a hip pointer. But a painkilling shot didn't help, and it was later diagnosed as a strained abdominal muscle. The pain extended toward the groin area.

"I think it's doubtful from what I heard in there that we're going to have Jon back," Jones said following

See **COWBOYS**, Page 12



HERALD Photo/Angie Sloan

Coahoma's Haley Pace (33) blocks a shot during the Bulldogettes' game against Klondike earlier this season. Coahoma, along with several other area boys and girls' basketball teams, begin tournament play again Tuesday.

## Patriots clinch AFC home-field edge

**The Associated Press**

AFC teams seeking a Super Bowl berth must go through Foxborough, a place where Tom Brady hasn't lost in the regular season since 2006.

Here's some hope for the challengers, though: The New England Patriots lost their only playoff game last season, routed at home by Baltimore.

Among the teams chasing the Patriots are the AFC West champion Kansas City Chiefs.

The Patriots secured throughout the AFC playoffs by routing the Buffalo Bills 34-3 Sunday. Brady hasn't lost a home game in the last 27 regular-season outings, and the Patriots (13-2) are unbeaten in 16 consecutive regular-season games at Gillette Stadium since losing to Pittsburgh on Nov. 30, 2008 with Matt Cassel replacing the injured Brady.

"We got a W, and

that's our biggest present, being able to come into the locker room and being able to see that hat and T-shirt," nose tackle Vince Wilfork said. "That's something to be proud of."

Baltimore (11-4) still could win the AFC North — it's tied with Pittsburgh, which already has a playoff berth, but does not own the tiebreaker with the Steelers in the division. The Ravens won at Cleveland 20-10, and must beat Cincinnati at home while Pittsburgh loses at Cleveland next Sunday.

"It doesn't matter (what Cleveland does)," Ravens star linebacker Ray Lewis said. "The only thing you can ask for in this business is to get in the dance. We're in and we have to take care of business against Cincinnati."

Failing to win the division means Baltimore gets a wild card,

See **PATRIOTS**, Page 12

## Tebow, Broncos beat Texans

**The Associated Press**

DENVER — Tim Tebow won on several fronts Sunday.

By rallying the Denver Broncos past the Houston Texans 24-23, the raw rookie from Florida secured not only his first victory as a pro but he won over the fans who have suffered through the franchise's worst slump in almost 40 years and were jeering the conservative play calling as the team trudged off the field at halftime.

"He definitely stepped up and gave the fans what they wanted," wide receiver Brandon Lloyd said. "And as a player, he gave us what we needed."

More importantly, Tebow took Denver (4-11) out of the running for the No. 1 draft pick in April, which figures to be Stanford star quarterback Andrew Luck.

John Elway, who is expected to join the Broncos soon as their chief football executive, is a big fan of the best passer Stanford has produced since, well, himself, and he said last week that Denver would have to seriously consider selecting Luck if he were available.

Now, Luck figures to be headed not to the Rocky Mountains but to the Blue Ridge Mountains as Carolina secured the top draft pick Sunday with wins by Denver and Cincinnati.

nati.

Tebow scored on a 6-yard scramble with three minutes left in his first home start, capping a comeback from a 17-0 halftime deficit.

"Things weren't going well early, but we kept fighting, kept believing in each other," Tebow said.

Matt Schaub was driving the Texans (5-10) for a go-ahead score when rookie cornerback Syd'Quan Thompson picked off a pass intended for wide-open tight end Owen Daniels, who had already caught eight passes for 73 yards and a score. But it was deflected at the line by Justin Bannan and settled into Thompson's arms at the Broncos 27 with just over a minute remaining.

"It was like a dream," Thompson said. "The ball was floating in the air so long. I had to go pluck it."

Schaub lamented that "if I can get that one in O.D.'s hands, he might score on that play."

The Texans were probably already in field-goal range. Neil Rackers had converted a 54-yarder that tied his career-longest field goal and then nailed a 57-yarder that tied the franchise mark, both in the third quarter.

Tebow turned the jeers from the crowd miffed at conservative play

See **TEXANS**, Page 12

## 49ers fire head coach Mike Singletary

**The Associated Press**

SAN FRANCISCO — Mike Singletary made a name for himself as a coach with that bold "I want winners!" declaration more than two years ago.

Ultimately, he didn't produce enough victories to save his job.

The Hall of Fame linebacker was fired by the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday night after two disappointing seasons, including a 5-10 showing this year for a franchise that expected to win the NFC West.

The team made the announcement upon returning to the Bay Area late Sunday, several hours after San Francisco was eliminated from playoff contention with a 25-17 loss at St. Louis. Defensive line coach Jim Tompula was promoted to interim coach and will run the team in the season finale at home against Arizona. He was to be formally introduced in a news conference Monday.

After team president and CEO Jed York told reporters in St. Louis after the loss he would think about whether Singletary would coach the final game, Singletary then was told of his dismissal back at the team's Santa Clara complex.

"I want to thank Mike Singletary for the passion and effort that he brought to this organization," York said in a statement. "He is a tremen-

dous person for whom I will always have great respect."

York said money wasn't an object in this decision considering Singletary had two years remaining on his contract.

"Obviously, we didn't achieve the things we set out to achieve. We should be a playoff team," York said in the locker room. "We aren't a playoff team this year. Very disappointed about that. We need to figure out how we can get into the playoffs and how we can start competing for Super Bowls."

San Francisco began the year with high hopes of winning the West and reaching the postseason for the first time since 2002. Singletary was 18-22 in two-plus seasons.

"One of the greatest experiences of my life was having the opportunity to coach the San Francisco 49ers," Singletary said in a statement. "What made it so special were the players. They were some of the most outstanding men I have ever been around in my life. The coaches were truly professionals. I wish the 49ers nothing but the best. I am thankful to the York family for having given me the opportunity to be a head coach in the NFL. I am indebted to them for that. I am also thankful for the Faithful

See **49ERS**, Page 12





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Annie's Mailbox

Saving a Son and a Marriage

Dear Annie: I've been married to a wonderful man for 26 years. We are compatible in every way except when it comes to my 28-year-old son, "Jeremy."

Jeremy has epilepsy, diabetes and a host of other problems. Recently, the two of them had a terrible fight.

Jeremy put all of his belongings in a bag and left. We had no idea that he was simply camping out in our backyard.

In the middle of the night, we heard a noise and a loud scream. Jeremy had had a severe epileptic seizure, and we called 911.

The paramedics noticed he had written on his hand, "Do not revive." We later found out he had tried to commit suicide by swallowing three bottles of pills.

Jeremy has not been a perfect son. He has lied to my husband and stolen minor things.

My husband wants him gone, but he knows I won't kick him out when he has so many medical problems.

Instead, my husband now refuses to have anything to do with him. He hasn't spoken to Jeremy in two days, and he's also becoming rather cold to me.

I cannot choose between my husband and my son. I love them both. And strange as it seems, Jeremy says he loves his stepfather and has apologized for all his past mistakes. Do you have any suggestions? — Hurting Mother

Dear Hurting: We understand your concern for your son, but unless Jeremy plans to spend the rest of his life with you, he needs to learn how to manage his various illnesses and become more independent. You should not be tak-

ing over responsibilities that he can handle for himself.

The two of you can contact the Epilepsy Foundation (epilepsyfoundation.org) at 1-800-332-1000 and the American Diabetes Association (diabetes.org) at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) and ask for assistance.

Talk to Jeremy's doctor about his depression. He should look into his eligibility for disability programs. This is the best thing for Jeremy — and coincidentally, for your marriage, as well.



KATHY MITCHELL MARCY SUGAR

Dear Annie: I will never look at my driver's license the same way again. Two days ago, my nephew received a heart transplant and a renewed chance at life.

Now when I look at my driver's license, the words "organ donor" proudly shine out at me.

I hope someday my death will give another person a chance for life, as one family unselfishly did for my nephew.

I want to say to his donor family that even though the recipients of your generous and ultimate donation appreciate their great fortune, we also grieve for your loved one. Your family will always be in our prayers. Thank God for your generosity. — Toledo, Ohio

Dear Toledo: Thank you for your poignant reminder of the good that each of us can do by becoming an organ donor. Those who are interested can also contact the National Kidney Foundation (kidney.org) at 1-800-622-9010 or the Health Resources and Services Administration (organ-donor.gov) at 1-888-ASK-HRSA (1-888-275-4772).

Dear Annie: I didn't like your answer to "Gagging in California," who couldn't stand to be

near smokers because of the odor. You said to be honest about why she was avoiding someone. You're wrong. Smokers would not prefer to know why someone is moving away from them — that would be embarrassing and hurtful.

Anyone who is offended by an odor should politely make an excuse to move away, but should never tell the

smoker that they smell. That would be rude, unnecessary and not appreciated. — Still Smoking

Dear Still: You seem both hypersensitive and defensive. We did not tell "Gagging" to inform smokers that they smell. We said it's better to tell them you have a tough time breathing around smokers than to simply

avoid them and not say why. That would be not only dishonest, but hurtful, especially if the smoker is a close friend or relative.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, long-time editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@com-cast.net, or write to:

Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Ste. 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. To find out more about Annie's Mailbox and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com. © 2010 CREATORS.COM

Tomorrow's Horoscope

successful people you know. Only people who take a shot can hit the target.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Maybe it won't take as long as you think to get what you want. Maybe you've been conditioned to think that good things only come to those who wait. Try not waiting. Try reaching out and taking it right now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If you're worried about what to say next, you'll stop yourself from expressing the effortless sense of humor for which you are famous. Focus on listening to others. This will loosen you up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you woke up less than happy, there's no reason why you can't change the way you feel immediately. Imagine that feelings are like flowers growing in a garden; all you have to do is pick the one you like.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your attitude shows in your every action. Take the time to set yourself straight in the morning. Sing a happy song in the shower, or talk to yourself in the mirror to psych yourself up.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have an artful way of presenting yourself, and you'll come across as a breath of fresh air. Maybe your audience won't tell you out loud, but your work is original and exciting.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You don't need to follow a guru for months in order to better yourself — you're a quick study. You hear

the words that enlighten your soul, and you apply them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It's just not time to move yet. The delay will favor you. As your sign mate Ellen DeGeneres said, "Procrastination isn't the problem; it's the solution. So procrastinate now. Don't put it off."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're scratching the surface of a new venture. Your talents will be used well in this arena. The only limits to how far you can go with this are the ones that exist in your own mind.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 27). Good luck is sprinkled throughout your year in the form of financial perks, interesting relationships and opportunities for personal development. You'll enjoy increased physical strength and will make a new commitment to health and fitness. You'll achieve notable accomplishments in February and September. Aquarius and Sagittarius people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 15, 3, 25, 50 and 31.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "I just got a new job. I had one week to learn my job and then 10 days vacation, a planned trip the boss agreed I should go ahead and take. The first week went well. But when I came back from vacation, so much work had piled up that it made me nervous. I forgot how to do the tasks I learned before vacation. The boss was over my shoulder,

which made it worse. I felt like running out on the job and the pressure. I had a panic attack right there in front of my new boss. I'm humiliated and worried that I'll get fired, that my boss thinks I'm a freak or a problem and, most of all, that it will happen again. What should I do? I'm a Cancer."

Lighten up. You're putting this pressure on yourself. No one else is doing it. So you need to relearn some of the tasks at your new position. Big deal. It usually takes several weeks in a row for a new position to feel comfortable, and since you're a sensitive Cancer it may take even longer to make your new job part of your routine. Stop psyching yourself out.

CELEBRITY PROFILES: Talented vocalist and keyboardist Hayley Williams appears as an avatar one can play in the video game "Guitar Hero World Tour." Capricorns are known to be mature for their age, and Williams is no exception. She had her first music industry deal at the age of 14, and her star is on the rise. Her Leo moon indicates that she loves to put on a show and feels right at home in the spotlight.

If you would like to write to Holiday Mathis, please go to www.creators.com and click on "Write the Author" on the Holiday Mathis page, or you may send her a postcard in the mail. To find out more about Holiday Mathis and read her past columns, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com. © 2010 CREATORS.COM

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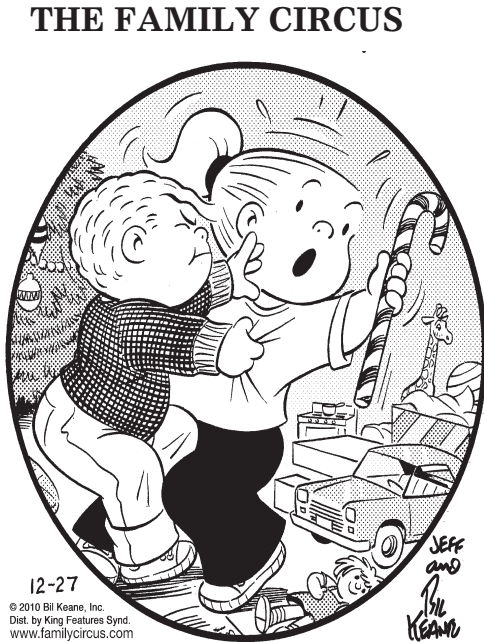
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Advertisement for B&B House Leveling & Foundation Repair, featuring text: 'B&B House Leveling & Foundation Repair', 'LOCALLY OWNED & FAMILY OPERATED FOR 67 Years', 'Foundation Repair is Our Specialty & Only Work Our Company Does!', 'If it's not a deep driven steel pier, it's not a steel pier.', 'Capable of 90 ft. in depth!', 'The Big Country's only provider for non-corrosive Steel Piers', 'Repairs on Solid Slab, Pier & Beam Foundations', 'Void Filling & Mud Jacking', 'Landscape Friendly', 'LIFETIME TRANSFERABLE GUARANTEE', '325-675-6613 • Abilene, TX • 800-335-4037', 'Owner: Rick Burrow', 'Licensed & Bonded for Home Owner's Protection', 'Insurance Claims Welcome • Free Inspections • Senior Citizens & Military Discounts'.

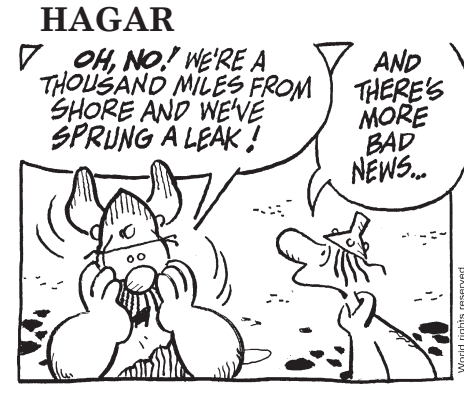
TV schedule table with columns for station (KMID, UNI, KPEJ, KOSA, KTLT, KWES, WTBS, KMLM, KPBT, KWWT, DISC, AMC, SPIKE, TNT, BET, DISN, ESPN2, ESPN) and time slots (5:30 PM, 6:30 PM, 7:30 PM, 8:30 PM, 9:30 PM, 10:30 PM, 11:30 PM, 12:30 AM, 1:30 AM).



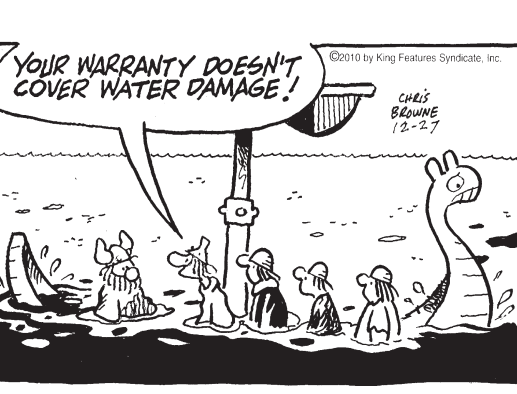
DENNIS THE MENACE YOU GOT THIS FOR CHRISTMAS? I SURE HOPE SANTA NEVER GETS YOUR HOUSE AND MINE MIXED UP!



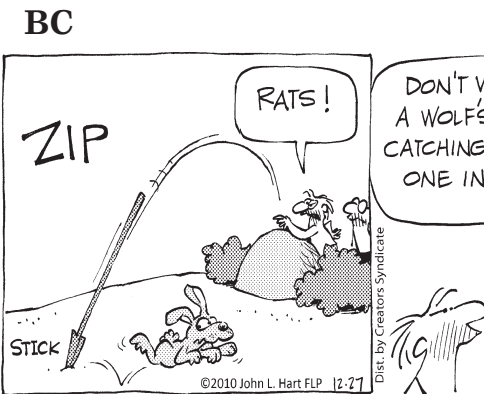
THE FAMILY CIRCUS "Mommy! Can we start being naughty again or do we still need to be nice?"



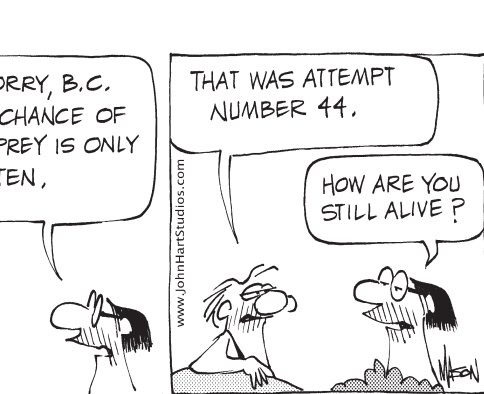
HAGAR OH, NO! WE'RE A THOUSAND MILES FROM SHORE AND WE'VE SPRUNG A LEAK!



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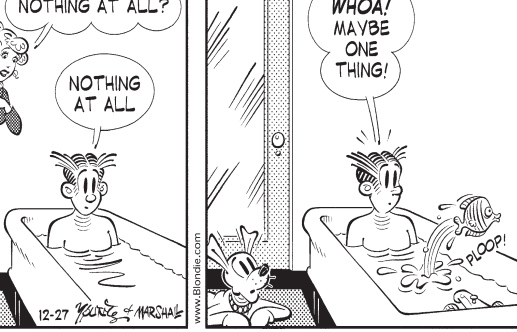
BC ZIP DON'T WORRY, B.C. A WOLF'S CHANCE OF CATCHING PREY IS ONLY ONE IN TEN.



WIZARD OF ID LOOK WIZ, I KNOW YOU LOVE YOUR NEW PET... AND I RESPECT THAT...



BLONDIE NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCE IN YOUR BATH SINCE WE INSTALLED THE NEW WATER SOFTENER?



BLONDIE WHOA! MAYBE ONE THING!

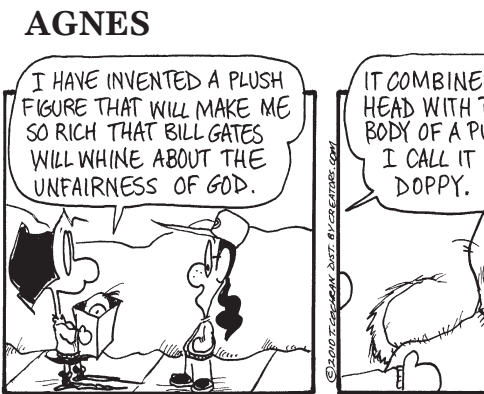
This Date In History

Today is Monday, Dec. 27, the 361st day of 2010. There are four days left in the year.

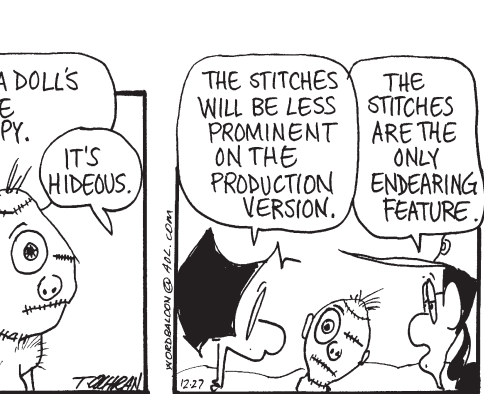
Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 27, 1968, Apollo 8 and its three astronauts made a safe, nighttime splashdown in the Pacific. On this date: In 1831, naturalist Charles Darwin set out on a round-the-world voyage aboard the HMS Beagle. In 1904, James Barrie's play 'Peter Pan: The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up' opened at the Duke of York's Theater in London. In 1927, the musical play 'Show Boat,' with music by Jerome Kern and libretto by Oscar Hammerstein II, opened at the Ziegfeld Theater in New York.

In 1949, Queen Juliana of the Netherlands signed an act recognizing Indonesia's sovereignty after more than three centuries of Dutch rule. In 1970, 'Hello, Dolly!' closed on Broadway after a run of 2,844 performances. In 1979, Soviet forces seized control of Afghanistan. President Hafizullah Amin (hah-FEE'-zoo-lah ah-MEEN'), who was overthrown and executed, was replaced by Babrak Karmal. In 1985, Palestinian guerrillas opened fire inside the Rome and Vienna airports; 19 victims were killed, plus four attackers who were slain by police and security personnel. American naturalist Dian Fossey, 53, who had studied gorillas in the wild in Rwanda, was found hacked to death. In 2007, opposition leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in Pakistan by an attacker who shot her after a campaign rally and then blew himself up.

Sound of Music") is 68. ABC News correspondent Cokie Roberts is 67. Rock musician Mick Jones (Foreigner) is 66. Singer Tracy Nelson is 66. Actor Gerard Depardieu is 62. Jazz singer-musician T.S. Monk is 61. Singer-songwriter Karla Bonoff is 59. Actress Tovah Feldshuh is 58. Rock musician David Knopfler (Dire Straits) is 58. Journalist-turned-politician Arthur Kent is 57. Actress Maryam D'Abo is 50. Country musician Jeff Bryant is 48. Actor Ian Gomez is 46. Actress Theresa Randle is 46. Actress Eva LaRue is 44. Professional wrestler and actor Bill Goldberg is 44. Actress Tracey Cherelle Jones is 41.



AGNES I HAVE INVENTED A PLUSH FIGURE THAT WILL MAKE ME SO RICH THAT BILL GATES WILL WHINE ABOUT THE UNFAIRNESS OF GOD.



AGNES IT COMBINES A DOLL'S HEAD WITH THE BODY OF A PUPPY. I CALL IT A DOPPY.

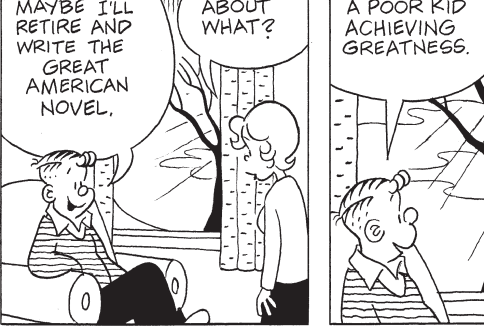
Newsday Crossword

- ACROSS: 1 Ink stain, 5 Discourage, 10 High-school dance, 14 Barbecue orders, 15 Sidestep, 16 Spicy Asian cuisine, 17 Wild way to run, 18 Mends, 19 Is shown on TV, 20 Follow orders, 22 Tennis-court divider, 23 Dad's boys, 24 Nary a soul, 27 Wearing a disguise, perhaps, 30 Cheese chunk, 32 "Eureka!", 33 Make revisions to, 35 Short summary, 39 Some small-business owners, 43 "Laughing" beast, 44 10 Across attendee, 45 \_\_\_ Moines, IA, 46 Energy, 48 Prevail over, 51 Dr. \_\_\_ and Mr. Hyde, 54 Make airtight, 55 \_\_\_ Baba (Arabian Nights hero), 56 Graceful river spanner, 62 Soup cookers, 64 Be worthy of, 65 Virtuous, 66 Gibbons and gorillas.

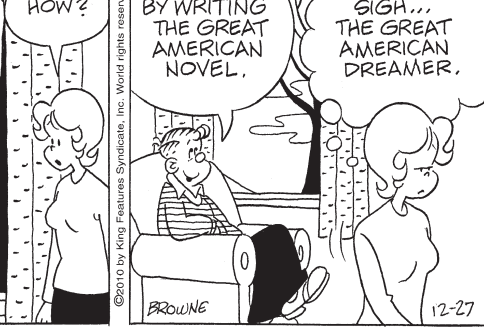
FEET FIRST by Billie Truitt Edited by Stanley Newman

- 7 Cab, 8 Genesis garden, 9 Transmit again, 10 School support org., 11 Horned safari animal, 12 Propelled a dinghy, 13 Teary-eyed, 21 Gardening tool, 25 Brute of folklore, 26 Red vegetable, 27 Prepare potatoes, 28 Sailor's greeting, 29 Clearance event, 30 Windshield cleaner, 31 Raison d'\_\_\_, 34 Inflict upon, 36 Secret writing, 37 Neighborhood, 38 "Hey, over here!", 40 Jealousy, 41 Sandbox item, 42 Obligated (to), 47 Star quality, 49 Corn serving, 50 Plane trip, 51 Neighbor of Korea, 52 Get married secretly, 53 Toys that fly, 54 Sparkle, 57 Nevada city, 58 Cornfield bird, 59 Gloomy, 60 Out of sight, 61 Border, 63 Former Mach 2 flier: Abbr.

Answer to previous puzzle: PASTEL, ATSYMBOL, LUPINE, NOSECONE, ORIENT, GETSREAL, DEN, EUROS, MARLA, DOOM, PURIM, EWAN, ELFIN, SANYO, ARD, DEFLECTS, SNARK, AIRY, PIES, LONGO, MONASTIC, TAP, HOSES, DOETH, USES, NERTS, CASE, RANTO, AISLE, BOW, KGBAGENT, UTHANT, INPATRICE, STELMO, CAREENED, HARLEY



HI AND LOIS MAYBE I'LL RETIRE AND WRITE THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL.



HI AND LOIS BY WRITING THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL.



SNUFFY SMITH LOOK AT THIS, VICKY. I CHECKED OUT AN "E-BOOK" FROM THE LIBRARY.



SNUFFY SMITH I THINK IT'S OVERDUE.



BEEETLE BAILEY GRR... I'M IN A BAD MOOD!! I FEEL LIKE PUNCHIN' SUMPIN', ELVINEY !!



BEEETLE BAILEY WELL, YA COME TO TH' RIGHT PLACE, LOWEEZY !!



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BEEETLE BAILEY INSPIRATION! YOUR MUSE IS ABOUT TO STRIKE

Crossword grid with numbers 1-71 indicating starting positions for words.

# Vikings-Eagles moved to Tuesday night

**The Associated Press**

PHILADELPHIA — On a bizarre day when the Philadelphia Eagles were snowed out, they celebrated an NFC East championship.

The NFL moved the Vikings at Eagles game from Sunday night to Tuesday because of a blizzard that dumped about a foot of snow on Philadelphia.

The game — the first on a Tuesday since 1946 — will be played at 8 p.m. EST., and televised nationally by NBC.

Sideline by the storm, the Eagles went home and

watched the Green Bay Packers beat the New York Giants 45-17. That gave Philadelphia its first division title since 2006 and sixth in 12 seasons under coach Andy Reid.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter declared a snow emergency as of 2 p.m. EST Sunday.

"We are urging all Philadelphians, please be careful, please be safe," the mayor told reporters in a news conference at City Hall on Sunday morning.

The decision to postpone

the game came shortly after noon — before there was any snow accumulation in Philadelphia.

In announcing the postponement, NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said:

"Due to public safety concerns in light of today's snow emergency in Philadelphia, tonight's Vikings-Eagles game has been postponed. Because of the uncertainty of the extent of tonight's storm and its aftermath, the game will be played on Tuesday night at 8 p.m. This will allow

sufficient time to ensure that roads, parking lots and the stadium are fully cleared."

The postponement did not sit well with Gov. Ed Rendell, who told KYW-TV he did "not at all" agree with the decision.

"This is football; football's played in bad weather," Rendell said. "I think the fans would have gotten there, the subways work and the major arteries are still open, and other fans would have stayed home — but you play football regardless of the weather."

The governor, who does football commentaries after Eagles games, also said the decision would be a "serious handicap" for the Eagles and was unfair to the team.

"I, for one, was looking forward to sitting in the stands throughout the snow and seeing an old-time football game," Rendell said.

Asked what Vince Lombardi would say about the decision, Rendell said "he'd be mocking us."

Reid agreed with the league's decision.

## PATRIOTS

Continued from Page 7

something the New York Jets already own. Although the Jets (10-5) were beaten 38-34 at Chicago, they qualified when Jacksonville lost to Washington 20-17 in overtime. Just like last season, when the Jets went to the AFC title game, they will finish second to the Patriots in the AFC East.

"This was a bit odd," said Jets running back LaDainian Tomlinson, who saw the Redskins win on TV. "We went from being down, a blown opportunity to 'we're in.'"

"I ran in (the locker room) and I was like, 'We're in.' Everybody was looking at me ... then all of a sudden everybody starts to smile and talk, the mood just kind of lightens up."

Kansas City earned its first AFC West championship since 2003 when it beat Tennessee 34-17 and

San Diego lost at Cincinnati. The Chargers had won the last four division crowns.

The Chiefs improved from 4-12 last year to 10-5 with a home game against Oakland remaining.

Jacksonville's loss did not finish it off in the AFC South. Indianapolis is 9-6 after a 31-26 win at Oakland, one game in front of the Jags. That division will be decided by next weekend's games: Tennessee at Indy, Jacksonville at Houston.

Atlanta and Chicago already have qualified for the postseason in the NFC. The Bears have won the North and are in position for a first-round bye. If the Falcons (12-2) win at home against New Orleans on Monday night, they will have NFC home-field advantage throughout the playoffs as well as the South title. The defending champion Saints (10-4) also get a playoff spot with a victory.

Seattle was routed 38-15 at Tampa Bay, yet will win the weak NFC West by defeating St. Louis at Qwest Field next Sunday night in prime time.

Should that happen, the Seahawks, currently 6-9, would be the first division winner in NFL history with a losing record. The Rams are 7-8 after a 25-17 win over San Francisco that eliminated the 49ers from contention.

The Buccaneers (9-6) are alive for a wild card, but need to win next Sunday at New Orleans and get lots of help.

Philadelphia (10-4) clinched the NFC East with the New York Giants' 45-17 loss at Green Bay. The Eagles' night game against Minnesota was moved to Tuesday night because of blizzard conditions in Philadelphia.

Green Bay and the Giants both are 9-6, but the Packers hold the tiebreaker for a wild card thanks to their win over New York and will make the playoffs by beating the archrival Bears next Sunday no matter who else finished 10-6. The Bucs need to have a better overall record than those teams to get in.

## COWBOYS

Continued from Page 7

the game. "The trainers didn't give me any encouragement."

Had the Cowboys (5-10) pulled out the win, they would've clinched a winning record under Garrett. Instead, they are 4-3 with another near-miss. His three

losses have been by a total of seven points. There's little solace in that, though, because Dallas had plenty of close losses under Wade Phillips, too.

This one was bizarre even by 2010 standards. The defense forced Arizona to go three-and-out on its first series, yet the Cardinals were up 14-0 the next time their offense took a snap. They hit one big play, courtesy of Mike Jenkins' ridiculous coverage of a rookie receiver, and mustered only two field goals.

"I feel playing the way we are, we're building on something," tight end Jason Witten said. "To lose that way, it's hard."

## TEXANS

Continued from Page 7

calls in the first half into delirious cheers by driving Denver for scores on each of its four second-half drives.

"I've never seen a winner lose. He's a winner," Broncos cornerback Champ Bailey said. "And I expect him to win a lot of games as a pro quarterback. Hopefully, I'm around here to see him do it."

Tebow's future in Denver seems much more secure than Bailey's.

A nine-time Pro Bowl selection still at the top of his game, Bailey might have played his last snap for Denver if he has to sit out the season finale against San Diego next week after re-injuring his right heel. He'll be a free agent after this season.

But this was a night for the

Broncos and their fans to celebrate Tebow's first pro win along with interim coach Eric Studesville's first triumph in three games since replacing Josh McDaniels and not to ponder Bailey's uncertain future.

Tebow's heroics helped the Broncos avoid a franchise-record 12th loss.

He threw for 308 yards but when it mattered most, he used his legs to give the Broncos their first win since Nov. 14.

On second-and-goal from the 6, Tebow faked the quarterback draw, raised up to throw it but found Eddie Royal covered. So, he tucked the ball and sprinted toward the left pylon, beating defensive tackle Earl Mitchell into the end zone to give Denver its first lead at 24-23 with 3:02 remaining.

Tailback Correll Buckhalter's 23-yard catch and run on a screen pass from Tebow pulled Denver

within striking distance at 23-17 with 10:55 left. Buckhalter was subbing for Knowshon Moreno, who injured his ribs in the first half.

Tebow's first home start drew such loud applause that he had to motion for the crowd to quiet down as he trotted onto the field for his first series. His first two throws went for 22 yards each, but his third throw to Lloyd was easily picked off by cornerback Jason Allen in the end zone.

"Terrible decision," Tebow said.

Even with Tebow starting ahead of Kyle Orton, the announced crowd was 67,974 with 5,717 no-shows.

And they booed the team off the field at halftime over its conservative playcalling.

The safe screen passes were replaced in the second half by deep throws that thrilled Tebow and the fans alike.

from an 0-5 start to reach the playoffs, but the 49ers would have made it if they had defeated the Rams and won again next Sunday. If that had happened, San Francisco would have won the tiebreaker over Seattle and St. Louis to win the division and become the first team with a losing record in a non-strike season to make the playoffs.

"You know what, I'll put it this way: a personal failure. I'm the head coach of this team and obviously wanted us to do better, felt that we could do better," Singletary said after the game Sunday. "There are some obvious questions that I hoped would be answered as the season went on, and obviously were not answered. When that happens, you end up out of the playoffs."

"I take full responsibility for every unanswered question."

The 52-year-old Singletary had two years remaining on his contract. York — son of owner John York — seems ready for major change

## 49ERS

Continued from Page 7

fans, I am just sorry I couldn't give them more."

The 49ers opened 0-5 and will finish with a losing record for the seventh time in eight years. They went 8-8 in Singletary's first full season, then produced an unbeaten preseason this year only to drop their first five games.

It was the franchise's worst start since losing seven in a row to begin a 2-14 season in 1979 — in the late Hall of Famer Bill Walsh's first year as coach.

No team has recovered

### Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

#### Famous Hand

West dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
 ♠ J 7 3  
 ♥ 10 8 4  
 ♦ J 9 6  
 ♣ A Q 6 2

**WEST**  
 ♠ A K Q 10  
 ♥ Q 3  
 ♦ K 8 4 3  
 ♣ 7 5 4

**EAST**  
 ♠ 9 8 6 5 2  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ A Q 5 2  
 ♣ 9 8 3

**SOUTH**  
 ♠ 4  
 ♥ A K J 7 6 5 2  
 ♦ 10 7  
 ♣ K J 10

The bidding:  
 West North East South  
 1♠ Pass 4♠ 5♥  
 Dble  
 Opening lead — king of spades.

**This deal was played in an international pair championship.** With Walter Avarelli and Massimo D'Alelio of Italy North-South, and Kenneth Konstam and Maurice Harrison-Gray of England East-West, the bidding went as shown.

**Harrison-Gray, West,** led the king of spades on which Konstam, East, played the nine! Ordinarily, the nine — an unnecessarily high spot card — would be regarded as a request for West to continue the suit. That's how almost everyone plays, and that's how Harrison-Gray interpreted the nine. But when he led another spade, D'Alelio ruffed and made the contract, discarding a diamond on dummy's fourth club. A diamond shift would, of course, have done South in.

**Obviously,** Harrison-Gray and Konstam were operating on different wavelenghts. Konstam intended the spade nine as a signal for a diamond shift — the higher-ranking of the two remaining side suits (clubs and diamonds). This was consistent with the suit-preference signals Konstam normally played in situations of this type.

**It can be argued** that Harrison-Gray should have led a diamond at trick two anyway — despite what he thought was a come-on signal in spades — because he could gauge from the bidding that declarer probably had no more spades.

**The answer to this,** if we accept Harrison-Gray's contention that there can be no such thing as a suit-preference signal at trick one, is that Konstam was requesting a spade continuation simply because he did not want any other suit led.

**However,** a more practical answer is this: Once two players agree to play together in an important championship, they should discuss in advance any and all methods of defense they plan to use. One cannot expect harmonious results when the trombone is playing Sousa and the cello is playing Beethoven.

**Tomorrow:** Famous Hand — Part Two.

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Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats. That means no number is repeated in any row, column or box. Solution, tips and computer program at [www.sudoku.com](http://www.sudoku.com)

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

*The following Financial Institutions will observe the following hours for the Christmas Holiday.*

**Big Spring Community Federal Credit Union**  
 Closed 1:00 p.m., Friday 12/31  
 Closed Saturday New Year's Day

**Citizens Federal Credit Union**  
 Open Friday 12/31  
 Closed Saturday New Year's Day

**State National Bank**  
 Open Friday 12/31  
 Closed Saturday New Year's Day

**Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.**  
 Open Friday 12/31  
 Closed Saturday New Year's Day

**Western Bank**  
 Open Friday 12/31  
 Closed Saturday New Year's Day

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ANSWERS

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