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U.S. gun support runs deep

PAUL J. WEBER
 Associated Press
 BRYAN, Texas — Adam Lanza's mother was among the tens of millions of U.S. gun owners. She legally had a .223-caliber Bushmaster rifle and a pair of handguns, which her 20-year-old son used to kill 20 children and six adults in 10 minutes inside a Connecticut school. In the raw aftermath of the second-worst school shooting in U.S. history, countless gun enthusiasts much like Lanza's mother complicate a gun-owning narrative that critics, sometimes simplistically, put at the feet of a powerful lobby and caricatured zealots. More civilians are armed in the U.S. than anywhere else in the world, with Yemen coming in a distant second, according to the independent Small Arms Survey in Geneva. Take Blake Smith, a mechanical engineer who lives near Houston and uses an AR-15 style rifle in shooting competitions. Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who famously claimed to have shot a coyote while jogging with a pistol holstered to his running shorts, has signed a half-dozen certificates applauding Smith as one of the state's top marksmen. "But I won't call myself a fanatic," said Smith, 54, whose father first let him handle a gun around age 6. "I sit at a desk all day."

See **GUNS**, Page 3

Healthy Woman heads to the Settles

Special to the Herald

Four years and counting. Healthy Woman — a Scenic Mountain Medical Center resource — has been active for four years and will be celebrating its anniversary Jan. 24 in the historic Hotel Settles. Tickets are set to go on sale Jan. 2 and will be \$40 per person. Jane Jenkins Herlong, motivational speaker and former Miss America Pageant contestant, will be delivering her speech "Bare Feet to High Heels and the Flip-Flops In-Between."



Herlong

"As always, we are very excited about this event and can't wait to see the reaction of all those attending," Anita Cline, Healthy Woman co-coordinator said. "Not only will we be hearing inspiring stories from Jane Herlong, but we will be one of the first to experience the Hotel Settles restored." The evening will begin with a health expo, located on the mezzanine, at 4:30 p.m. Area

vendors will be available with information about local health services. Vendor spaces are still available for health-related agencies. "We want to offer the community an opportunity to learn about all that Big Spring has to offer regarding health services," Cline said. "There are so many services right here that people don't realize and we want to make sure people are able to learn about those and talk to the people providing them." The ballroom doors will open at 6 p.m. for a sit-down dinner and the guest speak-

er. "When we plan our anniversary event, it's kind of like putting on a wedding. We want it to be such a grand event so that women can come and escape the worries of their day, even if for only a few hours. One of the main focuses of the Healthy Woman program is to get women to focus on themselves so that they are able to take care of those they love." Cline said. "When we heard the Settles would be open for our event we had to take advantage of it."

See **SMMC**, Page 3



Don't forget, though Christmas has past for another year, the Festival of Lights is open each evening through Dec. 31 at Comanche Trail Park. The drive through lights display is free, although donations are accepted.
 HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Volunteer Fire Chief Sullivan: Be careful where you pop off

By THOMAS JENKINS
 Staff Writer
 Crossroads residents planning to make fireworks part of their New Year holiday celebration should use extreme caution, according to local fire officials, as dry conditions could quickly turn fun

into tragedy. According to Howard County Volunteer Fire Chief Tommy Sullivan, local officials will be relying on residents' good planning and safe practices this holiday season when it comes to fireworks, much like they did during the

Independence Day holiday earlier this year. "There's no fireworks ban in place at this time, so residents will have the opportunity to make fireworks part of their holiday celebration," Sullivan said. "However, they need to make sure they

understand the law regarding where they can use them and make sure they practice fire safety when they do. We've been pretty lucky these last couple of months as the fire danger has risen and we'd

See **FIREWORKS**, Page 3

GOP willing to bend on issues?

By JOSH LEDERMAN
 Associated Press
 DES MOINES, Iowa — For years, Republicans have adhered fiercely to their bedrock conservative principles, resisting Democratic calls for tax hikes, comprehensive immigration reform and gun control. Now, seven weeks after an electoral drubbing,

some party leaders and rank-and-file alike are signaling a willingness to bend on all three issues. What long has been a non-starter for Republicans — raising tax rates on wealthy Americans — is now backed by GOP House Speaker John Boehner in his negotiations with President Barack

Obama to avert a potential fiscal crisis. Party luminaries, including Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, have started calling for a wholesale shift in the GOP's approach to immigration after Hispanic voters shunned Republican candidates. And some Republicans who previously championed gun rights now are opening

the door to restrictions following a schoolhouse shooting spree earlier this month. "Put guns on the table. Also, put video games on the table. Put mental health on the table," Rep. Jack Kingston, R-Ga., said last week. Other prominent Rep

See **GOP**, Page 3

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Obituaries

Gabriel Ezilas Viera

Gabriel Ezilas Viera, infant son of Vicki and Adam Viera of Big Spring, died Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012, at Covenant Medical Center in Lubbock. Funeral services will be at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2012, at Myers & Smith Chapel. Burial will follow at Mount Olive Memorial Park.

He was born Oct. 3, 2012, in Lubbock, Texas.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by his grandparents, Andrew and Nancy Caraway of Big Spring and Dolores Viera of Big Spring; great

grandparents, Patricio Rodriguez, Josefina Gutierrez and Alvino Gutierrez, all of Big Spring; and a number of aunts, uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Adam Eziah Viera; grandfathers, Paul Viera Sr. and Benny Rodriguez; and great-grandparents, Betty O. Rodriguez, Preciliano and Benita Viera and Lalo and Maria Mora.

Arrangements are by Myers & Smith Funeral Home. Pay your respects online at www.myersand-smith.com

Carol Lewis

Carol Lewis, 58, of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2012, in San Angelo. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Joe Doportto Jr.

Joe Doportto Jr., 54, formerly of Big Spring died Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2012, in Fort Worth. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

Police/Sheriff/EMS

Note: Because of computer troubles, police and sheriff's reports were unavailable this morning.

The Big Spring Fire Department/Emergency Medical Service reported the following activity:

- MEDICAL was reported in the 1700 block of Lancaster. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAFFIC ACCIDENT was reported in the intersection of Owens and Benton. Two people were transported to SMMC.
- MEDICAL was reported in the 300 block of Veterans Boulevard. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 1400 block of S. Aylesford. One person was transported to SMMC.
- TRAUMA was reported in the 3700 block of Wright. 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.

• GRASS FIRE was reported in the intersection of Channing and Sgt. Paredez.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 3000 block of Navajo. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 2900 block of W. Highway 80. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 3600 block of Calvin. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 500 block of E. 16th. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 1500 block of Tucson. One person was transported to SMMC.

• MEDICAL was reported in the 2400 block of Scurry. One person was transported to SMMC.

Take Note

Local resident Dale Pittman is planning a card crusade for the citizens of Newtown, Conn., who were devastated by the recent school shooting that took the lives of 26 people. No money is necessary, unless you want to help with postage. Just purchase and sign a card. "I wanted to be able to send them something ... and let them know that no matter how many miles may be between us, we still care and are thinking of and praying for them," said Pittman. Drop your card off at Big Spring Storage Zone, 23rd and Goliad. If no one is in the office, slide the card in the payment drop box. You may also drop them off at the visitors booth at Comanche Trail Festival of Lights. They will all be placed in a single box and mailed to Newtown.

Holy Trinity Youth Group is hosting its 2nd Annual "Warming up our Community" Project on from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday at Holy Trinity Catholic Church Hall, 1009 Hearn Street. Donated items, such as jackets, blankets and various warm attire will be available for anyone in need. This is open to the community.

A fund has been established at Myers & Smith Funeral Home to help pay funeral expenses for local resident Joe Gomez, who passed away on Dec. 12. Donations can be sent to Myers and Smith Funeral Home at P.O. Box 2760 in Big Spring.

Don't forget to visit the Comanche Trail Festival of Lights in Big Spring, on display nightly from Saturday through Dec. 31. More displays, more lights, and more fun — and admission is free. However, donations are gratefully accepted. Questions? Call 263-4607.

Big Spring State Hospital patients are in need of warm clothing. Clean items should be taken to the Community Relations Office near the south entrance of the hospital, 1901 N. U.S. Highway 87. Clothing that cannot be used by the patients will be taken to the hospital's Chalet Resale Shop for sale to raise money for patient needs. Men's clothing and larger-sized clothing are always in need. For more information, call Melissa Adams, BSSH program coordinator, at 432 268-7730.

The Big Spring State Hospital Volunteer Services Council needs assistance in The Chalet Resale Shoppe, 115 East Second St. The Chalet Resale Shoppe is a fast-paced retail shop specializing in gently worn clothing and small household appliance. Volunteers are needed to sort, price, check out and stock donated items. Volunteer hours are flexible. The Chalet is open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, contact Jamey Stegall at james.stegall@dshs.state.tx.us or 432 268-7535.

Compass Hospice is in need of your help. If you would be interested in offering your love and God's comfort to those who are suffering, or to their families, contact Michelle Coutermarsh at 263-5999 or come by 602 S. Main.

Volunteers are needed in many categories including patient care. You may give as much or as little time as you wish. Any amount of time is greatly appreciated. Training is offered free of charge.

Every Friday night from 7:30 p.m. until 10 p.m. is dance night at the Senior Citizen Center. The cost is \$8 per person.

Mobile Meals is in need of volunteer delivery

drivers. If you can donate one hour per week to help deliver meals to the elderly, call Macaria Cantu at 263-4016.

Spring Tabernacle Ministries, 1209 Wright St., has a brief, inspirational message before giving away food and clothing on Thursday mornings. It's a great way to work off community service and get help, too. Be there at 9 a.m.-11 a.m. and get two for one plus a rehab meeting.

Home Hospice is seeking volunteers. Volunteers are needed for in office duties as well as sitters, deliveries and crafts. To find out more information or to volunteer contact Sherry Hodnett at Home Hospice by calling 264-7599.

Hangar 25 Air Museum needs your help. We are in need of volunteers to fill a variety of positions such as tour guides, front desk, clerical, events, and many others. Set your hours and days of the week you are available. Meet new people and enjoy a rewarding experience. For more information, contact Emma Bogard at 432-267-2963.

The Salvation Army is holding its annual heater drive and is in need of heaters. Community members can donate new or used heaters. Monetary donations are also welcomed. Donations can be made at the main office, located at 811 W. Fifth St., Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The mission of CASA of West Texas is to promote and support quality volunteers who speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in court in an effort to find each child a safe, nurturing and permanent home. We need your help. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Sara Basaldua at 1-877-316-8346 or visit www.BecomeaCASA.org or www.casawtx.org.

Big Spring and surrounding counties are in need of foster families. Foster parents are the caretakers for the children in the community who have been abused or neglected. For more information on becoming foster parents or adoptive families, call the Children's Protective Services office at 263-9669.

Road to Recovery, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, seeks volunteers to drive cancer patients to treatment in Midland. This requires just a few hours commitment each month. To volunteer, or to request a ride for treatment, call (877) 277-1618, the High Plains American Cancer Group Report Center. Anyone wishing to volunteer should call Sherry Hodnett at 264-7599.

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Augustine Cantu

Augustine Cantu, 67, of Big Spring died Monday, Dec. 24, 2012, at Scenic Mountain Medical Center. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

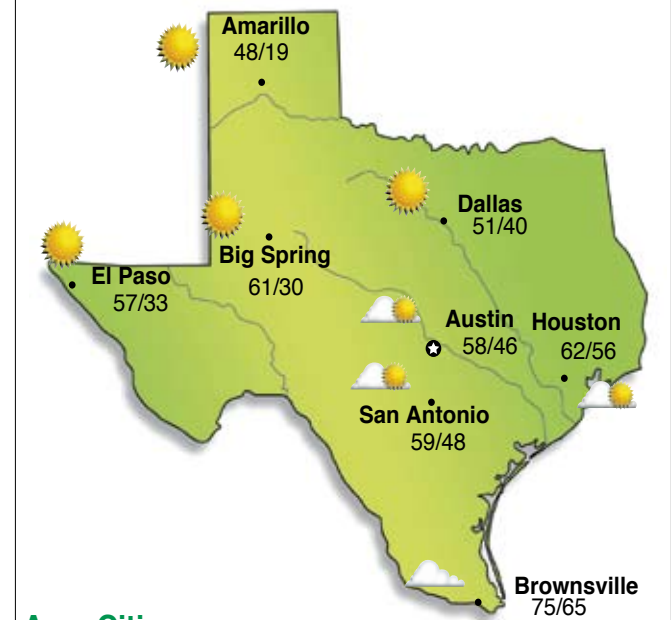
Today's Weather

Local 5-Day Forecast

Fri 12/28	Sat 12/29	Sun 12/30	Mon 12/31	Tue 1/1
 61/30 Abundant sunshine. Highs in the low 60s and lows in the low 30s.	 55/24 Abundant sunshine. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the mid 20s.	 55/31 Mainly sunny. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the low 30s.	 56/38 Mostly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the upper 30s.	 53/33 Cloudy. Highs in the low 50s and lows in the low 30s.
Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:49 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:50 PM	Sunrise: 7:46 AM Sunset: 5:50 PM	Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 5:51 PM	Sunrise: 7:47 AM Sunset: 5:52 PM



Texas At A Glance



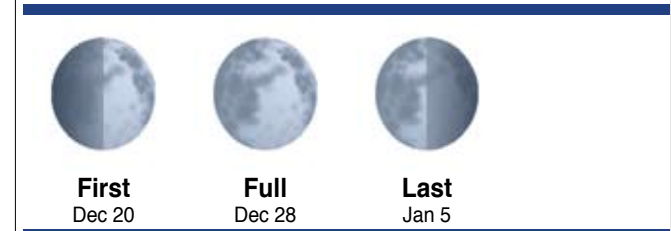
Area Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Abilene	57	33	sunny	Kingsville	70	59	cloudy
Amarillo	48	19	sunny	Livingston	58	48	pt sunny
Austin	58	46	pt sunny	Longview	53	44	pt sunny
Beaumont	60	52	pt sunny	Lubbock	54	23	sunny
Brownsville	75	65	cloudy	Lufkin	58	49	mst sunny
Brownwood	59	40	sunny	Midland	62	33	sunny
Corpus Christi	68	60	cloudy	Raymondville	74	62	cloudy
Corsicana	51	41	pt sunny	Rosenberg	63	56	pt sunny
Dallas	51	40	sunny	San Antonio	59	48	pt sunny
Del Rio	60	43	pt sunny	San Marcos	59	47	pt sunny
El Paso	57	33	sunny	Sulphur Springs	48	40	pt sunny
Fort Stockton	68	37	mst sunny	Sweetwater	57	32	sunny
Gainesville	44	32	mst sunny	Tyler	54	44	pt sunny
Greenville	47	37	pt sunny	Weatherford	49	34	mst sunny
Houston	62	56	pt sunny	Wichita Falls	46	27	sunny

National Cities

City	Hi	Lo	Cond.	City	Hi	Lo	Cond.
Atlanta	50	32	pt sunny	Minneapolis	24	21	cloudy
Boston	45	28	rain	New York	45	31	rain
Chicago	34	29	pt sunny	Phoenix	54	36	mst sunny
Dallas	51	40	sunny	San Francisco	55	44	sunny
Denver	33	13	pt sunny	Seattle	43	39	pt sunny
Houston	62	56	pt sunny	St. Louis	37	28	pt sunny
Los Angeles	61	42	sunny	Washington, DC	41	33	windy
Miami	75	54	pt sunny				

Moon Phases



UV Index

Fri 12/28	Sat 12/29	Sun 12/30	Mon 12/31	Tue 1/1
3	3	3	3	2
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low

The UV Index is measured on a 0 - 11 number scale, 0 being the lowest and 11 the highest. A higher UV Index shows the need for greater skin protection.

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GUNS

Continued from Page 1

And when I get out to the range, I don't hear any gunfire going on," said Smith, who likens his emotional detachment to his guns to the way he would feel about a car or any other machine. "I'm so intent on my sight alignment, my trigger pull, my position. I don't worry about anything. I don't think about anything. It's relieving. It's therapeutic. Everybody has to have their Zen."

Since the school shooting, President Barack Obama has asked for proposals on reducing gun violence that he can take to Congress in January, and he called on the National Rifle Association, the country's most powerful gun-rights organization, to join the effort.

Gun laws in the U.S. vary from state to state — for instance, as of last month it is now legal to carry a gun in public view in Oklahoma — and are defended by the firearms industry and the NRA. On Friday, the NRA broke a weeklong silence since the Connecticut massacre by calling for armed volunteers at public schools, prompting criticism from many quarters.

But in the U.S., gun-control advocates are up against a sizeable bloc

of mainstream Americans for whom guns are central to their lives, whether for patriotism or personal sense of safety, or simply to occupy their spare time.

Dave Burdett, who owns an outdoors and adventure shop across the street from the sprawling Texas A&M University campus in College Station, says his affinity for guns is rooted in history, not sport.

"It isn't about hunting. Everyone says, 'Well, I can understand having a sporting rifle, but not an AR-15,' Burdett said. "But wait a second — the idea of the Second Amendment was to preserve and protect the rights of individuals to have those guns."

"Remember that the (American) revolution was fought by citizen soldiers," he added. "To this day, that's one of the cornerstones of our military defense. We have an all-volunteer military."

An NRA poster picturing a bald eagle is taped to the glass door of his office. He started as a lawyer, dabbling in everything from commercial land to trying to block the deportation of an illegal immigrant, before seguing into selling guns.

When his daughter graduated with a business degree from Texas A&M, Burdett figured she would move somewhere cosmopolitan like Dallas

and work in a downtown high-rise. She instead went to work in the store, built her own AR-15 out of spare parts and used it to join what her father described as the "let's-go-pig-hunting-to-night circuit." Those feral hog hunts often include high-powered rifles as well as night-vision goggles.

"The other thing is, shooting is fun. It really is," Burdett said.

Many think so. Smith, the mechanical engineer, said that includes teenage girls. At national shooting competitions, Smith has run into a group of girls around 13 or 14 years old who call themselves "The Pink Ladies," firing high-powered rifles at targets. He also recalls meeting Australians, whose country bans guns, who told him, "I love to shoot, so I'm going to the U.S."

Others add safety to the list of reasons for allowing people easy access to guns.

"To me it's obvious — the more people that have guns, or at least in their homes, it's more of a criminal deterrent," said Bill Moos, a local taxidermist in the small town of Bryan, near College Station. Moos, who owns more than 30 guns, can be spotted any given morning, prowling his roughly 40-acre (16-hectare) ranch with his dogs and a shotgun slung over his shoulder.

He tells a story of standing in the post office one day and hearing about a suspect driving around, wanted by the police. He thought of the woman behind the counter near him.

"My first thought was, 'How are you going to protect yourself?' Does she have a gun, in case someone tries to rob her?" he said. "It's the first thing you think of: How are you going to defend yourself?"

On the television in the corner of his workshop, above a stuffed gray fox and a clutch of animal jawbones dangling on a ring like a set of keys, Obama is holding his first press conference since the Connecticut tragedy. He's promising to send Congress legislation tightening gun laws and urging them to reinstate a ban on military-style assault weapons, like the one used by Lanza.

Moos turns down the volume.

"I guess it's something you get used to," he said of guns. "That you grow up around, and you enjoy them, and you accept the fact that you can own. It's a privilege. It's a whole different way of life. I guess I don't need three pick-ups and a Corvette. But I have them."

Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: www.twitter.com/pauljweber

FIREWORKS

Continued from Page 1

like to see it stay that way."

Sullivan said recent cold fronts accompanied by humidity have helped to keep fire dangers lower than expected.

"These fronts which have been rolling through have brought humidity levels up above the 15 percent mark, which has really kept the fire danger down to a minimum," Sullivan said. "However, if we see the humidity drop below that level,

coupled with the high winds we've been seeing lately, we could be in some real trouble."

Sullivan said the key to keeping fireworks from becoming a danger this holiday season is in the hands of local residents.

"If our citizens do what they are supposed to do and follow the law, I don't expect to have any major problems," he said. "However, if they decide to get stupid, it's going to be game-on."

Fireworks enthusiasts who decide not to follow the law could be looking at some serious fines, as well, Sullivan said.

"It's illegal to set off

fireworks in the city limits," Sullivan said. "And that's all year long. If you get caught, don't expect local law enforcement to take pity on you, either. For those who will set them off in the county, you need to make sure you have the landowner's permission. If you don't and something goes wrong, you could be looking at a \$500 fine for reckless damage."

"Setting off fireworks on the side of the road or actually in the roadways is a bad idea, as well. It just takes one errant piece of paper from the fireworks to earn you a \$500 fine for litter-

ing. Again, don't expect law enforcement or the local fire departments to have mercy on you, especially if you're breaking the law."

While there is no burn ban — or fireworks ban — in place in Howard County at this time, Sullivan it's not a streak he expects to keep alive much longer.

"I plan to go before the county commissioners the first part of January," he said. "If the conditions do what I believe they will do, I'll be asking them to enact a burn ban. We're trying to stretch out our time without a ban so area residents can get rid of

their holiday waste and other sanitation needs. However, as the winds begin to kick up and it gets drier, we'll have no choice but to enact a ban and it will likely last through the winter and into the spring."

In the meantime, Sullivan urges residents to do what they can to keep the risk of wildfire — both countywide and near their residence — to a minimum.

"One of the most important things they can do is clear at least a 50-foot area around their house. Personally, with the high winds we have out here in West Texas, I suggest a 100-foot

circle," Sullivan said. "Make sure the grass is scalped down as low as you can get it within that area, because fire can move really fast through it."

"Also, if you have trees, it's not necessary to get rid of all of them, just make sure they aren't touching. You don't want the fire to be able to jump from one tree or bush to the next. It's possible to make your property look good and still make it safe."

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com

SMMC

Continued from Page 1

The story behind the renovation of the Settles goes hand in hand with the life experiences of Herlong. Both have had

obstacles put in their way, but in the end the Settles and Herlong have a story worth telling and an outcome worth seeing."

Dinner — a three course set up — will be catered by Hotel Settles. Herlong will speak for about

40 minutes, focusing on life lessons and some of the experiences that have made up her journey. After the program has concluded, Herlong will be signing books and CDs, which will be available for sale.

"Those attending

can expect to have a lot of fun and should be prepared for tons of laughter while they are learning an awareness of physical, mental and spiritual health," Herlong said. "One of the biggest pieces of advice I can give someone is

to never stop dreaming big and never stop believing in a God who is big."

To purchase tickets or for more information, call Amanda Duforat at 432-268-4842 or Anita Cline at 432-268-4871.

MYERS & SMITH FUNERAL HOME & CHAPEL

24th & Johnson 267-8288
Gabriel Ezilas Viera, infant, died Saturday. Funeral services will be at 2:30 p.m. today at Myers & Smith Chapel. Burial will follow at Mount Olive Memorial Park.
Carol Lewis, 58, died Tuesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.
Joe Doport, Jr., 54, died Tuesday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.
Augustine Cantu, 67, died Monday. Services are pending at Myers & Smith Funeral Home.

GOP

Continued from Page 1

Republicans echoed him in calling for a sweeping review of how to prevent tragedies like the Newtown, Conn., massacre. Among those who were open to a re-evaluation of the nation's gun policies were Sens. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa.

"You've got to take all these things into consideration," Grassley said.

And yet, the head of the National Rifle Association, silent for a week after the Newtown shootings, has proposed staffing schools with armed police, making clear the NRA, which tends to support the GOP, will continue pushing for fewer gun restrictions, not more.

Meanwhile, Boehner's attempt to get his own members on board with a deficit-reduction plan that would raise taxes on incomes of more than \$1 million failed last week, exposing the reluctance of many in the Republican caucus to entertain more moderate fiscal positions.

With Republican leaders being pulled at once to the left and to the right, it's too soon to know whether the party that emerges from this

identity crisis will be more or less conservative than the one that was once so confident about the 2012 elections. After all, less than two months have passed since the crushing defeat of GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney, who moved far to the right during the primary season and, some in the party say, lost the general election as a result.

But what's increasingly clear is that the party is now engaged in an uncomfortable and very public fight over whether its tenets, still firmly held within the party's most devout ranks, conflict with the views of Americans as a whole.

Many Republicans recognize that to remain relevant with voters whose views are changing, they too must change.

"We lost the election because we were out of touch with the American people," said John Weaver, a senior adviser to past presidential candidates John McCain, the GOP nominee in 2008, and Jon Huntsman, who ran for the nomination this year.

The polling suggests as much.

While Republican candidates for years have adamantly opposed tax increases on anyone, an

Associated Press-GfK poll earlier this month found roughly half of all Americans supported allowing George W. Bush-era tax cuts to expire on those earning more than \$250,000 a year.

Most GOP candidates — Romney among them — also long have opposed allowing people in the country illegally to get an eventual path to citizenship. But exit polls from the Nov. 6 election showed most voters favored allowing people working in the U.S. illegally to stay.

And gun control has for decades been anathema to Republicans. But a Washington Post/ABC News poll published last week, following the Connecticut shooting, showed 54 percent of Americans now favor stronger restrictions.

This is the backdrop as Republicans undergo a period of soul-searching after this fall's electoral shellacking. Romney became the fifth GOP nominee in six elections to lose the national popular vote to the Democratic candidate. Republicans also shed seats in their House majority and lost ground to majority Democrats in the Senate.

Of particular concern is the margin of loss among Hispanics, a group Obama won by

about 70 percent to 30 percent.

It took only hours after the loss for national GOP leaders to blame Romney for shifting to the right on immigration — and signal that the party must change.

Jindal, a prospective 2016 presidential contender, was among the Republicans calling for a more measured approach by the GOP. And even previously hardline opponents of immigration reform — like conservative talk show host Sean Hannity — said the party needs to get over its immigration stance heavily favoring border security over other measures.

"What you have is agreement that we as a party need to spend a lot of time and effort on the Latino vote," veteran Republican strategist Charlie Black said.

When Congress returned to Washington after the election to start a debate over taxes

and spending, a number of prominent Republicans, including Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, the top Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, signaled they would be willing to abandon their pledges against raising taxes — as long as other conditions were met — as part of a package of proposals to avoid a catastrophic budget meltdown.

Leading the effort was Boehner, who has told Obama he would allow taxes to be increased on the wealthiest Americans, as well as on capital gains, estates and dividends, as part of a deal including spending

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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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HOW TO CONTACT US

The Herald is always interested in our readers' opinions.

In order that we might better serve your needs, we offer several ways in which you may contact us:

- In person at 710 Scurry St.
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- By e-mail Managing Editor Bill McClellan at newsdesk@bigspringherald.com.
- By mail at P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721

LETTER POLICIES

The Herald welcomes letters to the editor.

- Sign your letter.
- Provide a daytime telephone number, as well as a street address for verification purposes.
- We reserve the right to edit for style and clarity.
- We reserve the right to limit publication to one letter per 30-day period per author.
- Letters that are unsigned or do not include a telephone number or address will not be considered.
- Letters should be submitted to Editor, Big Spring Herald, P.O. Box 1431, Big Spring, 79721. They can also be e-mailed to newsdesk@bigspringherald.com

A SMALL PRAYER

by K. Rae Anderson

When we prioritize our life, Lord, may we put You first.

Amen

Only when God says so

If my calendar is correct, you and I are going to welcome the New Year of 2013 in just a few days. Pardon me for being somewhat sarcastic, but wasn't the world supposed to end a few days ago? Those crafty Mayans and their calendar really had some folks thinking it was all over. However, before you go looking for a Mayan descendent to pound on, the real joke is on you if you really were giving this more than a laugh.



EDDY PRINCE

How in the world, which obviously still exists, can people who claim to be intelligent be duped into believing such nonsense? The amazing thing to me is how many times people have been fooled into buying into some apocalyptic theory and making fools of themselves in the process.

Make no mistake about it, friend, the end is coming. There is no doubt in my mind that the Bible is true and someday God will write the final chapter of planet Earth. But it will only end when He says it's going to end and that's just the way it is.

This latest end-of-the-world fiasco was only one of many scenarios that have played out on the world stage and they have all ended the same way; at best humorous and at worst, tragic.

You may remember Heaven's Gate, a San Diego based cult, which turned out to be a horrible tragedy led by a mad man and followed by many of questionable sanity. In March of 1997 police found 39 dead bodies of members who committed suicide so that they could catch a ride on a space ship that was following the notorious Hale-Bopp Comet, so that these people's spirits could ride away and avoid a "recycling" of the earth. These people basically took a mix of drugs and alcohol before inducing asphyxiation so they

could escape. They escaped, if you want to call it that.

Harold Camping has predicted the end of the world too many times, even if once is enough. He predicted that the Rapture would occur on May 21, 2011, followed by the Apocalypse on Oct. 21, 2011. It is now December of 2012 and we are all still here. He apparently has retired from Family Radio, although his "messages" are still all over the Radio Station's website.

What about the Branch Davidians under David Koresh? That ATF standoff in Waco, Texas, left more than 80 dead that also included women and children. The apocalypse that Koresh predicted was going to start in the Holy Land was magically moved to Waco. Somehow, Koresh used his charm to not only convince his followers of the apocalypse, but also that he was the living prophet, who could also pick the women for his harem regardless of age and status. This was the apocalypse, but only for 80 or so people rather than the billions of the rest of us.

Then there is the case of Charles Manson and "The Family." Manson duped a bunch of followers into believing that a cataclysmic race war between blacks and whites was imminent. Some followers considered him a prophet, and Manson supposedly learned of this great coming war through coded messages in a music album from The Beatles. Manson wanted this war so badly that he even made plans for his followers to go on a murder rampage. This was where "helter skelter" became a household term, all in the effort to jump-start the race war, as Manson wanted the blame to fall on the blacks for high-profile murders. Taxpayers have been forced to keep Manson alive for more than 40 years.

There have been many others calling for the end of the world. In 1954, UFO-cult Brotherhood of the Seven Rays' leader Dorothy Martin used Dec. 21 of that year to predict that a global flood was

going to end the world.

In 1973, David (or Moses) Berg predicted that the United States was going to be destroyed that year by Comet Kohoutek. He again failed in his predictions of the Tribulation from 1989 to 1993.

From 1998 to 2000, there were too many predictions to count about the end of the world for the millennium change in the year 2000. Even Sir Isaac Newton had predictions around the year 2,000 with an ultimate demise of the earth decades later.

Predictions of the end of the world, the end of an era, or the end of life as we know it, are nothing new. Nostradamus is only one of many who claimed to have visions of the future. For many of us, this world is going to end this century, but it won't be because some madman or a calendar had it scheduled. Disease, accidents, or old age will take care of it for millions.

If you feel like you were cheated by the Mayan Calendar, don't fret, because there are at least two more prophecies on the horizon. Some Hindu scholars believe that Kali is about to return and wreck us all. Then there is the I Ching prophecy that was set for Dec. 21, too. And even more prophecies are still out there for us. Nostradamus readers have the end of the world coming in the year 3,790.

But the bottom line for me is still clearly defined. The end will come when God says so, period. End of discussion. Until then, with or without the Mayans, I'll just keep enjoying life to the fullest and watching and waiting for the Biblical prophecy of the end to come to pass. That's the only record I'm paying any attention to. By the way, Happy New Year!

You may not agree with anything I've said, but I column as I see 'em.

Eddy Prince is senior pastor at Grace Fellowship Church of God in Big Spring. He can be reached by email at pastorprince@msn.com.

Wrestling with the problem of gun control

As if on cue, the recent tragedy in Connecticut has spawned yet another Second Amendment debate across this great nation, one that seems to run all the way from the White House to the kitchen tables of our everyday Americans.

Few things will get West Texans' hackles up quicker than talk of gun control — OK, so they might have a shorter fuse when it comes to religion, but I digress — and, unfortunately, some are using the shooting which claimed the lives of 20 students and six adults as a jumping-off point for such talks.

Obviously, there are two sides to this argument and both of them bring a number of good and valid points to the table.

Those in favor of gun control say if we have tighter regulations on who is allowed to own firearms, we'll have fewer shootings — resulting in both deaths and injuries — in the United States. And, despite the National Rifle Association's endless rhetoric, our nation does sport extremely liberal gun laws with a rate of gun ownership estimated at around 88 of every 100 Americans.

However, that high rate of gun ownership doesn't necessarily denote a comparatively high rate of firearm homicides. Honduras sports the highest rate with 68.43 homicides by firearm per 100,000 people, even though, as a nation, statistics show only 6.2 firearms are owned per 100 people.

And while the U.S. remains in the mid-range of countries when it comes to the number of homicides per 100,000 people — estimated at 2 percent to 5 percent, lower than most

of our South American neighbors — the majority of homicides committed usually involve a gun. Approximately 60 percent of U.S. murders occur using a firearm, which is the 26th-highest rate in the world.

While the loss of life should be absolutely paramount in these discussions, there is also the fiscal loss caused by gun violence.

Phillip J. Cook, senior associate dean for faculty and research and professor of economics and sociology for Duke University, estimates the annual cost of gun violence in the U.S. at \$100 billion, with emergency medical care the largest contributing cost, overall.

Probably one of the most telling comparisons in the gun control debate is between the United States and the United Kingdom, however.

Gun laws in England are much stricter than they are here at home. For the most part, semi-automatic guns of a caliber greater than .22 are banned in the country and if you want to own a gun at all — whether for hunting or target shooting — you had best be prepared for a slew of forms, interviews and other red tape. In other words, it's extremely difficult to get your hands on a firearm in the U.K. and it shows in their crime statistics.

In 2009, there were 15,241 murders reported with 9,146 of them committed with a firearm. During that same time period in the United Kingdom, 648 murders were reported, 39 of them by firearm. Now, bear in mind the U.K. had a smaller population than the United States during that time period, estimated at approximately 1 to 5, which would make the 39 murders equivalent to 195 in the U.S.

Now, as my grandfather would say,

these statistics lead us to believe one of two things: Either gun laws do help to lower the number of firearm-related deaths or British people just couldn't hit the broadside of a barn.

Then again, the National Rifle Association has given us plenty of slogans and bumper stickers — do you remember, "Guns don't kill people, people kill people?" — which seem, for the most part,

based in common sense.

It seems pretty elementary that if we outlaw guns, outlaws are going to carry guns, right?

They've also done a fantastic job of attaching firearms to our nation's fundamental ideas and beginnings, wrapping them soundly in our flag with a side of apple pie and motherhood.

However, I have a hard time believing if we left gun control up to the mothers of this nation — especially those who have lost loved ones at the hands of gun-wielding criminals — these firearms would be little more than a vague memory, regardless of the Second Amendment.

Is banning firearms the answer to stopping senseless violence similar to what happened in Connecticut? Absolutely not. The sad truth of the matter is the kind of person who plans to do something so horrible will find a way to get their hands on guns, whether they have to buy them on the street or some elusive black market.

All three guns used in the Connecticut murder spree were purchased lawfully by the shooter's mother, who was, incidentally, shot multiple times in the head with her own weapon. One of them — a .223 semi-automatic Remington Bushmaster — can be routinely purchased with a 30-round clip and is designed to look remarkably like a military rifle similar to the M16 used by the armed forces.

I'll be the first to admit I don't really know what the answer is in this deadly riddle which seems to swallow up hopes and dreams as if they were nothing, leaving behind horrible memories and such a tragic sense of loss. Some will say we need tougher gun laws, while others will tout the Second Amendment and say

it's our God-given right to arm ourselves to the teeth. By the way, those of you who like that term — God-given right — should bear in mind God did not create firearms and Jesus didn't carry a Glock. And don't say, "Hey, they didn't have guns back then," because I'm pretty sure God could have armed his son like Rambo headed for his last stand if he wanted to. After all, he's God.

Honestly, I don't know what we need to do. However, I do know it's time for some serious talks to take place in our nation's capitol. It's time for our lawmakers to look at this tragedy and try to find a way to stave off this violence which continues to grow like a cancer on this great nation.

I'll leave it up to each of you to decide how we do that.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@bigspringherald.com



THOMAS JENKINS



News in brief

3 dead as storm system heads east after Midwest snow and South twisters; holiday travel slows

MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — An enormous storm system that dumped snow and sleet on the nation's mid-section and unleashed damaging tornadoes around the Deep South has begun punching its way toward the Northeast, slowing holiday travel.

Post-Christmas travelers braced for a second day of flight delays and cancellations, a day after rare winter twisters damaged numerous homes in Louisiana and Alabama. The vast storm system stretching across numerous states has been blamed for three deaths and several injuries though no one was killed outright in the tornadoes. The storms also left more than 100,000 without power for a time, darkening Christmas celebrations.

Drenching rains and blustery winds moved early Wednesday across Georgia, a slew of tornado watches still in effect. The severe weather system was set to lash the Carolinas later in the day before taking aim next at the heavily populated Northeast corridor.

Farther north on a line from Little Rock, Ark., to Cleveland, blizzard conditions were predicted before the snow — up to a foot in some places — made its way into the Northeast.

Rick Cauley's family was hosting relatives for Christmas when the tornado sirens went off in Mobile. Not taking any chances, he and his wife, Ashley, hustled everyone down the block to take shelter at the athletic field house at Mobile's Murphy High School in Mobile.

Killer of 2 N.Y. firemen left chilling note saying he liked 'killing people,' death toll now 3

WEBSTER, N.Y. (AP) — The ex-con turned sniper who killed two firefighters wanted to make sure his goodbye note was legible, typing out his desire to "do what I like doing best, killing people" before setting the house where he lived with his sister ablaze, police said.

Police Chief Gerald Pickering said Tuesday that the 62-year-old loner, William Spengler, brought plenty of ammunition with him for three weapons including a military-style assault rifle as he set out on a quest to burn down his neighborhood just before sunrise on Christmas Eve.

And when firefighters arrived to stop him, he unleashed a torrent of bullets, shattering the windshield of the fire truck that volunteer firefighter and police Lt. Michael Chiapperini, 43, drove to the scene. Fellow firefighter Tomasz Kaczowka, 19, who worked as a 911 dispatcher, was killed as well.

Two other firefighters were struck by bullets, one in the pelvis and the other in the chest and knee. They remained hospitalized in stable condition and were expected to survive.

On Tuesday, investigators found a body in the Spengler home, presumably that of the sister a neighbor said Spengler hated: 67-year-old Cheryl Spengler. Spengler's penchant for death had surfaced before. He served 17 years in prison for manslaughter in the 1980 hammer slaying of his grandmother.

4 killed as Afghan bomber attacks near major U.S. base in country's east

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A vehicle driven by a suicide bomber exploded at the gate of a major U.S. military base in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday, killing the attacker and three Afghans, Afghan police said. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

Police Gen. Abdul Qayum Baqizai said a local guard who questioned the vehicle driver at the gate of Camp Chapman was killed along with two civilians and the assailant. The camp is located adjacent to the airport of the capital of Khost province, which borders Pakistan. Chapman and nearby Camp Salerno had been frequently targeted by militants in the past, but violent incidents have decreased considerably in recent months.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in an email that the bomber targeted Afghan police manning the gate and Afghans working for the Americans entering the base. He claimed high casualties were inflicted.

NATO operates with more than 100,000 troops in the country, including some 66,000 American forces. It is handing most combat operations over to the Afghans in preparation for a pullout from Afghanistan in 2014. Militant groups, including the Taliban, rarely face NATO troops head-on and rely mainly on roadside bombs and suicide attacks.

NATO forces and foreign civilians have also been increasingly attacked by rogue Afghan military and police, eroding trust between the allies.

With storms, 'fiscal cliff' worry, U.S. holiday shopping up just 0.7 percent, weakest since 2008

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. shoppers spent cautiously this holiday season, a disappointment for retailers who slashed prices to lure people into stores and now must hope for a post-Christmas burst of spending.

Sales of electronics, clothing, jewelry and home goods in the two months before Christmas increased 0.7 percent compared with last year, according to the MasterCard Advisors SpendingPulse report.

That was below the healthy 3 to 4 percent growth that analysts had expected — and it was the worst year-over-year performance since 2008, when spending shrank sharply during the Great Recession. In 2011, retail sales climbed 4 to 5 percent during November and December, according to ShopperTrak.

This year's shopping season was marred by bad weather and rising uncertainty about the economy in the face of possible tax hikes and spending cuts early next year. Some analysts say the massacre of schoolchildren in Newtown, Conn., earlier this month may also have chipped away at shoppers' enthusiasm.

Retailers still have time to make up lost ground. The final week of December accounts for about 15 percent of the month's sales, said Michael McNamara, vice president for research and analysis at MasterCard Advisors SpendingPulse.

In shift to right, Japan's parliament returns Shinzo Abe to prime minister post

TOKYO (AP) — Old-guard veteran Shinzo Abe was voted back into office as prime minister Wednesday and immediately named a new Cabinet, ending three years of liberal administrations and restoring power to his conservative, pro-big-business party that has run Japan for most of the post-World War II era.

Abe, whose nationalist positions have in the past angered Japan's neighbors, is the country's seventh prime minister in just over six years. He was also prime minister in 2006-2007 before resigning for health reasons that he says are no longer an issue.

The outspoken and often hawkish leader has promised to restore growth to an economy that has been struggling for 20 years. His new administration also faces souring relations with China and a complex debate over whether resource-poor Japan should wean itself off nuclear energy after last year's earthquake and tsunami caused a meltdown at an atomic power plant.

On top of that, he will have to win over a public that gave his party a lukewarm mandate in elections on Dec. 16, along with keeping at bay a still-powerful opposition in parliament. Though his party and its Buddhist-backed coalition partner is the biggest bloc in the more influential lower house, Abe actually came up short in the first round of voting in the upper house, then won in a runoff.

Capitalizing on voter discontent with the left-leaning Democratic Party of Japan, Abe has vowed to shore up the economy, deal with a swelling national debt and come up with a fresh recovery plan following last year's tsunami disaster, which set off the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl.

Obama to cut short holiday in Hawaii, leave Wednesday for Washington as 'fiscal cliff' looms

HONOLULU (AP) — With a yearend deadline looming before the economy goes over the so-called fiscal cliff, President Barack Obama is cutting short his traditional Christmas holiday in Hawaii, planning to leave for Washington on Wednesday evening.

Obama was expected to arrive in Washington early Thursday, the White House said late Tuesday. First lady Michelle Obama and the couple's two daughters are scheduled to remain in Hawaii until Jan. 6.

In the past, the president's end-of-the-year holiday in his native state had stretched into the new year. The first family left Washington last Friday night.

Congress was expected to return to Washington on Thursday. Before he departed for Hawaii, Obama told reporters he expected to be back in the capital this week.

Without action by Obama and Congress, automatic budget cuts and tax increases are set to begin in January,

which many economists say could send the country back into recession. So far, the president and congressional Republicans have been unable to reach agreement on any alternatives.

Well-wishers find ways to console, help grieving residents in Newtown, Conn., on Christmas

NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP) — This Christmas was unlike any other in Newtown.

When a gunman wiped out nearly an entire first-grade class and killed students and adults in two other first-grade classrooms just 11 days before Christmas, it made it impossible for the holiday to be the same this year.

Some residents, like Joanne Brunetti, have found ways to console and help their grieving neighbors. Well-wishers from around the country are stopping by to do the same.

Brunetti watched over 26 candles that had been lit at midnight, just before Christmas Day, in honor of those slain at Sandy Hook Elementary School. She and her husband, Bill, signed up for a three-hour shift and erected a tent to ensure that the candle flames never went out throughout the day.

"You have to do something and you don't know what to do, you know? You really feel very helpless in this situation," she said Tuesday. "People have been wonderful to everybody in Newtown whether you were part of what happened or not. My thought is if we were all this nice to each other all the time maybe things like this wouldn't happen."

Presidential pampering still available, but hotels not as busy for Obama's 2nd inauguration

WASHINGTON (AP) — Visitors coming to the nation's capital for President Barack Obama's second inauguration can't stay in the one place President Ronald Reagan's family once called an eight-star hotel. That spot is the White House, and it's booked for the next four years.

Still, inauguration-goers have a range of lodging options — from crashing on a friend's couch to reasonably priced rooms to ones that cost thousands of dollars a night.

With second inaugurations tending to draw fewer spectators, finding a place to stay in Washington won't be nearly as difficult as in 2009.

City officials are expecting 600,000 to 800,000 visitors for the Jan. 21 inauguration, far less than the 1.8 million people who flooded the National Mall four years ago to witness the inauguration of America's first black president. Back then, some hotels sold out months in advance and city residents rented out their homes for hundreds of dollars a night. This time, hotels say they're filling up more slowly, with rooms still available and prices at or slightly below where they were four years ago.

"Very few hotels are actually sold out at this point, so there's a lot of availability," said Elliott Ferguson, CEO of the tourism bureau Destination DC, who added that he expected demand to pick up after Christmas.

Durning, king of character actors, dies in NYC

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Charles Durning grew up in poverty, lost five of his nine siblings to disease, barely lived through D-Day and was taken prisoner at the Battle of the Bulge.

His hard life and wartime trauma provided the basis for a prolific 50-year career as a consummate Oscar-nominated character actor, playing everyone from a Nazi colonel to the pope to Dustin Hoffman's would-be suitor in "Tootsie."

Durning, who died Monday at age 89 in New York, got his start as an usher at a burlesque theater in Buffalo, N.Y. When one of the comedians showed up too drunk to go on, Durning took his place. He would recall years later that he was hooked as soon as he heard the audience laughing.

He told The Associated Press in 2008 that he had no plans to stop working. "They're going to carry me out, if I go," he said.

Durning's longtime agent and friend, Judith Moss, told The Associated Press that he died of natural causes in his home in the borough of Manhattan.

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News in brief

Tornadoes, heavy snow rumble through Texas

HOUSTON (AP) — A strong storm system that moved across Texas on Christmas Day spawned at least three tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, heavy snow and brisk winds that knocked down trees, killing one person near Houston.

More than 20,000 customers in the Houston area were without power — down from a previous estimate of more than 70,000 — and nearly 20,000 more lost power in parts of East and Central Texas.

By mid-afternoon, the tornado and thunderstorm warnings had ended as the storm system moved into Louisiana. But as the cold front dipped southward, heavy snow began to fall in North Texas, including in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Freezing temperatures were even forecast for parts of deep South Texas by nightfall.

Snow was falling at a rate of an inch to 1.5 inches an hour in parts of North Texas along the Oklahoma border on Tuesday afternoon, said Greg Carbin, a warning coordination meteorologist with the National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center.

“There is a band across a few counties up there in North Texas where it looks like it will snow pretty heavily,” he said.

Visibility at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport was down to a half-mile, and in downtown Dallas, visibility was at a quarter-mile.

sudoku

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.

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

www.sudoku-puzzles.net

Carbin said forecasters had initially expected about one to two inches of snow in those areas, but snow was falling more quickly than had been expected.

“They could be in the band for a few more hours ... maybe 3 to 6 inches,” Carbin said. “It looks pretty interesting.”

Ex-President Bush spends Christmas in hospital

HOUSTON (AP) — Former President George H. W. Bush spent Christmas in a Houston hospital with his wife, Barbara, and other relatives who planned to treat him to a special holiday meal.

Bush's son, Neil, and his wife also visited on Tuesday, and one of Bush's grandsons was planning to stop by as well, said Jim McGrath, Bush's spokesman in Houston.

The 88-year-old has been in the hospital since Nov. 23 with a lingering, bronchitis-like cough. A hospital spokesman had said Bush was likely to be released to spend Christmas at home, but then McGrath said the former president developed a fever.

Doctors remain “cautiously optimistic” Bush will recover, but want to keep him in the hospital while they help him build up his strength and balance his medications, McGrath said.

On Christmas, the Bush family normally eats at Gigi's Asian Bistro in Houston's Galleria neighborhood, McGrath said. There were plans to pick up food at the upscale restaurant and bring the meal to the hospital.

Bush has been receiving visitors for weeks, including two by his son, former President George

W. Bush, and one by Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida.

Bush and his wife reside in Houston during the winter, and spend their summers at a home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Cartel-related murder trials to begin in El Paso

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A February trial date has been set for two people accused of involvement in a 2009 drug cartel-related murder in El Paso.

The *El Paso Times* reports a February trial date has been set for 19-year-old Juan Gerardo Garcia Jr., and 20-year-old Christopher Duran. They are accused of involvement in the May 2009 shooting death of 37-year-old Jose Daniel Gonzalez-Galeana.

State prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against 21-year-old Michael Jackson Apodaca, who was a Fort Bliss soldier at the time of the killing, and 33-year-old Rueben Rodriguez-Dorado.

Police say the Juarez cartel ordered Rodriguez-Dorado to kill Gonzalez-Galeana because they believed he was cooperating with the U.S. government and had joined a rival group. Police say the victim was a mid-level cartel boss who coordinated drug shipments.

Texas Supreme Court to rule on church land dispute

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas Supreme Court will decide who owns 52 Fort Worth-area church properties valued at more than \$100 million in a case being hailed by lawyers as one of the largest church property disputes in state and U.S. history.

The dispute erupted about five years ago after the Fort Worth Episcopal diocese broke away from the national church in protest of the consecration of a gay bishop, ordination of women and other policies it perceived as too liberal. The Fort Worth diocese claimed it owned the churches and other properties, but in 2009 the national church sued, arguing the breakaway group could not take the buildings and land.

Attorneys believe the Supreme Court's decision could determine how Texas handles similar disputes in the future, cases that often require a balance between the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and state laws on property rights and nonprofits.

“It's not the amount of money that makes the case important,” Scott Brister, a lawyer for the Fort Worth diocese, told the Austin American-Statesman.

The Fort Worth diocese is led by conservative Bishop Jack Iker. When he led his group's split, Iker claimed his diocese held the deeds to all church properties, including the 48 congregations that joined him and the eight that remained loyal to the national church. Eventually, some of the local disputes were settled. But in 2009, the national Episcopal Church filed suit arguing all the properties belonged to the denomination.

Fort Worth firefighters rescue 4 in Christmas fire

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Fort Worth firefighters have rescued a family of four from the balcony of their townhome after it caught fire on Christmas Day.

The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reported the blaze started at about 2 a.m. When firefighters arrived the roof over several units were already on fire.

Fire officials say a couple and their two small children were standing on a rear balcony after escaping the flames. They say a ladder crew rescued them from the balcony.

Contract Bridge

By Steve Becker

The Most Important Trick

South dealer.

Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ Q 8 3

♥ K Q J 2

♦ Q 6 3

♣ Q 6 5

WEST

♠ A 9 7 5 4 2

♥ 10 7 4 3

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EAST

♠ 10 6

♥ 9 8 6 5

♦ K 8 5 2

♣ 9 8 3

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The bidding:

South West North East

1♦ Pass 1♥ Pass

3♦ Pass 4♦ Pass

6♦

Opening lead — ace of spades.

All too often, a faulty play by declarer on the first trick can cost him the contract.

Take this case where South wound up in a horrendous six-diamond contract missing a cashable ace and the K-J-8-x-x of trumps. The blame can be assigned mainly to North, whose leap to four diamonds in an attempt to show extra values led South to credit his partner with much stronger trump support.

This left South to grapple with the problem of how to make six diamonds after West led the ace and another spade. The trouble was that South's grappling did not begin until after he had taken the second spade with his king, at which point it was, sadly, already too late. No matter how he continued, there was no lie of the cards that would permit him to make the contract.

Had South taken more time at trick one to picture a lie of the opposing diamonds that would allow him to succeed, he would have realized that there was only one possibility — the singleton jack in the West hand. No other lie, including the singleton king in either hand, could avert a trump loser.

To get home safely, however, South would need two entries to dummy. Accordingly, he should have dropped the spade king under the ace at trick one and taken the second spade with dummy's queen.

The queen of diamonds is then led, leaving the defense without recourse. If East refuses to cover, declarer next leads a diamond to the ten, crosses to the queen of clubs and leads a diamond to the nine. If East instead covers the diamond queen with the king, declarer wins, leads a club to the queen and finesses the diamond seven to make the slam.

Tomorrow: A drop in the bucket.

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In Sunday's Big Spring Herald



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Pagano back coaching after cancer treatment

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Chuck Pagano stepped to the podium Monday, hugged his team owner, thanked his family for its support and wiped a tear from his eye. He might, finally, turn out the lights in his office, too. Nearly three months to the day after being diagnosed with leukemia, the Colts' first-year coach returned to a team eager to reunite with a boss healthy enough to go back to work.

"I told you my best day of my life was July 1, 1989," Pagano said, referring to his wedding date. "Today was No. 2. Getting to pull up, drive in, get out of my car, the key fob still worked. I was beginning to question whether it would or not. When I asked for Bruce to take over, I asked for him to kick some you-know-what and to do great. Damn Bruce, you had to go and win nine games? Tough act to follow. Tough act to follow. Best in the history of the NFL. That's what I have to come back to."

The comment turned tears into the laughter everyone expected on such a festive occasion.

For Pagano and the Colts, Monday morning was as precious as anyone could have imagined when Pagano took an indefinite leave to face the biggest opponent of his life, cancer.

In his absence, all the Colts was win nine of 12 games, make a historic turnaround and clinch a playoff spot all before Sunday's regular-

"I told you my best day of my life was (my wedding day) July 1, 1989. Today was No. 2."

Chuck Pagano
Indianapolis Colts
head coach

season finale against Houston, which they pegged as the day they hoped to have Pagano back. If all goes well at practice this week, Pagano will be on the sideline for the first time since a Week 3 loss to Jacksonville.

Pagano endured three rounds of chemotherapy to put his cancer in remission.

That Pagano's return came less than 24 hours after Indy (10-5) locked up the No. 5 seed in the AFC and the day before Christmas seemed fitting, too.

"I know Chuck is ready for this challenge. In speaking to his doctor multiple times, I know that the time is right for him to grab the reins, get the head coaching cap on and begin the journey," owner Jim Irsay said. "It's been a miraculous story. It really is a book. It's a fairytale. It's a Hollywood script. It's all those things but it's real."

The reality is that he's returning to a vastly different team than the one he turned over to Arians, his long-time friend and first assistant

coaching hire.

Back then, the Colts were 1-2 and most of the so-called experts had written them off as one of the league's worst teams. Now, they're ready to show the football world that they can be just as successful under Pagano as they were under Arians, who tied the NFL record for wins after a midseason coaching change.

Pagano also has changed.

The neatly-trimmed salt-and-pepper hair and trademark goatee that were missing in November have slowly returned, and the thinner man who appeared to be catching his breath during a postgame speech in early November, looked and sounded as good as ever Monday.

He repeatedly thanked fans for their prayers and letters, the organization and his family for their unwavering help and promised to provide comfort and support to other people who are facing similar fights. During one poignant moment that nearly brought out tears again, Pagano even recounted a letter sent to him by a 9-year-old child who suggested he suck on ice chips and strawberry Popsicles in the hospital and advised him to be nice to the nurses regardless of how he felt — and he never even paused.

"I feel great, my weight is back, my energy is back and again, it's just a blessing to be back here," Pagano said.

See **COACH**, Page 13

Sports Calendar

THURSDAY

Boy's Basketball

- Forsan vs. TBA, Reagan County Tournament (varsity only), through Saturday.
- Coahoma vs. TBA, Reagan County Tournament (varsity only), through Saturday.
- Stanton vs. McCamey, Reagan County Tournament, 1:30 p.m., through Saturday.
- Sands vs. TBA, Lubbock Caprock Tournament, through Saturday.

Girl's Basketball

- Big Spring vs. Tulia, Lubbock Caprock Tournament, Lubbock Coronado, 1:30 p.m., through Saturday.
- Coahoma vs. TBA, Reagan County Tournament, (varsity only), through Saturday.
- Forsan vs. TBA, Reagan County Tournament (varsity only), through Saturday.
- Stanton vs. TBA, Reagan County Tournament (varsity only), through Saturday.
- Sands vs. TBA, Lubbock Caprock Tournament (varsity only), through Saturday.

FRIDAY

Men's Basketball

- Howard College vs. Salt Lake Community College, 2 p.m., at Mesa College Tournament, Mesa, Ariz., through Saturday.

Boy's Basketball

- Big Spring vs. TBA, Bridgeport Tournament (varsity only), through Saturday.
- Grady vs. Wink, 8 p.m., Grady Black & White Cotton Classic Tournament, through Saturday.
- Garden City vs. Ira, 5 p.m., Grady Tournament, through Saturday.

Girl's Basketball

- Grady vs. Lovington, N.M., 12:30 p.m., Grady Black & White Cotton Classic, through Saturday.
- Garden City vs. Midland Trinity, 9 a.m., Grady Tournament, through Saturday.

College football bowl schedule

- Little Ceaser's Pizza Bowl, Central Michigan vs. West Kentucky, Detroit, MI, today, 6:30 p.m., ESPN.
- Military Bowl, Bowling Green vs. San Jose State, Washington D.C., Thursday, Dec. 27, 2 p.m., ESPN.
- Belk Bowl, Cincinnati vs. Duke, Charlotte, N.C., Thursday, Dec. 27, 5:30 p.m., ESPN.
- Bridgeport Education Holiday Bowl, Baylor vs. UCLA, Thursday, Dec. 27, 8:45 p.m., ESPN.
- AdvoCare V100 Independence Bowl, Ohio vs. ULM, Shreveport, LA, Friday, Dec. 28, 1 p.m., ESPN.
- Russell Athletic Bowl, Rutgers vs. Virginia Tech, Orlando, FL, Friday, Dec. 28, 4:30 p.m., ESPN.
- Meineke Car Care Bowl of Texas, Minnesota vs. Texas Tech, Houston, TX, Friday, Dec. 28, 8 p.m., ESPN.
- Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl, Air Force vs. Rice, Fort Worth, TX, Sat. Dec. 29, 10:45 a.m., ESPN.
- New Era Pinstripe Bowl, Syracuse vs. West Virginia, Bronx, NY, Satur-

- day, Dec. 29, 2:15 p.m., ESPN.
- Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl, Arizona State vs. Navy, San Francisco, CA, Saturday, Dec. 29, 3 p.m., ESPN2.
- Valero Alamo Bowl, Oregon State vs. Texas, San Antonio, TX, Saturday, Dec. 29, 5:45 p.m., ESPN.
- Buffalo Wild Wings Bowl, Michigan State vs. TCU, Tempe, AZ, Saturday, Dec. 29, 9:15 p.m., ESPN.
- Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl, N.C. State vs. Vanderbilt, Nashville, TN, Monday, Dec. 31, 11 a.m., ESPN.
- Hyundai Sun Bowl, Georgia Tech vs. USC, El Paso, TX, Monday, Dec. 31, 1 p.m., CBS.
- AutoZone Liberty Bowl, Iowa State vs. Tulsa, Memphis, TN, Monday, Dec. 31, 2:30 p.m., ESPN.
- Chick-fil-A Bowl, Clemson vs. LSU, Atlanta, GA, Monday, Dec. 31, 6:30 p.m., ESPN.
- Heart of Dallas Bowl, Purdue vs. Oklahoma State, Dallas, TX, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 11 a.m., ESPNU.

- TaxSlayer.com Gator Bowl, Mississippi State vs. Northwestern, Jacksonville, FL, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 11 a.m., ESPN2.
- Capital One Bowl, Georgia vs. Nebraska, Orlando, FL, Tuesday, Jan. 1, noon, ABC.
- Outback Bowl, Michigan vs. South Carolina, Tampa, FL, Tuesday, Jan. 1, noon, ESPN.
- Rose Bowl, Stanford vs. Wisconsin, Pasadena, CA, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 4 p.m., ESPN.
- Discover Orange Bowl, Florida State vs. Northern Illinois, Miami Gardens, FL, Tuesday, Jan. 1, 7:30 p.m., ESPN.
- Allstate Sugar Bowl, Florida vs. Louisville, New Orleans, LA, Wednesday, Jan. 2, 7:30 p.m., ESPN.
- Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, Kansas State vs. Oregon, Glendale, AZ, Thursday, Jan. 3, 7:30 p.m., ESPN.
- AT&T Cotton Bowl, Oklahoma vs. Texas A&M, Arlington, TX, Friday, Jan. 4, 7 p.m., FOX.

For Cowboys, Sunday task a familiar one

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The Dallas Cowboys should know this drill by now.

The only thing left is figuring out how to win a playoffs-or-bust game at an NFC East rival in the final game of the season.

The Cowboys flopped badly in Philadelphia in 2008, and were better but still not very good last season at the New York Giants.

Dallas gets another chance Sunday night at Washington against Robert Griffin III and the Redskins (9-6), who could still make the postseason even if they lose.

"You live for games like this," Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said at a quiet and mostly shuttered team headquarters on Christmas Eve.

The Cowboys (8-7) began the second-to-last Sunday of the regular season with control of their playoff fate, and ended it the same way despite losing to New Orleans 34-31 in overtime. That's because the Giants lost at Baltimore, essentially rendering the Dallas loss meaningless.

During a stretch of five wins in six games that revived Dallas'

postseason hopes, the only loss was to the Redskins on Thanksgiving. Griffin engineered the first 28-point quarter for Washington in 13 years, going 8 of 8 for 178 yards and three touchdowns in the second quarter. The first big NFL play in Texas for the Heisman Trophy winner from Baylor was a perfect deep throw to Aldrick Robinson for a 68-yard score.

"I'll say it again: I was awed with what he did to us in the second quarter out here in Cowboys Stadium," Cowboys owner Jerry Jones said. "I certainly think that's the type of player we're playing against and team we're playing against."

If the loss to the Saints is any indicator, the Cowboys are in trouble. They couldn't stop Drew Brees and the Saints until New Orleans mostly quit throwing with a 31-17 lead in the fourth quarter. Brees threw for 446 yards and three touchdowns, and the Cowboys gave up 562 total yards — a season high by more than 100. New Orleans converted 11 third downs and kept the ball for nearly 42 minutes.

See **DALLAS**, Page 13

Lakers top Knicks to get back to .500

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The pieces of the puzzle that have been the Lakers' confounding season so far are starting to fall into place.

Kobe Bryant engineered a second-half comeback, the defense stepped up, and Los Angeles beat the New York Knicks 100-94 on Tuesday, extending its winning streak to five games.

"We're .500," a smiling Dwight Howard said. "We did it on Christmas, too. I knew this day would come."

Bryant scored 34 points in his NBA-record 15th Christmas Day game and Metta World Peace added 20 points and

seven rebounds while defending Carmelo Anthony, whose 34 points led the Knicks. Anthony said he hyperextended his left knee, but expects to play on Wednesday in Phoenix.

Bryant, the league's leading scorer, has topped 30 or more points in nine straight games.

"If you're going to play on Christmas, it's always better to win. Makes it all worthwhile," said Bryant, who would soon hop a flight to Denver, getting there ahead of the Nuggets, who played the Clippers in the other half of the holiday doubleheader at Staples Center.

The Lakers improved

to 14-14 — 9-9 under new coach Mike D'Antoni — and upped their holiday record to 21-18, including 13-9 at home. They returned to .500 for the first time since they were 8-8 on Nov. 30.

"It's so early in the season to have turned a corner," Bryant said. "We have everybody in the lineup and we're starting to see how we want to play."

The Knicks controlled most of the game behind Anthony and J.R. Smith, who had 24 points. But they struggled offensively in the fourth, when Anthony was limited to seven points and Smith had five as the Lakers' defense clamped down.

World Peace fouled out with 1:58 to play and the Lakers ahead by four.

World Peace credited his defense on Anthony to "old-school basketball."

"I'm back in shape and it's a little tough to guard me," he said.

Steve Nash said: "This is what he's been doing all year. He gets his hands on a lot of balls, pounds on the other team's best guy. You can't win without that type of effort."

Smith's 3-pointer pulled New York to 96-94. After Pau Gasol made one of two free throws, Smith missed another 3

See **LAKERS**, Page 13

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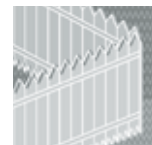
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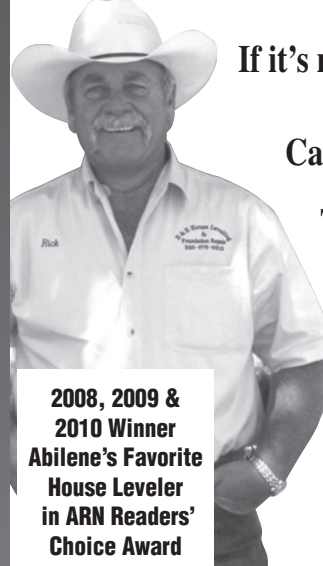
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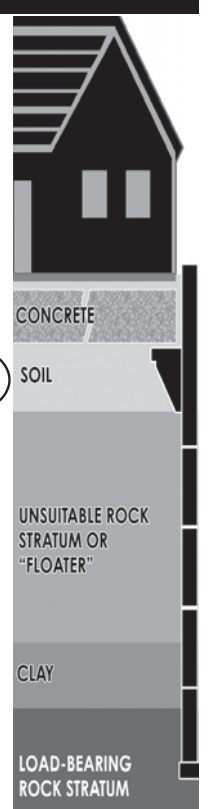
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Pet News

Annie's Mailbox®

Hero dog missing snout seems to have beaten cancer

DAVIS, Calif. (AP) — A veterinarian at the University of California, Davis, has some good news about a dog from the Philippines who became an international hero after sacrificing her snout to save two young girls.

After completing six weekly intravenous chemotherapy infusions, Kabang appears to have beaten the cancer she was suffering from, Gina Davis, the primary care veterinarian at the William R. Pritchard Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital in Davis, told the San Francisco Chronicle.

The dog, however, is still facing treatment for heartworms in her arteries before she can have the gaping wound on her face closed. Full treatment of that condition was put on hold during cancer therapy.

Kabang — a female mongrel — had the first of three arsenic-based heartworm shots on Dec.



4 and is expected to receive the other two in the second week of January, Davis said.

"It will be one to two months for her to recover from that before she goes in and has the surgery," Davis said.

Kabang had her snout and upper jaw sheared off when she jumped in front of a speeding motorcycle, saving her

owner's daughter and niece from serious injury or death, according to newspaper reports in the Philippines.

The dog ended up in Davis earlier this year after a nurse from Buffalo, N.Y., spearheaded a fundraising campaign to bring her to the U.S.

Veterinarians in the Philippines were apparently unable to

treat her injuries.

Surgeons are planning to perform two or three procedures. The first will involve dental work, extractions and covering exposed roots.

They will then try to close the dog's wound and restore nasal functions. The dog's bony structures are currently exposed to air, increasing the chance of infection, Davis said.

Kabang may return to the Philippines in May or June. The bill for her treatment is expected to top \$10,000.

Davis said despite Kabang's many conditions, the dog appears to be in good spirits.

"She has come through everything very well," Davis said. "Her appetite is still good. She's still bright and happy."

Information from: San Francisco Chronicle, <http://www.sfgate.com>



KATHY MITCHELL
MARCY SUGAR

Dear Annie: I have been dating "Stan" for five years. We are both in our 60s. When we started dating, I was absolutely certain that I did not want to get married. But Stan and I have been through so much these past few years with various illnesses and the like. We have always stood by each other, and I have come to realize that I would like to be married to this man and have said so to him.

Stan still has responsibilities to a surviving parent. Both Stan and his mom seem so dependent on each other that I feel like the proverbial third wheel. When I discuss this with Stan, there is a slight change, but only for a brief period of time, and then things go right back to the way they were, with me essentially on my own.

I don't want to walk away from Stan, but I need more than I am getting and want to know how to get my point across. I would hate for Stan to lose out on having a wonderful life with me at this stage of our lives. — *So Confused*

Dear Confused: You cannot force Stan to see the benefits of marriage through your eyes. His relationship with his surviving parent takes precedence over his relationship with you, and right now, Stan interprets marriage as an abandonment of Mom.

In addition, you have changed the rules midstream by wanting marriage when you initially precluded it. You would do better to absorb Mom into your life, making a commitment toward her care part of your relationship. And although that doesn't promise marriage, it will make Stan more favorably disposed. Only you can decide whether the relationship with Stan the Man is worth keeping without the legal papers.

Dear Annie: My husband, "Bob," rarely washes his hands after using the bathroom. My son and I are really disgusted with this behavior and worry about the lingering germs that his hands pass on to everything else he touches.

Bob claims we are germophobes, and that a little bacteria is good for you. He thinks we overdo the hand washing, getting rid of the "good" germs. I have asked him to pose this question to his doctor, but he refuses. Please help settle this argument. — *Irritated in Indiana*

Dear Indiana: It's true that over-sanitizing can be a problem, but some degree of hygiene is necessary because not all bacteria are harmless. And we transfer these less helpful germs primarily through our hands, not only via contact with multiple surfaces that others have touched (or will), but also by rubbing our eyes, scratching our noses and covering our mouths with these same bacteria-laden hands. This is how easily diseases such as meningitis, flu and hepatitis can get passed around. If your husband wants to swim in a swamp to see whether it boosts his immune system, that's up to him. But he shouldn't subject the rest of his family to his quirks.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "No State," whose 23-year-old cousin is now a police officer and brags that he can give out tickets to those who annoy him.

A police officer who abuses his authority not only makes himself look bad, but also damages the reputation of his department and all the other hardworking and dedicated officers who put their life on the line day in and day out.

Most police officers try to do their very best in difficult circumstances. It is often a thankless job, but one we willingly accept. Trust me, other police officers do not like to see these abuses of power. "No State" should talk to this officer's superiors. — *Retired Kentucky Trooper*

Dear Trooper: We suspect this cousin is all talk, but it might not take much for him to cross a line. We appreciate your counsel.

Happy Kwanzaa to all our readers.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please email your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 737 3rd Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. 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.

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-TUCK adopted 05-04-11

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Lost, blind dog finds way back to Alaska owners

FAIRBANKS, Alaska (AP) — Blind and alone in Alaska winter temperatures that dipped 40 degrees below zero, a lost 8-year-old Fairbanks dog wasn't given much of a chance to make it home.

But after walking 10 miles to the edge of a local musher's dog yard, Abby the brown-and-white mixed breed was found and returned to her owners, a family that includes two boys and one girl under the age of 10.

The dog that the family raised from an animal-shelter puppy went missing during a snowstorm on Dec. 13, and the family never expected to see her again, The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner reported.

"It's a miracle, there's no other words to describe it," said

McKenzie Grapengeter, emotion choking her voice and tears coming to her eyes. "We never expected to have her to be returned safe and alive."

Musher and veterinarian Mark May said he came across the dog while running his team on Dec. 19, but didn't stop to pick her up.

"It ran with us for about a mile on the way home before she fell off the pace, but I had a big dog team so I couldn't grab it," he said. "I said, 'boy I hope it finds somebody's house.'"

The next day, the dog turned up at May's house.

"Everybody just assumed it was some kind of scaredy-cat, but there it was in front of the door in our dog lot and it was blind," May said. "It was sitting there, all the

way from 14 mile on the winter trail down into this neighborhood, I guess by just sniffing, so I picked it up and brought it in."

To May's surprise, the dog had no signs of frostbite.

"No frozen ears, no frozen toes, she'll probably go back home and it'll (be) business as usual. She's no worse for wear but quite an adventure," he said.

The Grapengeter family hadn't tagged or put a microchip in the dog, but the community used social media to track down Abby's owners.

"We're so, so grateful for all (the community's) hard work," McKenzie Grapengeter said. "They've given us the most amazing Christmas gift we could ever ask for."

Tomorrow's Horoscope

Boxing Day Stars

A sextile of Saturn and Pluto brings home the major themes of this Boxing Day, a day when bosses serve employees and when those who have give to those who have not. Though the standards of living have vastly improved since the Middle Ages when this tradition started, the needy are still among us. Mars in Aquarius urges your generosity.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Information is more readily available now than it ever has been in any other time period. But wisdom can't be Googled. It has to be legitimately earned, which is how you'll come by it today.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Today highlights the difference between caution and fear. This can be a very slight and personal difference that each individual must detect for him or herself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You prefer the company of people who let you finish the sentences you start, but that's not always the case. You'll be exposed to a wide variety of people, and you may have to assert yourself in order to hold your own.

CANCER (June 22-July

22). Just because you're not talking to someone at the moment doesn't mean you've lost the connection. Silence and space between people who share a strong affinity often signifies a strong bond, not a deficit.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll experience a merging of languages: the language of the senses, the language of emotions, the language of thoughts. You'll create beauty by interpreting and interweaving many ways of communicating.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When you spend time with people, you are also spending time with the remnants of their history, especially the childhood parts involving their family system. Knowing this, you should try not to take any of it too seriously.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll rally for justice in a situation that hasn't exactly been fair for a long time. Progress may be slow, but slow is better than letting everything stay stuck. Your work won't be in vain.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're often more comfortable one-on-one than in a group, and today's circumstances will prove it. You'll expertly read someone's body language and be most influential as a result.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll bring spontaneity to a group scenario, and those who follow your lead are sure

to have a good time. But there's also something tangible you hope to accomplish.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). This will be a surprisingly productive day. Stress can be highly motivating. You'll take the tension you feel and pour it into an activity that requires a heightened energy level to complete.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). When the timing is right, you will hit the jackpot you want. But for now, look around at the jackpot you already have. It's pretty great. The more you appreciate it the better you feel.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll find a wonderful bit of decadence set aside just for you, but indulge with caution. Like a rich dessert, the first few bites are the best. Go too far, and a heavy feeling sets in, followed by regret.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 26). The year starts in a swirl of mystery and excitement. One relationship stands out, and strong emotions will change your experience of daily life. Then February brings a development that lends practical assistance to one of your plans. A bonus comes in August. An unforgettable journey starts in September. Aquarius and Libra people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 1, 14, 34 and 16.

ASTROLOGICAL QUESTIONS: "My ex-



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5:PM	News ABC	Casa	Two Men	News CBS	Noticias	News	King	Shepherd's Heart	Charlie Rose	King	Moonshiners	Appaloosa, Renee Zellweger	Auction	Castle	Queen	Phineas	E:60	SportsCenter
6:PM	Jeopardy!	Corona de Lágrimas	Big Bang	News Ent	Caso Cerardo	News	Seinfeld	Mani	PBS News-Hour	Rules	Moonshiners	Auction	Castle	Queen	ANT Farm	NFL Live	Football	
7:PM	Middle Neighbors	Por Ella Soy Eva	Ben-Kate	Elementary	Rosa Diamante (SS)	Whitney Gays-	Fam. Guy	Upd	Nature (DVS)	Arrow	Moonshiners	Movie: Four Brothers, André Benjamin	Auction	Castle	Queen	Gravity	Sport Sci.	College Football: Little Caesars Bowl
8:PM	Mod Fam Suburg.	Amores Verdaderos	Ben-Kate	The 35th Annual Kennedy Center Honors	Corazón Valiente	Law & Order: SVU	Fam. Guy	Light of the Southwest	NOVA (DVS)	Supernatural	Amish Mafia	Auction	Castle	Queen	ANT Farm	NFL's Greatest Games		
9:PM	Nashville (DVS)	Amor Bravo (SS)	Simpsons	How I Met	Escobar Rostro de	Chicago Fire	Big Bang		NOVA (DVS)	Seinfeld	Moonshiners	Movie: Casino, Joe Pesci	Auction	Castle	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Jessie	SportsCenter
10:PM	News Nightline	Impacto	How I Met	News	Noticias	News	Conan	Rik McDonald	Charlie Rose	'Til Death	Amish Mafia	Auction	Castle	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Shake It	Sport Sci.	
11:PM	Jimmy Kimmel Live	Al Diablo	Law Order: CI	Ferguson	Decisiones (SS)	Jimmy Fallon	Office	Alewine	World	'70s	Moonshiners	Auction	Castle	CSI: NY	Wendy Williams	Wizards	NFL Live	
12:AM	Extra	Mar de Amor (SS)	Raymond	Insider	Pagado	News	Earl	Light of the Southwest	Browns	Moonshiners	Auction	Cold Case	Wendy Williams	Deck	NBA Basketball: Nuggets at Clippers	SportsCenter		
1:AM	Paid	La Jaula	American	Paid	Paid	Paid	Earl	Light of the Southwest	Cops	Amish Mafia	Auction	Dallas	Movie: National Security	Good		SportsCenter		

DENNIS THE MENACE

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"I'M ALREADY STARTIN' TO GET THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT FOR NEXT YEAR."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

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"I just thought of some things Santa forgot. How many days till my birthday?"

HAGAR

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NO!
YOU CAN'T USE YOUR SHIELD AS A PLATE!

BLONDIE

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ELMO SURE DID A GREAT JOB ON THIS SNOWMAN

BLONDIE

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WELL, I DESERVE SOME OF THE CREDIT

BLONDIE

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NO, BUT I LET HIM BORROW MY SCARF!

WIZARD OF ID

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AH, THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS... A TIME FOR RELAXATION AND REFLECTION.

WIZARD OF ID

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IN FACT, WE IN RETAIL ONLY NEED WORRY ABOUT A SINGLE TASK.

This Date In History

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 26, the 361st day of 2012. There are five days left in the year. The seven-day African-American holiday Kwanzaa begins today. This is Boxing Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

- On Dec. 26, 1972, the 33rd president of the United States, Harry S. Truman, died in Kansas City, Mo., at age 88.
- On this date: In 1776, the British suffered a major defeat in the Battle of Trenton during the Revolutionary War.
- In 1799, former President George Washington was eulogized by Col. Henry Lee as "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."
- In 1862, 38 Santee Sioux Indians were hanged in Mankato, Minn., for their roles in an uprising that had claimed the lives of hundreds of white settlers. The Civil War Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, resulting in a Confederate victory, began in Mississippi.
- In 1908, Jack Johnson became the first African-American boxer to win the world heavyweight championship as he defeated Canadian Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia.
- In 1910, the London Palladium, Britain's famous variety theater, first opened.
- In 1941, during World War II, Winston Churchill became the first British prime minister to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress.
- In 1944, during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, the embattled U.S. 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne, Belgium, was relieved by units of the 4th Armored Division.
- In 1966, Kwanzaa was first celebrated.
- In 1980, Iranian television footage was broadcast in the United States, showing a dozen of the American hostages sending messages to their families.
- In 1996, 6-year-old beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey was found beaten and strangled in the basement of her family's home in Boulder, Colo. (To date, the slaying remains unsolved.)
- In 2004, some 230,000 people, mostly in southern Asia, were killed by a tsunami triggered by the world's most powerful earthquake in 40 years beneath the Indian Ocean.
- In 2006, former President Gerald R. Ford died in Rancho Mirage, Calif., at age 93.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Donald Moffat is 82. Actor Carol Spinney (Big Bird on TV's "Sesame Street") is 79. Rhythm-and-blues singer Abdul "Duke" Fakir (The Four Tops) is 77. Record producer Phil Spector is 73. "America's Most Wanted" host John Walsh is 67. Country musician Bob Carpenter (The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 66. Baseball Hall of Fame catcher Carlton Fisk is 65. Retired MLB All-Star Chris Chambliss is 64.

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AGNES

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WELL? DID YOU GET SOCKS FOR CHRISTMAS?

AGNES

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BUT THEY'RE COLLECTOR UNDERPANTS!... IT'S A SET OF TWELVE, EACH FEATURING AN INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY!

HI AND LOIS

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THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS...

HI AND LOIS

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WHEN WE GET TO RETURN OUR PRESENTS...

THE OTHER COAST

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AS A KID, DID YOU EVER WISH FOR IMPOSSIBLE CHRISTMAS GIFTS?

THE OTHER COAST

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I GOT MY FOREVER HOME.

SNUFFY SMITH

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L'I'L TATER'S A MITE PUZZLED BY YORE PRESENT, MAW !!

SNUFFY SMITH

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PURTY SIMPLE, SONNY BOY-- THEY GO WIF HIS OTHER ONES !!

BETLE BAILEY

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DON'T BOTHER ME WITH THAT PETTY STUFF

BETLE BAILEY

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I'M A GENERAL! I MAKE BIG DECISIONS!

Newsday Crossword

ACROSS

- Somewhat, on a score
- Carved pole
- Engrave deeply
- Frenzied
- Run off for romance
- Mideast region
- Divine Secrets of the Sisterhood (2002 film)
- TV producer Sorkin
- Metric measure
- George Clooney film of 2000
- Diverse
- Arizona natives
- Grouch's look
- Kind of aircraft engine
- Pitchfork-shaped letter
- Horse-stopping cry
- Rival of Caterpillar
- Gene Kelly film of 1952
- Heron kin
- Sixth Greek letter
- Homer Simpson neighbor
- Apartment occupant
- Bucolic
- Pulls along
- Nod off
- Clark Gable film of 1939
- Wall St. debuts
- "Bye now!"
- Publicize
- Presidential prerogative

DOWN

- Cable service
- Midwest metropolis
- More demure
- Cousins of giraffes
- Raze
- Norway's patron saint
- Ripped out
- Distinctive period
- Teacher and advisor
- Board game gadget
- Poi source locale
- Captain of industry
- Soccer great Mia
- Common Market initials
- Garden implement
- Expert
- Nonsocial person
- Author Auel
- Pennsylvania port
- Be disposed (to)
- Attention-getter
- Cyberspace place
- Aware of
- Westernmost of the Aleutians
- Irritates
- "That's obvious!"
- Construction workers
- Sudden changes
- Comprise
- Lean, as cuisine
- Prepare, as tea
- British prince, familiarly
- Busybody
- Does some lawn work
- Provide
- Essay page
- Write down briefly
- Prefix for sphere
- AB positive, e.g.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
14				15					16						
17				18					19						
20				21					22						
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61										62					63
64										65					66
67										68					69

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Answer to previous puzzle

LESS	REARS	CUTS
AUTO	ONSET	SHUT
GRAD	UTTER	PONY
ORACLE	OFO	MAHA
PER	DEN	
ASSERT	TEEN	LOG
LEER	THEN	SEETO
GEORGE	AND	MARTHA
AMUSE	ISSO	TIBET
ESL	TILE	NINERS
ATM	ETA	
MANOF	LAM	ANCH
REIN	RATON	LAND
UNDO	EVITA	ALTO
BUSY	EATEN	POSE

LAKERS

Continued from Page 7

that would have tied the game at 97 with 32 seconds left.

"We missed a lot of easy shots, a lot of little chippers around the basket, shots that we normally make," Anthony said. "There were some plays that we thought should have went our way down the stretch, but for the most part, we fought. I'll take this effort any night. If we continue to play with this effort, we'll win a lot of games."

With Bryant double-teamed, Nash passed to Gasol, who dunked with 12 seconds to go, punctuating a win that sent Lakers fans, frustrated by the team's struggles and coaching change, home happy. The Lakers avenged a 116-107 loss in New York on Dec. 13.

A smiling Howard called Gasol's driving slam "a submarine dunk because he was very low to the ground."

Gasol responded, "I don't dunk as often as I used to so it felt good. I took it right down the lane and finished strong."

Nash had 16 points, 11 assists and six rebounds in his second game in nearly two months. He missed 24 straight games while recovering from a small fracture in his lower left leg.

Howard had 14 points and 12 rebounds, and Gasol had 13 points and eight rebounds.

"It was an important win for us as we were a little bit desperate," Nash said. "We've gone through a lot since Mike Brown — new coach, new offense. It's been a difficult transition."

Bryant had eight of the Lakers' first 10 points to open the fourth during a run that provided their first lead since the opening quarter in a game matching the two teams that have played the most on Christmas Day.

They took the lead for good on Bryant's basket with 7:38 remaining. Anthony and Tyson Chandler were in foul trouble in the fourth, with Chandler fouling out late.

"They just were a little bit more aggressive," Anthony said. "Kobe got it going and Steve Nash hit some big shots down the stretch. When you have a guy like Nash doing that, it's kind of tough. Those guys know how to play."

DALLAS

Continued from Page 7

When the Dallas offense stalled on the first possession of overtime, the Cowboys immediately gave up a 26-yard completion to Jimmy Graham before a fluky catch-and-fumble play ended with New Orleans on the Dallas 2. Garrett Hartley's 20-yard field goal made it three straight Cowboys games ending on the final play.

The Cowboys won't say it, but injuries could be wearing on a beleaguered defense.

Five starters and nickel cornerback Orlando Scandrick are out. Replacement free agents have been filling hwoles days after signing. DeMarcus Ware is trying to play through groin, elbow and shoulder problems, and he was mostly watching late while the Saints

finished a sack-free game for Brees despite 53 attempts.

"A lot of different combinations of players playing for us against a really, really good offensive football team," Garrett said. "I just thought that they fought, fought, fought."

The Cowboys could always just try to outscore the Redskins. Tony Romo threw for 416 yards and four touchdowns against the Saints, including a pair of 58-yarders to Dez Bryant, who had a career-high 224 yards.

Miles Austin caught a 19-yard tying score with 15 seconds left in regulation — the second of two TDs in the final 3:35 — and Jason Witten broke Tony Gonzalez's NFL season record of 102 catches by a tight end, grabbing six for 60 yards to put him at 103.

Dallas ran just 11 times for 40 yards, all by DeMarco Murray, but part of that was because the

Saints kept the ball so long.

"When you get in, anything can happen," said Romo, who has 17 touchdowns and just three interceptions the past eight weeks. "I know that. We've seen that far too many times. We just need to do the right things to get in."

Jones acknowledges the injuries on defense, but still thinks the Cowboys are better than they were when they fell behind New York 21-0 in a 31-14 loss last New Year's night that propelled the Giants to a Super Bowl win.

"I think that we are with a healthier Miles, and Dez with where he is with his maturation," Jones said. "I think we've got a better offensive line than what we had this time last year. I think we're better at corner as we go up there."

Once again, the Cowboys get a chance to prove it.

COACH

Continued from Page 7

In the minds of Colts players and coaches, Pagano never really left.

He continually watched practice tape and game film on his computer, used phone calls and text messages to regularly communicate with players and occasionally delivered a pregame or postgame speech to his team.

"He texted me and called me so much, it was like he was standing there in my face every day," said receiver Reggie Wayne, who has been friends with Pagano since the two were working together at the University of Miami.

But the Colts found plenty of other ways to keep Pagano's battle in the forefront.

They began a fundraising campaign for leukemia research, calling it Chuckstrong. Players had stickers with the initials CP on their locker room nameplates, and Arians wore an orange ribbon on his baseball cap during games. Orange is the symbolic color for leukemia. At one point, nearly three

dozen players shaved their heads to show their ailing coach they were with him.

That's not all.

Arians and first-year general manager Ryan Grigson decided to leave the lights on in Pagano's office until he returned. Pagano noted the team even installed plastic clips to make sure those lights were not mistakenly turned off while he was gone. Those clips were removed when Pagano arrived Monday morning.

And Arians said nobody sat in the front seat of the team bus.

"He's always been our head coach," Arians said.

So after getting medi-

cal clearance from his oncologist, Dr. Larry Cripe, to return with no restrictions, Pagano couldn't wait to get to the office Monday morning.

Arians arrived at 7 a.m., three hours early for the scheduled team meeting. By then, Pagano had already driven past the inflatable Colts player with the words "Welcome Back Chuck" printed on its chest and was back in his office preparing for the Texans.

Players showed up a couple of hours later, and when the torch was passed from Arians back to Pagano, players gave their returning coach a standing ovation that

Wayne said was well-deserved.

All Pagano wants to do now is emulate the success Arians and his players have had this season.

"I asked him (Arians) if he would lead this team and this ballclub and this organization and take over the reins," Pagano said. "What a masterful, masterful job you did Bruce. You carried the torch and all you went out and did was win nine ballgames. You got us our 10th win yesterday and you got us into the playoffs. You did it with dignity and you did it with class. You're everything that I always knew you were and more."

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Miami wins Finals rematch over OKC

MIAMI (AP) — LeBron James finished with 29 points, nine assists and eight rebounds, Dwyane Wade scored 21, and the Miami Heat survived a frantic finish to beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 103-97 in an NBA Finals rematch on Tuesday.

Mario Chalmers scored a season-high 20 for the Heat, who matched the franchise's best 25-game start at 19-6. Chris Bosh added 16 for Miami, which has beaten the Thunder five straight times going back to last June's title series.

Kevin Durant scored 33 points and Russell Westbrook added 21 for Oklahoma City, but both Thunder stars missed potentially game-tying 3-point attempts in the final seconds. Serge Ibaka and Kevin Martin each added 15 for the Thunder, who have dropped two straight for the first time this season.

The Heat went 19 for 19 from the foul line, the second-best effort in franchise history. They were 30 for 30 at Boston on March 24, 1993.

And it was a wild finals rematch — one that lived up to expectations.

There was a fast start by the reigning champions, a one-handed dunk by James on an offensive rebound that will be added to his copious highlight reel, a scrum after a hard foul that led to double-technical on Wade and Ibaka early in the fourth, an easy rally by the Thunder from an early double-digit deficit, and even a jawing match between Durant and James in the final minutes.

Such was the intensity that James slumped over the scorer's table with 1:08 left, exhausted.

Oh, and there was a wild finish, as well.

Wade lost the ball on an ill-advised, behind-the-back dribble, and the turnover set up Durant for a two-handed dunk that got the Thunder within 96-95 with 44.1 seconds remaining.

Needing a stop on the next trip, the Thunder forgot to play defense instead. Kendrick Perkins and Ibaka both were confused on the ensuing Miami possession, and Bosh was left alone to take a pass from James and throw down a dunk that restored Miami's three-point edge.

Oklahoma City got within one when Durant made a jumper over James, but no closer. Ray Allen's two free throws with 15.6 seconds left made it 100-97, and Miami's last three points came from the line after a Thunder foul and Westbrook getting hit with a technical for punching a table af-

ter arguing that he was fouled on his 3-point try in the final moments.

While the stars were stars, the Heat got help from one unexpected source. Chalmers was making everything, even unintended plays.

Allen lost possession on what looked to be a pass to no one, but Chalmers picked up the bouncing ball on the right wing, whirled and made a 3-pointer — putting Miami up 86-79 with 8:14 left.

In the end, that cushion was necessary.

The Heat came out flying, opening a quick 13-2 lead after making six of their first seven shots. About all that didn't go right for the Heat early on was James committing a foul, the first time he was called for a personal since Dec. 8.

It happened 4:03 into the game — 254 minutes and 7 seconds of on-court time since his last one — when James fouled Ibaka on a dunk attempt.

Chalmers had 12 points, matching his season high, in the opening quarter alone, and that was also Miami's lead after his layup for a 15-3 edge. When Durant headed to the bench after being called for his second personal, plus a technical, with 2:08 left in the first, the Heat led 27-16.

But even with Durant out, Oklahoma City scored the last eight points of the quarter,

six of those coming from the line in what became a theme.

The Thunder shot 17 of the game's first 18 free throws, with Miami's lone attempt coming on Durant's technical. No Heat player went to the line after a shooting foul until James scored while being hit with 2:47 left in the half. By the early portion of the third quarter, the free-throw difference was 22-2 in favor of Oklahoma City.

It helped the Thunder shake off that slow start.

Miami's lead was 54-48 at the half, but the Heat were held to two points in the first 5:05 of the third, and the Thunder grabbed the lead for the first time. Durant went left, connected on a baseline jumper while falling out of bounds and getting fouled by James. The resulting free throw gave Oklahoma City a 58-56 edge.

With that, the back-and-forth began, with five ties in the next 5 minutes alone, and the Heat held a 74-72 lead entering the fourth.

NOTES: James scored at least 20 points for the 30th straight regular-season game and 46th overall. ... Wade is 7-1 on Christmas, and James has won six straight on the holiday. ... Mike Miller became the 48th active player to reach the 10,000-point mark when he made a 3-pointer early in the second quarter.

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sudoku
ANSWERS

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

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