



Voice of football

Al Michaels reaches another milestone

- 1B



More coverage online

More state, national and world stories are available on www.tdtnews.com.



Weekend

Area events include comedy show, live music and ice skating

- 8A

Today's Outlook

High: 73

Low: 62

Partly cloudy



STATE

Judge blocks law restricting kids from app stores

BY ALEX NGUYEN AND STEPHEN SIMPSON THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

A federal judge has temporarily blocked a new Texas law adding restrictions on children's use of app stores.

Senate Bill 2420, which was supposed to activate on Jan. 1, establishes age verification requirements and mandates parental consent before a minor is allowed to download or

make purchases within apps. Its supporters say the law is needed to protect children as they navigate social media and online spaces, while critics say it would violate free speech rights.

U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman, an Obama appointee, on Tuesday sided with the law's opponents, saying that parts of it are "unconstitutionally vague" and "exceedingly overbroad."

"The Act is akin to a law that would require every bookstore to verify the

age of every customer at the door and, for minors, require parental consent before the child or teen could enter and again when they try to purchase a book," Pitman wrote in a 20-page ruling granting a preliminary injunction.

"As set out below, the Court finds a likelihood that, when considered on the merits, SB 2420 violates the First Amendment."

But state Sen. Angela Paxton, the McKinney Republican who authored

SB 2420, is confident that the law will prevail.

"We built this bill to equip parents with common sense tools to protect their kids AND to survive court challenges by those who may have lesser priorities," she said in a written statement.

The Computer & Communication Industry Association, which filed the lawsuit in October, cheered the decision.

"This Order stops the Texas App

Store Accountability Act from taking effect in order to preserve the First Amendment rights of app stores, app developers, parents, and younger internet users," Stephanie Joyce, director of CCIA's Litigation Center, said in a news release. "It also protects parents' inviolate right to use their own judgment in safeguarding their children online using the myriad tools our members provide."

Please see APP, 3A

A star shining in the night



Lights and pyrotechnics surround the star on top of the Santa Fe Plaza Christmas tree during the tree lighting ceremony held on Saturday, Nov. 29, in downtown Temple

Nan Dickson/Special to the Telegram

CENTRAL TEXAS

Keeping kids safe

Tips to keep children out of the ER

BY CAROLINE REED TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

The holiday season brings excitement, family gatherings and new toys for children across Central Texas, but for emergency room staff at Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's Hospital, it also signals one of the busiest times of the year.

"It's always busy right after Christmas and even the day of," said Krista Easley, a registered nurse and trauma injury prevention and outreach coordinator at the hospital. "Once kids open their toys and start playing with them, we usually see several common injuries every year."

From falls and fractures to choking hazards and respiratory illnesses, Easley said the pediatric emergency department prepares each winter for a predictable increase in patients.

Please see SAFE, 3A

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

After 71 years of Christmas tradition, family finds new rhythm

BY IAN CAMACHO TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

For more than seven decades, the Northern family of Bell County followed a holiday blueprint.

While many families navigated the seasonal stress of divided loyalties and long-distance travel, the Northens enjoyed a rare, 71-year streak of consistency rooted in the geography of Central Texas and a deep commitment to fairness.

This year, however, the 72nd Christmas will mark a quiet but significant departure from the past.

For Norman Northen, president of Temple Civic Theater, the upcoming holiday represents the end of a seamless arrangement that began even before his parents married.

"We were blessed to have two complete sets of grandparents that lived in the same town," Northen said.

The proximity allowed the family to honor both the

Northern and Normand sides of the lineage without the need for compromise or alternating years.

By design, the family celebrated with the Normand side on Christmas Day and reserved Christmas Eve for the Northern side, ensuring that both customs were preserved and respected.

A typical Christmas Day was a marathon of togetherness and tradition. The morning began quietly with a special breakfast for the immediate family before a 10:30 a.m. departure for Lake Belton. There, at the grandparents' home, a large lunch served as the centerpiece of the afternoon.

After a brief and necessary nap, the group would relocate to the Northern family farm, a property that has remained in the family for four generations.

The farm served as the backdrop for the Northern side's festivities, where a

Please see FAMILY, 3A

CENTRAL TEXAS

Temple, Belton students give back to community during holiday season

BY BELLA CASEY TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

Cereal and board games surrounded a group of Sparta Elementary School students as they loaded onto a bus to deliver donations to community members.

The Belton Independent School District students sang songs and chatted among themselves as they delivered the items to Family Promise of Bell County and Helping Hands Ministry of Belton — two nonprofits the students partnered with during the holiday season.

Students across Belton and Temple school districts gifted their time and effort to others this holiday season. Students from both districts participated in donation drives, holiday events and service projects to help others.

Lincoln Green, a fifth grader at Sparta Elementary School, helped collect cereal and food donations, said the experience was heart-warming.

Green is a member of the Sparta Elementary School Hope Squad chapter, a group that works to support peers and spread kindness. He said he first joined the group because he liked after-school activities, but now that he's been a part of the group, he has enjoyed collecting donations.

He said it's amazing to see other children giving during the holiday season, a time when some are only excited about gifts they will receive.

Giving to families in need helped him realize some are experiencing misfortune or bad luck, and it is easy to take things



Courtesy photo

Members of the Delta Program in Belton Independent School District helped pack donation bags at the Belton Police Department.

for granted, he said.

"I thought about it, and that could have happened to me," Green said. "I could have just had that bad luck instead of them, and I could have been through the exact same thing. So it just warmed my heart knowing that if I did go through that, I would have had help."

Temple ISD students also collected donations.

The Temple High School Toy Story Club collected toy donations, and the Special Education program participated in a district-wide toy drive for children in need. Other Temple ISD students partici-

pated in a variety of holiday volunteering events and spent time with community members who may be in need of holiday companionship.

The Temple High School football team and athletic trainers visited a local care facility to pass out socks and handwritten notes to residents as part of the Thankful Sock giving project. Students sang as a resident played the piano, a "special" moment during a cherished tradition, Temple ISD Head Athletic Trainer Windee Skrabanek said.

Please see STUDENTS, 3A



TODAY'S BIBLE VERSE

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior, which is Christ the Lord." — Luke 2:10-11



MARKET REPORT

Editor's note: Due to an early deadline the market information is not available for the Thursday edition.

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