



HUMAN INTEREST

Thursday, January 7, 2010



Disabled sailor completes solo Atlantic crossing

Paralyzed sailor Geoff Holt, 42, from Southampton, began the 2,700-mile (4,345km) journey from Lanzarote to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, on 10 December. His voyage was hampered by the lack of wind and mechanical problems on his boat, Impossible Dream. His wife Elaine and son Timothy sailed out to greet Mr Holt off the coast of Cane Garden Bay. Mr Holt suffered a diving accident 25 years ago in the bay that left him paralysed. During the

voyage, he has been aided by a carer and filmed by a cameraman, but did all his own sailing in the 60ft (18m) purpose-built catamaran. He told BBC News: "It's fantastic, it's absolutely wonderful to be back after 25 years to sail across the Atlantic Ocean, it is quite emotional.

Maine Man, 101, Can't Save Beloved Old Elm, Herbie

YARMOUTH, Maine -- The massive elm tree that shaded the corner of East Main Street and Yankee Drive was sick. Like so many others in so many of America's towns in the 1950s, it was stricken with Dutch elm disease. Tree warden Frank Knight was so smitten with the tree that he couldn't bear to cut it down. After all, it had been standing sentinel in this New England village since before the American Revolution. Over the next half-century, Knight carefully nursed the tree, spraying for pests and pruning away the dreaded fungus, even as the town's other elms died by the dozens. As he succeeded, the stately tree's branches reached 110 feet skyward, its leaves rustling in summer breezes off the Royal River and its heavy limbs shouldering winter snowfalls. The tree, nicknamed Herbie and acclaimed as the tallest and oldest elm in New England, survived 14 bouts of Dutch elm disease in all, thanks to Knight's devotion. Now the disease ravages again and Herbie is too weak to fight back. Knight, now 101, said there's nothing else he can do to save the tree he's watched over for five decades. "He's an old friend," Knight said, speaking with passion while gazing up at the tree just before Christmas. "I love that tree. There's no question. And I feel so proud that we kept him for so long." Herbie, estimated to be about 240 years old, will be cut down Jan. 18. Knight, consulted by tree experts who made the decision, is resigned that the end has come. ([Video](#))



Cold Iguanas Free-Fall From Trees



HOLLYWOOD, Fla. -- Record lows across South Florida are literally freezing the invasive iguana in its tracks. Kamikaze iguanas, plummeting from their treetop perches, have long been a Floridian urban legend. On Wednesday morning, Local 10 caught the free-falling lizard on tape. [\(Video\)](#)

Second Grader Organizes Mass Homeless Shelter Donation

He may be a little guy, but he helps homeless folks in a big way. After seeing a homeless woman during a holiday trip to Chicago, Jonathon Slack, a seven-year-old boy from Orland Park, led a 10-day donation drive, collecting over four truckloads of food and toys for a Chicago shelter. Jonathon was moved to tears when he saw the homeless woman standing outside of Macy's on State Street, holding a sign that said she and her son had no place to live. After he finished crying, he was moved to action. "At home that night after I read to him and getting him ready to be tucked in, he started crying," said Heather Slack, his mother. He told his mom, "That lady had



no shelter, mom." "He wanted us to drive back to the city so that he could give the lady the \$6 he had in his pocket," Heather said. The Slacks weren't sure that was a good idea, but they encouraged Jonathon to think of other ways to help. He thought of plenty. He was going to paint smiley faces on rocks and sell them. He was going to ask president Obama to take money from rich people and give it to poor people. His mother suggested starting a donation. So Jonathon wrote a letter asking his community to pitch in. He dropped off photocopies all around his neighborhood. The response was tremendous. The youngster managed to collect over four truckloads of food and toys, which he then sent to the Su Casa Catholic Worker homeless shelter in Chicago. [\(Video\)](#)

AAA Publishes Number to Porn Line Instead of Tow Service



They must've thought they just drunk dialed. The New Mexico branch of AAA has apologized after publishing an incorrect number for its inebriated members to call to receive a free tow and a ride home on New Years Eve. The number directed callers to a service offering "pornographic conversation" instead says the Las Cruces Sun-News. The Carlsbad Current Argus talked to the owner of the tow company when they broke the story on Wednesday - he said he was wondering why he hadn't received any calls.

LIMO TAKES TO THE ICE

BROOKFIELD — Diana M. and Stephen C. Nickerson have seen a lot of interesting things on Quaboag Pond since they moved there almost four years ago, but yesterday brought something new and truly different. Mr. Nickerson looked out the window of the couple's home across Quaboag Street from the shore of the large pond about 7:30 a.m. and saw a 1989, 30-foot-long, white stretch limousine heading out on the ice for a some early morning ice fishing. "My husband saw the limo on the ice and said 'I guess it's safe enough to drive on,' " Mrs.



Nickerson said yesterday afternoon. Mrs. Nickerson estimates the ice on the pond, which she says is at least 500 acres in size, is about 15 to 18 inches thick. Martin R. Palka, 58, of 126 Summer St., Palmer, one of three people in the limo owned by his nephew, Andrew R. Giza, 21, of Crescent Street in Warren, also said the ice was at least a foot thick.

Central Talent Booking