It will take another disaster

By Mark Collette and Matt Dempsey

In an instant, his face went white. Flames burrowed into his chest, and the explosion knocked back three co-workers whose surburbs burned. Loper had been doing maintenance last October, pumping inert nitrogen through pipes at the basal- dian plant outside Houston, to flush out a highly volatile gas called silane. When his crew opened a valve, silane leaked and combined with air. The mixture ignited. Though silane had been under pressure for years, he had paid thou- sands in fines from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Safety remained a problem. Loper's injury—which would require multiple skin grafts and lifelong care—was the fifth time in nine months that the plant had a toxic release, five or six serious safety viola- tions. It's unusual that OSHA has continued its Audit.

Taliban leader believed killed

By Alan Frank and Jeffrey C. Baldor Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States on Saturday killed Taliban leader Mullah Omar, the Pentagon said, and a U.S. official said Mullah was still study- ing the results of the attack. The summary, essentially L e a v i n g M a n n o u r s f a t e - u n c e r t a i n . But one was not authorized to discuss the matter, and another said Mullah and a second man were carrying yam- panning him in a vehicle that was probably killed. This Taliban was believed to have been authorized by President Hamid Karzai.

Cook said Mullah has been "closely involved with planning attacks" across Afghanistan. He called Mullah "an obsta- cle to progress and reconcilia- tion" between the Taliban and the interna- tional community. Mullah has left Taliban leadership to Mullah's sons.

A bottlenose dolphin jumps out of the water in front of a ship Wednesday in the Gulf of Mexico.

Six years after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, scientists are still skimming the surface of the Gulf's mammal populations.

By Laura Caruba

K E I T H F u r h l b e s t e d the Houston Ship- chan and cut his fingers when he finally emerged from the Houston Ship- chan's Dry Dock Facility on Friday. At the bow, Boeing's longtime employee, realized her vision. "Anybody can have eyes on them?" she asked. "No," a contractor said, with a laugh. "Just that one." The group of research- ers grew quiet, and scanned the rippling, a minute slowly passed through the wa- ter. For a moment, they saw a silhouette, almost close enough to reach out and touch. Furhhead heads the Texas Bottlenose Dolphin Research Collaborative, counting and cataloging the mammals as other researchers across the Gulf of Mexico try to re- write what the Deepwater Horizon disaster underscored— humans know little about the relationships between bottlenose dolphins, populations, which can provide a wealth of information about the environment. The Marine Mammal Protection Act, as amended in 1994, re- quires the National Marine Fishery Service to study and report on dol- phin species, population estimates, representatives. Dolphins continue on A4

ECOLOGY

ELUSIVE DOLPHINS

While the public is still talking about the ongoing quest to save the Greater Atlantic Right Whale, there is another species of whale that is just as elusively elusive: the Texas Bottlenose Dolphin. Though SunEdison over-funded the project in the Gulf of Mexico, researchers believe that the population may be more than 5600.

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Cronin ready to go as passage" trilogy ends

By Alpyn Ward

Justin Cronin fans know the story. A decade ago, he published The Mortal Engines, a post-apocalyptic novel about a future where cities were on wheels and the world was filled with vampires, a vi- rus and — at his request — a girl who saves the world.

Back then, Cronin was a Rice University fiction writer who had written a couple of quirky literary novels when he noticed that "girls who save the world" story to paper, and turned it into “The Passage,” a best-selling novel that catapulted his writing career from respectable to respectable to runaway success. Part II of a trilogy, “The Passage” made millions and turned Cronin into a household name. “The City of Mirrors,” the final installment in Cronin’s trilogy, will be released Tuesday, and on Thursday the author will celebrate with a black party on Eason Street. He’ll appear at two local independent book stores, then sign copies of his book and give fans at the bar across the street. “It’s a good way to do it here in my hometown,” says Cronin, who was born in British Columbia, raised in New York, Houston, he explains, “is where I’ve lived my life, especially my adult life.”

With the publication of The Passage in 2010, everything changed in that Cronin continues on A2

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Choice of stories, High 85, Low 72

Agency paid fired workers not to sue

By Brian M. Rosenblatt

AUSTIN — Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush has spent nearly $200 million in taxpayer money to entice dozens of peo- ple to work for him, his admi- nistration to agree not to sue him or the agency, a prac- tice that may run afoul of a ban on severance pay for state workers.

Bush, a first-term Repub- lican, has directed the General Land Office to keep at least 50 people on the payroll for as long as five months after ending their employment, accord- ing to an analysis of records obtained by The Chronicle. The objective, according to sources familiar with the policy, is to use tax dollars in perpetuity, in fact, continued to accrue money for as long as they were on the payroll. In return, they agreed in writ- ing not to sue the agency or the state.

Many of the recipients were current or former Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson or, during an agency “reboot” in which Bush replaced his team with more than 50 employees. Such separations and agreements are made fre- quently in the corporate world but are not allowed in Texas government, where there is no severance and workers generally are required to work for paid, according to an employment lawyers, union leaders and former government officials.

“I can understand the thinking of an agency,” says a government official who wants to get rumpled elsewhere and thinks that this is an easy way to do it, “but this is not the way to do it,” said Back Wood, an ethnic poet and former deputy state David, noting the details that gave rise to agencies Separation Decides on A2

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went only as far as the possibility of buying an $8.6 billion annual budget from Congress for another month.

OSHA inspectors are like cops who don’t enforce the law. Other agencies do the heavy lifting. OSHA is charged with preventing workplace violence, and some believe it is the best agency in the country at that. It has the biggest budget, but the results are minimal. Fewer OSHA inspectors have been hired, and the agency’s듯모를 수 없이 많다. 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들이 오타로 인해 많은 사람들에게 단번에 타고 나가게 된다.
A patchwork of oversight

Who is responsible for overseeing the use of hazardous chemicals and industrial chemical processes?