

Warped

by Scott McCullar



# High court to hear city's nativity case

**United Press International**  
WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court agreed Monday to test for the first time whether a city can own and display a nativity scene at Christmas without violating the Constitution's ban on mixing government and religion.

Tackling a question that crops up each yuletide, the justices will review this fall a ruling banning the city of Pawtucket, R.I., from displaying a town-owned crib scene with life-size figures of the Christ child, Mary, Joseph, kings and shepherds.

The city displayed the crib along with numerous other decorations in privately owned Hodgson Park in the heart of the city. Other decorations included a giant "Seasons Greetings" sign, lighted tree, figures of carolers, snowmen, Santa Claus, reindeer and Disney characters and a stand for a live Santa.

Only the creche was attacked in a lawsuit filed by a group of taxpayers and the Rhode Island branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, who argue the Christian nativity scene violates

the First Amendment's ban on government "establishment of religion."

In other action Monday, the justices:

— Agreed to decide if National Enquirer reporters based in Florida can be sued for libel by Hollywood actress Shirley Jones.

— Refused to revive Oscar-winner Mickey Rooney's claim against major Hollywood studios for refusing to pay him for reruns of his pre-1960s films on cable television.

— Rejecting vigorous arguments from Chief Justice Warren Burger, left intact a ruling requiring a federal court to review the conviction of a triple-murderer in Washington state.

In the nativity case, both a U.S. district judge in Rhode Island and the First U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the

taxpayers and ACLU in the nativity scene case and declared the city's sponsorship of the scene unconstitutional.

"Despite its passive nature, erection of the creche has the real and substantial effect of affiliating the city with the Christian beliefs that the creche represents," U.S. District Judge Raymond Pettine ruled.

On a 2-1 vote, the appeals court went a step farther and found the city not only entangled government and religion by erecting the creche, but also illegally discriminated between Christian and non-Christian religions.

Pawtucket's city fathers defend the nativity scene as only a neutral, historical symbol of the Christmas holidays. They argue it was only one part of a larger scene of traditional decorations that as a whole have no religious purpose.

## Resurrection called fluke

# Live 'corpse' stuns officer

**United Press International**  
CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — A young woman who had been pronounced dead but revived from a morgue table was actually in state of "hibernation," hospital officials said.

Police officer Gary Wright, who was startled to hear the "corpse" swallow and try to breathe, was not impressed with the medical explanation.

"I'm telling you, I've seen people a hundred times in

my life and she was dead," Wright said. "You can believe me or not believe me. I saw a resurrection."

The woman was in satisfactory condition Sunday night in Burnham Hospital. Dr. Stanley Bobowski, a hospital pathologist, called the "resurrection" a medical "fluke."

"Her temperature was so low she didn't have to breathe or have a fast pulse. It's very rare. I think you read about it three or

four times a year in the country," Bobowski said.

The woman was pronounced dead Thursday afternoon after police — summoned by friends — found her lying still and cold on the living room floor of her apartment. Authorities later determined she had passed out from a combination of drugs and alcohol.

The officers, unsure what had happened to the woman, called detectives, who left the

body on the floor for two hours as they investigated the scene for a possible crime.

Then an ambulance took the woman to the hospital morgue. One police officer said at least 12 people saw the woman and believed she was dead.

But when the victim was placed on the morgue table, Wright said, he saw her swallow and try to breathe. The woman was then rushed to the emergency room for treatment.

# Mud slide dams river, floods small Utah town

**United Press International**  
THISTLE, Utah — The Spanish Fork River, dammed up by a mountain mud slide that turned it into a 3-mile-long lake, trapped Thistle with 50 feet of water, forcing evacuation of 50 people. Authorities feared the river would flood another town downstream.

"The town of Thistle is gone. The future, whether it will ever be again, is uncertain," Larry Hansen, Utah public safety commissioner, said at the site today.

State geologist Bruce Kaliser said Spanish Fork, a town of 500 people about 6 miles upstream from the slide area, is preparing for flooding. Hundreds of federal, state and local emergency workers attempted to secure the dirt dam to keep the water from coursing down the canyon.

"Of course there is a possibility of this dam breaking," he said. "It's a natural dam. Even if engineered dams break. We have no guarantee this dam will hold. And, if it breaks, Spanish Fork city will be threatened."

Spanish Fork Mayor Enoch Hallow said town officials believe only one area was low enough to be in danger.

"Most of the city is on a bench area and high enough to be safe," he said. "Of course, if a hill of water came down, we might be in trouble."

Thistle, a tiny railroad and farming town of about 50 people, is located 65 miles southeast of Lake City, was under as much as 50 feet of water Sunday after the mud slide in Spanish Fork Canyon backed up the riv-

ers, creating a lake extending 3 miles.

All of Thistle's residents, many of them retirees, were safely placed in emergency shelters in nearby Birdseye today while emergency workers battled the mud slide to prevent further flooding in the town of Spanish Fork miles downstream.

The slide, which began Wednesday night, has caused more than \$1 million in damage to railroad property and state roads in the canyon.

the history of Utah as far as the economic ramifications are concerned," Kaliser said. "There won't be another disaster like this for decades — I hope."

The mountain's mud slide, resulting from a long winter and a wet spring, had moved more than 17 feet since Wednesday and was creeping at 6 inches per hour Sunday.

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