

**THURSDAY**  
TODAY & next morning  
**HIGH 72** Mostly sunny and nice.  
**LOW 46**  
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# CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE



www.chronicleonline.com

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Meeting to discuss Homosassa Heritage Park

A public meeting, a requirement of the Florida Community Trust, benefactor of a grant to acquire property for the Homosassa Heritage Park, will take place from 6 to 7 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Old Homosassa Civic Club, 5530 S. Mason Creek Road. Future plans for the park will be presented.

### County seeks applications for Beverly Hills council

The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is seeking applications for the Beverly Hills Advisory Council. They are seeking two qualified regular members to fill the two-year terms that will expire Jan. 31, 2024.

Eligible applicants must reside full time and own property within the boundaries of the Beverly Hills Municipal Service Benefit Unit as approved by the BOCC.

The Beverly Hills Advisory Council meets at 10 a.m. the second Monday of every month at the Beverly Hills Civic Center, 1 Civic Circle. The purpose of this board is to provide street lighting and landscaping services for the Beverly Hills area.

Applications are due by Dec. 9 and can be accessed at [citrusbocc.com/boardapplication](http://citrusbocc.com/boardapplication). Completed applications should be sent to Citrus County Administration, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Suite 267, Lecanto, FL 34461.

### Man charged with killing 21-year-old woman in 1983

DELRAY BEACH — A man who had long been considered a person of interest in the killing of a 21-year-old South Florida woman has been arrested after 38 years, officials said.

Ralph Williams, 59, was arrested Monday in Jacksonville and charged with the death of Carla Lowe, whose beaten body was found Nov. 13, 1983, on a roadside, Delray Beach police said Tuesday.

Lowe had last been seen waiting for a train at an Amtrak station in Delray Beach, the South Florida SunSentinel reported.

Detectives said they searched the area for hours but never found anyone who had seen or heard anything suspicious.

The same day her body was found, Delray Beach police arrested Williams on grand theft auto and burglary charges, records show.

Williams' criminal record shows more than 20 arrests across Florida, on charges that include burglary; resisting an officer with violence; robbery with a gun or deadly weapon; selling, manufacturing or delivery of heroin and marijuana; and possession of burglary tools.

— From staff and wire reports

# Ex-deputy dies in shooting

## Steven Smolensky was a 25-year veteran of Citrus County Sheriff's Office

**BUSTER THOMPSON**  
Staff writer

A former Citrus County Sheriff's Office deputy who retired from the agency after 25 years of service was fatally shot while making a propane delivery in a Marion County town.

Marion County Sheriff's Office deputies found

52-year-old Steven Smolensky dead from numerous gunshot wounds at around 9:45 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 30, while responding to a verbal disturbance in the 15000 block of Southeast 180th Street in Weirsdale.

In connection to the deadly shooting,



Steven Smolensky

according to the sheriff's office on Wednesday, detectives arrested Weirsdale 38-year-old Steven Alan Swearingen on charges of second-degree murder, false imprisonment and possessing a firearm as a convicted felon.

Authorities jailed

Swearingen without a bond.

Smolensky started as a deputy with the Citrus County Sheriff's Office in June 1992, and retired from the agency in June 2017 as a duty officer with the Judicial and Juvenile Services Division.

Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast told the Chronicle on Wednesday Smolensky's life was cut

short while he was trying to enjoy time with his family and the fruits of his labor as a deputy.

"Your heart aches because it affects all of us," the sheriff said. "It has impacted everybody across the agency that knew him."

According to the Marion County Sheriff's

See SHOOTING/Page A2

# Cities get Christmas ball rolling

## Inverness lines up events for holidays

**FRED HIERS AND BUSTER THOMPSON**  
Staff writers



MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle file

Five-year-old McKenna Splitt must keep social distancing rules in mind as she and dozens of other children visit Santa on Friday, Dec. 4, 2020, at the city of Inverness' Light Up the Lake celebration at Liberty Park.

Inverness models itself as small town America and when it comes to Christmas, the holiday is no exception.

The city of about 7,500 people is planning a series of Christmas events to entertain its residents, children, and attract visitors to its downtown, parks, and businesses.

City Manager Eric Williams told the Chronicle that the celebrations are a reflection of the city.

"Because we're small-town America ... and people want to be here because it's small-town America," Williams said. "Everything we do ... is because we want to engage the community."

As for the number and types of events, Williams said, "I think we're in the sweet spot right now."

The events are meant to be "comfortable, warm and inviting," he said. Visitors and residents are encouraged to come to the events and enjoy downtown businesses, buy a meal, ice cream and buy some gifts, he said.

The city's first holiday event will be Santa on the Plaza on Friday, Dec. 3. Santa and wife Mrs. Claus will be available for visiting children from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Valerie Plaza, 207 Courthouse Square, Inverness.

Children will be invited to sit on Santa's lap and also meet School of Dance Arts' Nutcracker characters.

Also from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, the School of Dance Arts will present excerpts from the Nutcracker Suite. The event will be at the Valerie Theatre, 207 Courthouse Square, Inverness. The price

See more local Christmas events on Page A3.

See EVENTS/Page A2

# Christmas on the Square heads to Crystal River

**BUSTER THOMPSON**  
Staff writer

Crystal River is hosting three days of holiday magic in its downtown with Christmas on the Square.

City staff, Crystal River Main Street and the Citrus County

Chamber of Commerce are putting on the event, which will feature a synthetic ice skating rink alongside a 5,000-square-foot themed maze for ticket holders to enjoy each day.

"I can't believe it's here," Main Street Executive Director Meredith Linley said about the

festive outing, which was inspired by a request the Crystal River Middle School student government group made in 2018. "It's finally happening."

Christmas on Square will be from 3 to 10 p.m. on Friday, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to

9 p.m. on Sunday at Crystal River Town Square, 559 N. Citrus Ave.

Anyone who skates on the open-air "ice" rink must have a ticket, including adults accompanying children. Skates

See SQUARE/Page A2

# Prendergast calls for bigger sheriff's office

## Says state's population boom will bring new challenges for law enforcement



Mike Prendergast  
Citrus County Sheriff.

**BUSTER THOMPSON**  
Staff writer

Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast is calling for backup.

Expecting Florida and the county's population to boom, the sheriff said his agency has to have more staff, equipment and facilities to take on the additional demands for

services and protection. "We have a lot of work to do," Prendergast told the Chronicle Editorial Board Wednesday, Dec. 1. "We've got to take care of our citizens."

By 2030, Prendergast said, Sunshine State residents are expected to increase by 20%, prompting the sheriff's office to spearhead an updated

framework for local responses.

"That's a huge number of new citizens, and they're impacting every community across the state," he said, "and our community is seeing its fair share of that ... just by the building permits going in for new construction."

Prendergast said his goal is to approach the county

commission by the spring of 2022 with funding requests to bolster his forces, including a possible pitch to increase the local sales tax.

"We've got to have these conversations now," he said. "The revenue has to come from somewhere."

When Prendergast

See SHERIFF/Page A2



# SHOOTING

Continued from Page A1

Office, Smolensky went to the Weirsdale address to fill up a propane tank as a Suburban Propane employee.

Swearingen told investigators in a police interview he believed Smolensky was there to "fill the home with propane," prompting him to arm himself with a pistol and confront Smolensky about his presence, according to the sheriff's office.

Swearingen said Smolensky told him he was there to fill a propane tank, and Swearingen later admitted to shooting Smolensky multiple

times after holding him at gunpoint so he couldn't get to his truck.

According to the Marion County Sheriff's Office, Swearingen has "an extensive criminal history," including convictions for crimes involving violence against law enforcement.

Florida Department of Corrections records show Swearingen was released from state prison in July 2011 after serving a two-year sentence for June 2009 charges from Marion County of resisting an officer with violence, felony DUI and driving with a suspended license.

During his tenure with the Citrus County Sheriff's Office, Smolensky



Steven Swearingen

obtained numerous accolades, including a service award, perfect attendance honors, a commemorative service award, a Judicial Services Unit Citation and 21 letters of commendation.

"A 25-year career is a legacy to selfless service and dedication to a calling higher than yourself," Prendergast said, "and, in this case, he did his job to the standard of excellence we expect in a professional."

Contact Chronicle reporter Buster Thompson at 352-564-2916, [bthompson@chronicleonline.com](mailto:bthompson@chronicleonline.com) or visit [tinyurl.com/ycn2ahso](http://tinyurl.com/ycn2ahso) to see more of his stories.

# SQUARE

Continued from Page A1

— from sizes for toddlers up to adult 13s — will also be provided.

"It is not real ice," Linley pointed out. "It's a synthetic ice skating rink."

A 30-minute skating session is \$10 per person, and \$3 more gets 30 minutes in the "Snow-Mazing Christmas" maze. A one-hour wristband for the maze is \$5.

Limited walk-up tickets will be available to purchase with cash, checks or Venmo, but it's encouraged tickets be bought online through EventBrite at [tinyurl.com/2sr3sart](http://tinyurl.com/2sr3sart) to guarantee a spot and keep waits short. Roughly 25% of tickets have been sold.

Online tickets to attend a specific day will be available for purchase up until 9 a.m. on that day.

Santa also plans to make an appearance each day, alongside food vendors, live music and Main Street and the chamber selling beer and wine.

For more information about Christmas on the Square, visit [tinyurl.com/paj3ye7x](http://tinyurl.com/paj3ye7x).

Crystal River's tree lighting festival will also coincide with Christmas on Square from 3 to 10 p.m. on Friday, at town square, with Duke Energy presenting the 6 p.m. tree lighting.

Crystal River's "Christmas in Toyland" parade,

hosted by the chamber, starts at 6 p.m. Saturday with floats beginning their southern route down U.S. 19, from Citrus Avenue to Paradise Point.

Southbound lanes of U.S. 19 will be closed between 5 and 10:30 p.m. from Northwest First Avenue to West Fort Island Trail. Northbound lanes of the highway will remain open to handle traffic traveling in either direction.

Chamber President and CEO Josh Wooten said the parade will be a return to normal after COVID-19 caused organizers last year to plan a reverse parade.

"We're back to the full force and traditional parade," he said, "and we're very excited about it ... and the weather looks like it's going to be great."

Chase Palmes will be the parade's grand marshal.

"He's done so much," Wooten said, "and created so much investment in our community."

Citrus County Sheriff's Office deputies will also be on hand to help keep parade goers safe.

"There's going to be all kinds of precautions," Wooten said. "It's going to be a good time."

For questions or concerns about the parade, contact the chamber's events manager, Erika Corley, at either events@CitrusCountyChamber.com or 352-795-3149.

# EVENTS

Continued from Page A1

of admission is \$20 per person. For information about the event, call 341-7850.

■ On Dec. 4, the city will host its annual Light Up the Lake and Light Up the Park. The community program is a series of events at Liberty Park, 300 N. Apopka Ave., Inverness and begins at 5 p.m.

At 5:45 p.m. the Cove Lighted Boat Parade will come by Big Lake Henderson at the park. At 6:15 p.m., the city will host its annual tree lighting and lighting of the decorated light posts, decorated by local families, businesses, and organizations. The city will give awards to the best decorated light posts in various categories.

■ On Friday, Dec. 10, the Valerie Theatre will host a live performance of "The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge." The play will run from 7 to 9 p.m. and focuses on Scrooge suing Jacob Marley and the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future for breaking and entering his home, slander, attempted murder, and emotional distress.

The cost of a ticket is \$15. The Valerie Theatre is at 207 Courthouse Square, Inverness. Tickets can be purchased online at <https://tinyurl.com/bdhjjzx4>.

■ On Saturday, Dec. 11, Inverness will host the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade. The event begins noon and lasts about an hour.

The parade will run from Publix on Main

Street to Cooter Pond.

■ On Dec. 11 and Dec. 12, the Valerie Theatre will again host "The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge." The Dec. 11 event will be from 7 to 9 p.m. The Sunday, Dec. 12, show will be 2 to 4 p.m.

■ On Monday, Dec. 13, the Valerie will play the 1954 classic movie "White Christmas" at the Valerie Theatre, 207 Courthouse Square, Inverness. Admission is free, but tickets can only be obtained at the box office on show day. The movie's cast includes Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney. Showtime is 3 p.m.

■ On Friday, Dec. 17, the city will host a free movie at the Liberty Park lawn, 268 N. Apopka Ave., Inverness. The movie will be "Polar Express." Hot cocoa and snacks will be available. Bring lawn

chairs and blankets.

■ On Wednesday, Dec. 22, the Valerie Theatre will show the movie "Elf" at 3 p.m. Tickets will be \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, and \$4 for children.

Liz Fernley, the city's director of marketing, events and cultural arts, said the city was eager to have a lot of good things happening.

Inverness Parks and Recreation director Woody Worley said the large number of Inverness holiday events grew over time and now are a good match to what the residents and visitors want to see and participate in.

Fernley said many of the events are possible only because of volunteers, the Valerie Theatre staff, and other organizations such as School of Dance Arts.

# SHERIFF

Continued from Page A1

presents his strategies to county leaders, he'll be pulling recommendations from a University of North Florida study analyzing the local law enforcement staffing needs.

"...To determine how much we can bring on and absorb in our agency in any given year," he said, "and move the agency forward to meet current demands for calls for service, as well as the future demands that we know are just over the horizon."

Prendergast said calls for service to the county's 911 center climbed each year from 174,459 in 2017 to 205,390 in 2019 before slowing in 2020 to 201,354 because of COVID-19 lockdowns.

When Prendergast took over the sheriff's office in January 2017, his number of sworn personnel was at 208.

Recruitment efforts and sign-on bonuses since then have increased the sworn officer roster up to 220. There are total 408 sheriff's office employees.

Prendergast said more deputies and support staff in varying capacities are needed to tackle not just the complex emergencies but also the low-priority calls going unanswered.

"With a population of a 154,000, that gives us about one deputy per 700 citizens. ... The national average is 2.4 sworn law enforcement officers per 1,000 inhabitants," he said. "We're clearly drastically below the national average when it comes to our ability to do things we

need to do."

Prendergast said he'd like to add 22 sworn and 10 unsworn positions to the sheriff's office, which could cost a total \$4.3 million in the first year.

"It has taken me to 2021," he said, "and I'm still, 3 1/2 years later, not healthy when it comes to personnel and resourcing — the human capital that we need to do the job here in our community."

Like his counterparts across the nation, Prendergast said the sheriff's office is having to compete with the lucrative benefits and pay the private sector

offers, and also a lack of community support for the law enforcement profession.

"The things that we see that get sensationalized overnight that plays out on our television screens or plays out on the front pages of newspapers has an impact on our ability to retain folks we've got working for us," he said, "as well as to recruit new folks to join our team."

Prendergast said the \$73 million proposal from Gov. Ron DeSantis to raise starting salaries for state law enforcement officers by 20% also might even

hurt his own ability to recruit and retain.

While the intentions of the governor's plan are sincere, the sheriff said, the outcome could pull more employee interest away from local policing agencies.

"I applaud the governor's initiative," Prendergast said, "but this is going to make our job at local level that much more difficult. ... Who can absorb a 20% increase right now?"

Prendergast said numerous and high health insurance claims stemming from COVID-19 and other serious illnesses

also hit the sheriff's office budget hard in 2020, resulting in the agency having to take \$2.5 million from reserves to maintain solvency as a self-insured entity.

Along with bringing on more employees, Prendergast would also like to start implementing an "overdue" body-worn camera program to help ensure responsible and lawful policing.

"It tells the story and, in some cases, it may allow us to weed out a bad apple before something escalates," he said, "and becomes a truly untenable

event that nobody would wish to happen on a community."

Another priority for Prendergast is to create one-stop-shop facility for deputies to prepare for their 12-hour shifts, a larger fleet of patrol cars to be maintained, more evidence to be stored and outside organizations to host bigger training functions.

"As we posture ourselves for the future, we're running out of real estate," he said. "We don't have enough facilities to support the mission set we have right now."

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*Around the*  
**COUNTY**

**Fire crews called to Lecanto post office**

A malfunctioning air-conditioning unit prompted Citrus County Fire Rescue crews to respond the morning of Wednesday, Dec. 1, to the Lecanto post office.

According to the fire department, engines were dispatched at 10:08 a.m. to the U.S. Postal Service building at 320 S. Lecanto Highway, where they arrived at 10:11 a.m. to find smoke emitting from a faulty air-conditioning system. No injuries were reported.

—Buster Thompson/Staff writer

**Celebrate the holiday season with libraries**

Each Citrus Library branch hosts their own holiday celebration to bring community members of all ages together for a day of cheer.

■ The Floral City branch starts the festivities alongside the Floral City Heritage Days Festival. At 5 p.m. Dec. 3, enjoy a Holiday Story Walk. Then, come inside for Candles and Carols Cafe. Stop by again from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 4 to create themed crafts for any age.

■ The Homosassa branch will celebrate from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 7 with craft kits and a holiday photo booth.

■ Central Ridge will host a musical get together from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 9 with crafts, refreshments and card making.

■ The Coastal Region branch will hold their celebration at 1 p.m. Dec. 10 with holiday craft stations, party games and karaoke.

■ Finally, the Lakes Region branch will celebrate from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Dec. 13 by making crafts. Stick around for a musical performance by the Nature Coast Dulcimer Players and gingerbread house building. Those interested in building will need to pre-register. All other programs are free with no registration required. For additional information, call your local library, visit citruslibraries.org or follow @CitrusLibraries on Facebook and Instagram.

**Shop local at the Market at the Depot, Inverness**

Stop by the Market at the Depot from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 4, at 300 N. Apopka Ave. in Inverness. The Market is held the first and third Saturday of each month.

For more information, contact the city of Inverness at 352-726-3913.

— From staff reports

**Correction**

County Commissioner Jeff Kinnard said the landfill has only about eight or nine years of air space left, so capacity is currently insufficient. A story in the Wednesday edition contained incorrect information.

Readers can alert the Citrus County Chronicle to any errors in news articles by emailing community@chronicleonline.com or by calling 352-563-5660.

# Hospital gets new name

*Bayfront Health Seven Rivers outlines future health focus as Bravera Health Seven Rivers*

**FRED HIERS**  
Staff writer

Bayfront Health Seven Rivers announced Tuesday a name change for the Crystal River hospital.

The name change to Bravera Health stems from a 2020 sale of Bayfront Health St. Petersburg to Orland Health. In the deal, the Tampa Bay hospital keeps its name and other Bayfront hospitals throughout Florida must change theirs. The change is effective immediately.

During an unveiling ceremony of the new name, Linda Stockton, Bravera Health Seven Rivers CEO, told the 150 people attending the event, that the name change will be followed in 2022 with a growth in services in former Bayfront facilities in Citrus County.

Stockton said during the ceremony the services provided at Bravera Health Seven Rivers are growing to meet the health care needs of Citrus County.

Stockton would not be specific about the changes but said that in 2022 they would include:

■ The hospital adding robotic surgery and private patient rooms in a dedicated surgical unit.

■ A second cardiac catheterization lab.

■ Expanding the facility's spine surgery service line.

■ An additional physician at Bravera Medical Group's Crystal River location, which offers primary care and gynecology.

■ Bravera Medical Group also will add specialty care directly to neighborhoods with the addition of general and

bariatric surgeons to new locations in Homosassa and Citrus Hills.

Those entities transitioning to Bravera Health include:

■ Bayfront Health Seven Rivers is now Bravera Health Seven Rivers.

■ Bayfront Health ER Citrus Hills is now Bravera Health ER Citrus Hills.

■ Bayfront Health Brooksville is now Bravera Health Brooksville.

■ Bayfront Health Spring Hill is now Bravera Health Spring Hill.

■ Bayfront Health Medical Group is now Bravera Medical Group in Crystal River.

During the ceremony, Stockton also thanked the hospital employees who worked tirelessly during the worst of the COVID pandemic and called them the "backbone" of the health care facility.

She also thanked volunteers for their donated work.

"Everyone has worked so hard together to get to this point," she said.

"Our communities, our



FRED HIERS/For the Chronicle

**Bravera Health Seven Rivers CEO Linda Stockton unveils new hospital name. The Crystal River hospital was formerly Bayfront Health Seven Rivers**

patients, and our hospital staff members, are brave and resilient," Stockton said at the ceremony. "Our new name embodies that spirit by combining 'brave' and 'vera,' the root word for true."

Bravera spokeswoman Jennifer Siem told the Chronicle that the three local facilities will coordinate as a group and that will allow them to better focus on local needs and services that best fit here.

Bravera Health includes

372 licensed beds and about 700 physicians on the combined active medical staff, according to Siem.

The system of three hospitals had more than 250,000 patient encounters in 2020, including 67,000 emergency room visits and 14,800 inpatient admissions.

The Bravera facilities are owned by Community Health Services, based in Franklin, Tennessee. The company owns or operates more than 80 hospitals.

## Other Christmas happenings around the community

*Special to the Chronicle*

**Nature Coast Dulcimer Players concerts**

The Nature Coast Dulcimer Players will be performing Christmas and traditional music at the following venues in December:

"Candles and Carols" from 6 to 9 p.m. Dec. 3 in the front yard of the Love House on East Orange Avenue in Floral City.

1 to 2:30 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Central Ridge Library, 425 W. Roosevelt Blvd. in Beverly Hills.

10 a.m. to noon Dec. 13 at the Lakes Region Library, 1511 Druid Road in Inverness.

**Tri-County R/C Club annual Santa Fly-In**

The Tri-County R/C Club will be having their annual Santa Fly-In and festivities will begin at 8:30 a.m. Dec. 4 at the Rainbow R/C Park, 11729 Bridges Road in Dunnellon. Pilot registration opens at 8:30 a.m. with a pilot meeting at 9 a.m.

This event is in cooperation with the Marines Toys for Tots organization. The landing fee for pilots is a new, unwrapped toy with a value of at least \$15. A cash gift is acceptable and will be used to purchase toys.

All spectators are welcome and encouraged to donate. Food will be available at the Rainbow café.

For more information, contact Chris Wieland at 352-212-9333 or carolts@tampabay.rr.com.

**"Trains for Christmas" train show**

The free train show, "Trains for Christmas," will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 4 and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 5 at Holy Faith Episcopal Church, 19924 W. Blue Cove Drive in Dunnellon.

There will be multiple layouts, no vendors and a raffle. For more information, contact Bill Quast at 352-209-5422 or wmquast@gmail.com.

**Enjoy the lights at Fort Cooper State Park**

Attend "Nights of Lights" at Fort Cooper

**Groups decorate light posts**



MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle

**Eleven-year-old Colton Olson, a member of the Diamond Academy travel baseball team, strings decorations on a lamp post Wednesday, Dec. 1, in Liberty Park in Inverness. This post and 30 others like it will be decorated for display in the Downtown Depot District and Liberty Park areas as part of Light Up Liberty, an event Saturday evening. Community organizations, businesses and others are decorating the lamp posts that will be judged and winners announced in four categories Saturday at the part at 300 N. Apopka Ave. The event begins at 5 p.m.**

State Park at 6 p.m. Dec. 10, 3100 S. Old Floral City Road in Inverness.

Enjoy the park with music, decorations and thousands of lights as you stroll along the walkways and through the buildings. There will also be free refreshments and a visit

with Santa.

Admission is a donation of non-perishable food or a new toy for Citrus United Basket (CUB) and/or a donation of pet food for Citrus County Animal Services. All proceeds from monetary donations will be used to fund this

and future events.

This year's challenge is "Fill CUB's Truck!" During the two-day event, donations will be loaded into the CUB truck by a local Boy Scout Troop. For more information, visit thefriendsoffortcooper.com.

Created by Donna VanLiere, Eddie Carswell and arranged by J. Daniel Smith, it blends well-known Christmas carols and comforting music to enhance the drama of a girl who just wants to buy a pair of shoes for her sick mother.

The musical will be at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 18 and 10:45 a.m. Dec. 19 at the church, 9324 N. Elkcam Blvd. in Citrus Springs. All are welcome and no church affiliation is required. For more information, visit northoakbc.org or call 352-489-1688.

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Today's HOROSCOPES

Birthdays: Streamlining your life will make it easier for you to get where you want to go...

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 21): Pick up the pace and make every move count for something.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Pay attention, focus on detail, lock in what you want and don't stop until you reach your goal.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19): Choose your words wisely. An emotional argument will distance you from a loved one.

Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20): Joint ventures aren't in your best interest. Over-paying for something, taking on too much debt or promising more than you can deliver will drag you down.

Aries (March 21-April 19): Check your financial situation, and update investments, contracts and any other timely paperwork.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Do your homework. If you jump into something prematurely, you'll regret it.

Gemini (May 21-June 20): Set your sights on your goals and press on. Talks will bring you closer to your goal, and your suggestions will be welcome.

Cancer (June 21-July 22): Don't be shy; express your thoughts and feelings, and you'll come up with an extraordinary plan.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Anger will cause a stalemate with someone who can influence your lifestyle moving forward.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Put your heart and soul into what and who is important to you.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Take matters into your own hands. Opportunity depends on you and how you handle others as well as tricky situations that surface.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22): You'll be stuck in a difficult situation if you let your emotions take the reins.

ENTERTAINMENT

Stephanopoulos interviews Baldwin about set shooting

NEW YORK — ABC will air an hourlong special Thursday featuring George Stephanopoulos' interview with Alec Baldwin about the fatal shooting on the set of the movie 'Rust.'

Baldwin fired a prop gun that had live ammunition on the set in New Mexico on Oct. 21, killing cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and injuring director Joel Souza.

It will be the first time Baldwin has spoken in depth on screen about the shooting. The interview will air on ABC at 8 p.m. Thursday and stream on Hulu later that evening.

ABC said a two-hour special '20/20' next week will examine the investigation into the shooting in more depth.

Police: Smollett 'upset' camera didn't record attack

CHICAGO — Jussie Smollett, who is accused of lying to police when he reported he was the victim of racist and homophobic attack in downtown Chicago, appeared troubled when he was told that a surveillance camera did not record the alleged assault.

Chicago police detective Kimberly Murray described how she took a report from the former 'Empire' actor the morning of the January 2019 attack at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, where he was being treated for injuries that Murray described as 'minor.'



Henry Cavill poses for photographers upon arrival at the World premiere for the second season of 'The Witcher' in London Wednesday, Dec. 1.

returning home after buying a sandwich.

Murray said Smollett — who said he had received a threatening phone call days earlier — refused to hand over his cellphone, which the detective said could help police piece together a timeline of what happened.

She also said Smollett was 'upset' when she told him a surveillance camera in the area didn't capture the alleged attack because it was pointed away from the scene.

A lead investigator in the case, Michael Theis, said Tuesday that two brothers who worked with Smollett on the Chicago set of 'Empire' later detailed for police how the actor orchestrated the hoax and they participated in it.

Theis, who is now assistant

director for research and development for the Chicago Police Department, said roughly two dozen detectives clocked some 3,000 hours on the investigation, rebutting a defense attorney's statement that they rushed to judgment.

'The crime was a hate crime, a horrible hate crime,' Theis said, noting Smollett — who is Black and gay — reported that his attackers put a noose around his neck and poured bleach on him.

Defense attorney Nyne Uche has said the brothers attacked Smollett because they didn't like him 'because of who he is,' and suggested Tuesday that the brothers were homophobic.

Smollett is charged with six counts of felony disorderly conduct for making what prosecutors say was a false police report.

— From wire reports

Today in HISTORY

Today is Thursday, Dec. 2, the 336th day of 2021. There are 29 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight: On Dec. 2, 1859, militant abolitionist John Brown was hanged for his raid on Harpers Ferry the previous October.

On this date: In 1823, President James Monroe outlined his doctrine opposing European expansion in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1942, an artificially created, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction was demonstrated for the first time at the University of Chicago.

In 1993, Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar was shot to death by security forces in Medellin.

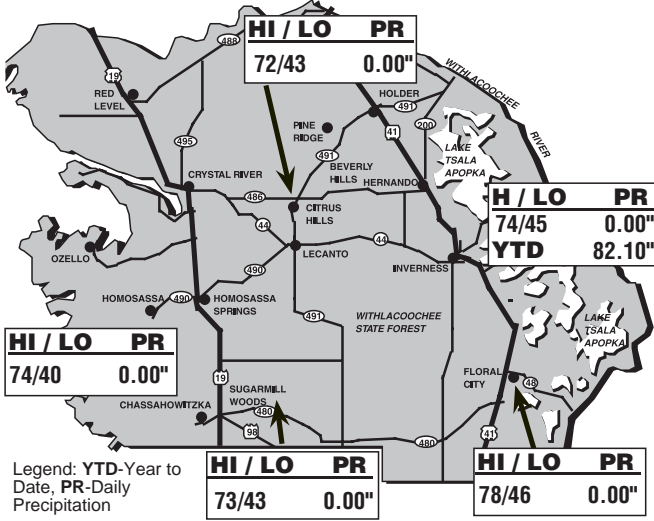
Ten years ago: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi vowed to work together to promote democratic reforms in Suu Kyi's long-isolated and authoritarian homeland.

Five years ago: A fire that raced through an illegally converted warehouse in Oakland, California, during a dance party killed 36 people.

One year ago: Britain became the first country in the world to authorize a rigorously tested COVID-19 vaccine, giving the go-ahead for emergency use of the vaccine developed by American drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech.

Today's Birthdays: Former Attorney General Edwin Meese III is 90. Former Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., is 82. Actor Cathy Lee Crosby is 77. Movie director Penelope Spheeris is 76. Country singer Joe Henry is 61. Rock musician Rick Savage (Def Leppard) is 61. Actor Brendan Coyle is 58. Actor Joe Lo Truglio is 51. International Tennis Hall of Famer Monica Seles is 48. Singer Nelly Furtado is 43. Pop singer Britney Spears is 40. Actor-singer Jana Kramer is 38. Actor Yvonne Orji is 38. Actor Daniela Ruah is 38. NFL quarterback Aaron Rodgers is 38. Pop singer-songwriter Charlie Puth is 30.

YESTERDAY'S WEATHER



THREE DAY OUTLOOK

Forecast for the next three days: Today & Tomorrow Morning, Friday & Saturday Morning, Saturday & Sunday Morning.

ALMANAC table with columns for Temperature, Dew Point, Humidity, Pollen Count, Air Quality, and Barometric Pressure.

SOLAR TABLES showing minor and major times for morning and afternoon on Dec 02 and Dec 03.

CELESTIAL OUTLOOK table showing sunset, sunrise, moonrise, and moonset times for Dec 4, 10, 18, and 26.

BURN CONDITIONS: Today's Fire Danger Index is MODERATE. There is no burn ban.

WATERING RULES: For established lawns and landscapes, irrigation may occur during only one (1) of the specified time periods.

Addresses with house numbers ending in: 0-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, Common Areas.

TIDES: \*From mouths of rivers, \*\*At King's Bay, \*\*\*At Mason's Creek.

Key to Conditions: c=cloudy, fg=fog, hz=haze, mc=mostly cloudy, pc=partly cloudy, ra=rain, rs=rain, sn=sunny, sh=showers, sm=snow, sn=snow, ss=snow showers, t=thunderstorms.

FLORIDA TEMPERATURES

Table of Florida temperatures by city: Daytona Bch., Fort Lauderdale, Fort Myers, Gainesville, Homestead, Jacksonville, Key West, Lakeland, Melbourne, Miami, Ocala, Orlando, Pensacola, Sarasota, Tallahassee, Tampa, Vero Beach, W. Palm Bch.

MARINE OUTLOOK

Today: North winds around 10 knots. Seas 2 feet or less. Bay and inland waters a light chop.

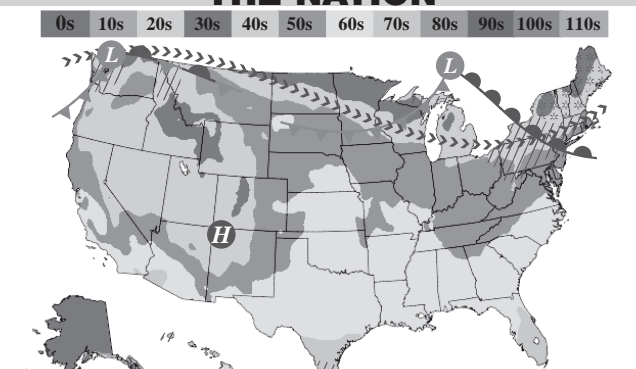
Gulf water temperature 63 degrees. Taken at Crystal River.

LAKE LEVELS

Table of Lake Levels for Withlacoochee at Holder, Tsala Apopka-Hernando, Tsala Apopka-Inverness, and Tsala Apopka-Floral City.

Levels reported in feet above sea level. Flood stage for lakes are based on 2.33-year flood, the mean-annual flood which has a 43-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any one year.

THE NATION



FORECAST FOR 3:00 P.M. Thursday

Forecast for 3:00 P.M. Thursday table with columns for City, H, L, Pcp, H, L, Fcst, City, H, L, Pcp, H, L, Fcst.

WORLD CITIES

World Cities table listing cities like Lisbon, London, Madrid, Acapulco, Amsterdam, Athens, Beijing, Berlin, Bermuda, Cairo, Calgary, Havana, Hong Kong, Jerusalem and their weather forecasts.

ALERT CITRUS SIGNUP

- To register for the Citrus County Sheriff's Office's Alert Citrus weather program, visit www.sheriffcitrus.org and click on the links to register. Create a profile, list how you want to be contacted in case of a weather emergency...

CHRONICLE logo and website information: www.chronicleonline.com

To start your subscription: Call now for home delivery by our carriers: Citrus County: 352-563-5655. 13 weeks: \$65.72 - 26 weeks: \$117.09 - 1 year: \$193.46

For home delivery by mail: In Florida: \$67.34 for 13 weeks. Elsewhere in U.S.: \$78.26 for 13 weeks

Contact us about circulation/delivery issues: 352-563-5655. Questions: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday to Friday.

I want to place an ad: To place a classified ad: Citrus - 352-563-5966. To place a display ad: Marion - 888-852-2340

I want to send information to the Chronicle: MAIL: 1624 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429

Who's in charge: Trina Murphy, Publisher; Jeff Bryan, Editor; Tom Feeney, Production Director; Trista Stokes, Advertising Director; Jackie Lytton, Circulation Director; Hillary Hammerle, Circulation Customer Service Leader; Theresa Holland, Classified Leader; John Murphy, Digital Leader.

Report a news tip: News stories, Sports stories, Opinion page/letters, Sound Off.

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*For the* **RECORD**

*Around the* **STATE**

**Citrus County Sheriff's Office**

**Arrests**

■ **Jessica Danielle Labance**, 39, Inverness, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **Corey Lee Skeens**, 35, Crystal River, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **Mitchell Carl McGahegan**, 36, Homosassa, arrested Nov. 30 for falsely identify or give false name to LEO and violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **Thomas Mitchell Rozycki**, 37, Homosassa, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.

■ **Grant Wiley Yates**, 45, Hernando, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **Everett Van Davis**, 61, Hernando, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **James Douglas Watson**, 48, Hernando, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **Lamar Lacarlos Gibson**, 24, Inverness, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **Kayleigh Reane Morris**, 25, Beverly Hills, arrested Nov. 30 for violation of probation. No bond.  
 ■ **Ronald Calvin Mills**, 39, Inverness, arrested Nov.

30 for drug paraphernalia.  
 ■ **William Dobbs Page**, 48, Homosassa, arrested Nov. 30 for retail petit theft.  
 ■ **Joseph Thomas Hodge**, 35, Ocala, arrested Nov. 30 for driving while license suspended/revoked (habitual traffic offender). Bond \$2,000.

**Burglaries, thefts and vandalisms**

Here are the reported burglaries, thefts and vandalisms (criminal mischiefs) released Wednesday, Dec. 1, by the Citrus County Sheriff's Office:  
 ■ Theft, 10:20 a.m. Nov. 30, off of Lyle Avenue, Crystal River.  
 ■ Auto theft, 2:01 p.m.

Nov. 30, off of North Tamarind Avenue, Hernando.  
 ■ Theft, 4 p.m. Nov. 30, off of Gulf-to-Lake Highway, Inverness.  
 ■ Theft, 8:21 p.m. Nov. 30, off of Gulf-to-Lake Highway, Inverness.  
 ■ Criminal mischief, 4:25 a.m. Dec. 1, off of West Avenue, Inverness.  
 Those with information about these offenses could be eligible for a cash reward by contacting Citrus County Crime Stoppers at 888-269-8477. Tipsters remain anonymous.  
 Tips can also be reported to the sheriff's office by calling the agency's non-emergency line, 352-249-2790.

**Sheriff: 'Prolific offender' accused of assaulting woman**

**KISSIMMEE** — A man with a lengthy criminal history is accused of sexually assaulting an 18-year-old woman as she delivered pizza to a central Florida apartment complex, officials said.  
 U.S. marshals arrested Osvaldo Figueroa, 55, Tuesday in nearby Lake County on a sexual battery charge, Osceola County Sheriff Marco López said during a news conference.  
 He said the woman was assaulted Sunday in an elevator at the apartment complex in Kissimmee.

During a livestream of his arrival at the sheriff's office, Figueroa went on an expletive-laced rant, denying the allegations to reporters who were gathered there. The video posted on the sheriff's Facebook page shows Figueroa becoming agitated and screaming as he was led by deputies.  
 "I didn't do this, bro," he said. "I didn't rape nobody."  
 López called Figueroa a "prolific offender," adding he was released from prison earlier this year after serving time for trafficking in stolen property. He said Figueroa has an extensive criminal history over a 35-year span that includes 70 to 80 arrests and multiple convictions on drug and robbery charges.  
 — From wire reports

**2021 Christmas Giveaway**

**Holiday Happiness And Prizes Galore**

**FROM NOV. 26 - DEC. 13**

**ONE PRIZE EACH WEEKDAY**

**GREEN THUMB PACKAGE - \$150 VALUE**



**BUDDY & FRED'S HARDWARE**  
 Located In Food Ranch Plaza  
 44 Highway 19 North • Inglis, FL 34449  
**352-447-2600**  
 Package Includes a green wheelbarrow filled with gardening items  
 BuddyandFredsHardware.com

**NOV 26**

**LET IT SNOW SNOWMAN BASKET - \$100 VALUE**



**WIPPLY WINDMILLS**  
 18 U.S. Hwy. 19 North, Inglis  
**352-447-5595**  
 MON - THUR 10 AM - 3 PM  
 SAT 10 AM - 4 PM • SUN 11 AM - 3 PM

**NOV 29**

**TRAILBLAZER FIREARMS LIFECARD .22WMR SINGLE ACTION HANDGUN SNIPER GREY - \$349 VALUE**



**FEAR NO EVIL GUNS & AMMO**  
 46 HWY 19 NORTH INGLIS, FL, 34449  
**352-447-5595**  
 www.fearnoevilguns.com/

\*Winner must comply with all state and federal gun laws. Firearm is not transferable

**NOV 30**

**PATIO LIGHTS - \$60 VALUE**



**CITRUS Liquidation**  
 2615 N Florida Ave, Hernando, FL 34442  
**844-737-3388**

**DEC 01**

**ENTER TO WIN TODAY'S GIFT DECEMBER 2, 2021**

**\$108.94 VALUE**



**WISTERIA BOUTIQUE BASKET**

**WISTERIA BOUTIQUE BASKET - \$108.94 VALUE**



**Wisteria boutique**  
 2408 N. Heritage Oaks Path, Citrus Hills  
**352-637-5437**

**DEC 02**

**FUN FISHING PACKAGE - \$75+ VALUE**



**PETESPIER**  
 CRYSTAL RIVER, FL  
 1 SW 1st Place  
 Crystal River, FL 34429  
**352-795-3302**

**DEC 03**

**Wisteria boutique**

**Items in Basket**

- Party Purse—Waterproof thermal lined tote bag for wine, appetizers and food
- Michel Design Works: Bar soap, Soap dish, Travel candle, Cocktail napkins
- Silli Mitt- Oven Mitt
- \$25 Gift Certificate

**162 N. Florida Ave., Inverness**  
**352-637-5437**  
 WWW.CHRONICLEONLINE.COM/CONTESTS

**GIFT BASKET, MASSAGE, GIFT CERTIFICATE & OILS - \$100 VALUE**



**MARY JANE WELLNESS CLINIC**  
 1321 SE Hwy 19, Suite B  
 Crystal River, FL 34429  
**(352) 794-3544**  
 maryjanewellnessclinic.com

**DEC 06**

**POTTED PLANTS & GIFT CERTIFICATE - \$100 VALUE**



**Utopia Interior Landscapes**  
 Jimmy White  
**727-280-3388**  
 324 S. Kensington Ave.  
 Lecanto, FL 34461

**DEC 07** SALES • LEASING • MAINTENANCE

**BASKET OF GOODIES & GIFT CERTIFICATE - \$100 VALUE**



**GENERAL STORE**  
 • Simply Southern Apparel  
 • Old Fashion Candy & Sodas  
 • Blue Bell Ice Cream  
 • Amish Jar Goods  
 • Large Selection of Country & Primitive Home Decor

**639 N. Citrus Avenue**  
**352-564-0311**

**DEC 08**

**STERLING SILVER SAND DOLLAR - \$85 VALUE**



**Jim Green Jewelers**  
 Crystal River Shopping Center  
 1665 SE HWY. 19, Crystal River  
**352-563-0633**

**DEC 09** **STERLING SILVER SAND DOLLAR WITH WHITE TOPAZ ACCENTS DESIGNER ALAMEA**

**\$100 GIFT CERTIFICATE**



**BABY BARGAINS**  
 Proudly serving Citrus County since 1998  
 162 N. Florida Ave., Inverness  
**352-637-5437**

**DEC 10**

**EATING WITH PURPOSE CULINARY GIFT BASKET - \$85 VALUE**



**Gastroenterology Associates**  
 Crystal River Office & Inverness Office  
**352-563-2450**  
 www.citrusge.com

**DEC 13**

**Enter Everyday as many times as you like!**  
**www.chronicleonline.com/contests**

# 22nd annual fundraising gala a success

### Special to the Chronicle

Citrus Pregnancy Center held its annual fundraising gala on Nov. 14 at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Inverness.

In 2020, Citrus Pregnancy Center had to do a virtual fundraiser, but returned in person this year.

Food was catered by Bell's Catering and there were 332 guests in attendance. Guest meals were served by youth groups from various churches.

The highlight of the evening was the "Celebration of Families." Women and men, along with their babies and children came in and guests were able to see the real impact that Citrus Pregnancy Center is having in the community.

The youngest baby was 3 weeks old and oldest child was 17 years old. Seeing the generational impact Citrus Pregnancy Center has on families brought many guests to tears.

These moms and dads participate in the parenting training program and dads can also attend the fatherhood training offered by Citrus Pregnancy Center.

To learn more, visit [CitrusPregnancy.org](http://CitrusPregnancy.org).



Special to the Chronicle

ABOVE and BELOW: The Citrus Pregnancy Center's 22nd annual fundraising gala saw 332 guests. After a virtual gala in 2020, they returned to in-person festivities this year. TOP RIGHT: Guest meals were served by youth groups from various churches.



5014-1202 THCRN  
**CITRUS COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
Thursday, December 16, 2021  
at 9:00 AM  
Lecanto Government Building  
3600 West Sovereign Path, Room 166  
Lecanto, Florida 34461

MICHAEL FACEMYER, CHAIR  
DAVID BRAMBLETT, 1st VICE CHAIR  
ROBERT BASS, 2nd VICE CHAIR  
RICHARD BARMES  
JAMES ROYS  
KURT STONE  
STACEY WORTHINGTON  
WILLIAM BURDA (Alternate)  
CAROLE SCRAGG (Alternate)  
CHUCK DIXON (School Board)

- A. CALL TO ORDER
- B. INVOCATION
- C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- D. ROLL CALL
- E. CHAIRMAN TO READ THE APPEAL PROCESS AND MEETING PROCEDURES
- F. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – Receive comments from the public
- G. APPROVE MINUTES – Approval of available minutes
- H. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS
- I. EX PARTE COMMUNICATION: County Attorney
- J. APPLICATIONS

**1. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT**  
**a. CPA/AA-21-10 Chuck Pigeon for Whetstone Development Corp.**  
**REQUEST:** This request is to amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the Citrus County Comprehensive Plan from Low Density Residential District (LDR) to Recreational Vehicle Park/Campground District (RVP) and to amend the Land Development Code Atlas Map from Low Density Residential District (LDR) to Recreational Vehicle Park/Campground District (RVP).  
**LOCATION:** Section 15, Township 19 South, Range 17 East, more specifically, Lot 1 and 2 of MSP-06-01 (AK 2968796) and Parcel 24300 (AK 1121591) an unrecorded tract; which addresses are 2558, 2590, 2720 S. Stonebrook Dr., Homosassa, Florida. A complete legal description of the property is on file with the Land Development Division.  
**STAFF CONTACT:** Joe Hochadel, Principal Planner, Land Development Division

**2. PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT**  
**a. PUD-20-08 Invictus Development, LLC**  
**REQUEST:** This request is to amend an existing Planned Unit Development (PUD-18-05), pursuant to Section 4300, Planned Unit Developments, as specified in the Citrus County Land Development Code. The applicant proposes to extend the expiration date and allow multi-family apartments (previously limited to affordable senior housing), as well as some site plan changes.  
**LOCATION:** Section 12, Township 20 South, Range 17 East and Sections 6 and 7, Township 20 South, Range 18 East; more specifically, Lots 1-29 of an unrecorded subdivision (formerly Lots 4-7 of Homosassa Gardens); Homosassa Gardens Lot 2, Tract 3.1, and portions of Lots 30-32; Alternate Key Numbers 1517249, 1517265, 2570091, 1517273, 1517281, 1181151 and 1181143, which addresses are 7035 W Cardinal Street, 6674 S. Lewdaring Drive; and 6595, 6611 and 6635 S. Suncoast Blvd. Homosassa, FL. A complete legal description is on file with the Citrus County Land Development Division.  
**STAFF CONTACT:** Joanna Coutu, AICP, Director, Land Development Division

**3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT**  
**a. CPA/AA/PUD-21-17 Dr. Michael Wilburn for Kidder**  
**REQUEST:** This request is to amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the Citrus County Comprehensive Plan from Medium Density Residential (MDR) to General Commercial District (GNC) and Medium Density Residential (MDR), to amend the Land Development Code Atlas Map from Medium Density Residential with mobile homes allowed (MDR) to General Commercial District (GNC) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) with mobile homes allowed with a Planned Unit Development (PUD) to expand an existing mini-warehouse development.  
**LOCATION:** Sections 30, Township 18 South, Range 18 East, more specifically, Parcel 44120 and 44110, of an unrecorded subdivision; also known as Alternate Key Number 2608668 and 1493901, which address is 5782 W. Norvell Bryant Hwy, Crystal River, Florida. A complete legal description of the property is on file with the Land Development Division.  
**STAFF CONTACT:** Miranda Anaya, Senior Planner, Land Development Division

**4. LAND USE APPLICATION**  
**a. V-21-19 Brenda McKenzie for GSP Holdings, LLC**  
**REQUEST:** This request is for a Variance from the Citrus County Land Development Code (LDC) for the placement of a single-family dwelling having less than the required 50-foot setback from the mean high water line, pursuant to Section 3520, Floodplain Protection Standards, as specified in the LDC.  
**LOCATION:** Section 25, Township 19 South, Range 16 East and Section 30, Township 19 South, Range 17 East; specifically, Lot 14, Block 1 of Riverhaven Village Subdivision (AK 1012279), which address is 4848 S. Prices Pt., Homosassa, FL. A complete legal description of the property is on file with the Land Development Division.  
**STAFF CONTACT:** Amber Splitt, Planner, Land Development Division

**K. ADDITIONAL ITEMS**  
**L. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS**  
**M. ADJOURN**  
If any person decides to appeal any decision made by the Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting and, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.  
Any person requiring reasonable accommodation at this meeting because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the County Administrator's Office, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Suite 267, Lecanto, FL 34461, (352) 527-5210, at least two days before the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, dial 7-1-1, 1-800-955-8771 (TTY) or 1-800-955-8770 (v), via Florida Relay Service.  
Si necesita un traductor de español por favor haga arreglos con el Condado dentro de dos días de la notificación de la publicación (352-527-5370).

### Worth NOTING

#### German-American Social Club to have holiday party

The German-American Social Club of West Central Florida will have their Christmas party from noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 5 at the Citrus Hills Golf and Country Club, 505 E. Hartford St. in Hernando.

The menu includes minestrone soup, a tossed salad and choice of prime rib of beef served with au jus or bourbon salmon. Dinner includes garlic mashed potatoes, green beans, almandine, rolls, coffee and tea. For dessert is strawberry cloud cake.

Dress code is semi-formal or traditional German. There will be number tickets at the door for two gift baskets.

Admission is a \$35 donation. For information, Sigi Strak at 352-854-9616 or sigistrak@centurylink.net.

#### Enjoy a holiday breakfast with Santa in Floral City

Floral City United Methodist Church will have a breakfast with Santa from 7 to 9 a.m. Dec. 7, 8478 E. Marvin St. in Floral City.

Parents and children are invited to

enjoy a free breakfast with Santa. Bring your camera for pictures. For more information, call 352-344-1771.

#### Wisconsin Club to meet

Join the Wisconsin Club for a little holiday fun at 11:30 a.m. Dec. 8 at the Crystal Point Club house, 7820 Summertree St. in Crystal River. The club is a social group that meets the second Wednesday of each month. Snowbirds and all others who are from Wisconsin are welcome.

The club has been in existence for more than 20 years and all who attend enjoy socialization and the chance to meet new people living in Florida that moved from Wisconsin. For information, call Joyce McMullen at 352-860-1292.

#### Have dinner with the Beverly Hills Lions

The Beverly Hills Lions will have their monthly dinner from 4 to 6 p.m. Dec. 8, 72 Civic Circle.

The dinner will be pork chops with gravy, vegetable, salad, rolls and butter with coffee or iced tea.

The cost per person is \$10 and \$5 for children younger than 12. Dinners can

also be purchased to go. Call 352-228-0450 or 352-527-1556 to place an order or reserve a table for six or more.

Tickets may be purchased on Monday evening or Thursday during the day when bingo is being held or from any Lion member.

Tickets may also be purchased at the door. Profits go back to help the community.

#### CF graduation ceremony approaches

The College of Central Florida will hold its fall 2021 commencement ceremony at 5 p.m. Dec. 10 at the World Equestrian Center Expo Hall No. 1, 1750 NW 80th Ave. in Ocala.

Carolyn Barton Grissom will be honored posthumously with the CF Foundation's Distinguished Service Award and student Edgard Soto will be the graduation speaker.

The in-person ceremony also will be webcasted live at CF.edu/graduation. For more information, call the Ocala campus at 352-854-2322, ext. 1391 or 1739; Citrus campus at 352-746-6721; or Levy campus at 352-658-4077.

—From staff reports

### Obituaries



#### Robert Braatz, 83

Robert M Braatz, 83, passed away Monday November 29, 2021 at home. He was born August 17, 1938 in Detroit, Michigan to Milford and Edith Braatz.

He is survived by his loving wife Patty of 44 years. Son Heath Cobb of Miami daughter Laura Foiles, (Tim) of Ocala. Daughter April Hodges (Ryan). Panama City. Grandchildren: Adam Jackson of South Carolina, Erin Jackson of Georgia, Victoria Hodges Panama City David Foiles and Katelyn Foiles of Ocala. Great grand children Addie Jackson and Waylon Jackson of South Carolina. Michael Fentz-laff of Webster. He is predeceased by his brother Michael Braatz.

Robert was a Mason and a Shriner. He was a proud



Robert Braatz

Marine Veteran. He was in sales in the building industry, mainly in the window and doors industries. He was a former owner of Energy Saving Products in Jasper Fl. He was past president of FMA. Fenestration Manufacturers Association and past president of Score of Citrus County. He truly loved talking to people and could get anyone to tell their life story. He loved to fish with his long time friend Butch Hagye. He also obtained his private pilots license. Robert was a Baptist by faith and member of First Baptist Church of Old HOMOSASSA.

The celebration of life will be held Saturday December 11 at the church.. Visitation will be from 10 to 10:30. Service at 10:30. Pastors Cecil Lewis and David Throckmorton presiding.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to First Baptist Church of Old HOMOSASSA PO Box 5578 Homosassa Florida 34487 in Robert's memory. The physical address of the Church is 10540 W Yulee Dr. HOMOSASSA Florida 34487.

Sign the guest book at [www.chronicleonline.com](http://www.chronicleonline.com).

#### June Shelley, 94 CRYSTAL RIVER

June Lillian Shelley (AKA: Momma Shelley, Momma June, Miss June) was born in Manasquan, NJ on January 15th, 1927, to Charles and Lillian Cook.

Because of her dad's Coast Guard career, June moved to many beach locations during her childhood. That brought on a love of fishing, swimming and shell collecting. After graduation from Bob Jones University in 1948, she met and married Rev. Gordon Shelley in 1949 and joined him in ministry. They moved to Crystal River in 1972 where June was a kindergarten teacher at Crystal River Primary School until retiring in 1989.

After retirement, June and Gordon traveled abroad to many exciting places. After Gordon died in 2002, June remained active in trips, community



June Shelley

activities and church involvement at Seven Rivers Presbyterian Church.

She leaves behind 2 younger brothers and their families, 5 children and their spouses, 9 grandchildren, 9 great grandchildren, faithful friends and former students. June will be greatly missed.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Seven Rivers Christian School, 4221 West Gulf to Lake Hwy, Lecanto, FL 34461. Memorial Service will be Monday, December 6th, 2021, at 10:30 AM at Seven Rivers Presbyterian Church at the address above. Wilder Funeral Home, Homosassa. [www.wilderfuneral.com](http://www.wilderfuneral.com)

#### OBITUARIES

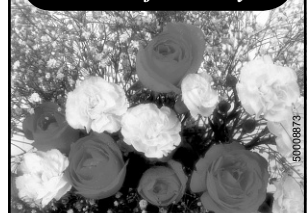
Email obits@[chronicleonline.com](http://chronicleonline.com) or call 352-563-5660 for more information.

Submissions must be verified with the funeral home or society in charge of arrangements.

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Service: Sat. 12/11 at 11AM - Florida National Cemetery

EDWARD PARKER - Gathering: Sat., 3-5 PM  
EARLENE WILLIAMS - Arrangements Pending  
WILLIAM MULLER - Private Arrangements  
JOAN PLACE - Arrangements Pending  
ALFRED "BILL" PARKER - Private Arrangements  
LINDA DODGE - Arrangements Pending  
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# Death of bullied Utah girl draws anger

**BRADY MCCOMBS**  
Associated Press



Brittany Tichenor-Cox via AP  
**Isabella "Izzy" Tichenor is pictured in May of 2020. The mother of a 10-year-old Utah girl who died by suicide after she says her daughter was harassed for being Black and autistic is speaking out about the school not doing enough to stop the bullying.**

DRAPER, Utah — When her 10-year-old daughter tried spraying air freshener on herself before school one morning, Brittany Tichenor-Cox suspected something was wrong with the sweet little girl whose beaming smile had gone dormant after she started the fifth grade.

She coaxed out of Isabella "Izzy" Tichenor that a boy in her class told her she stank after their teacher instructed the class that they needed to shower. It was the latest in a series of bullying episodes that targeted Izzy, who was autistic and the only Black student in class. Other incidents included harassment about her skin color, eyebrows and a beauty mark on her forehead, her mother said.

Tichenor-Cox informed the teacher, the school and the district about the bullying. She said nothing was done to improve the situation. Then on Nov. 6, at their home near Salt Lake City, Izzy died by suicide.

Her shocking death triggered an outpouring of anger about youth suicides, racism in the classroom and the treatment of children with autism — issues that have been highlighted by the nation's racial reckoning and a renewed emphasis on

an outside investigation that is ongoing. "When I was crying out for help for somebody to do something, nobody even showed up for her," Tichenor-Cox said this week in an interview with The Associated Press. "It just hurts to know that my baby was bullied all day throughout school — from the time I dropped her off to the time I picked her up."

Being autistic made it difficult for Izzy to find words to express what she was feeling, but her mother sensed her daughter was internalizing the messages from school. She asked her mother to get rid of the beauty mark and shave her unibrow. Her mother told her those features made her different and beautiful. She told her mother her teacher didn't like her and wouldn't say hi or help with schoolwork.

Izzy's mother, 31, blames the teacher for allowing the bullying to happen. Prior to this year, she said, Izzy and two of her other children liked the school.

Tichenor-Cox has also called out deep-rooted racism in the

predominantly white state of Utah, where she said the N-word that kids called her when she was a child in the 1990s is still hurled at her children three decades later.

But she doesn't want fury to be her only message. She vows to make Izzy's life matter by speaking out about bullying, racism and the importance of understanding autism so that no other parent has to suffer like she is.

Davis School District spokesman Christopher Williams declined to provide an exact timeline on the investigation, reveal the employment status of Izzy's teacher or respond to any direct accusations.

He did say in a statement Wednesday that an independent investigative team is working "urgently" and that findings will be released when finished.

The Justice Department investigation uncovered hundreds of documented uses of the N-word and other racial epithets over the last five years in the district. The probe also found physical assaults, derogatory racial comments and harsher discipline for students of color.

student mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Utah, the suicide also intensified questions about the Davis School District, which was recently reprimanded by the Justice Department for failing to address widespread racial discrimination.

The district, where Black and Asian American students account for roughly 1% of the approximately 73,000 students, initially defended its handling of the bullying allegations but later launched

Windstream participates in a government benefit program called Lifeline to make residential telephone or broadband service more affordable to eligible low-income individuals and families. Eligible customers are those that meet eligibility standards as defined by the FCC and state commission. Residents who live on federally recognized Tribal Lands may also qualify for additional Tribal benefits if they participate in certain federal eligibility programs. The program offers a monthly discount limited to one discount per household and can either be applied to wireline or wireless. If applied to wireline the discount can be applied to either your voice or broadband service. The monthly discount is up to \$5.25 per month for voice only service or up to \$9.25 per month for broadband service.

Windstream's basic local service rates for residential voice lines range from \$20 to \$32 per month depending on your service location. Specific rates will be provided upon request. For the broadband Lifeline discount to apply, a customer must subscribe to a Windstream service that meets the minimum standard requirements as defined by the FCC.

For the purposes of the Lifeline program a household is defined as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. Lifeline service is not transferable, and only eligible consumers may enroll in the program. Consumers who willfully make false statements to obtain Lifeline telephone or broadband service can be punished by fine or imprisonment and can be barred from the program. If you live in a Windstream service area, please call 1-800-347-1991 or visit [www.windstream.com/Lifeline](http://www.windstream.com/Lifeline) with questions or to request an application for the Lifeline program.

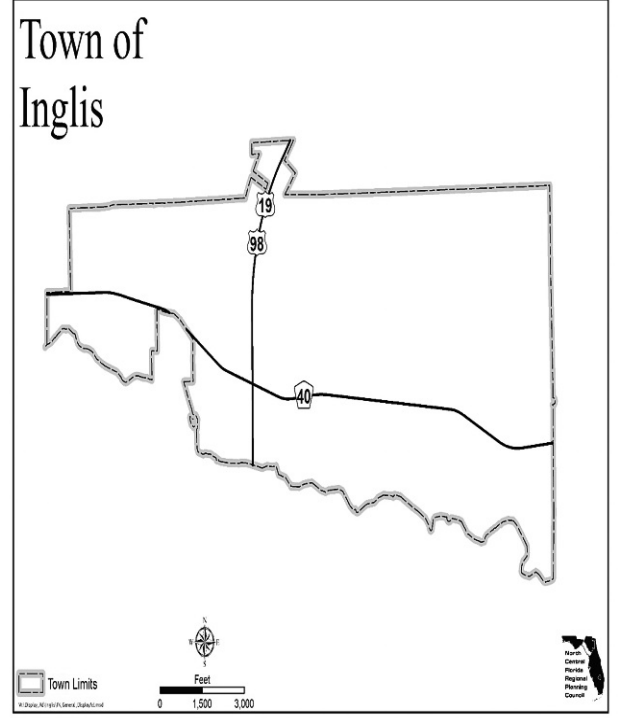


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## NOTICE OF LAND USE CHANGE

The Town Commission of the Town of Inglis, Florida, proposes to regulate the use of land within the area as shown on the map below by amending the text of the Town of Inglis Comprehensive Plan, hereinafter referred to as the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

CPA 21-03, an application by the Town Commission, to amend the text of the Comprehensive Plan by adding a Property Rights Element to the Comprehensive Plan per Section 163.3161(10), Florida Statutes, as amended and Section 187.101(3), Florida Statutes, as amended, and renumbering the sequential chapter.



The first of two public hearings on the proposed amendment will be held December 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the Town of Inglis Commission Room, Town Hall, located at 135 Highway 40 West, Inglis, Florida. The Town Commission will hold the public hearing to consider the amendment, conduct a first reading of the ordinance adopting the amendment and consider transmittal of the amendment to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. The title of said ordinance reads, as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 05-21

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF INGLIS, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE TOWN OF INGLIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, RELATING TO AN AMENDMENT TO THE TEXT OF THE TOWN OF INGLIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION, CPA 21-03, BY THE TOWN COMMISSION, UNDER THE REGULAR AMENDMENT PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED IN SECTIONS 163.3161 THROUGH 163.3248, FLORIDA STATUTES, AS AMENDED; PROVIDING FOR ADDING A PROPERTY RIGHTS ELEMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PER SECTION 163.3161(10), FLORIDA STATUTES, AS AMENDED AND SECTION 187.101(3), FLORIDA STATUTES, AS AMENDED; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time and place of any continuation of this public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no further notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above referenced public hearing.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the amendment.

Copies of the amendment are available for public inspection at the Office of the Town Clerk, Town Hall, located at 135 Highway 40 West, Inglis, Florida, during regular business hours.

All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact the Town Clerk, at least 48 hours prior to the public hearing via telephone at 352.447.2203. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 800.955.8770 or 800.955.8771

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# 'Preppers' discover how to get free unclaimed silver bars

NATIONWIDE - 'Preppers' are said to be among the smartest folks in the world and you may actually be one of them without even knowing it.

So, what is the definition of a Prepper? Webster says: 'Prepper' is a person who is prepared or striving to be prepared.

Scooping up scarce necessities gives people a sense of control during uncertain times. The rarer something is, the more people seek it.

So, when a group of Preppers recently stumbled upon a little known mega site listing hundreds of thousands of last names, they instantly hit the jackpot.

Now everyone who beats the deadline to get the free silver bars and cover just the \$29 name engraving fee to finish the bars are getting a deal too good to pass up.

Every American household in this day and age of uncertainty should all

be Preppers. Prepping is actually a way for everyone to build up hopeful confidence as they plan ahead.

A bit of practical prepping can take the strain off of us while we are all preparing for the next surprise.

That's why everyone is now flocking to get these free unclaimed silver bars.

"You should know, these are no ordinary silver bars, they are actually being minted with your name on them. They will always have value", said Mary Ellen Withrow, the 40th Treasurer of The United States.

So, if you don't want to miss out, you better hurry because thousands and thousands of folks have already begun to snatch them up.

**HOW TO GET:**  
Go to: [UnclaimedSilverBars.com](http://UnclaimedSilverBars.com)  
Or call: 1-877-292-3338 Dept. NA307



■ **FIRST TO GET THEM:** "I stock up on everything including silver bars, because they are as good as money. But, these silver bars with my name on them are priceless", said John Wilson. Wilson was among the first to find his last name on the massive unclaimed list and he immediately claimed five free silver bars.





► **"You get what you expect and you deserve what you tolerate."**

Mark Graban, author of "Lean Hospitals: Improving Quality, Patient Safety, and Employee Satisfaction"

**CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE**

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**"You may differ with my choice, but not my right to choose."**

— **David S. Arthurs** publisher emeritus

**Gerard "Gerry" Mulligan** publisher emeritus

The opinions expressed in Chronicle editorials are the opinions of the newspaper's editorial board.

**HOSPITALS GET SAFETY GRADES**

# Safety matters when it comes to health care

It may seem as though you've seen multiple articles in recent months about "grades" for area hospitals — and you have. The grades are from Leapfrog, a national nonprofit organization focused on "driving a movement for giant leaps forward in the quality and safety of American healthcare."

Leapfrog issues multiple hospital reports each year. The original Leapfrog Hospital Survey is an annual voluntary survey in which Leapfrog asks hospitals to report quality and safety data.

In addition, a twice-yearly Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is assigned to all U.S. general hospitals regardless of whether they have participated in the voluntary survey. Much of the data used are publicly available from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The second of this year's Hospital Safety Grades reports was issued recently. Both of Citrus County's hospitals were assigned a "C" grade. We have said before that a "C" is acceptable, but an average grade isn't the goal we aspire to for our local hospitals.

Seven Rivers Hospital's "C" grade is its second in a row. However, Citrus Memorial's "C" grade is a drop from its previous multi-year record of "B" grades. Wrong direction. And several

factors on which our two hospitals did not meet standards are extremely serious.

Why do these grades matter, and what should healthcare consumers do with this information? Leapfrog says it provides them to help educate consumers. "We know 'A' hospitals do a better job at preventing errors," Leapfrog says. So if your hospital of choice rates below an "A," the organization recommends talking with your doctor at that hospital and urging them to improve safety.

Opening a conversation with hospital administration about safety issues is another avenue of action.

The goal, Leapfrog says, is to embed safety and quality into daily work at all levels of the organization, make it part of the culture. That's what enabled the "straight A" hospitals to be more resilient in responding to the evolving pandemic. Leapfrog also says the "A" hospitals consistently show a commitment to the workforce, empowering them to ask questions and share safety concerns.

Everyone wants to have confidence in their local hospitals, the places that care for us in times of greatest need. We hope to see both of Citrus County's hospitals climbing toward that "A" status in future Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades reports.

many accidents have been in these places they'll replace. Then I'll believe what he's saying, but I never will because the fact remains: they do prevent deaths.

**Cut the school budget**

I'm responding to the Sound Off, "Schools approaching full capacity" (Saturday, Nov. 27, Page A8). I totally disagree with you. They should still cut the school budget, period. And you're saying they're at full capacity, but you still want them to build, build, build and bring more people and children. Really? They could cut the budget and operate. It's working within your budget. Even if it's at full capacity, you could still cut the budget. Quit making excuses. And there should be no virtual teaching, just brick and mortar, period. That's the bottom line.

**Roundabouts prevent deaths**

I'd like to comment again on "I'll adapt to a roundabout" (in Saturday, Nov. 27's Page A8 Sound Off). Well, maybe this guy should have lived where we lived in Michigan and seen the result after about 10 years of a roundabout being in. We've had no fatalities there — a few minor fender-benders — but prior to that, there was an average of six to 10 people killed and many people injured because it was a crossroad and people liked to run red lights going 60 mph right through them and that's why they had so many fatalities. So I think this guy is very, very wrong. Maybe he better check with his highway department or his local area of business concerning vehicle accidents. Check with the police and ask how



THE CHRONICLE invites you to call "Sound Off" with your opinions about local subjects. You do not need to leave your name, and have less than a minute to record. COMMENTS will be edited for length, libel, personal or political attacks and good taste. Editors will cut libelous material. OPINIONS expressed are purely those of the callers.

**Hot Corner: UNIVERSAL GARBAGE**

I'm calling in reference to the "Hot Corner: Universal Trash Pick-Up" (Sunday, Nov. 28, Page C3). I'm seeing here that many people, they don't really have a clue about universal garbage pick-up. I lived in Pinellas County more than half my life until I moved up here 12 years ago and let me tell you something: This other person here is talking about having their rights taken away with universal garbage. What about my rights to not have to breathe plastic being burned by my neighbor? Whether it's illegal or not, they still do it. What about the rights of the forest not to have trash and garbage thrown into it? With universal garbage pick-up, that means everybody gets their garbage picked up. It's not taking away anybody's rights.

Universal garbage does not work. I had a house way out at the end of Turner Camp Road. I had another house in Inverness. The one way out on Turner Camp Road was too far for the major trash haulers to service, so they sublet to some little fly-by-night company that half the time didn't show up. My house in Inverness was (served by a major trash hauler) and they were very picky. They wouldn't pick up a bicycle inner tube because that's car parts. They wouldn't pick up any broken glass because it wasn't in a frame. They wouldn't pick up

bad lantern batteries. They were too picky and they would take it out of the garbage can and throw it on the ground and leave it. So, with universal garbage, we still had to do our own. Universal garbage doesn't work when you have only one major company and you have no recourse if they miss you or anything.

I'm calling to reject the universal trash pick-up contract that our supposedly intelligent people who run this county are trying to push through. We have perfectly wonderful pick-up. We have pick-up twice a week for trash, garbage. We have once a week for recycle. We have once a week for yard waste. And it will cost less money for all that than what these people are going to shove down our throats. ... So I vote (to) reject it. Why won't they listen to the people?...

I'm calling in reference to the universal trash pick-up, where we're not allowing Beverly Hills Waste (Management) to even be in on the bid. I disagree with that. Let the small guy in. We're happy with their product, their service. So, appreciate it if you guys would reconsider because it just seems to me that there's always the little guys getting shoved out because the big guys are the only ones who can bid on anything.

Is this all our commissioners can do is figure out ways to

take more money out of the households of the Citrus County people? We've got to pay twice for ambulance service. Now we're paying twice for the landfill. Now they want universal garbage. Well, just who is clamoring for universal garbage? Nobody, just the commissioners because they know it's a giant moneymaker for the government. ... Well, that's not what we like in this country. We like to make our own choices and if government can't run the landfill with the money they've already assessed us, they should get out of the landfill business.

The paper on Nov. 28 says that the commissioners are again considering universal garbage pick-up (Sunday's front-page story, "County to mull garbage bids," "Commissioners will weigh multiple options in considering universal service"). Here is what I would like to tell the commissioners: We have Waste Pro and we totally believe in a competitive business environment and going to a solo or a single universal garbage pick-up is the wrong idea. I want the commissioners to know that if they, in fact, do that and my garbage does not get picked up, it's going to be in front of their offices or in front of their home. Hear me? I'm going to be pretty upset and you're going to end up having to get rid of my garbage.



**LETTERS to the Editor**

**The irony of county government**

On Oct. 2, the county took over the ambulance service from Nature Coast EMS.

Nature Coast EMS had previously requested a rate revision from the county in order to improve service and meet the expectations placed on them by the county commissioners. Nature Coast EMS presented rate recommendations to the commissioners based on a study that they had ordered and that was conducted by Fitch & Associates. The commissioners rejected their request for additional funding and decided to take over ambulance services.

Two months later, Citrus County Fire Rescue proposed an identical rate revision.

Their request was based on the same Fitch & Associates rate study that was presented by Nature Coast EMS and then rejected by the commission. On Tuesday, commissioners voted unanimously to now approve the additional funding. I find it ironic that the same request for additional funding is suddenly now approved.

Whether this was a power grab, overreach or poor decision making we can only speculate. Perhaps, they are just embarrassed by their back-fired decision and are now trying to cover their backsides. Or, maybe this was just a way to quietly squeeze out Nature Coast EMS with very little public fanfare. Regardless, the decision to revisit

- OPINIONS INVITED**
- **Viewpoints** depicted in political cartoons, columns or letters do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editorial board.
  - **All letters** must be signed and include a phone number and hometown, including letters sent via email. Names and hometowns will be printed; phone numbers will not be published or given out.
  - **We reserve** the right to edit letters for length, libel, fairness and good taste.
  - **Letters** must be no longer than 400 words, and writers will be limited to four letters per month.
  - **SEND LETTERS TO:** The Editor, 1624 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429; or email to [letters@chronicleonline.com](mailto:letters@chronicleonline.com).

**Civility in politics is a two-way street**

A recent letter with the heading of bring back civility, laying fault of f\*\*k Joe Biden at the feet of President Trump and Republicans. Somehow one has to assume this person is completely blind to history and how we ended up at this point.

We could go back to the disgusting things said about Sarah Palin and her daughters but, of course, that's all in the past no harm. That this submission is from a citizen who Hillary Clinton labeled a racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic — you name it, should have no bearing on any negative feelings harbored by myself or others.

How conveniently the writer has forgotten Robert DeNiro saying f\*\*k Trump at the Tony awards, or maybe Madonna saying "let's blow up the White House, Peter Fonda's wish to put 10-year-old Baron Trump in a cage with child molesters, Kathy Griffith holding Trump's severed head and Snoop Dogg shooting a likeness of Trump in a music video or the image of Trump in a body bag on the cover of an album.

There are many more instances, but why continue?

You want civility? Clean up your own backyard before you complain about others.

Ralph Ryan  
Hernando

Mike Dragoun  
Lecanto

## Justices signal they'll OK new abortion limits

### Supreme Court may toss Roe law

MARK SHERMAN AND JESSICA GRESKO  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In the biggest challenge to abortion rights in decades, the Supreme Court's conservative majority on Wednesday signaled they would allow states to ban abortion much earlier in pregnancy and may even overturn the nationwide right that has existed for nearly 50 years.

With hundreds of demonstrators outside chanting for and against, the justices led arguments that could decide the fate of the court's historic 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion throughout the United States and its 1992 ruling in Planned Parenthood v. Casey, which reaffirmed Roe.

The outcome probably won't be known until next June. But after nearly two hours of arguments, all six conservative justices, including three appointed by former President Donald Trump, indicated they would uphold a Mississippi law that bans abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

At the very least, such a decision would undermine Roe and

Casey, which allow states to regulate but not ban abortion up until the point of fetal viability, at roughly 24 weeks.

And there was also substantial support among the conservative justices for getting rid of Roe and Casey altogether. Justice Clarence Thomas is the only member of the court who has openly called for overruling the two cases.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, a Trump appointee, asked whether the court would be better off withdrawing completely from the abortion issue and letting states decide.

"Why should this court be the arbiter rather than Congress, the state legislatures, state supreme

courts, the people being able to resolve this?" Kavanaugh asked. "And there will be different answers in Mississippi and New York, different answers in Alabama than California."

Abortion would soon become illegal or severely restricted in roughly half the states if Roe and Casey are overturned, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization that supports abortion rights. Legislatures in many Republican-led states are poised for action depending on the Supreme Court's ruling.

People of color and lesser means would be disproportionately affected, supporters of abortion rights say.

The court's three liberal justices said that reversing Roe and Casey would significantly damage the court's own legitimacy.

"Will this institution survive the stench that this creates in the public perception that the Constitution and its reading are just political acts?" Justice Sonia Sotomayor asked.

In unusually strong terms for a high-court argument, Justice Stephen Breyer warned his colleagues they "better be damn sure" before they throw away the established abortion decisions.

Public opinion polls show support for preserving Roe, though some surveys also find backing for greater restrictions on abortion.



Associated Press

A worker disinfects chairs at a new vaccination center Tuesday, Nov. 30, in Lisbon. A pandemic-weary world faces weeks of confusing uncertainty as countries restrict travel and take other steps to halt the newest potentially risky coronavirus mutant before anyone knows just how dangerous omicron really is.

## Omicron variant could take weeks to understand

LAURAN NEERGAARD AND LAURA UNGAR  
AP medical writers

A pandemic-weary world faces weeks of confusing uncertainty as countries restrict travel and take other steps to halt the newest potentially risky coronavirus mutant before anyone knows just how dangerous omicron really is.

Will it spread even faster than the already extra-contagious delta variant? Does it make people sicker? Does it evade vaccines' protection or reinfect survivors? There are lots of guesses but little hard evidence as scientists race to find answers amid scrutiny from an anxious public.

"Pretty much the right level of freaking out," is how Trevor Bedford, who studies evolution of the coronavirus at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, characterized health experts' reactions.

Omicron might not turn out

"as bad as we're perhaps imagining it could be but treating it as such at the moment I think is entirely appropriate," he said.

Up to now, the world has been slow to react to each coronavirus curveball.

This time an early warning from South Africa and Botswana might have offered important head start.

"It's hard to know: Have we just simply caught up to the reality and now the world is reacting with the appropriate speed as variants emerge?" asked Dr. Jacob Lemieux, who monitors variants for a research collaboration led by Harvard Medical School.

### WHY THE WORRY?

Omicron raised alarm because of its sheer number of mutations, more than prior variants had. Possibly 30 are in a key place, the spike protein that lets the virus attach to human cells.

Scientists recognize a few

mutations from earlier variants that were more contagious or a bit resistant to vaccination. But they've never seen this particular constellation of changes.

Most "are really unique to this virus," said Dr. William Moss of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "It's that combination of potential increased transmissibility and ability — potential ability — to escape our immune system that has everyone worried."

"It is a balance," Moss said. "We want to take this seriously because of the combination of mutations, but we don't want to panic and we don't want to overreact as well until we really learn more about this virus."

### WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Scientists say it may take two to four weeks to get some important answers.

Among the biggest concerns is how much omicron might

evade immunity. So far the beta variant has been the biggest challenge to vaccine protection but that mutant fortunately didn't spread widely.

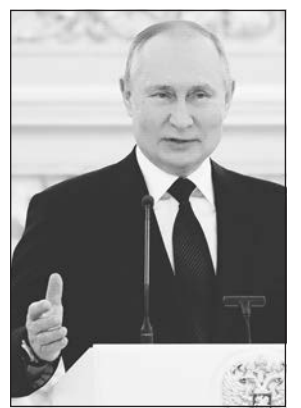
"It is highly unlikely that this new variant has escaped all antibodies generated following vaccination," said immunologist E. John Wherry of the University of Pennsylvania.

Vaccine makers and other scientists are setting up lab tests to tell how well antibodies generated by vaccines or prior infection can fight omicron compared to earlier variants. It takes time because first, they must grow samples of so-called "pseudoviruses" that hold the worrisome new mutations.

But that "won't be the whole story," Moss said.

The immune system has multiple layers of defense beyond antibodies, including T cells that should help avoid severe disease even if someone experiences a breakthrough infection.

## World BRIEFS



Associated Press

**Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks Wednesday during a ceremony to receive credentials from foreign ambassadors in Kremlin, in Moscow, Russia.**

### Putin demands NATO guarantees

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that Moscow would seek Western guarantees precluding any further NATO expansion and deployment of its weapons near his country's borders, a stern demand that comes amid fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ukrainian and Western officials have worried about a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine, saying it could signal Moscow's intention of an attack. Russian diplomats countered those claims by expressing concern about Ukraine's own military buildup near the area of the separatist conflict in the eastern part of the country.



**U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken,**

noting that Putin could quickly order an invasion of Ukraine, warned that Washington stands ready to inflict heavy sanctions on Russia if he does.

### Greek lawmakers OK vaccine mandate

ATHENS, Greece — Greek lawmakers have approved legislation making vaccination for COVID-19 mandatory, on pain of a monthly fine, for all people aged over 60 living in the country, to deal with an infection surge and the emergence of the omicron variant.

The draft law backed Wednesday by the center-right government and a center-left opposition party — but rejected by all other opposition parties — targets the country's age group that is most vulnerable to death or intubation from the coronavirus.

Some 17% of Greeks aged over 60 have not yet been vaccinated. They have until Jan. 16 to get their first jabs, or will be fined 100 euros (\$113) for every month they remain unvaccinated.

— From wire reports

## Michigan teen charged in Oxford High School shooting

COREY WILLIAMS AND ED WHITE  
Associated Press

OXFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich. — A 15-year-old boy was charged with murder for a shooting that killed four fellow students and injured more at a Michigan high school, authorities said Wednesday as they revealed additional details, including a meeting between troubled officials and his parents just a few hours before the bloodshed.

No motive was offered by Oakland County authorities, a day after violence at Oxford High School, roughly 30 miles north of Detroit. But prosecutor Karen McDonald said the shooting was premeditated, based on a "mountain of digital evidence" against Ethan Crumbley.

"This was not just an impulsive act," McDonald said.

Indeed, sheriff's Lt. Tim Willis told a judge that Crumbley



Associated Press

Students hug at a memorial Wednesday, Dec. 1, at Oxford High School in Oxford, Mich.

recorded a video the night before the violence in which he discussed killing students.

Crumbley was charged as an adult with two dozen crimes,

including murder, attempted murder and terrorism causing death. During his arraignment, he replied, "Yes, I do," when asked if he understood the charges.

Defense attorney Scott Kozak entered a plea of not guilty.

"He deliberately brought the handgun that day with the intent to murder as many students as he could," assistant prosecutor Marc Keast said in successfully arguing for no bail for Crumbley and a transfer to jail from a juvenile facility.

Earlier, Sheriff Mike Bouchard told reporters that Crumbley's parents were called to the school Tuesday "for behavior in the classroom that was concerning." The teen remained in school, and the shooting occurred a few hours later.

Bouchard didn't disclose what had worried school officials. He said investigators believe the gun was already in school.

"There is nothing that he could have faced that would warrant senseless, absolutely brutal violence on other kids," the sheriff said, noting that Crumbley had an additional 18 rounds of ammunition when he was arrested.

# Special cupcakes for very special occasion

Last week I wrote about our daughter Anna Faith's wedding, I wanted to write more about it and some of the preparations, including these Festive Raspberry-White Chocolate Cupcakes.

My name is Dorcas Raber (Gloria's mom) and I am filling in for Gloria last week and this week. Gloria will return next week!

Thinking about Anna Faith's wedding makes my mind go back to 35 years ago, when it was our very own wedding day. How we worked to get the homeplace spik 'n span.

I so remember the storm that unleashed its fury the evening before. Yet, I also remember sunshine on our wedding day. Isn't that how real life is? We face storms in life, storms that are devastating, yet alongside flow the blessings. And somehow the storms enrich our lives and are treasures of darkness.

David and I have faced many storms the past 35 years in our own lives or our children's or circumstances around us. But one thing remains etched eternally, God is always good. He grieves with us, cares deeply, and if we allow Him he always brings beauty out of ashes. I believe in Him with all my heart.

Coming back to our wedding day, my Dad owned and operated "Woodland Woodcrafts" where he made kitchen cabinets, bedroom suites, etc. Before our wedding, we shined up that shop and that's where the wedding guests gathered and observed my Dad, who is an Amish bishop, unite David and me in marriage.

We were young, rather

naïve in some ways, but eager to start this new chapter in our lives. Our wedding reception was in Dad and Mom's ranch house. We had set up the bridal table and other tables in the basement.

On our bridal table were two treasured hurricane lamps. My mom had used them on her bridal table 26 years earlier. And now all three of us sisters have used them on our

bridal tables. Many memories of our wedding day are forgotten or only a blur, but one thing I do know and remember, I was awed to be married to my best friend and a I am still blessed.

Back to Anna Faith's wedding ... several days before the wedding, I went through some "trauma" with the wedding cupcakes. (I really believe that God uses adverse circumstances to teach us lessons!) I had asked two young girls of our church, along with our daughter Keturah, to help me with the cupcakes.

We went to a nearby bakery that I had asked permission to use, and plunged into the project. The cupcakes were to be baked that day, then filled and frosted on a later day. Alas! The first batch, and the next and the next and on ... did NOT turn out right. Never in all my 56 years had I seen such cupcakes! Odd shaped, and simply anything except elegant wedding cupcakes.

I started feeling stressed out, very, very stressed. Daniel, Gloria, and their children stopped by to see how things were going. Daniel, being a practical man, said it appears that the ovens are too hot. A



Photo courtesy of The Amish Cook

## Festive White Chocolate-Raspberry Cupcakes.

phone call to the bakery owner's wife confirmed that yes, indeed, we had not set the temperature (and maybe not the blower?) to the right setting on these confectionary ovens!

Dozens of odd-shaped cupcakes stared at me, and I got a brainstorm. I sent the three girls, the remaining cake mixes, and the cupcakes pans out the door, and over to our community building, that has two "plain Jane" gas ovens.

Daughter Anna Faith was in town, and bought more cake mixes. My traumatized brain needed to be alone, so I cleaned up the mess in the bakery after the girls left, as well as pulling out some very nice cupcakes out of the one plain gas stove that was there!

Several hours later, those three dear girls had baked dozens of lovely wedding cupcakes.

What a blessing! The odd-shaped ones will be convenient to use at church frolics, etc.

Anna Faith leaving home means we only have one child left at home. (We are so thankful for 15-year-old Keturah.) We now have six married children and 16 grandchildren. Quite a tribe!

keepsake wedding gift for Anna Faith, pieced by grandma. And I am eager to spend hours of stitching with love.

And now for a recipe — well yes, why wouldn't it be a cupcake recipe? We just followed the directions on the cake mix box for our cupcakes, but here's a deluxe recipe that my sister Rhoda used for her daughter's wedding.

We filled our white cupcakes with black raspberry pie filling, then frosted them with whipped Whip N Ice (a store-bought whipped frosting, but regular white icing would work fine) that was swirled with a little of black raspberry filling.

## White Chocolate-Raspberry Cupcakes

- 1 box white cake mix
- 3 egg whites
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 1/4 cup water
- 1/3 cup white chocolate instant pudding
- 3 ounces white chocolate candy wafers
- 2 tablespoons butter
- One can of black raspberry pie filling, store-bought or homemade

Mix first 5 ingredients. Melt wafers and butter together. Add to batter. Fill muffin tins with batter. Bake 15 to 20 minutes at 350 degrees.

When baked and cooled, use a cupcake or cake-decorating bag and tip, and fill with black raspberry pie filling.

Frost with your favorite icing.

Readers may write to Gloria Yoder, *The Amish Cook*, directly at: Gloria Yoder, 10510 E. 350th Ave., Flat Rock, IL 62427.

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## Something new: Jessica Seinfeld's vegan mac and cheese



uses  
plant  
milk

Excerpted  
from "Vegan,  
at Times"

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Jessica Seinfeld with Sara  
Quessenberry. Reproduced by  
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Associated Press

A recipe from Jessica Seinfeld's "Vegan, at Times":

I have served this many times to non-vegans and they always go for seconds. I use cashew or almond milk for their mild flavor, but you can always experiment with other plant-based milks.

### Macaroni and Cheese

Serves: 6

Total time: 55 minutes

Active time: 35 minutes

**For the macaroni and cheese:**

- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for pasta water
- 1 pound short pasta, such as cavatappi, elbows or small shells
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 4 1/2 cups unsweetened cashew or almond milk
- 16 ounces (4 cups) shredded plant-based cheddar cheese (We like Violife)
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper

**For the breadcrumb topping:**

- 1 cup panko or coarse dried breadcrumbs
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat leaf parsley, for serving

Position the oven rack about 8 inches from the top and heat the oven to 400 degrees.

**Make the macaroni:** Bring a large pot of water to a boil, then salt it. Add the pasta and cook until it's a few minutes short of al dente (it will continue to cook in the oven). Drain into a colander and pass under cold running water to stop the cooking. Shake out any excess water.

Meanwhile, to make the cheese sauce, in a large pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the flour and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, for about 3 minutes to cook out the raw flavor of the flour.

Add 1 cup of the milk and whisk until it forms a smooth paste. Continue to whisk in the remaining milk a little at a time, at first, to avoid lumps. Let the mixture reach a simmer while whisking often, paying attention to the corners where the flour can collect.

Remove from the heat and add the cheese, nutritional yeast, dry mustard, the 1/2 teaspoon salt, the black pepper, and the cayenne pepper. Whisk until creamy and smooth.

Add the pasta and stir well to coat. Taste for salt; you may want to add a little more. Scrape the mixture into a 9- by 13-inch baking dish.

**Make the breadcrumb topping:** In a small bowl stir together the breadcrumbs, oil, salt, and pepper. Grate in the garlic and stir to combine.

Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the macaroni and cheese. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbling. Then turn on the broiler and broil for 1 to 3 minutes, until the breadcrumbs are golden brown. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving and sprinkle the top with the parsley.

## Time for gingerbread!

Join Citrus County UF/IFAS Extension Services for their inaugural 4-H Gingerbread Workshop from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 3, at the Citrus County Extension Office, 3650 W. Sovereign Path in Lecanto.

The workshop is open to youths ages 5 through 18. Due to limited space, two adults per family may attend. Each child must have one adult attending with them. Costs are \$5 for children ages 5 to 7 and \$10 for ages 8 to 18. All materials will be provided. Each participant will receive their own gingerbread house.

There will also be a youth ugly holiday sweater contest. Prizes will be awarded for the "Best Theme" and "Most Creative" categories.

Registration for this event is required **no later than Dec. 2.**

To register, visit [tinyurl.com/mstvrxdy](https://tinyurl.com/mstvrxdy).



—From staff reports

# Holiday feasting continues with Hanukkah's potato latkes



CHEYENNE COHEN/Associated Press

Potato pancakes, latkes, are the food most traditionally associated with Hanukkah. There are all kinds of modern variations using other vegetables and other toppings.

## Traditional treat for Festival of Lights can be plain or fancy

KATIE WORKMAN  
Associated Press

**F**rom turkey and cranberry sauce straight to potato pancakes in one weekend. Not bad!

Hanukkah this year began on Sunday night, Nov. 28, so those who celebrate were able to move right into the holiday while still contemplating Thanksgiving leftovers.

Potato pancakes, or latkes, are the food most traditionally associated with Hanukkah. The story goes that over 2,000 years ago, after the Second Temple of Jerusalem was ransacked by invaders, there was only enough oil to keep the temple menorah lit for one day and night. Inexplicably, the oil burned for eight days and eight nights, thus earning the holiday the name "festival of lights."

Food cooked in oil, like doughnuts and latkes, are symbolic of this miracle of Hanukkah.

In recent decades, many home cooks and chefs have played around with the ingredients in latkes, using vegetables like beets, zucchini, and butternut squash, and adding fresh herbs or different seasonings. Toppings are another way to put a modern stamp on latkes — swapping in tzatziki for sour cream, for example.

In my family, updates would be welcomed as a supplemental option, but not as a substitute for the non-negotiable, old-school potato pancake with traditional toppings.

By the way, you don't have to be Jewish or celebrating Hanukkah to think about latkes, of course. Little crispy potato pancakes make a wonderful appetizer, a great side dish — just a big old treat all year long.

So, what cooking oil should you use?

My way is a little indulgent and veers towards the untraditional, but I like to cook latkes in mostly olive oil with a tiny bit of butter added for flavor. Keep an eye on the heat level of the pan; you want it high enough to cook up crisp pancakes, but not so high that it smokes and turns brown.

Do not whip out the fancy bottle of extra virgin olive oil; a less expensive bottle of pure olive oil, available in grocery stores everywhere, works just fine for frying. You can also use vegetable or canola oil.

Serve latkes with sour cream and applesauce, so people can choose or mix them. If you're feeling a little fancy schmancy, you might serve these up with some budget-friendly caviar, or smoked salmon or gravlax, and maybe swap out the sour cream for crème fraîche. (Skip the butter and sour cream if you are serving meat with the latkes and keeping the meal kosher.)

## Kitchen SMARTS

Finally, leftover cranberry sauce is a terrific complement to latkes. I'll be testing this notion the last week of November, and if you give it a shot, let me know what you think!

Other items on a traditional Hanukkah menu might include noodle kugel, beef brisket with wild mushrooms, Jewish beef brisket, chicken marbella, or chicken thighs with onions and green olives.

### Potato Pancakes

Serves 6 to 8

- 2 1/2 pounds baking potatoes, peeled
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1 tablespoon matzoh meal or flour (optional)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Olive oil for cooking (about 1/2 cup)
- 3 tablespoons butter for cooking (optional, but recommended)
- Sour cream and/or applesauce to serve

Using the grating blade of a food processor or a handheld grater, grate the potatoes on the large-holed blade or side. Place the grated potatoes into a large bowl, and let them sit while they release their liquid.

Meanwhile, in another large bowl, mix the eggs and minced onion. With your hands, grab handfuls of the grated potato and squeeze over the bowl with all the potatoes in them, squeezing out as much liquid as possible back into the bowl. Transfer the squeezed potatoes in batches into the bowl with the eggs.

Insert your finger into the liquid left in the other bowl. You'll feel a firm layer of potato starch at the bottom. Carefully pour off the liquid from the top and then scrape up all that valuable starch from

the bottom of the bowl and mix it well with the egg and potato mixture (hands are best for this). This natural starch helps bind together the potatoes. If there is only a tablespoon or two of the starch, you'll also want to blend in the optional matzoh meal or flour. Generously season with salt and pepper.

In a large skillet (or two if you want to speed up the process), heat a couple of tablespoons of olive oil and a teaspoon or so of butter until the butter has melted and the fat is hot. Swirl the pan, and then add spoonfuls of the potato mixture — as big or small as you wish — and gently press them into round flat shapes in the pan. Cook until golden brown and crisp, about 4 to 5 minutes on each side. You'll need to keep a close eye on the heat; too low and they won't brown properly, too high and the oil will start smoking.

Drain the potato pancakes briefly on paper towels, and transfer to a serving platter. Repeat until all of the potato mixture is used up, adding more oil and bits of butter as you need it (periodically, you may want to dump out the pan, give it a quick wipe, and start over if you're finding that the oil is getting kind of dark and that too many bits of charred potato and onion are floating around). The potatoes will continue to release liquid as they sit; as you get to the bottom of the bowl, just give the potato mixture a quick squeeze before putting it in the hot pan, to avoid splattering. And the potatoes may start to brown, but when you cook them up it won't be very noticeable.

Serve the warm potato pancakes with sour cream and/or applesauce.

Katie Workman writes regularly about food for The Associated Press. She has written two cookbooks focused on family-friendly cooking, "Dinner Solved!" and "The Mom 100 Cookbook." She blogs at <http://www.themom100.com/about-katie-workman>. She can be reached at [Katie@themom100.com](mailto:Katie@themom100.com).



MetroCreative

**THE NUMBER:**  
**20**

Consecutive games Cleveland had lost in Miami before Wednesday's 111-85 victory. Kevin Love had 22 points.



Kevin Love

# SPORTS

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

Section B - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021



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## Rays, Kluber finalize \$8M, 1-year contract

*Two-time Cy Young winner wants to win a championship*

**MARK DIDTLER**  
*Associated Press*

ST. PETERSBURG — Two-time Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber and the Tampa Bay Rays finalized an \$8 million, one-year free-agent contract on Wednesday.

The deal includes an additional \$5 million in incentives.

The 35-year-old Kluber had his third consecutive injury-plagued season in 2021, going 5-3 with a 3.83 ERA in 16 starts for the New York Yankees.

Kluber said there were a number of factors that led to him signing with Tampa Bay, but first and foremost was a chance to win a championship.

"I'm at the stage of my career where I'm trying to still win a World

Series and I think that the success that this team has had the last few years makes it pretty obvious that they're in a position to do that," Kluber said. "This is a team I want to be part of."

Tampa Bay reached the World Series in 2020 but lost in six games to the Los Angeles Dodgers. Kluber was on the 2016 Cleveland team that dropped a seven-game World Series to the Chicago Cubs.

The right-hander, who won the Cy Young Award with Cleveland in 2014 and 2017, threw a no-hitter for the Yankees at Texas last May 19 and then made one more start before missing three months with a shoulder injury.

"Kluber was a priority target for us at the start," Tampa Bay president of baseball operations Erik Neander said.

Kluber was limited to seven starts and 35 2/3 innings during his last year with Cleveland, in 2019, and just one inning with Texas in 2020 due to forearm, shoulder and oblique injuries.

See **KLUBER**/Page B3



New York Yankees starting pitcher Corey Kluber throws Sept. 17 against Cleveland in New York. The two-time Cy Young Award winner and the Tampa Bay Rays finalized an \$8 million, one-year free-agent contract on Wednesday.

Associated Press

## Gators slip on road



Associated Press

Florida guard Brandon McKissic (23) slips as he tries to get the ball away from Oklahoma guard Elijah Harkless (55) during the first half Wednesday in Norman, Okla. The Sooners defeated the 14th-ranked Gators 74-67.

### Groves scores 20, leads Oklahoma past No. 14 Florida, 74-67

*Associated Press*

NORMAN, Okla. — Tanner Groves scored 20 points to lead Oklahoma to a 74-67 victory over No. 14 Florida on Wednesday night.

Groves, a transfer from Eastern Washington, shot 8 of 11 and had eight rebounds.

Jalen Hill scored 18 points and Umoja Gibson added 15 for Oklahoma (7-1), which earned its biggest win yet under new coach Porter Moser. He picked up his 300th career coaching win after previous stops at Arkansas-Little Rock, Illinois State and Loyola Chicago.

Phlandrous Fleming Jr. scored 17 points and Colin Castleton added 14 points, 11 rebounds and four blocks for Florida (6-1).

The Sooners led 9-0 before the Gators scored on a free throw nearly four minutes into the game. The Gators committed five turnovers before making a shot.

Florida chipped away throughout the

half and took the lead for the first time on three free throws by Tyree Appleby just over a minute before the break. Oklahoma recovered and led 37-36 at halftime.

A 3-pointer by Groves pushed the lead to seven with just under 6 minutes remaining, and Hill followed with a thunderous right-handed jam that gave the Sooners a 65-56 lead and prompted a Florida timeout.

Florida rallied, and a 3-pointer by Appleby cut Oklahoma's lead to 69-67 with about 2 minutes remaining. But Hill scored, was fouled and made the free throw to push the Sooners' lead back to five, and Oklahoma remained in control from there.

#### BIG PICTURE

**Florida:** The Gators already have solid wins over Florida State and Ohio State this season — the same Ohio State team that just beat No. 1 Duke on Tuesday. This loss isn't a resume killer.

**Oklahoma:** It's an impressive win for an

Oklahoma team that was pieced together with a new coach, a few holdovers, transfer portal additions and incoming freshmen. The Sooners were picked to finish seventh in the Big 12, but they look like they might be better than that.

#### No. 6 Villanova 71, Penn 56

PHILADELPHIA — Collin Gillespie scored 26 points, Brandon Slater had 16 and No. 6 Villanova avoided a second straight court-storming at Penn with a 71-56 win.

The last time the two Big 5 schools played at the Palestra in 2018, the Ivy League Quakers pulled off one of the great upsets in school history with a three-point win over the reigning national champion Wildcats.

#### No. 10 Arkansas 97, Central Arkansas, 60

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Stanley Umude scored 17 points off the bench and

See **GATORS**/Page B3

## Clock ticks down To MLB's 1st work stoppage since 1995

**RONALD BLUM AND STEPHEN HAWKINS**  
*AP baseball writers*

IRVING, Texas — The clock ticked down Wednesday toward the expiration of Major League Baseball's collective bargaining agreement at 11:59 p.m. EST and a likely management lockout ending the sport's labor peace at 9,740 days over 26 1/2 years.

After successfully reaching four consecutive agreements without a stoppage, players and owners have appeared headed for a confrontation for more than two years.

"The lockout seems like a very likely scenario," pitcher Max Scherzer, a member of the union's executive committee, said Wednesday after finalizing his contract with the New York Mets.

Management negotiators left the union's hotel about nine hours before the deal was set to expire and both sides said talks would not resume in the evening. Players said MLB did not make any new central economic proposals this week.

The union demanded change following anger over a declining average salary, middle-class players forced out by teams concentrating payroll on the wealthy and veterans jettisoned in favor of lower-paid youth, especially among clubs tearing down their rosters to rebuild.

"As players we see major problems with it," Scherzer said of the 2016 agreement. "First and foremost, we see a competition problem and how teams are behaving because of certain rules that are within that, and adjustments have to be made because of that in order to bring out the competition."

Management, intent on preserving salary restraints gained in recent decades, rejected the union's requests for what teams regarded as significant alterations to the sport's economic structure, including lowering service time needed for

See **CLOCK**/Page B3

# Best Christmas present any dad can have

First and foremost, let me wish each and everyone of you, happy holidays. With a special thanks to all of you who have fished with me over the past years.



**Rick Burns**  
**FISHING**  
**REPORT**

the charter businesses, mainly in part due to the pandemic and such, I'm truly blessed to have a passion that provides me the opportunity to spend time out on the water doing what I truly love to do

— fish! It is also extremely rewarding to see and meet past clients at events and on the water who are willing to share their passion for the resources and the sport.

As always the case in Florida, December can sometimes be a challenging time of year to fish our nature coast area. With the windy, cloudy, rainy and colder water and weather, it can bring difficult angling with it. But when you do have that short window of nicer weather and high pressure, take advantage. Because the fish will be a whole lot more cooperative.

For those who fished with me during those good calm conditions, fishing was great. Such was the case when Josh and his dad Jim went out on a trip with me. We caught some nice trout mainly utilizing 1/8oz. jigs suspended under popping corks. And hooked into a few using some topwater plugs. As the tide turned and starting coming in we busted a move towards the outer islands and backcountry

in search of some reds.

I think Josh showed his dad up by catching a couple including a nice 24-incher on a rapala skitterwalk.

I was again proud to have yet another dad and son team aboard to enjoy some angling fun. But I was most especially proud and honored because Josh was home on leave from

overseas where he has been serving our country. My hat is off to these fine young men and women who not only are serving, but also aren't always able to be fortunate as you and I to be home at Christmas with their families and loved ones. Thank you Josh for what you're doing. Christmas, (not xmas) will be here before you

know it. Remember the reason for the season. See ya next week.

*Capt. Rick Burns runs Reel Burns Charters out of Homosassa. He can be contacted at 352-201-6111 or visit his website at www.homosassafishingguide.com.*



Special to the Chronicle

**Anthony from the Brandon area with a perfect 22-inch slot-size redfish he hooked into on a 3-inch pearl colored paddle tail jig.**

## Tide charts

	Chassahowitzka*		Crystal River**		Homosassa***		Withlacoochee*	
	High/Low		High/Low		High/Low		High/Low	
THURS 12/2	3:59 a.m. 5:06 p.m.	11:54 a.m. 9:51 p.m.	2:07 a.m. 3:21 p.m.	9:17 a.m. 9:04 p.m.	2:38 a.m. 4:20 p.m.	11:18 a.m. 9:17 p.m.	12:52 p.m. ——	7:08 a.m. 7:11 p.m.
FRI 12/3	4:44 a.m. 6:03 p.m.	12:51 p.m. 10:00 p.m.	2:50 a.m. 4:13 p.m.	10:09 a.m. 9:47 p.m.	3:18 a.m. 5:11 p.m.	12:19 p.m. 9:50 p.m.	12:01 a.m. 1:46 p.m.	7:58 a.m. 7:57 p.m.
SAT 12/4	5:30 a.m. 6:50 p.m.	1:48 p.m. 10:20 p.m.	3:34 a.m. 4:59 p.m.	11:00 a.m. 10:31 p.m.	4:00 a.m. 5:58 p.m.	1:15 p.m. 10:28 p.m.	12:42 a.m. 2:38 p.m.	8:46 a.m. 8:40 p.m.
SUN 12/5	6:19 a.m. 7:27 p.m.	2:44 p.m. 10:49 p.m.	4:19 a.m. 5:43 p.m.	11:49 a.m. 11:16 p.m.	4:44 a.m. 6:44 p.m.	2:09 p.m. 11:12 p.m.	1:23 a.m. 3:28 p.m.	9:33 a.m. 9:23 p.m.
MON 12/6	7:08 a.m. 7:58 p.m.	3:39 p.m. 11:26 p.m.	5:04 a.m. 6:27 p.m.	12:36 p.m. 11:59 p.m.	5:30 a.m. 7:30 p.m.	3:02 p.m. ——	2:05 a.m. 4:17 p.m.	10:19 a.m. 10:06 p.m.
TUES 12/7	7:59 a.m. 8:31 p.m.	4:34 p.m. ——	5:50 a.m. 7:12 p.m.	1:24 p.m. ——	6:17 a.m. 8:21 p.m.	12:04 a.m. 3:54 p.m.	2:50 a.m. 5:04 p.m.	11:07 a.m. 10:53 p.m.
WED 12/8	8:51 a.m. 9:11 p.m.	12:10 a.m. 5:28 p.m.	6:39 a.m. 8:03 p.m.	12:44 a.m. 2:13 p.m.	7:06 a.m. 9:20 p.m.	1:03 a.m. 4:45 p.m.	3:39 a.m. 5:48 p.m.	11:54 a.m. 11:44 p.m.

\*From mouths of rivers. \*\*At Kings Bay. \*\*\*At Mason's Creek.

# Magic end 7-game skid

*Cavaliers end 20-game losing streak in Miami*

Associated Press

ORLANDO — Cole Anthony scored 24 points, Wendell Carter Jr. added 18 and the Orlando Magic rallied from an early 16-point deficit to beat the Denver Nuggets 108-103 on Wednesday night and end their seven-game losing streak.

The Magic took their first lead of the night at 106-103 when rookie Franz Wagner drilled a step-back 3-pointer with 1:45 to play. Wagner had 15 points, while his brother, Moritz Wagner, chipped in 12 points off the bench.

Denver's final chance fell way short when Will Barton's 25-foot shot with 2 seconds remaining badly missed the rim.

Orlando also ended a 10-game losing streak against Denver, a streak that dated back to March 15, 2016. The Magic's rally ruined the return of Nuggets forward Aaron Gordon, who played at the Amway Center for the first time since Orlando traded him to Denver on March 28. Gordon, who spent seven seasons in Orlando from 2014-21, scored 17 points, grabbed eight rebounds and had three thunderous dunks on Wednesday.

Monte Morris scored a season-best 22 points, while Nikola Jokic had 18 points, 15 rebounds and seven assists for the Nuggets.

## Cavaliers 111, Miami 85

MIAMI — Kevin Love scored 22 points and the Cleveland Cavaliers snapped a 20-game losing streak in Miami, beating the Heat 111-85.

Jarrett Allen added 19 points and 11 rebounds and Darius Garland finished with 16 points for the Cavaliers, who had not won on the Heat's home court since Jan. 25, 2010.

Tyler Herro scored 21 points for Miami.

## Celtics 88, 76ers, 87

BOSTON — Jayson Tatum scored 26 points with a career-high 16 rebounds, shaking off a hard fourth-quarter fall to lead to lead the Boston Celtics to an 88-87 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Tatum scored 11 points in the fourth, and Jaylen Brown blocked Georges Niang's shot at the buzzer to give the Celtics the victory.

Joel Embiid had 18 rebounds for Philadelphia, adding 13 points.

## Hawks 114, Pacers 111

INDIANAPOLIS — Trae Young made two crucial free throws in the final seconds of the game to help the Atlanta Hawks fend off the Indiana Pacers 114-111.

Malcolm Brogdon led the Pacers with 27 points.

## Wizards 115, Timberwolves 107

WASHINGTON — Montrezl Harrell scored 27 points and Bradley Beal added 19 to lift the Washington Wizards to a 115-107 victory over the Minnesota

Timberwolves. Timberwolves star Karl-Anthony Towns had to leave the game with 2:14 remaining after injuring himself on a dunk.

Minnesota lost for just the second time in nine games.

## Mavericks 139, Pelicans 107

NEW ORLEANS — Luka Doncic scored 18 of his team-high 28 points in the first quarter and dished out 14 assists in 27 minutes to power the Dallas Mavericks to a 139-107 win over the New Orleans Pelicans.

Kristaps Porzingis added 20 points and 10 rebounds for Dallas, which had lost five of its previous six games.

## Rockets 114, Thunder 110

OKLAHOMA CITY — Jae'Sean Tate scored a career-high 32 points and added 10 rebounds, seven assists and five blocked shots, sparking a fourth-quarter rally to lead the short-handed Houston Rockets to a 114-110 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

The Rockets won their fourth straight and the Thunder dropped their seventh in a row.

## Bucks 127, Hornets 125

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo scored on a driving layup with two seconds left to give Milwaukee a 127-125 victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Antetokounmpo had 40 points and 12 rebounds and Khris Middleton added 21 points for the Bucks.

LaMelo Ball had a career-high 36 points for the Hornets.

# Title game picks: Georgia over Tide, Michigan over Iowa

**RALPH D. RUSSO**  
AP college football writer

Those conference championship upsets with the potential to create College Football Playoff chaos scenarios never actually happen.

As AP Top 25 college football poll voter Brett McMurphy of Action Network pointed out, only six teams that went into championship weekend holding a top-four spot in the selection committee's rankings did not end up making the field.

In five of those cases, that team lost its conference championship game. Four of those five teams (Georgia in 2018, '19, Auburn in 2017 and Iowa in 2015) lost to teams that made the playoff and the other, Wisconsin in 2017, lost to an Ohio State team that finished fifth in the rankings that determine which four teams play for the national title.

The only team that won its final game of the regular season and fell out of playoff position was TCU in 2014. The Horned Frogs were third in the final rankings, blew out an Iowa State team that did not win a Big 12 game that season but ended up out after Ohio State won the Big Ten title against Wisconsin.

Back then there was no Big 12 championship game and Baylor and TCU "shared" the conference title, though Baylor beat the Horned Frogs in the regular season.

The committee, clearly torn over Baylor and TCU, found another option in Ohio State, which went on to win the national championship — though fans of those Big 12 teams are still chafed about the decision.

One notable upset came in 2019, when Utah was fifth heading into its Pac-12 title game against Oregon. The Utes weren't a slam dunk for the final spot, but with LSU and Georgia ahead of them and playing in the SEC title game, they had to be feeling good about their chances.

The Ducks won 37-15. After LSU beat Georgia, Oklahoma took the last spot in the CFP by winning the Big 12 title.

The picks:

## FRIDAY

No. 10 Oregon (plus 2 1/2) vs. No. 14 Utah, Pac-12 championship at Las Vegas

Utes hammered the Ducks in Salt Lake City two week ago ... OREGON 28-24.

Western Kentucky (minus 2 1/2) at UTSA, Conference USA championship

WKU QB Bailey Zappe has thrown 52 TD passes and is 32 yards shy of 5,000 for the season ... WESTERN KENTUCKY 31-28.

## SATURDAY

No. 1 Georgia (minus 6 1/2) vs. No. 4 Alabama, SEC championship at Atlanta

Bulldogs have lost six straight to the Tide, including two SEC title games and a national championship game ... GEORGIA 31-20.

No. 2 Michigan (minus 10 1/2) vs. No. 15 Iowa, Big Ten championship at Indianapolis

First Big Ten title game appearance for the Wolverines, who have not won the conference since 2003 ... MICHIGAN 31-17.

No. 16 Houston (plus 10 1/2) at No. 3 Cincinnati, AAC championship

Bearcats try to make it back-to-back AAC championships ... CINCINNATI 34-21.

No. 5 Oklahoma State (minus 4 1/2) vs. No. 9 Baylor, Big-12 championship at Arlington, Texas

Cowboys beat the Bears in early October, 24-12 ... OKLAHOMA STATE 23-20

No. 17 Pittsburgh (minus 2 1/2) vs. No. 18 Wake Forest, ACC championship at Charlotte, N.C.

Panthers have never won the ACC; the Demon Deacons last did in 2006 ... WAKE FOREST 38-37.

Utah State (plus 5 1/2) at No. 19 San Diego State, Mountain West championship

Aztecs have allowed more than 21 points twice this season, and once was in an overtime game ... SAN DIEGO STATE 24-14.

Appalachian State (minus 2 1/2) at No. 20 Louisiana-Lafayette, Sun Belt championship

Ragin' Cajuns won the regular-season meeting 41-13 ... APPALACHIAN STATE 27-24.

Kent State (minus 3 1/2) vs. Northern Illinois, MAC championship in Detroit

Golden Flashes beat the Huskies 52-47 in the regular season ... NIU 38-36.



Associated Press

**Orlando guard Cole Anthony (50) celebrates with Wendell Carter Jr., center and Mo Bamba, left, as the time expires to defeat the Denver Nuggets 108-103 in Orlando.**



THURSDAY EVENING DECEMBER 2, 2021. Table listing TV channels, times, and program titles such as News, NBC News, and various entertainment shows.

Annie's advice

Dear Annie: I am a single mother to my one daughter, who is now 29. She moved from our hometown because that's where she met her husband...



DEAR ANNIE

Recently, she signed him up for toddler soccer, and I told her that I wanted to go to see him play. This past Saturday, they went, and she never asked me to join them.

It has been and still is very hard for me being in this new city. I don't know anybody and am still single, having left my companion when I moved down here.

I have been lonely and have been living here for a year now. I'm thinking about moving back to my hometown but I'm torn because of not being able to see my grandson as often.

My question is, do you think I am being unreasonable to feel hurt that she doesn't ask me to attend things when her husband is going?

Dear Homesick: It sounds like freaked-out first-time mom was the one who requested you move to her neighborhood. Now that she's in the groove of her parenting duties...

Dear Annie: My son's father has recently told me he wants to do everything he can for our son, who is almost 4. However, ever since our son was born, I have barely had any help.

I'm not sure how I feel about my son's father suddenly wanting to be in our son's life and claiming he will do whatever it takes. You don't choose when you feel like being a parent.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

Bridge PHILLIP ADLER Newspaper Enterprise Assn.

Ten years after the original, Jeff Chen has produced "Bridge Crossword 2" (Master Point Press). There are 52 crosswords of course!

Bridge game layout showing North-South and East-West hands, dealer information, and opening lead.

appears in the clues and lights (answers). When I edited "Bridge Magazine" in England, I asked Araucaria (who was a creative cryptic crossword compiler) for some that generated bridge problems.

In Araucaria's crosswords, the defenders' hands only came with the solution. Note that he took all of the 10s (Ts) for North-South to reduce the number of x's.

South has eight top tricks: one spade, four hearts and three clubs. If the club jack is at most doubleton, or the suit is splitting 3-3, there won't be a problem.

Then declarer can drive out the diamond ace, but that won't work well if the opponents can take one diamond and four spades. To do that, though, the spades must be 5-2, not 4-3.

South must win the first trick with dummy's ace. Then he tests clubs before turning to diamonds. Here, he loses only two spades, one diamond and one club.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Jumble puzzle grid with circled letters and a cartoon illustration of a man and woman in a tropical setting.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon. Yesterday's Answer: The person putting up the new billboard was ASSIGNED THE JOB

MORE PUZZLES Find the daily crossword puzzle inside the Chronicle's classified pages, along with Sudoku, Wordy Gurdy and a word puzzle.

2021 Christmas Giveaway Prizes Daily MON-FRI. Includes a QR code and the website URL www.chronicleonline.com/contests/12dayschristmas.



Peanuts



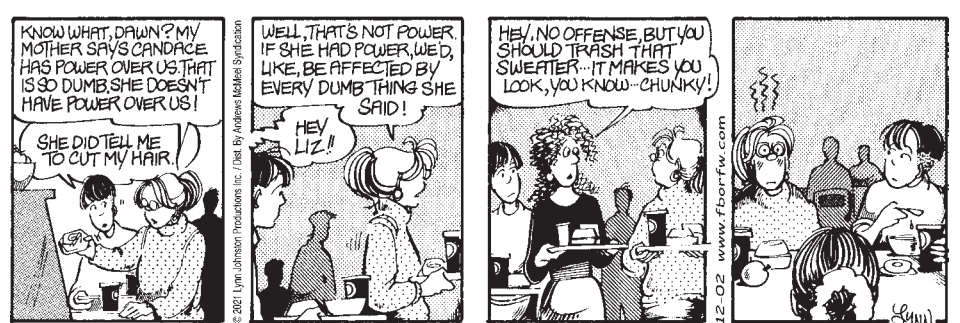
Garfield



Pickles



For Better or For Worse



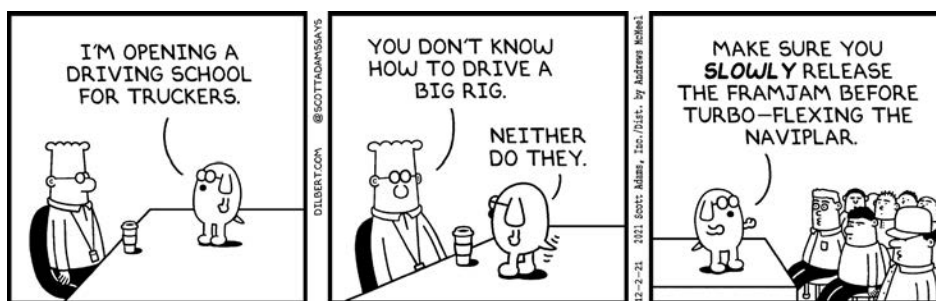
Sally Forth



Beetle Bailey



Dilbert



The Grizzwells



The Born Loser



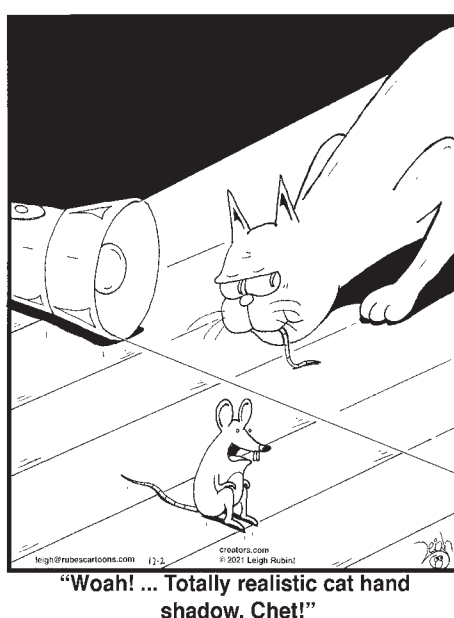
Blondie



Moderately Confused



Rubes



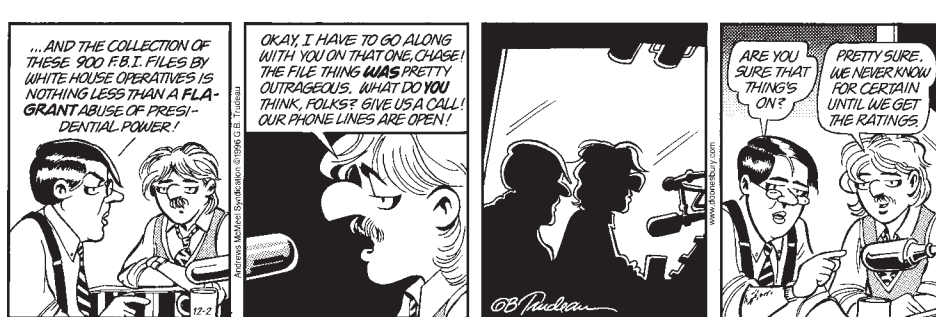
Dennis the Menace



The Family Circus



Doonesbury Flashbacks



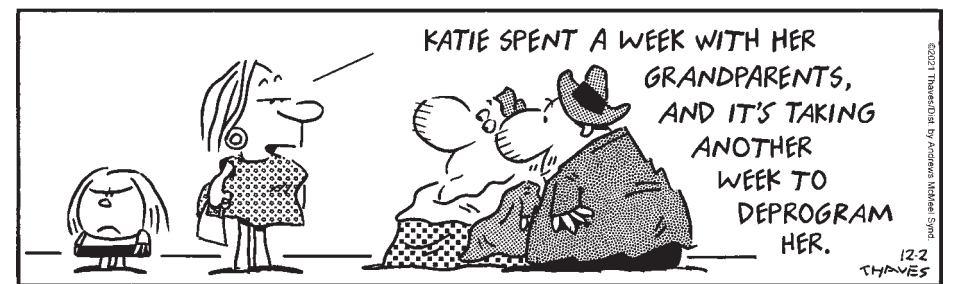
Betty



Big Nate



Frank & Ernest



Arlo and Janis



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- WDUV 105.5 FM Hudson
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- WRZN-AM 720 Adult Mix

CELEBRITY CIPHER by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

Today's clue: I equals C

"ZHCJ ERKN, ORB PJBEL TR FJNFL  
 FAL CFYN CJN UHPY RD TNCCHAT  
 JBUC XNIFBPN ERKN HP FA FVFMHAT  
 DNNEHAT." — XUHCANO PSNFUP

Previous Solution: "I've learned throughout my journey that perfection is the enemy of greatness." — Janelle Monae

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Today's MOVIES

Times provided by Regal Cinemas and are subject to change; call ahead.

Citrus Cinemas 6 Inverness;  
 844-462-7342 Code 187  
 Thursday, Dec. 2  
 "Christmas with the Chosen" NR — 7 p.m.  
 "Encanto" PG — 12:15, 3:45, 7:45, 10:25 p.m.  
 "House of Gucci" R — 11:30 a.m., 3, 7:15,  
 10:05 p.m.  
 "King Richard" PG13 — 11 a.m., 2:30,  
 10:15 p.m.  
 "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" PG13 — 11:45 a.m.,  
 3:15, 7:30, 10:35 p.m.  
 "Clifford The Big Red Dog" PG — 12, 3:30,  
 6:45, 10:45 p.m.  
 "Eternals" PG-13 — 11:15 a.m., 2:45, 6:30,  
 10 p.m.

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 6:45, 10:45 p.m.  
 "Eternals" PG-13 — 11:15 a.m., 2:45, 6:30,  
 10 p.m.

Valerie Theatre, Inverness; 352-341-7850  
 Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 4 and 5  
 "Nutcracker Suite" — live performance, 2-3 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 3













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