

Merry Christmas

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

SATURDAY

TODAY & next morning
HIGH 73
LOW 48
Mostly sunny
PAGE A4

DECEMBER 25, 2021

Florida's Best Community

Newspaper Serving Florida's Best Community

\$1

VOL. 127 ISSUE 82

NEWS BRIEFS

Two killed in separate crashes Thursday

A 33-year-old Lecanto woman died after colliding with another vehicle nearly head-on in the late night hours Thursday, Dec. 23, according to a Florida Highway Patrol report.

The woman was driving a sedan eastbound at approximately 10:54 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 23, in the outside westbound lane of State Road 44, east of Blanton Drive. A van, driven by a 30-year-old from Kokomo, Michigan, was traveling westbound in the westbound inside lane of S.R. 44.

For unknown reason, the woman entered the westbound lane and collided nearly head-on with the van, the FHP report stated. Post-impact, the sedan and van rotated to final rest in the westbound outside lane and center median respectively.

Transported to an area hospital, the woman, who was not wearing a seatbelt, later died from her injuries suffered during the crash, the report stated.

According to the FHP, the driver of the van, including three passengers, a 28-year-old woman, a 7-year-old female and a 5-year-old female, all had serious injuries and were transported to area hospitals.

In a separate crash Thursday, Dec. 23, a 46-year-old Homosassa man died when he was thrown from a scooter, the FHP reported.

The man was traveling westbound on a scooter on South Lewdingar Drive, west of Barbara Lane when, for unknown reasons, the rider failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway and drove onto the unpaved shoulder and was ejected from the vehicle. Transported to an area hospital, he later expired from injuries suffered during the crash. The man was not wearing a helmet, according to the report.

Clerk's office will close for holiday

The Clerk of Courts office will be closed Dec. 31 in observance of New Year's Day to coincide with the Fifth Judicial Circuit's holiday calendar. They will reopen on Jan. 3.

All other local government offices will be open Dec. 31 and closed on Jan. 3. As an alternative, visit the clerk's website at citrusclerk.org to make online payments, search court case information and initiate a marriage license application.

Commissioners to hold annual planning retreat

The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) annual planning retreat will be held at 9 a.m. Jan. 5 at the Lecanto Government Building, room 166, 3600 W. Sovereign Path.

The public is invited to attend, though there will be no "open to the public" speaking opportunities during this event. Citizens are welcome to speak during the BOCC meeting scheduled for 1 p.m. Jan. 18 at the Citrus County Courthouse, 110 N. Apopka Ave. in Inverness.

For more information, call public information officer Veronica Kamp-schroer at 352-527-5484.

New shelter contract could come by February

By MICHAEL D. BATES

Chronicle Reporter

County Administrator Randy Oliver said he now expects a contract to build a new animal shelter will be brought to county commissioners in February for their consideration.

The board last month selected Florida-based Tocoi Engineering Inc., to handle the design of the facility. Tocoi was deemed the most qualified out of the three companies interviewed.

Oliver said the state's Competitive Consultants Negotiation Act (CCNA) requires that the scope of work and cost be negotiated with the highest ranked firm.

"The selected firm has stated that they will have a scope and price for services to design the new shelter by mid-January," Oliver wrote in an email to the Chronicle on Monday.

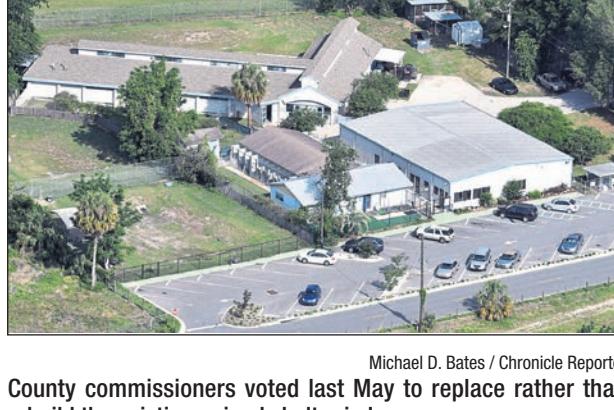
Barring any complications with the work scope or contract, the county hopes to

have the money secured for the project by March, with design completed in June or July.

About a year from now, it's hoped a construction contract will be awarded. According to the most recent timetable, the new animal shelter could be up and running by late winter or spring 2024.

County commissioners in May directed staff to work within a budget of \$8 to

See SHELTER, page A8



Michael D. Bates / Chronicle Reporter
County commissioners voted last May to replace rather than rebuild the existing animal shelter in Inverness.



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Lara and Robert Vitter sit on their front porch with their children, from left, Annabella, 13, James, 4, Samuel, 6, Maxim, 3, Lydia, 8, and Priscilla, 11. Earlier this year the couple adopted Maxim, born in Ukraine.

Maxim's first American Christmas

Ukrainian 'special needs' orphan brings great joy to Vitter family

By NANCY KENNEDY

Chronicle Reporter

With a houseful of kids, Christmas for the Vitter family is always joyful pandemonium.

But this year, with the addition of one more Vitter, 3-year-old Maxim, whom they adopted from Ukraine in May, the joy is multiplied.

"This is like a fairy tale for us and a huge blessing," said Robert Vitter, the dad of the family of now six children: Annabella, 13; Priscilla, 11; Lydia, 8; Samuel, 6; James, 4 and Maxim.

"He needed a family and we have one, and now we're all together," Robert said.

As Lara Vitter, the mom of the family, explained, "The plan was always to adopt, and at one time we were house parents at a children's home in Alabama, but we never thought about adopting a special needs child."

Maxim was born with Apert Syndrome, a genetic disorder characterized by deformities of the skull, face and limbs.

Among other things, Maxim has fused fingers and toes, an elongated skull and prominent eyes.

He's also smart as a whip and loves everyone and everything, especially bananas.

"When we walked out of the orphanage to take him home, he walked with a swagger, swinging his arms, like he was heavyweight champion of the world," Vitter said.

"The whole time he was in the car, he just sat there smiling, like he was thinking, 'You love ME,'" Lara said.

"Priscilla and Annabella are the reasons we have him," she said. "When we were missionaries in Italy, they kept asking if we could adopt a child with

special needs. They prayed and prayed, and it took four or five years for Robert to come around."

When Annabella was 6, they were at the airport in London, heading home to the U.S. from Italy, and Annabella asked, "Mommy, where do babies come from?"

A couple nearby started laughing and the Vitters struck up a conversation with them, which grew into a friendship. And when that couple adopted a child with special needs, that stirred something inside them, Lara said.

They found Maxim on

See CHRISTMAS, page A7

Three-year-old Maxim Vitter must wear a protective helmet while playing outdoors to ensure a fall won't cause a serious injury to his head. The child lives with a condition known as Apert Syndrome.



Citrus County COVID-19 cases steady for now

By FRED HIERS

Chronicle Reporter

The number of new cases of coronavirus in Citrus County are holding steady.

But infection information for the virus is slow in coming during the winter

holidays and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention latest data is for Dec. 16. The CDC gets its Citrus County infection data from Florida health officials.

During the week ending Dec. 16, the CDC reported

46 new cases and one death due to the virus.

The county's cumulative cases is now 20,938. The county's population is 149,657. The number of county deaths in Citrus County attributed to the virus is 838 people.

The number of hospital admissions in Citrus County due to the virus was eight during the week ending December 18. There had been four the prior week, according to the CDC.

In Citrus County 59 percent of the people eligible

to be vaccinated received vaccines. The Florida average is 70 percent, according to the Florida Department of Health.

There have been 3.8 million cases of the virus in

See COVID, page A8



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STATE & LOCAL

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

NEWS BRIEFS

Apply for Boys State

Boys State is open to young men in their junior year of high school. It is an all-expense paid week-long trip to Tallahassee from June 19 to 25 for an intense study of government. College scholarship opportunities will also be available.

Qualifications for juniors interested in Boys State are:

- Has an interest in government
- Demonstrates leadership
- Is a resident of the state of Florida
- Is willing to salute the flag and take the oath of office on a Bible
- Has maintained an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher

Contact your guidance counselor for an application and additional information. Applicants can also contact Robert Baker, Boys State chairperson of the American Legion Post 155, at 352-564-2548 or rbaker244@tampabay.rr.com.

For more information, visit floridalegion.org. Applications should be submitted as soon as possible.

Oak Village Women's Club to meet

The Oak Village Women's Club (OVWC) will have their luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 10 at Sugarmill Woods Country Club, 1 Douglas St. in Homosassa.

The theme is "Centering your mind, body and soul!" with Karen Anderson who will teach Tai Chi. Wear comfortable clothes and sneakers.

Lunch includes New England clam chowder, dinner rolls and one of the following entrees: cod piccata, almond-crusted chicken or vegetarian salad. Dessert is apple crisp a la mode.

The cost is \$25 for members. Guests can attend the first time for \$25 and thereafter, for \$27 unless they join. Checks with menu choices are due Jan. 1. Drop checks off at the Oak Village bulletin board on Oak Village Boulevard South or Oak Village Bath and Tennis Club, 1 Village Center Circle.

Membership is open to women who reside in Sugarmill Woods. For more information, call Hattie Ciolko at 352-503-7300.

AARP offers free tax preparation services

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The AARP Tax-Aide program has announced the opening of their 2022 tax season and will begin accepting appointments beginning Jan. 4 for free tax preparation services from Feb. 1 to April 18. You do not need to be an AARP member to utilize this service.

Due to COVID-19, normal operating procedures and tax preparation will be a little different than in past years. All sites will be appointment only and face coverings will be required for all visitors and volunteers.

When you arrive for your appointment, you will give all your documents to a

Tax-Aide volunteer who will interview you regarding the information you provided and have you sign a waiver allowing the documents to be in their possession while you are not present.

You will then leave the tax preparation room and wait in your car or the library. Upon completion, you will be called and asked to return to the room where you dropped off your paperwork.

Your taxes will be reviewed with you and any questions you may have will be answered. Once you approve your return, they will electronically file it.

When you make your appointment, you will be given an intake/interview form

that needs to be completed prior to your appointment. You will also be given another document telling you what you need to bring with you to the library for your appointment.

To make an appointment, visit or call a Citrus County Library. Any library can make an appointment for you at any site.

The following sites will be open this year:

■ Central Ridge Library, 425 W. Roosevelt Blvd. in Beverly Hills. Call 352-746-6622.

■ Citrus Springs Memorial Library, 1826 W. Country Club Blvd. Call 352-489-2313.

■ Coastal Region Library, 8619 W. Crystal St. in Crystal River. Call 795-3716.

■ Crystal River Moose Lodge, 1855 S. Suncoast Blvd. in Homosassa. Call 352-795-2795.

■ Floral City Public Library, 8360 E. Orange Ave. Call 352-726-3671.

■ Homosassa Public Library, 4100 S. Grandmarch Ave. Call 352-628-5626.

■ Lakes Region Library, 1511 Druid Road in Inverness. Call 352-726-2357.

Days and hours of operation will be available when you make your appointment.

As in other years, there are limits on the tax situations they can assist with. More information on the common limitations are available on the information sheet available at the library sites.

When you arrive to have

your taxes done, you will need the following information: proof of identity (i.e. drivers license) for all household members listed on your taxes, social security cards for everyone, all tax documents that you have received and the completed information sheet you received when you made your appointment.

In addition, bring a copy of your 2019 and 2020 tax returns if you have them. In some cases, they will be needed to accurately complete your return. If you have a cell phone, please bring it with you.

Plans for the season may change if status of the pandemic changes. For more information, email paula.bels@aol.com.

INVERNESS SAYS GOODBYE TO COUNCILMAN

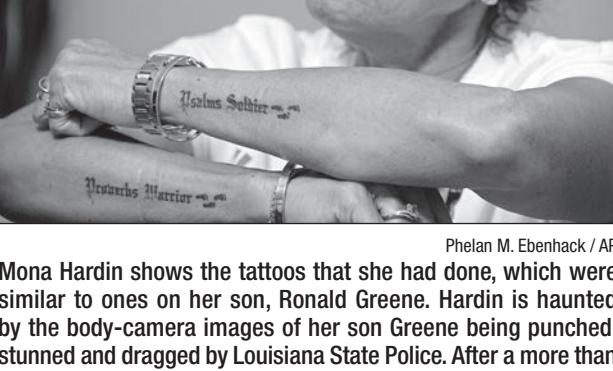


Special to the Chronicle

Members of the city of Inverness government staff and council members gather during the Inverness Christmas parade to wish retiring city councilman Ken Hinkle goodbye. From left, council members include Jacquie Hepfer, David Ryan, Ken Hinkle, City Manager Eric Williams, Mayor Bob Plaisted and councilwoman Linda Bega.

In Ronald Greene's death, a mother's defiant quest for truth

By JIM MUSTIAN and JAKE BLEIBERG
Associated Press



Mona Hardin shows the tattoos that she had done, which were similar to ones on her son, Ronald Greene. Hardin is haunted by the body-camera images of her son Greene being punched, stunned and dragged by Louisiana State Police. After a more than two-year federal probe, still none of the officers involved has been charged.

Associated Press investigation identified at least a dozen cases over the past decade in which troopers or their bosses ignored or concealed evidence of beatings, deflected blame and impeded efforts to root out misconduct. And by the state police's own count, 67 percent of troopers' uses of force in recent years targeted Black people.

But it's been a frustrat-

ing crusade. After a federal probe that's dragged on more than two years, still none of the officers involved in Greene's arrest has been criminally charged.

Along the way, the 70-year-old Hardin says her repeated trips to Washington, D.C., and Baton Rouge have been met with empty promises from officials, institutional wagon-circling and indifference. Hardin

saw her son's assailants stay on the job, unpunished for months, the then-head of the state police defending Greene's deadly arrest as "awful but lawful" before abruptly retiring, and the body camera video remaining a secret from the public for more than two years before the AP obtained and published it this spring.

All of it has deepened her family's pain, she said, while making a mockery of the criminal justice system.

"In the end, you just end up being part of a big nightmare," Hardin said. "But that was my commitment. I won't fail him."

Not long before midnight on May 10, 2019, the 49-year-old Greene was driving near the University of Louisiana at Monroe when a trooper attempted to pull him over for a traffic violation. Greene, who an autopsy would show had cocaine in his system, sped away, leading troopers on a chase that topped speeds of 115 mph. It ended with troopers converging on Greene's SUV, beating him,

jolting him with stun guns and leaving him handcuffed and prone for several minutes as he pleaded for mercy and wailed: "I'm your brother! I'm scared!"

One trooper, Kory York, could be seen on body-camera video briefly dragging him facedown by his ankle shackles. Another, Chris Hollingsworth, struck Greene in the head several times with a flashlight, and was later captured on his squad car video boasting he "beat the ever-living f--- out of him."

Hundreds of miles away, in central Florida, Hardin said she "felt in my soul something was wrong with Ronnie."

Those fears were confirmed when her daughter called her early that morning in a panic, saying Greene had been in a crash and "didn't make it." Alana Wilson said a state trooper told her by telephone that her brother "was in a car accident, hit a tree, went through the windshield and died on impact."

Loved ones arriving at the hospital in West Monroe be-

came suspicious after seeing the deep bruises on Greene's face and cuts on his head.

"It didn't look like what they said," Wade said.

Even the emergency room physician doubted the account of Greene's death from the moment he arrived dead at the hospital, bruised and bloodied with two stun-gun prongs still protruding from his backside.

Hardin's anguish would only deepen in the months that followed. An avalanche of excuses – including the pandemic – compounded the uncertainty and lack of answers from, police, state prosecutors and the FBI's field office in Monroe.

Hardin's first ray of hope came when a civil rights law firm in Philadelphia agreed to take her case and filed a federal wrongful-death lawsuit just before the first anniversary of Greene's death. Hardin returned to Louisiana in the October 2020 for a private family viewing of the body-camera video.

"I had to see my son take his last breath," she said. "I felt it."

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CITRUS COUNTY

ENTERTAINMENT

New Year's Eve in Times Square still on, with smaller crowd due to COVID

By MICHAEL R. SISAK

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Revelers will still ring in the new year in New York's Times Square next week, there just won't be as many of them as usual under new restrictions announced Thursday as the city grapples with a spike in COVID-19 cases.

Viewing areas that normally accommodate about 58,000 people will be limited to about 15,000 to allow for more distancing, and everyone in attendance must show proof of vaccination and wear a mask, Mayor Bill de Blasio said in a news release announcing the changes.

"There is a lot to celebrate and these additional safety measures will keep the fully vaccinated crowd safe and healthy as we ring in the New Year," de Blasio said, noting the city's success in getting residents vaccinated while also keeping businesses open.

The added precautions for New Year's Eve in Times Square were spurred by the rapid spread of the omicron variant in the Big Apple, where lines for testing have snaked around blocks in recent days.

On Wednesday, the city set yet another one-day testing record with 22,808 new cases, though a true comparison to the number of cases during the initial COVID-19 surge in spring 2020 is impossible because tests were very limited at the time.

Because of vaccinations, hospitalizations and deaths from the current surge are far fewer than at the pandemic's height.

The new wave of cases has led to the cancellation of concerts, sporting events and Broadway



Seth Wenig / AP

The 2022 sign that will be lit on top of a building on New Year's Eve is displayed in Times Square, New York, Monday, Dec. 20. Revelers will still ring in the new year in New York's Times Square next week, there just won't be as many of them as usual under new restrictions announced Thursday as the city grapples with a spike in COVID-19 cases.

shows, but de Blasio has shown a strong preference for having the annual Times Square ball drop go on as planned — the last major event of his eight-year tenure, which ends Jan. 1.

Little more than a month ago, de Blasio gleefully announced that a fully vaccinated crowd of hundreds of thousands of people would be back at the iconic celebration — donning goofy 2022-themed glasses and watching a crystal-clad ball drop at midnight — after it was limited last year to small groups of essential workers.

But that was before omicron

caught fire, forcing city officials and event organizers to rethink just how many people they wanted to squeeze into the bright, billboard-lined tourist haven known to some as the Crossroads of the World.

On Tuesday, the Fox network gave its verdict, pulling the plug on a planned live broadcast from the New Year's Eve event. Other networks plan to air the festivities, including Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve on ABC, the stalwart now hosted by Ryan Seacrest.

De Blasio said along with Thursday's announcement that the city

is monitoring the COVID-19 situation and could impose additional precautions if needed. Among the other changes announced Thursday, revelers won't be allowed into viewing areas until 3 p.m., much later than in past years.

On New Year's Eve last year, Times Square was mostly empty, with Jennifer Lopez and other artists performing behind police barricades. After vaccines became widely available in the U.S., the city allowed crowds back to the Macy's Fourth of July fireworks, the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade and other events.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today is Saturday, Dec. 25, the 359th day of 2021. There are six days left in the year. This is Christmas Day.

Highlight in history:

On Dec. 25, 1991, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev went on television to announce his resignation as the eighth and final leader of a communist superpower that had already gone out of existence.

On this date:

In A.D. 336, the first known commemoration of Christmas on Dec. 25 took place in Rome.

In 1776, Gen. George Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware River for a surprise attack against Hessian forces at Trenton, New Jersey, during the American Revolutionary War.

In 2006, James Brown, the "God-father of Soul," died in Atlanta at age 73.

Ten years ago: Five members of a family — three children and their grandparents — died in a Christmas morning blaze in Stamford, Connecticut, that was blamed on burning embers in a trash can.

Five years ago: George Michael, who rocketed to stardom with WHAM! and went on to enjoy a long and celebrated solo career, died at his home in Goring, England, at age 53.

One year ago: A recreational vehicle parked in the deserted streets of downtown Nashville exploded early Christmas morning, damaging dozens of buildings, causing widespread communications outages and grounding holiday travel at the city's airport; investigators later determined that the bomber, a 63-year-old Nashville-area man, was killed in the explosion.

Today's Birthdays: R&B singer John Edwards (The Spinners) is 77. Singer Jimmy Buffett is 75. Pro and College Football Hall-of-Famer Larry Csonka is 75. Country singer Barbara Mandrell is 73. Actor Sissy Spacek is 72. Singer Annie Lennox is 67.

ALERT CITRUS SIGNUP

- To register for the Citrus County Sheriff's Office's Alert Citrus weather program, visit [www.sheriffcitrus.org](http://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 (text, mobile phone, home phone, email), then include the address(es) you want alerts for. You can choose what types of emergencies you want to hear about, and set a quiet period for no conduct.
- Those without computer access may call 352-249-2705.

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

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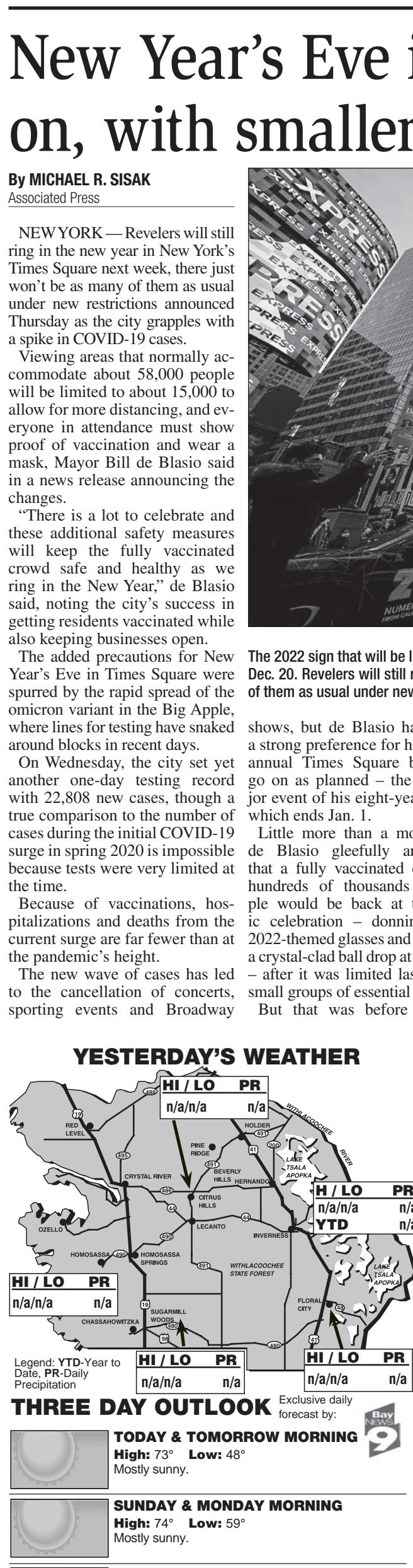
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FLORIDA TEMPERATURES

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Daytona Bch.	75	56	s	Miami	78	67	s
Fort Lauderdale	80	63	s	Ocala	75	55	s
Fort Myers	78	58	s	Orlando	77	56	s
Gainesville	73	56	s	Pensacola	76	62	pc
Homestead	80	61	s	Sarasota	76	62	s
Jacksonville	74	57	s	Tallahassee	74	59	pc
Key West	78	68	pc	Tampa	76	61	s
Lakeland	76	56	s	Vero Beach	78	56	s
Melbourne	78	56	s	W. Palm Bch.	77	66	s

MARINE OUTLOOK

Today: South winds around 10 knots then becoming southwest early in the afternoon, then diminishing to around 5 knots late in the afternoon. Seas 2 feet or less. Bay and inland waters a light chop.

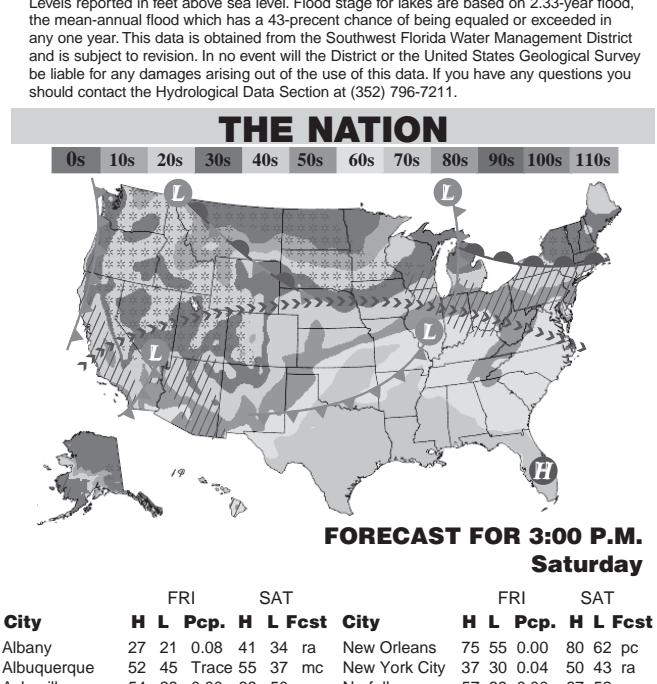
Gulf water temperature
64°
Taken at Crystal River

LAKE LEVELS

Location	FRI	THU	FRI
Withlacoochee at Holder	29.49	29.50	34.64
Tsala Apopka-Hernando	37.82	37.82	38.66
Tsala Apopka-Inverness	39.15	39.15	39.73
Tsala Apopka-Floral City	40.32	40.33	41.37

Levels reported in feet above sea level. Flood stage for lakes are based on 233-year flood, the mean-annual flood which has a 43-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any one year. This data is obtained from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and is subject to revision. In no event will the District or the United States Geological Survey be liable for any damages arising out of the use of this data. If you have any questions you should contact the Hydrological Data Section at (352) 796-7211.

THE NATION



City	FRI	SAT	City	FRI	SAT	City	FRI	SAT

<tbl_r cells="9" ix="1" maxcspan="1" maxrspan="1

Merry Christmas



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President

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Feb. 7, 1943 – July 10, 2021

Penny Sue Hesselberg 2-7-43 to 7-10-21



Thinking of you during this holiday season, Penny went on to be with her Lord and Savior this summer and her parents that went on before her that she missed so dearly.

Penny was a loving step-mother, daughter, cousin and friend to many! She enjoyed keeping in touch and talking with all of those she loved over the telephone, and in person we all will miss her hand written notes letters and cards!

Born in Kansas City Penny was raised in the Greater Detroit area after high school she received her degree in teaching from Whittenburg University in Ohio. Penny was very active in her community she was raised in the Lutheran Church and

enjoyed her Bible study and discover group at her Methodist church in Crystal River. She also did volunteer work and felt it was important to do this in her older years to give back to her community she enjoyed reading sharing books with her friends dining out and her reality television, Motown music and playing her piano! She enjoyed life at every stage, we all remember her as a intelligent kind loving, a very thoughtful and generous spirit.

Every year you wrote a

Christmas letter letting us

all know the highlights of

your year and i write this

letting you know you were

one of the highlights of my

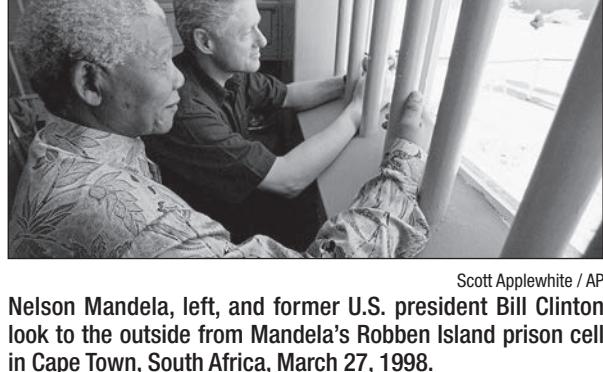
life. Missing you especially

this time of year and will

cherish all that you taught

us and memories of times

past we shared!



Scott Applewhite / AP

Nelson Mandela, left, and former U.S. president Bill Clinton look to the outside from Mandela's Robben Island prison cell in Cape Town, South Africa, March 27, 1998.

South African minister objects to sale of Mandela's cell key

By ANDREW MELDRUM

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — A South African Cabinet minister on Friday urged the cancellation of an upcoming U.S. auction of a key to the Robben Island prison cell where Nelson Mandela, the country's first Black president, was long jailed for his opposition to apartheid.

The key is among Mandela memorabilia being sold by Guernsey's auction house in New York on Jan. 28. Most of the items were provided by members of Mandela's family to raise funds for a planned museum and garden around his grave, while the key is being sold by Mandela's former jailer who became his friend.

"It is unfathomable for Guernsey's, which is clearly aware of the painful history of our country and the symbolism of the key, to consider auctioning the key without any consultation with the South African government, the heritage authorities in South Africa and Robben Island Museum," Minister of Sport, Arts, and Culture Nathi Mthethwa said in a statement.

"This key belongs to the people of South Africa under the care of Robben Island Museum and the South African State. It is not anyone's personal belonging," said Mthethwa.

In response, the auction house said the proceeds of the sale are to raise funds to build a 24-acre memorial garden and museum around Mandela's burial site. Mandela's oldest daughter, Makaziwe Mandela-Amuah, approached Guernsey's to hold an auction of Mandela memorabilia to help build the garden, Arlan Ettinger, president of Guernsey's, told The Associated Press.

"We are honored to sell many items from the Man-

dela family to help them create the garden," Ettinger said. The 33 objects to be auctioned include one of Mandela's colorful shirts, gifts from former U.S. presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, as well as items that he signed and artwork.

The key to his former jail cell is one of three items put up for sale by Christo Brand, Mandela's Robben Island jailer.

A draft of South Africa's constitution that Mandela inscribed to Brand and an exercise bicycle Mandela used were also provided for the auction by Brand. Brand's representative could not be reached for comment Friday.

The key has been in Brand's possession for many years and has been exhibited internationally, said Ettinger. Mandela's daughter has approved its sale and a portion of the proceeds will go to the garden fund, he said.

"The key symbolizes the worst and the best of humanity," said Ettinger. "The key locked up Mr. Mandela for his opposition to racial oppression and that was horrendous. The key also freed him and he went from prisoner to president of South Africa and became the inspiration for millions of people around the world. It seems fitting that the sale of the key can now help raise funds to create a memorial around Mr. Mandela's burial site."

Mthethwa, the minister of culture, said he will take action to stop the key's auction.

"The key must be returned to its rightful owners with immediate effect and this auction must be halted," said Mthethwa who added that he was discussing with authorities "appropriate steps that must be taken to stop the auction and to secure the return of the key to South Africa."

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Floral City man arrested for explosive devices

By BUSTER THOMPSON

Chronicle Reporter

A Floral City man was taken into custody after the Citrus County Sheriff's Office bomb squad found a homemade explosive in his bedroom during a response to a threat.

Local authorities arrested 53-year-old William Estill Skaggs Tuesday, Dec. 21, on a charge of possessing a destructive device with intent to cause bodily harm or damage property.

Skaggs was jailed under a \$5,000 bond, which a judge left unchanged at Skaggs' first court appearance on Wednesday. Jan. 19 was set

as Skaggs' arraignment.

According to Skaggs' arrest report, obtained Thursday, sheriff's office deputies

responded Monday to a bomb threat reported at Skaggs' address off of South Florida Avenue.

A witness and family member to Skaggs told investigators Skaggs showed up to their house next door asking for black powder.

When his relative handed him the powder, Skaggs poured it into a plastic, egg-shaped container, inside

which he installed two feet of wiring before wrapping the device in electrical tape.

Skaggs then said he was going to blow up a vehicle and house, according to his arrest report, but his family member talked him out of acting out his plans.

Roughly 15 minutes later, more arguing was heard at Skaggs' house, prompting the sheriff's office to be called about Skaggs' intentions with the black powder.

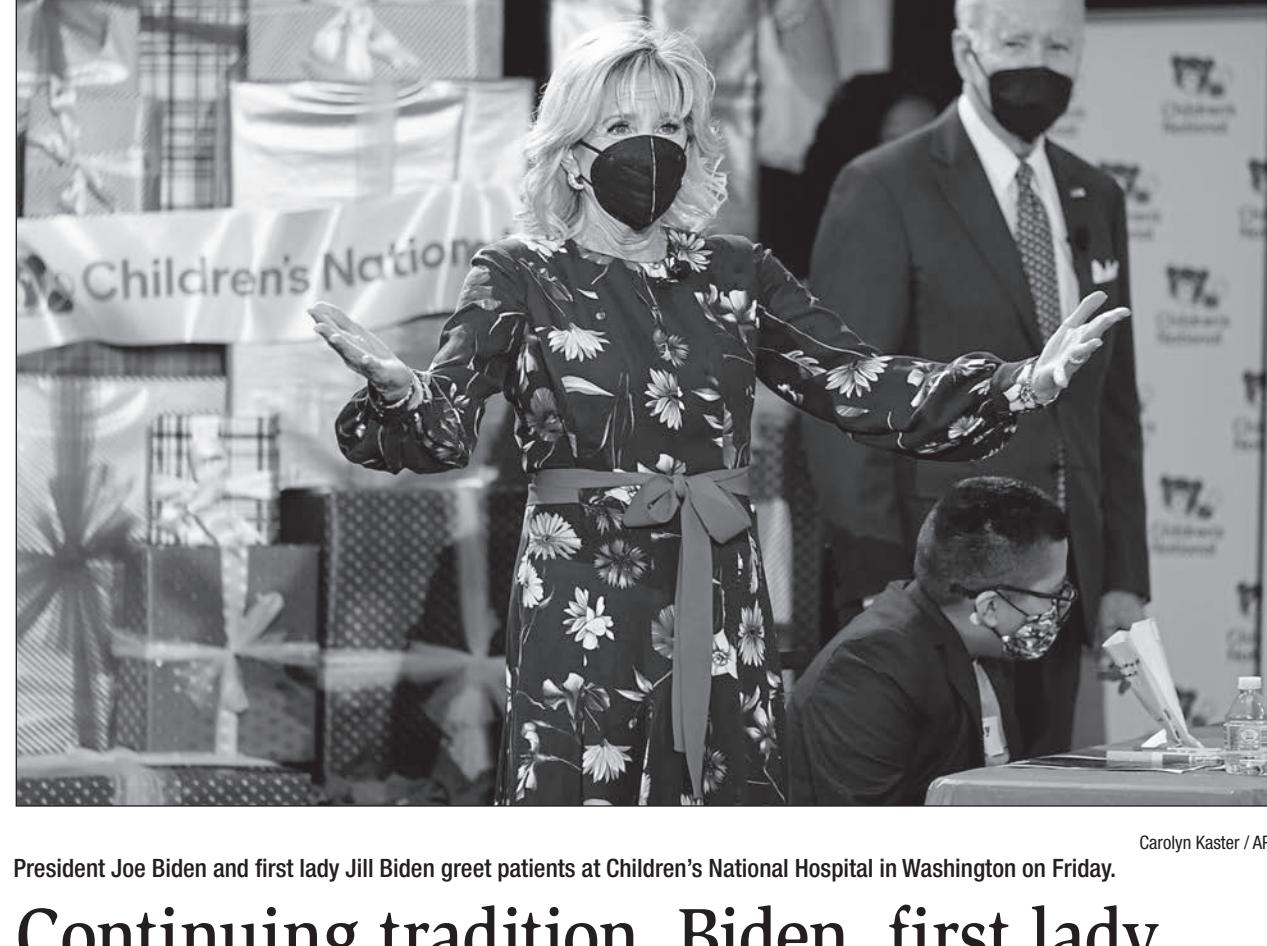
Skaggs, according to his arrest report, told deputies the witnesses were lying to get him put in jail. He also refused to give authorities consent to search his bed-

room until there was a warrant to do so.

After obtaining a search warrant, the sheriff's office bomb squad found and seized two explosive devices — one of which was inoperable — from Skaggs' bedroom.

According to his arrest report, Skaggs told deputies he makes his own "firecrackers," including one he made several hours before law enforcement arrived at his house.

Contact Chronicle reporter Buster Thompson at 352-564-2916, bthompson@chronicleonline.com or visit tinyurl.com/yxn2ahso to see more of his stories.



Carolyn Kaster / AP

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden greet patients at Children's National Hospital on Friday.

Continuing tradition, Biden, first lady visit hospitalized kids on Christmas Eve

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden brought some Christmas Eve cheer to hospitalized children who aren't well enough to go home for the holidays.

It's longstanding tradition for first ladies to visit Children's National Hospital at Christmastime, but Joe Biden's visit on Friday was a surprise. It marked the first time that a sitting president had joined the fun, the White House said.

It wasn't the only tradition that the president joined in on Friday. Jill Biden answered calls to the the North American Aerospace Defense Command's Santa tracking service, another longstanding tradition for first ladies, and she was joined by Biden for the calls.

At the hospital, the Bidens spoke with a group of children making lanterns as part of a winter craft project, asking each one what they drew on their lanterns. Some drew family, snowmen or other holiday-themed art.

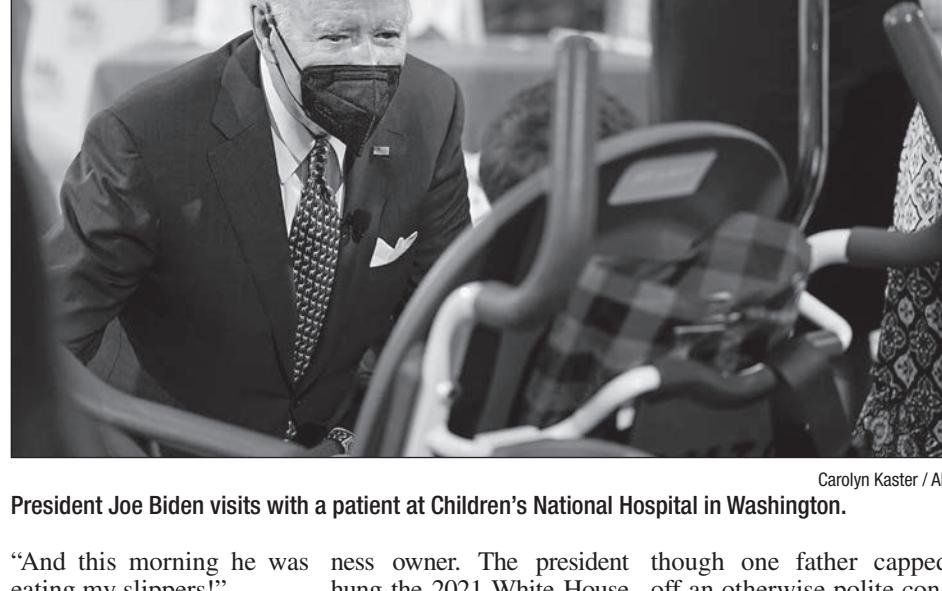
They both spoke to a child who said the hospital "helped him when he was down."

"Well we hope we're bringing you some joy today," Jill Biden responded.

The president added, "You're bringing us some joy, pal."

Biden also pulled out his phone to show the kids photos of his new dog, Commander, a nearly 4-month-old German Shepherd puppy. The dog joined the family this week and was seen playing with a handler on the South Lawn of the White House complex earlier Friday before the Bidens left for their visit to the hospital.

"His name is Commander!" Jill Biden told the kids.



Carolyn Kaster / AP

"And this morning he was eating my slippers!"

The president and first lady then sat before the hospital's Christmas tree, where Jill Biden read "Olaf's Night Before Christmas" to the kids, which was broadcast to hundreds of children in their rooms at the hospital.

The Walt Disney Co. provided copies of the book for each patient so they can follow along with the first lady, the White House said. Each book includes a White House bookmark designed by her office.

The annual tradition of a hospital visit by the first lady dates to Bess Truman, who served in the role from 1945-1953.

Before returning to the White House, the two stopped briefly at a Jill Biden-themed Christmas tree set up on the street in D.C.'s Dupont Circle neighborhood by a local busi-

ness owner. The president hung the 2021 White House Christmas ornament on one of the branches, nestled between large cutouts of Jill's face dotting the tree.

Back at the White House, the two capped off their Christmas Eve festivities by answering calls for NORAD, as they watched Santa soar over the United Arab Emirates on the Santa tracker screens. They took three largely pleasant phone calls from kids and parents,

though one father capped off an otherwise polite conversation with the president by wishing him a happy holidays and adding, "Let's go Brandon!" before hanging up. The phrase has become widely used by conservatives as a stand-in for a more vulgar epithet against the president.

Biden didn't seem to catch the caller's intent, however — he responded, "Let's go Brandon, I agree" as the call came to an end.

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SHELTER

From page A7

\$9 million for an animal shelter, with maximum borrowing of \$7.5 million. Conditions at the existing shelter are cramped and getting worse, the county said.

In related news:

vaccinated, and released back into their original environment.

The agency is unable to provide the service until further notice due to staff availability according to county

shelter are cramped and getting worse, the county said.

In related news:

Citrus County Animal Services (CCAS) has suspended its Community Cat Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR) program. The shelter is able to provide the service until further notice due to staff availability, according to county spokeswoman Veronica Kampschroer.

Michael D. Bates is a staff writer with the Citrus County

ty Cat Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR) program until further notice. Writer with the Citrus County Chronicle and can be reached at mbates@chronicleonline.com

program until further no- mbates@chronicleonline.com

tice. The program allows residents to bring feral cats to the facility where they are neutered/spayed, vaccinated, and released back into their original environment.

COVID

From page A-

Florida and 62,264 deaths, according to the New York Times, which collects the COVID-19 data.

In the United States, there have been 51.6 million cases and more than 811,000 deaths, according to the New York Times.

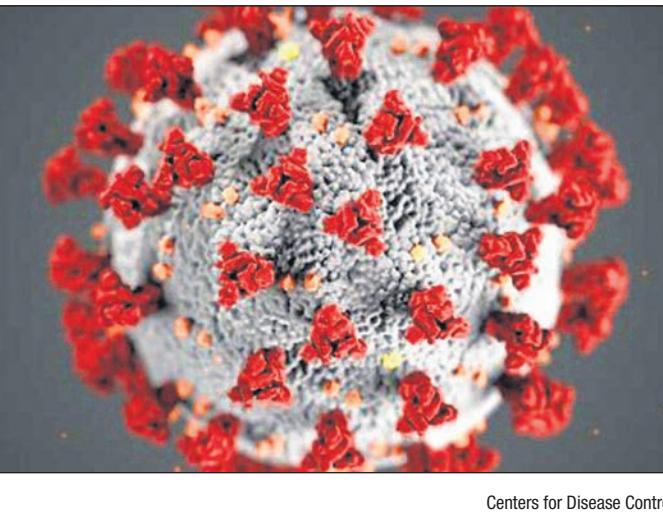
As for the new Omicron variant of the virus, it has now been detected

Page 1 of 1

in every US state.

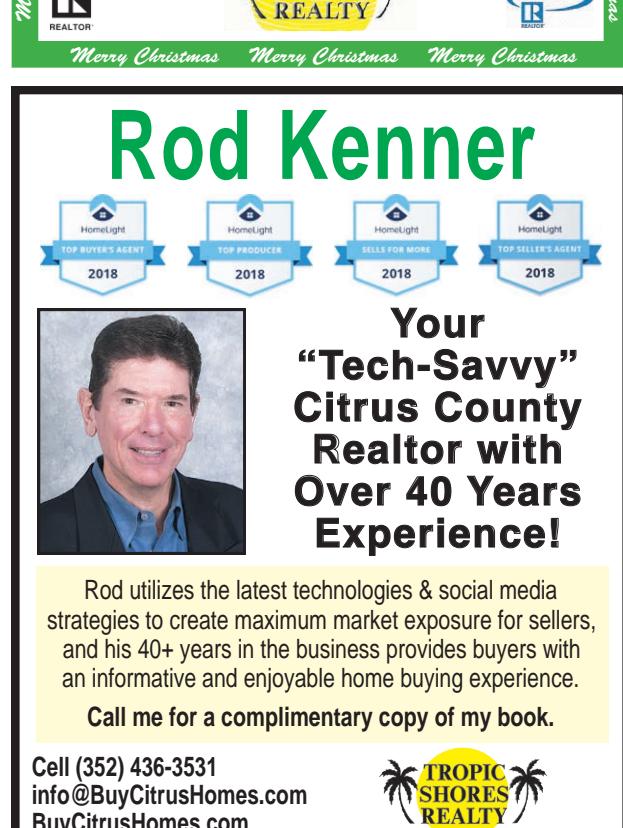
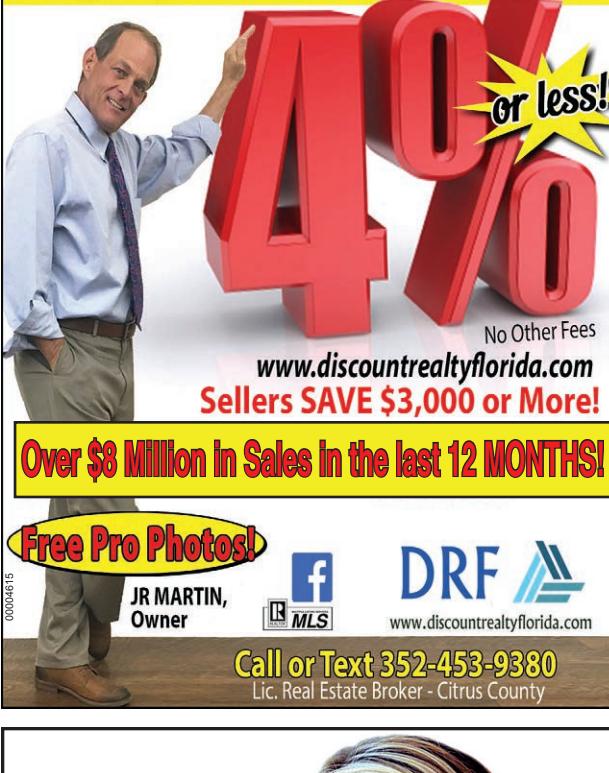
Early studies suggest that the new variant is 70 percent less likely than the previous Delta variant to result in the infection needing hospital care. However, studies also show that the new variant is more transmissible and booster vaccinations waned faster with the Omicron variant than the Delta.

Citrus Chronicle. E-mail him at fred.hiers@chronicleonline.com



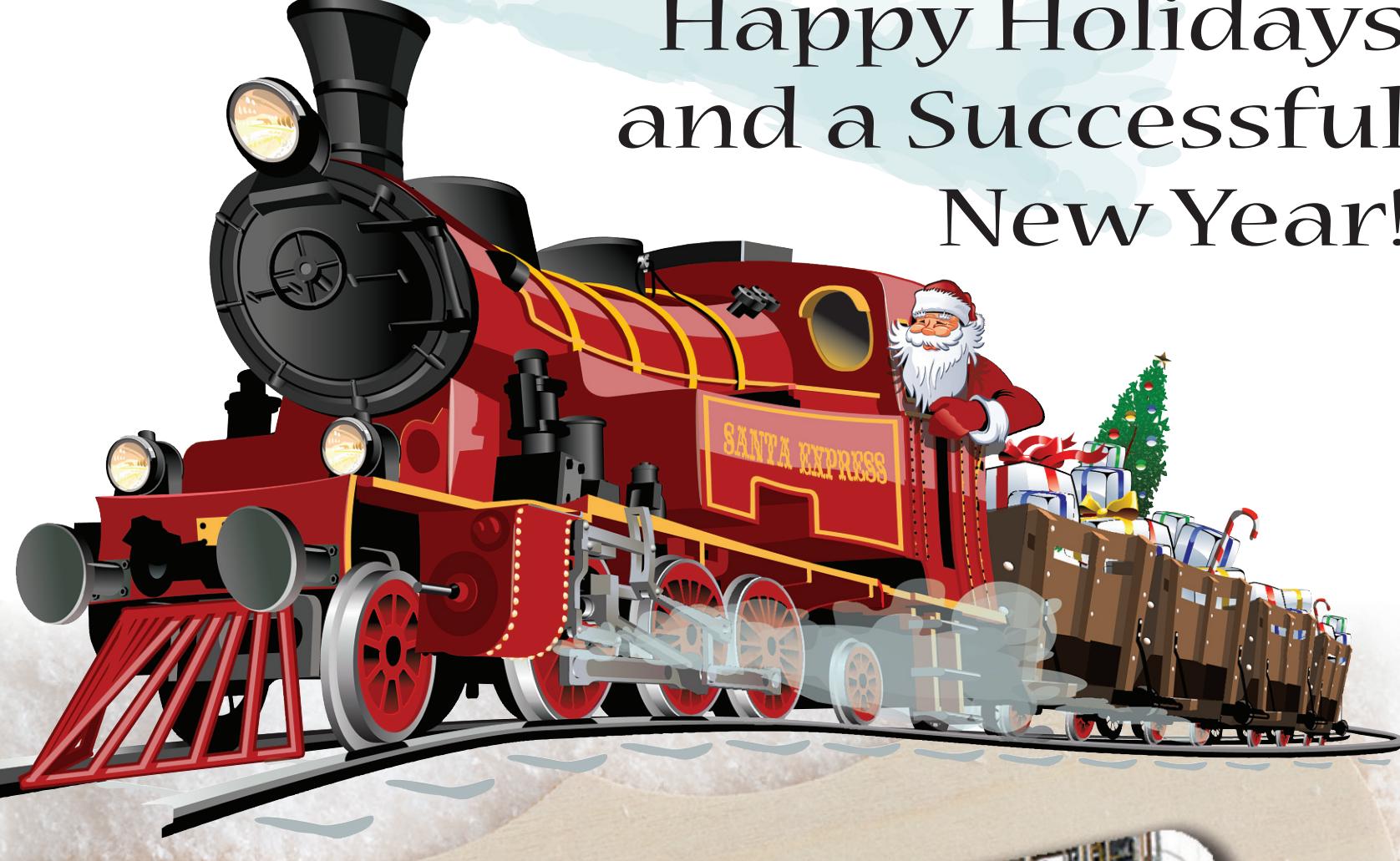
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Third Florida-based ship has outbreak as state cases rise

MIAMI (AP) — A COVID-19 outbreak took place on a South Florida-based cruise ship for the third time this week, as the number of coronavirus cases in Florida hit its second-highest level since the start of the pandemic.

An undisclosed number of passengers and crew aboard the Carnival Freedom cruise caught the virus so the ship was denied entry to Bonaire and Aruba, Carnival said in a statement.

The ship has 2,497 passengers and 1,112 crew members and was scheduled to return to Miami on Sunday following an 8-day cruise. Passengers were required to be vaccinated and they were tested before leaving last Saturday, according to Carnival.

"Carnival Freedom is following all protocols and has a small number on board who are in isolation due to a positive COVID test," the statement said. "Our protocols anticipate this possibility and we implement them as necessary to protect the health and safety of our guests and crew."

Ashley Peterson, a passenger on the ship, tweeted a photo of a Dec. 22 letter from the ship's captain apologizing for being unable to make the stops in Aruba and Bonaire. The letter said passengers would get \$100 per room in

onboard credit and refunds for excursions planned at the two stops.

"We know these unexpected changes are disappointing and impact your cruise vacation, however we trust you understand this is outside our control," said the letter from Capt. Mario Imbimbo.

It was the third outbreak this week affecting cruise ships operated by Carnival and Royal Caribbean departing Miami and Fort Lauderdale ports.

Meanwhile, Florida had 26,811 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, the second-highest daily number since the start of the pandemic in the U.S. in March 2020, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The highest was in last August when 27,802 cases were reported.

Police: Shooter arrested after targeting homeless people

MIAMI (AP) — Police in South Florida announced Thursday that they have arrested a real estate agent suspected of hunting homeless people.

Willy Suarez Maceo, 25, was initially jailed early Thursday morning on a trespassing charge, and Interim Miami Police Chief Manuel Morales said during a news conference that they were planning to charge him with a count of murder

and a count of attempted murder.

Maceo is suspected in two shootings that occurred Tuesday night about two hours apart, police said. One victim survived, but the other didn't. Detectives said video surveillance footage placed Maceo's car at one of the attacks, and then ballistics testing showed the same gun was used in both attacks.

Investigators were also working to connect Maceo to a shooting from October, officials said.

Jail and court records didn't list an attorney for Maceo.

Man arrested in 2019 slaying of Florida transgender woman

LABELLE, Fla. (AP) — Florida sheriff's deputies have arrested a man in connection with the slaying of a transgender woman whose body was found more than two years ago in her burning car.

The Hendry County Sheriff's Office said Marcus Lynell Thompson, 35, is charged with being an accessory after the fact to first-degree murder and arson in the killing of 23-year-old Bee Love Slater.

Detectives did not reveal more details or the motive of the killing at a press conference but said they were confident they were going to solve the murder and there would be more

arrests. It is not yet clear if Thompson knew Slater.

Media reports the FBI helped detectives, in

vestigating the case as the sheriff's office didn't say whether the slaying

Slater's gender identity was considered a hate crime.

At the press conference, crime.

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Woman brings Christmas back to Tampa street

By PAUL GUZZO
Tampa Bay Times

TAMPA, Fla. — The city of Tampa once marked the start of the holiday season by turning on Christmas lights strewn throughout downtown's Franklin Street.

"It was the center of the Christmas universe," said Victor DiMaio, who, as a kid, spent winter break with his mother Mercy as she worked at Haber's Department Store on Franklin Street.

Back then, Franklin Street was also the center of the "shopping universe," he said, so merchants decorated storefronts to put customers in the holiday mood.

But then came the malls in the 1970s and 1980s.

Franklin Street stores shuttered.

"It became a ghost town," DiMaio said. "No more Christmas lights."

Until last year.

Kim Puleo, who owns

the office building at 1205 Franklin St., brought them back.

For the second straight holiday season, Puleo decorated her three-story building with a musical Christmas display, wrapped every tree on her block with lights and hung strands over the street.

She hopes it inspires those on neighboring blocks to do the same in the coming years.

"It would be great if this extended down all of Franklin Street," said Puleo, who has owned her building for three years. "Let's make it like it used to be."

But Puleo did not know how it used to be when she hung lights last year.

"I grew up in North Tampa," she said. "I didn't come to downtown much."

Franklin Street is lively again, a mix of retail and residential spaces, restaurants, bars and offices.

But it was dark last year, Puleo said, when businesses

temporarily shuttered due to the pandemic.

"I just wanted to bring some happiness back," she said. "Christmas lights felt like a good way to do it."

DiMaio, who leases an office in Puleo's building, then told her of the history of Franklin Street during the holiday season. Others showed her old photographs from that era.

"I was not versed in that at all," Puleo said. "But I thought, 'Let's make this a thing.'"

News archives report that Franklin Street first became the holiday hub in 1947.

"Brilliant Christmas decorations brighten up Tampa," reads a Tampa Tribune article from 1950. "The big display is an expanding project which was started by the Merchants Association three years ago. The first year, colored lights were strung across Franklin St. Last year tinsel was added."

Tinfoil decorations were

introduced in 1950, the article says.

It grew from there.

Old photographs show man-made snow, Christmas trees and parades, all on Franklin Street.

"Every building had its own Christmas display," DiMaio said. "Santa was at Maas Brothers."

Neighboring streets joined in the festive fun, but Franklin Street remained the hub.

Mayor Dick Greco "officially opened the shopping season" when he "threw the switch" to turn on Franklin Street's Christmas lights,

the Tribune wrote in 1967.

Greco then joined Santa for an elephant ride through the street.

Franklin Street continued to headquarter downtown's holiday happenings through the 1980s and 1990s, but crowds dwindled as stores went out of business.

"Franklin Street has a lot of lunchtime activity, but, other than that, it's boarded up," the Tribune wrote in 1988.

"People started doing all their shopping at malls," DiMaio said. "Families went there to see Santa."

But Santa was back on Franklin Street on Dec. 13 when Puleo had the lights flipped on.

So was Mayor Jane Castor and members of City Council.

"It felt like old times," DiMaio said.

Puleo hopes it becomes a tradition.

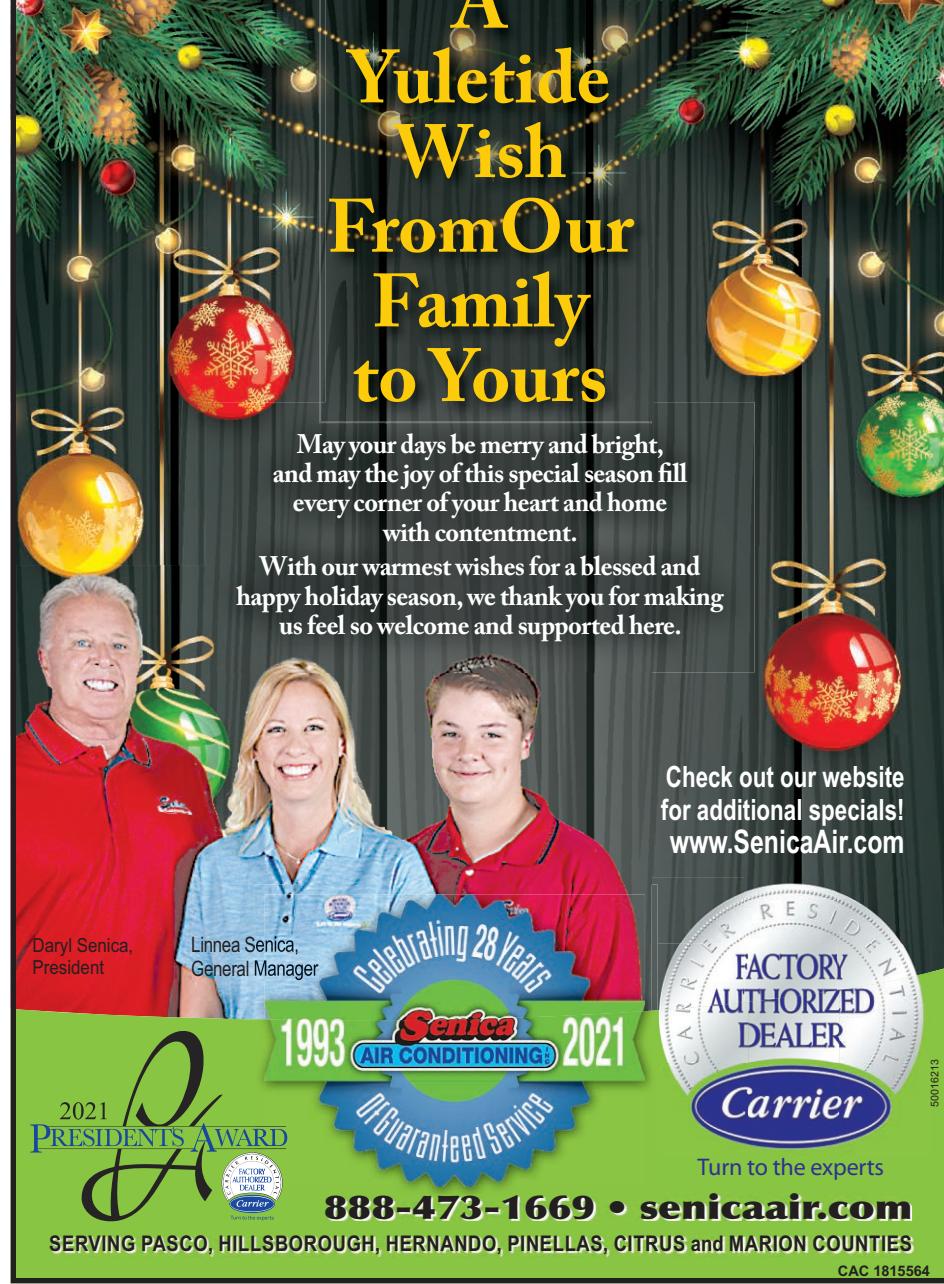
"I've had so many people who live and work in downtown tell me how happy these lights make them," she said. "So, why wouldn't we want to do this every year? Why wouldn't others want to join in?"



Merry Christmas to all!

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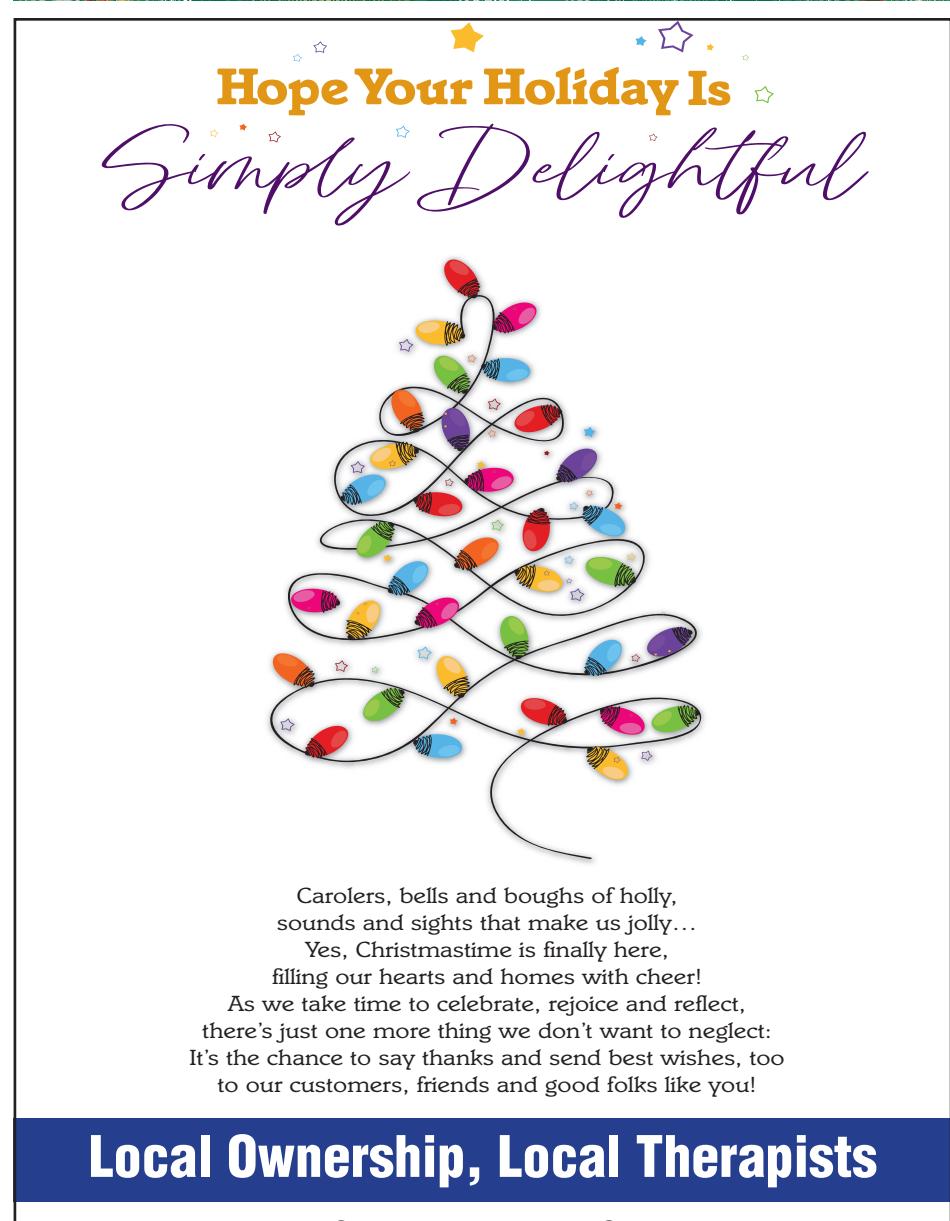
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Airlines cancel flights due to COVID staffing shortages

By DAVID MCHUGH
and TALI ARBEL
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Airlines canceled hundreds of flights as the omicron variant jumbled schedules and drew down staffing levels at some carriers during the busy holiday travel season.

Delta Air Lines and United Airlines said they canceled flights because of staff shortages tied to the omicron variant. Delta canceled 145 flights on Friday and 111 for Christmas Day, according to FlightAware. (Other factors, such as weather, are also causing cancellations.) United called off 175 flights on Friday and 69 on Saturday.

Not all airlines said COVID was disrupting their travel schedules. American Airlines said it had "nothing to report," while Southwest Airlines said "things are

running smoothly."

Flight delays and cancellations tied to staffing shortages have been a regular problem for the U.S. airline industry this year. Airlines encouraged workers to quit in 2020, when air travel collapsed, and were caught short-staffed this year as travel recovered.

Delta said it canceled flights Friday because of the impact of omicron and possibility of bad weather after it had "exhausted all options and resources — including rerouting and substitutions of aircraft and crews to cover scheduled flying."

The airlines both said they were trying to rebook passengers.

Germany-based Lufthansa said Friday that it was canceling a dozen long-haul transatlantic flights over the Christmas holiday period because of a "massive rise" in sick leave among pilots.

COVID spike leads many U.S. churches to cancel in-person Christmas services

By DAVID CRARY
AP National Writer

NEW YORK — Amid the surge of coronavirus cases across the U.S., numerous churches have canceled in-person Christmas services, disappointing pastors and churchgoers who consider them an annual highlight.

Other churches planned outdoor services or proposed a hybrid of online and in-person worship, often im-

posing tight restrictions for those in attendance. These included requirements to wear masks and show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations.

Among the prominent churches canceling some or all of their in-person Christmas services were Washington National Cathedral in the nation's capital; St. John the Divine, the cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York; and the historic Old South Church in Boston.

Leaders of Washington National Cathedral, which traditionally welcomes more than 15,000 people to its Christmas services, announced that all its services until Jan. 9 would be offered only remotely, with no worshippers or visitors allowed in the cathedral.

"Unfortunately, as the omicron variant takes hold across the world, our city seems to be leading the nation in infections," said the cathedral's dean, the Very

Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith. "Given the spike in infections, I simply cannot justify gathering massive crowds as the public health situation worsens around us."

In New York City, which is experiencing record numbers of positive tests for COVID-19, leaders at St. John Divine said they were shifting all Christmas services to online-only, using its Facebook page and YouTube channel.

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OPINION

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE



Founded by Albert M. Williamson

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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.

EDITORIAL

Chronicle editorial board shares holiday wishes

Each year, members of the Chronicle editorial board share their Christmastime thoughts with readers. Here is this year's Christmas message:

"It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air." W.T. Ellis

My wish is that you feel Christmas in your heart and those around you feel it as well. This Christmas linger just a bit longer with family and friends to help make the memories last.

Special days like Christmas are gone too quickly. Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year.

Trina Murphy, publisher

As the old Christmas song goes, "have a holly, jolly Christmas, it's the best time of the year." First, I would like to encourage you to have the best time daily. They say laughter is the best medicine. Second, as we approach the new year, it is my sincere hope we can be kind, warm hearted and civil to each other. We should re-learn how we respect each other's differences. Enjoy your time with family and friends not only today but the days, weeks, months and years ahead. Cherish the time together.

Jeff Bryan, executive editor

Merry Christmas to all. Let's start the new year with love in our hearts and with kindness to our neighbors.

Brian LaPeter, managing editor

The spirit of love and goodwill that fills the holiday air and brings joy to our hearts began on a holy night in Bethlehem with the birth of the Christ Child more than 2,000 years ago. Ever since that blessed moment when God gave His only begotten Son to the world, His celebrated message of love and goodwill to all has made the Christmas season a magical time. It is my heartfelt wish that the joyful message of that first Christmas fills every heart and warms every home, not only on this Christmas day, but throughout the coming year. My good tidings to all for a magical and blessed Christmas on this most joyous of days.

Curt Ebitz, citizen member

During the holiday season, I wish everyone a feeling of peace and togetherness with those we love, whether in person or only in spirit. In this time, we are often reminded that there is still much good in the world, and there are many people who dedicate themselves to making our community a better place. My hope is that each of us will try to find the good in our neighbors and our community and that we will commit to focus on the positive rather than the negative as we go into the new year.

Mac Harris, citizen member

We don't need more fancy roads

I read Art Jones' column on Thursday, Dec. 16, about a southern route for the Florida Turnpike (Page A11). He is suggesting that the turnpike go right through Citrus County because it would promote tourism. I couldn't disagree more. We live here because of its rural nature. We don't need any more tourism. We don't need any more fancy roads. I hope we can keep the turnpike out of Citrus and I know a lot of people feel the same

Many folks say their happiest memories of Christmas are from their childhood because the world seemed more positive and magical then. It's probably worth practicing the same outlook now, when we are coping with such uncertainty and negativity. Here are some pointers I've found helpful, especially during the holidays and as we look forward to a new year.

Practice gratitude and keep an optimistic attitude. A well-known motivational speaker advises that optimism is the one quality more associated with success and happiness than any other.

Although that positive attitude might not solve all your problems, it will still annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.

My personal favorite is this one: "The world is full of cactus, but we don't have to sit on it."

This year I hope everyone enjoys the optimism that every day helps build precious, happy memories.

Rebecca Martin, citizen member

This time last year, family gatherings during the Christmas holiday were little more than memories due to the COVID-19 lockdown. This year, following that nightmare, we all can join with family and friends in love and fellowship – together. We can reflect on this pandemic and pray for the families that are without loved ones. Using a golf analogy, I am on the back nine. So far, I'm on par, maybe a little under, always a good thing. I have two children with loving spouses, eight grandchildren, two wonderful sisters, nephews and nieces and numerous cousins – some who can really cook well and that's wonderful during the holidays – and a loving, supportive wife who is my best friend. I wish all of us a safe, enjoyable, loving holiday, and pray we can continue this tradition next year and for many years moving forward.

Don Hiers, citizen member

My Christmas wish is for each of us to love one another. To really take to heart what it means to treat someone as you want to be treated. To be able to have differences of opinion that do not end in lost relationships with family and friends. To not judge one another, but rather show sympathy and perhaps even empathy for the experiences someone has gone through even if we ourselves have not walked down the same road. I hope that the love and kindness the holiday season fills us with lasts the whole year.

Sunshine Arnold, citizen member

way as I do.

Take responsibility with your gun

I'm reading Sound Off and I see "Columnist's article was 'hogwash'" (Friday, Dec. 17, Page A8) and at the end of it, it says, "People like you are the reason why we have guns." Well, sir, it's people like you why we have (the front-page story) "Lockdown mistakenly initiated at CRHS," because you have a gun but you don't take any responsibility. That's what's wrong, sir – you.

SOUND OFF

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COVID puts a damper on Christmas Eve again around the world

By JACK JEFFERY, DAVID CRARY and DAVID MCHUGH
Associated Press

From Bethlehem and Frankfurt to London and Boston, the surging coronavirus put a damper on Christmas Eve for a second year, forcing churches to cancel or scale back services and disrupting travel plans and family gatherings.

Drummers and bagpipers marched through Bethlehem — the town where Christians believe Jesus was born — to smaller than usual crowds after new Israeli travel restrictions meant to slow the highly contagious omicron variant kept international tourists away.

In Germany, a line wound halfway around Cologne's massive cathedral, not for midnight Mass but for vaccinations. The offer of shots was an expression of "care for one's neighbor" that was consistent with the message of Christmas, cathedral provost Guido Assmann told the DPA news agency.

Around the world, people weary from nearly two years of lockdowns and other restrictions searched for ways to enjoy some of the holiday rituals safely.

"We can't let the virus take our lives from us when we're healthy," said Rosalia Lopes, a retired Portuguese



Mahmoud Illean / AP
Latin Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa greets worshippers next to the separation wall between the West Bank city of Bethlehem and Jerusalem on his way to the Church of the Nativity on Friday in Bethlehem. Pizzaballa, the top Catholic clergyman in the Holy Land, began Christmas celebrations with an annual procession from Jerusalem to the biblical town of Bethlehem, which was hosting its second straight Christmas Eve celebrations.

government worker who was doing some last-minute shopping in the coastal town of Cascais.

She said she and her family were exhausted by the pandemic and determined to go ahead with their celebrations with the help of vaccines and booster shots, rapid home tests and mask-wearing in public.

Across the Atlantic in New

York City, where omicron has spread widely, people waited in long lines to get tested, many doing so as a precaution before traveling to reunite with family.

But holiday travel was dealt a blow when major airlines canceled hundreds of flights, in part because of staff shortages largely tied to omicron.

In Britain, where the coronavirus variant is ripping through the population, some houses of worship

hoped to press on.

At St. Paul's Old Ford, an Anglican church in East London, priests planned to hold services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. But to protect parishioners, the church called off its Nativity play.

"You might have to cancel the service, but you can't cancel Christmas," said the Rev. April Keech, an associate priest. "You can't stop

love. Love still stands."

Numerous churches in the U.S. canceled in-person services, including Washington National Cathedral in the nation's capital and historic Old South Church in Boston. Others planned outdoor celebrations or a mix of online and in-person worship.

In France, some visited loved ones in the hospital. In the Mediterranean city of Marseille, the intensive care unit at La Timone Hospital has been taking in more and more COVID-19 patients in recent days.

Frankfurt's cathedral, which can hold 1,200 people, offered only 137 socially distanced spaces, all of which were booked days in advance. Singing was allowed only through masks.

People in the Netherlands tried to make the best of the holiday, despite living under one of the strictest lockdowns in Europe. All nonessential shops were closed, including bars and restaurants, and home visits were limited to two people per day, four on Christmas.

"We are just meeting with some small groups of family for the next few days," Marloes Jansen, who was waiting in line to buy the traditional Dutch kerststol, a Christmas bread with fruits and nuts.

A glitch in a computerized appointment system prevented scores of people from scheduling COVID-19 tests and undermined the government's efforts to administer booster shots in a country already lagging far behind its neighbors.

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Amelie Khayat has been paying daily visits to her husband, Ludo, 41, who is recovering from spending 24 days in a coma and on a breathing machine.

They touched their heads together as she sat on his bed, and now that he is strong enough to stand, he got up to give her a farewell hug, as a medical worker put final decorations on the ICU Christmas tree.

Parisians lined up at chocolate shops, farmers' markets and testing centers. France has posted record numbers of daily COVID-19 infections, and hospitalizations have been rising, but the government has held off on imposing curfews or closings during the holidays.

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Board Certified Ophthalmologist

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NATION & WORLD

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE



In this image taken from video from a Caltrans remote video traffic camera, traffic is stopped along a snow covered Interstate 80 Thursday at Donner Summit, Calif.

Western storms bring flood threats, snow for Christmas

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two people died in a submerged car, evacuations were ordered for wildfire-scarred California, and Seattle and Portland faced the rare chance of snowy streets as a wave of storms rolled through the West.

An atmospheric river — a sky-born plume of moisture from the Pacific Ocean — was fueling the weather, which could dump rain and snow over much of the region through Christmas, while the Pacific Northwest was looking at a dayslong cold snap.

On Thursday, two people died when their car was submerged in a flooded underpass in Millbrae, just south of San Francisco. Firefighters rescued two people who had climbed atop a car but they couldn't reach the fully submerged vehicle, San Mateo County sheriff's Det. Javier Acosta said.

In the Sierra Nevada, an evacuation warning was issued for about 150 homes

downstream of Twain Harte Lake Dam after cracks were found in granite that adjoins the manmade part of the 36-foot-high structure. Authorities began releasing some water, but the dam didn't seem in any immediate danger, Tuolumne County sheriff's Sgt. Nicco Sandelin said.

The Sierras could see 5 to 8 feet of snow through the holidays, with 10 feet possible at higher elevations, and authorities urged people to avoid traveling through the mountain passes, which could be treacherous.

In Southern California, evacuation orders were issued Thursday night in Orange County because of possible mudslides and debris flows in three canyons where a wildfire last December burned the ground bare. The Orange County Fire Authority reported a mudslide Thursday night in one canyon that affected some roads but no injuries were reported.

The area saw flooding in a

storm last week and several homes were red-tagged.

Steve Learned left the area Thursday morning after doing what he could to protect his home.

"The last storm just killed us, buried our road," he told KABC-TV. "My street turned into a creek bed about 2-and-a-half feet deep with rocks and mud. I hope it doesn't do it again."

The Pacific Northwest was facing frigid temperatures and measurable snow was possible in both Seattle and Portland, forecasters said.

Seattle planned to open two severe weather shelters in the evenings starting Saturday. Daytime temperatures could struggle to reach freezing and overnight lows could drop to single digits into next week, National Weather Service meteorologist Reid Wolcott said.

"This is a rare event," Wolcott said Thursday. "It's been years since those of us at the weather service in Seattle have seen forecast data like this."

The area saw flooding in a

More Tiananmen massacre memorials removed in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AP) — Universities in Hong Kong are removing memorials to the bloody suppression of the 1989 Chinese pro-democracy movement centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong early Friday took down the "Goddess of Democracy," a statue based on a figure created by art students and brought to the square shortly before the crackdown in which hundreds, if not thousands, of people were killed.

The removal of the monuments testifies to the ruling Communist Party's efforts to erase the bloody events from the public consciousness.

ness. It also comes as the party snuffs out democratic challenges in Hong Kong to its rule.

On Thursday, a monument at the University of Hong Kong was dismantled, wiping out one of the city's last remaining places of public commemoration of the crackdown.

The government has never provided a figure on casualties and the pro-democracy movement remains a taboo topic in mainland China. Hong Kong and Macao, the two semi-autonomous territories, were the only places on Chinese soil where commemorations of the crackdown were allowed until authorities banned annual

candlelight vigils for two consecutive years.

In a statement, Chinese University confirmed the removal of the statue and said it had never authorized its display and that no organization has claimed responsibility for its maintenance and management.

Separately, Lingnan University also removed a bas relief memorial wall display dedicated to the memory of the June 4 movement.

The university's decision was predicated on the "overall protection of the university community after a recent assessment," government-run Hong Kong Radio Television reported.

The variant, which was first detected by scientists in South Africa, has since spread around the world. The World Health Organization and leaders in southern Africa criticized the travel ban as ineffective and unfairly damaging to local economies.

It was the first time she had performed the technique on an infant, she said.

Feds seek jail for Capitol riot suspect found with rifle

A North Carolina man awaiting trial on charges he assaulted two police officers during the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol had an assault rifle and ammunition in his vehicle when he was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving earlier this month, according to prosecutors.

Justice Department pros-

ecutors have asked a federal judge in Washington, D.C., to revoke 29-year-old James Tate Grant's pretrial release and order him detained after his recent arrest. One of the conditions of Grant's pretrial release in the Jan. 6 riot case was that he not possess a firearm or any other weapon.

The judge didn't immediately rule on Thursday's request by prosecutors.

On Dec. 7, a police officer in Garner, North Carolina, responding to a report of a suicide threat found Grant pulling out of a restaurant's parking, according to prosecutors. Grant, who

appeared to be intoxicated, told the officer about his involvement in the "January 6th incident," then tried to flee while the officer placed him under arrest, prosecutors said.

"He then dropped to the ground and stated something to the effect of 'Just kill me now.' He then stated, 'It's over,'" prosecutors wrote in a court filing.

US to lift omicron-linked travel ban on southern Africa

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. will lift travel restrictions on eight southern African countries that it imposed to try to blunt the spread of the COVID omicron variant, the White House announced Friday.

The variant, which was first detected by scientists in South Africa, has since spread around the world. The World Health Organization and leaders in southern Africa criticized the travel ban as ineffective and unfairly damaging to local economies.

The Nov. 29 ban barred nearly all non-U.S. citizens who had recently been in South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The restrictions will be lifted on New Year's Eve.

White House spokesman Kevin Munoz said on Twitter that the decision was recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Munoz said the temporary travel bans bought scientists nec-

essary time to study the new virus variant and conclude that the current vaccinations are effective in blunting its impact.

Russian court slaps

Google, Meta with

massive fines

MOSCOW (AP) — A Moscow court on Friday slapped Google with a nearly \$100 million fine and also fined Facebook's parent company Meta \$27 million over their failure to delete content banned by local law, as Russia seeks to step up pressure on technology giants.

The Tagansky District Court ruled that Google

repeatedly neglected to remove the banned content,

and ordered the company

to pay an administrative

fine of about 7.2 billion rubles (about \$98.4 million).

Google said it would study

the court documents before

deciding on its next steps.

Later Friday, the court

also slapped a fine of nearly

2 billion rubles (\$27.2 million)

on Meta for failure to

remove banned content.

Massive ferry

fire kills at least

39 in southern

Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — A massive fire

swept through a crowded

river ferry in Bangladesh

early Friday, leaving at

least 39 people dead and

70 injured, officials said.

Many passengers leapt

from the vessel into cold

waters to escape the blaze.

It took 15 fire engines two

hours to control the fire and

another eight to cool down

the vessel, according to fire

officer Kamal Uddin Bhuiyan, who led the rescue

operation. Afterward, the

blackened hull of the ferry

sat anchored at the river's

edge. Many anxious relatives

gathered on the banks,

while divers continued to

search the waters.

The blaze broke out

around 3 a.m. on the MV

Avijan-10, which was

carrying 800 passengers, many

of whom were traveling to

visit family and friends for

the weekend, officials said.

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Pope celebrates Christmas Eve Mass even as virus surges in Italy

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis celebrated Christmas Eve Mass before an estimated 2,000 people in St. Peter's Basilica on Friday, going ahead with the service despite the resurgence in COVID-19 cases that has prompted a new vaccine mandate for Vatican employees.

A maskless Francis processed down the central aisle as the Sistine Chapel choir sang "Noel," kicking off the Vatican's Christmas holiday that commemorates the birth of Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem. He remained maskless throughout the service.

In his homily, Francis urged the faithful to focus on the "littleness" of Jesus, and remember that he came into the world poor, without even a proper crib.

"That is where God is, in littleness," Francis said. "This is the message: God does not rise up in grandeur, but lowers himself into littleness. Littleness is the path that he chose to draw near to us, to touch our hearts, to save us and to bring us back to what really matters."

TSA officer saves infant who stopped breathing at airport

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A security officer leapt over

conveyor belt rollers and saved a 2-month-old boy who stopped breathing at a security checkpoint at Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey, newly released video shows.

The footage, released Thursday by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration, shows TSA officer Cecilia Morales springing into action to resuscitate the child Dec. 9 after his mother picked him up from a car carrier and noticed he wasn't breathing.

Morales, an EMT who has been a TSA officer for about two months, told the agency she performed the infant version of the Heimlich maneuver, placing the baby face down on her arm and patting him on the back to get him breathing again.

It was the first time she had performed the technique on an infant, she said.

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Alessandra Tarantino / AP

Pope Francis unveils a statue of Baby Jesus as he celebrates Christmas Eve Mass on Friday at St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican. Pope Francis is celebrating Christmas Eve Mass before an estimated 1,500 people in St. Peter's Basilica. He's going ahead with the service despite the resurgence in COVID-19 cases that has prompted a new vaccine mandate for Vatican employees.

ecutors have asked a federal judge in Washington, D.C., to revoke 29-year-old James Tate Grant's pretrial release and order him detained after his recent arrest. One of the conditions of Grant's pretrial release in the Jan. 6 riot case was that he not possess a firearm or any other weapon.

The judge didn't immediately rule on Thursday's request by prosecutors.

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Massive ferry fire kills at least 39 in southern Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — A massive fire swept through a crowded river ferry in Bangladesh early Friday, leaving at least 39 people dead and 70 injured, officials said.

Many passengers leapt from the vessel into cold waters to escape the blaze.

It took 15 fire engines two hours to control the fire and another eight to cool down the vessel, according to fire officer Kamal Uddin Bhuiyan, who led the rescue operation. Afterward, the blackened hull of the ferry sat anchored at the river's edge. Many anxious relatives gathered on the banks, while divers continued to search the waters.

The blaze broke out around 3 a.m. on the MV Avijan-10, which was carrying 800 passengers, many of whom were traveling to visit family and friends for the weekend, officials said.

San Francisco board OKs mayor's emergency order over opioid crisis

By JANIE HAR

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The Board of Supervisors approved an emergency order to tackle the opioid epidemic in San Francisco's troubled Tenderloin neighborhood, despite reservations by some that the declaration will be used by the mayor to criminalize people who are homeless, addicted to drugs or both. The vote shortly after midnight on Friday was 8-2, following a marathon 10 hours of debate and public comment. The public health emergency declaration authorizes the Department of Emergency Management to re-allocate city staff and bypass contracting and permitting regulations to set up a new temporary center

where people can access expanded drug treatment and counseling.

Advocates for the homeless and substance users urged supervisors to reject the emergency order because Mayor London Breed has also pledged to flood the district with police to halt crime, which some residents want. The mayor also said some drug users may wind up in jail unless they accept services, although drug possession is a misdemeanor crime and rarely enforced.

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Shortly afterwards the service is posted on the Church's Facebook page: Inverness First United Methodist Church
You can also go to the youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChla1DPK11EgwPa5KNcyRg>
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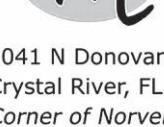
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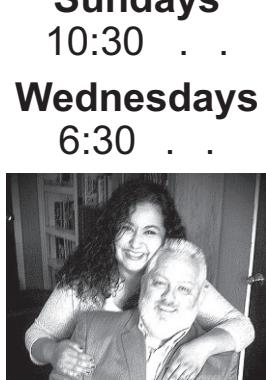
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RELIGION

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

RELIGION NOTES

SPECIAL EVENTS

Inverness First United Methodist Church

Inverness First United Methodist Church will have a Christmas Eve candlelight service on Dec. 24 at the church, 1140 Turner Camp Road in Inverness. There will be a traditional service at 5 p.m. and a modern service at 7 p.m.

No child care will be provided. All are welcome to attend.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will have their 2021-22 Winter Music Series at the church, 439 E. Norvell Bryant Highway in Hernando on the following dates:

■ "Tidings of Joy and Peace!" musical Christmas offering at the 8:30 and 11 a.m. services Dec. 12. There is no charge for this event. It is also available on the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Facebook and YouTube.

■ Larry Stephenson Bluegrass Band at 6 p.m. Feb. 18.

■ Johnny Carlsson & The MegaBones at 3 p.m. Feb. 27. Five professional trombone players will perform original compositions that characterize jazz from the 50s and 60s.

■ Grammy nominee and IBMA "Best Song of the Year" award winner, Special Consensus bluegrass band, at 7 p.m. April 29.

Tickets for each concert are \$15 at the door. They will be masking and distancing based on current CDC requirements. Call, text or email for confirmation. For more information, contact Angela Busler at 860-906-8723 or AMBusler@gmail.com.

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church will hold an outdoor flea market from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 8 on the church property, 6 Roosevelt Blvd. in Beverly Hills. The church holds flea markets monthly from September through May, usually on the first Saturday of the month.

Shoppers are welcome. Commercial vendors and private individuals are welcome to bring and sell goods. Spaces are available for \$10 and should be reserved in advance although there is always room for one more.

For more information or to reserve a space, call Rose Mary at 352-527-6459 or email wjeselso@tampabay.rr.com.

Homosassa First Methodist Church

The Homosassa First Methodist Church arts council presents their 2021-22 concert series at the church fellowship hall, 8831 W. Bradshaw St. Remaining shows are:

Sideline Sunday

3 p.m. Jan. 16
■ Brass Roots Trio at 3 p.m. Feb. 6

■ Paul Todd at 3 p.m. March 5

For single tickets, general admission is \$15 and reserved seating is \$20.

Those who are vaccinated need not wear masks. Masks are recommended for those who are not.

For tickets or more information, call the church at 352-628-4083, Ron Hesketh at 352-382-4518 or Karen Kline at 352-382-7263.

Gulf to Lake Baptist Church

Gulf to Lake Baptist Church will host, "Your Heart's Desire Art & Craft Fair" at 9:30 a.m. Jan. 22, 1454 N. Gulf Ave. in Crystal River.

Art and craft goods will be available for sale. All items are handcrafted.

For more information about the church, visit gulftolake.com.

FOOD &

FELLOWSHIP

Christian Women meet

The Christian Women's Club meets at 1 p.m. the second Tuesday monthly at Oyster's Restaurant in Crystal River.

For information, call Kate at 352-419-8453.

Rivers of Life Restoration Ministry

Rivers of Life Restoration Ministry Inc. operates the Seven Loaves Food and Clothing Pantry at Helping Hands Thrifty Treasures, 9699 W. Fort Island Trail, Crystal River. The free-to-all Food Pantry is now open from noon to 3 p.m. every Tuesday. Call 863-666-4129 for more information.

St. Timothy Church and LifeTree Church

Food pantry from 9:30 a.m. to noon every Tuesday at LifeTree Church, 1501 SE U.S. 19 in Crystal River during the pandemic, outside in front of the building. For more information, call 352-403-1498.

First Lutheran Church of Inverness Food pantry from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. For more information, call the church at 352-726-1637. The church is at 1900 W. State Road 44, Inverness.

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church

The Food Pantry is open from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The pantry offers canned, dried and frozen foods to anyone in need in Citrus County. Call 352-726-3153.

Our Lady of Fatima

Helping Hands Our Lady of Fatima, 604 U.S. 41 S. in Inverness offers an

outreach program to help those in need, supported by their thrift store. Those who qualify are assisted with utilities every four months, prescriptions every three months, clothing every three months and food every two months.

To qualify for the outreach program, bring a current picture ID, proof of residence, Social Security cards for all household members, proof of income (pay stubs, tax forms, SSI statement, etc.), car payment and car insurance to an intake meeting.

The thrift store is accepting donations from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday of slightly used clothing, household items, furniture in good shape (no mattresses), food (not outdated) and personal hygiene items.

LIVE & LEARN

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

'Tis the season once again to #LightTheWorld. Several years ago, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints launched its annual "Light the World" initiative to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and encourage people globally to serve others during the Christmas season.

This year, the theme is "Light the World with Love." A printable calendar for adults and children with simple but meaningful ways to show love to each other through the month of December can be found at tinyurl.com/yc9tw84.

Activities such as these, and many others, will "Increase the Wattage" of #LightTheWorld making our homes and communities more loving this holiday season and being a catalyst for showing Christlike love in 2022.

For more information, visit churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist.

The Family History Center at 3474 W. Southern St., Lecanto, is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the family-friendly, free ancestry resource/research

See NOTES, page A20



Special to the Chronicle

From left are: Mike Turner, George Fanning, Ben DiVona, Lynn Steffel, Ron Steffel, Steve Amann, Anne Amann, Nancy DiVona and Jim Bobay. Present but not pictured are: Roger Preble, Jim Horan and Les McGlothlin.

Knights give gift of inspiration for Christmas

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The St. Scholastica Knights of Columbus Council 14485 purchased inspirational books, written by Matthew Kelley, and

wrapped them as gifts so they could be distributed to St. Scholastica parishioners at Christmas masses.

This is the fifth year the Knights have given out books at Christmas. They wrapped 537 books this year.

SEASONS GREETINGS

Thinking it, wishing it, saying it too: From our door to yours, Merry Christmas to you!

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All are Welcome

Pastor

Lou Ellen Hartley

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www.fpcinverness.org



Faith Lutheran Church (LCMS)

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Crystal Glen Subdivision

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6:00 P.M.

Sunday Service

9:30 A.M.

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Calendar of Events, Audio of Sermons at:

faithlecano.com

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Wednesday

6:00 PM

Independent Fundamental

Pastor

Terry Roberts

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Christmas Tree of Hope

Walmart Foundation grant helps spread cheer

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Christmas Tree of Hope project at the First United Methodist Church of Homosassa has been fulfilling Christmas wishes of local children in need for more than 20 years.

This year, 54 children are receiving presents provided by members of the church and donations from community partners. Christmas Tree of Hope is one branch of the larger Tree of Hope program that focuses on seniors, families and homeless persons.

The Walmart Foundation recently awarded the Tree of Hope a \$2,000 grant in support of its community outreach efforts. For more information, call Sue Pagano or Judy Chambliss at the church at 352-628-4083.



Special to the Chronicle
Shirley Bertrand, a member of the First United Methodist Church of Homosassa, donated a bike and bike helmet to the Christmas Tree of Hope program. She also volunteers at the food pantry.



Special to the Chronicle
Christmas Tree of Hope elves recently readied gifts for 54 Homosassa children in need. Pictured from left are: Sandy Dewart, Richard Comfort, Leanne Comfort, Sue Pagano, Judy Chambliss and Joyce Ward.

Giving Tree provides gifts to nursing home residents

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Legion of Mary at St. Scholastica Catholic Church participates in reaching out to area nursing homes each year to bring Christmas blessings to persons who are suffering through their Giving Tree program.

The Giving Tree is a way for all parishioners to join our church family during the Christmas season. This includes the Knights of Columbus and the children at St. John Paul II School who helped to wrap the gifts for the needy children of the area.

The Legion of Mary thanks

all who helped to make this a successful year of giving. More than 140 gifts were collected for distribution to four nursing homes.

The Legion of Mary is a world-wide spiritual prayer group that began in Dublin, Ireland in 1921 and is now in every country in the world.

They are a small group that does much of the outreach for the church with weekly rosary and communion services at nursing homes, rosary rallies and prayer support.

They also conduct a Pilgrim Virgin Statue Program, where

members visit a parishioner's home with the Our Lady of Fatima statue. Members lead opening prayers, offer intentions and pray the rosary with the family before taking their leave.

The family prays the rosary daily and tries to avoid sin for a week, after which the Legion of Mary members come back, lead closing prayers and take the statue to the next home.

Anyone can join in their spiritual works to bring people closer to the blessed Mother Mary and her son Jesus.



Special to the Chronicle
Pictured are members of the Legion of Mary with assisted living residents at Rosecastle of Citrus Assisted Living and Memory Care Center, where they lead a sing-a-long and presented Christmas gifts.



Special to the Chronicle
The St. Scholastica Knights of Columbus Council 14485 presented a donation to Our Lady of Good Counsel Camp in Floral City to be put toward the renovation of their cabins.

Knights present check for Good Counsel Camp renovation

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

St. Scholastica Knights of Columbus Council 14485 in Lecanto recently donated \$8,126.90 to Our Lady of Good Counsel Camp in Floral City to assist in the renovation of 12 cabins.

The money came from a raffle the Knights conducted. This is the third year the council has raised money for cabin renovations. So far, they have donated \$19,578.90 in total.

The camp has been in-

volved with the youth of Citrus County and beyond for more than 70 years. It is owned and operated by the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Every summer the camp welcomes more than 500 boys and girls of all faiths between the ages of 7 and 15 to take part in its summer programs and activities.

Some of the renovation of the cabins have been completed. The remaining work to be done is the installation of new windows and doors,

heaters and air-conditioning and the purchase of new bunk beds.

The total cost of the renovation of the 12 cabins is \$212,000. With updated cabins, it will allow the youth groups and ministries to be more comfortable during the hot summer and cold winter months.

For more information or to donate to this effort, call Our Lady of Good Counsel Camp at 352-270-8831 or visit goodcounselcamp.org/donate.

NOTES

From page A19

center. For information, call Frances Austin at 352-746-5943.

Cross Bound Ministry

Broadcasts with a focus on Bible teaching and strengthening the family on radio station 720AM every Sunday at 8 a.m.

SUPPORT

Homosassa First United Methodist Church

The free Memory Lane Support Group & Respite Program meets from 1 to 3 p.m. every Monday at Homosassa First United Methodist Church, 8831 W. Bradshaw St.

This program has been in existence for nearly 10 years. It started as a support group for caregivers, but quickly evolved into a support group for those caring for loved ones with memory issues and dementia.

For more information, call 352-628-4083 or visit lumc.org.

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

Bereavement Support Group Thursday meetings in the hall behind the church in Homosassa. We take a positive approach to grief by helping grievers learn how to

The hallmark of Christmas

Here's a riddle: What has 15 actors, four settings, two writers and one plot?

The answer: 632 Hallmark Christmas movies.

I'll add: beautiful winter coats, hats and scarves, impeccably decorated homes, snow and mugs of cocoa. Sometimes there's a prince from an unspecified European country.

There's always a "meet cute" and a misunderstanding. Sometimes a neighborhood landmark needs to be saved or an estranged relationship needs to be reconciled.

Although I cringe as I admit this, I've been watching Hallmark Christmas movies.

It's my husband's fault.

He has a friend who watches them and when he's visiting and they're on TV, he says he can't help but watch them, too.

One day he came home saying, "Quick! Turn on the Hallmark Channel!"

He had to see how the movie ended.

It ended the way they always end, with a kiss. Love wins.

In every movie, at least the ones I've seen, love wins.

That's the hallmark, the distinctive feature, of Christmas. It's the ultimate true love story.

However, unlike a Hallmark movie, there's no "meet cute," the moment where the couple first meet under humorous or awkward circumstances.

In the love story that is Christmas, the Son of God leaves

heaven and comes to Earth to

profess his love to a stiff-necked

people who not only reject him,

but eventually kill him.

That would be us.

Unlike a Hallmark movie where the beloved is flawed but beautiful, not so much with us.

And that's the wonder of the

story, that God, in the person of Jesus, would choose to set his love on us.

The Bible records a number of love stories. There's Boaz, a kind, rich man who marries a poor young widow who is not even an Israelite.

There's Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, and Rebekah whose marriage is personally arranged by God, with the couple being introduced to each other by an angel.

With Joseph and Mary, Joseph goes against his culture to marry an unwed, pregnant virgin, chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus.

But the love story that most resembles the relationship between God and us is Hosea and Gomer.

God tells the prophet Hosea to marry Gomer, a prostitute. This is God's way of showing his people how he feels about their idolatry, likening their straying and unfaithfulness to Gomer's adultery.

God also uses Hosea's continual forgiveness of Gomer to demonstrate his grace and love to us.

"As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you" (Isaiah 62:5).

Jesus came to Earth to pursue the very ones who scorned him.

My husband particularly likes the Hallmark movies about a prince or king. Often, the prince is about to enter an arranged marriage that he's not thrilled about, but then he meets a girl who, at first, is all wrong for him.

But he loves her and spends the rest of the movie proving his love, winning her over.

Because it's a Hallmark movie, love wins.

For us, because Jesus is our King, the greatest love wins.

Merry Christmas!

Nancy Kennedy is the author of "Move Over, Victoria - I Know the Real Secret," "Girl on a Swing," and her latest book, "Lipstick Grace." She can be reached at 352-564-2927 or via email at nkennedy@chronicleonline.com.

make a new life. Thirty years of experience. The group meets 1-3 p.m. St. Thomas the Apostle is on U.S. 19, 300 yards southwest of Cardinal, just past Walmart, on the west side. For information, call 352-220-1959.

The Hills Church

Celebrate Recovery meets every Monday from 6-8 p.m. at The Hills Church, 2 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills. It is a Christ-centered recovery group for hurts, hang-ups and habits. No child care;

authorized to sign court slips. Call Tom or Sheila Boss for more information, at 410-353-7857 or 410-271-4112. [Celebraterecovery.com](http://celebraterecovery.com).

North Oak Church

North Oak Church is offering group support for caregivers of dementia patients at 6:30 p.m. the first Thursday monthly at the church, 9324 N. Elkcam Blvd. in Citrus Springs.

GriefShare seminars and support groups are led by people who understand grief and want to help. Gain access to valuable resources and workbooks to help recover from loss and look forward to rebuilding.

Attendees learn helpful, practical information that will help with recovery from the pain of grief and loss. Group members will tell their story, but there's never pressure to do so.

Become part of a family and learn how to go through a healthy season of grieving, then begin transitioning to emotional and spiritual wholeness. They call this "your journey from mourning to joy."

Join this GriefShare group any time after Jan. 5. For more information, call 352-489-1688.

Sarah Gatling is features editor of the Citrus County Chronicle. Email her at sgatling@chronicleonline.com.

SPORTS

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE



Central Florida running back Isaiah Bowser (5) follows a block by offensive lineman Matthew Lee on Florida defensive lineman Jalen Lee during the first half of the Gasparilla Bowl on Thursday.

Bowl bragging rights

Bowser boosts UCF to 29-17 Gasparilla Bowl win over Florida

By MARK DIDTLER
Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Isaiah Bowser ran for 155 yards and two touchdowns, Ryan O'Keefe had 85 yards on seven receptions, and Central Florida earned Sunshine State bragging rights by beating Florida 29-17 in the Gasparilla Bowl on Thursday night.

UCF (9-4) took a 26-17 lead late in the third when Daniel Obarski made a 21-yard field goal and Mikey Keene threw a 54-yard scor-

ing strike to O'Keefe in the span of about two minutes. Obarski then made it 29-17 on a 33-yarder with 2:41 to play.

"Yeah, we are the best in Florida," said O'Keefe, who also had 110 rushing yards. "We always thought that, but now we finally got to prove it."

Florida quarterback Emory Jones, playing in his final game with the Gators before entering the transfer portal, completed 14 of 36 passes for 171 yards. He also ran for 62 yards on 10 carries.

"Not thinking about my future right now," Jones said. "Will talk to my mom and family, and then made a decision."

Florida was led by interim

coach Greg Knox, who took over when Dan Mullen was fired before the regular-season finale against Florida State. Former Louisiana coach Billy Napier will take over for the 2022 season. Florida (6-7) finished with its first losing record since 2017.

The Gators had eight penalties for 85 yards.

"You can't make the mistakes we made and expect to win," Knox said. "I think our guys played hard, just was not able to overcome the mistakes we made."

UCF outgained Florida 436-376.

"We beat 'em handily," UCF coach Gus

See UCF, page B3

Ode to SPORTS

A year when games and fans came off the bench

By FRED LIEF
Associated Press

Essentially better, wouldn't you say?
Fans back in the stands and games back in play.
Clearly more settled but far from routine:
Some shots from the arc, some for the vaccine.
A year on the rebound crisscrossing sports.
A year next to normal, progress of sorts.

First Quarter

The New Year strikes, ignites the flame.
Bama, Buckeyes reach title game.
Browns and playoffs: Now there's a match.
DeVonta Smith, a Heisman catch.
Capitol Hill, a violent sea.
The Heat and Celtics take a knee.
New York star, good as it gets —
Lindor leaves Cleveland, dealt to Mets.
A limb falls from the Dodger tree —
Tom Lasorda was 93.
Tide surges in a dull affair
To send Nick Saban past the Bear.
Nets nab Harden, aiming higher.
Jags try likewise, Urban Meyer.
Australian tennis, quarantine.
Olympics nearing, what's it mean?

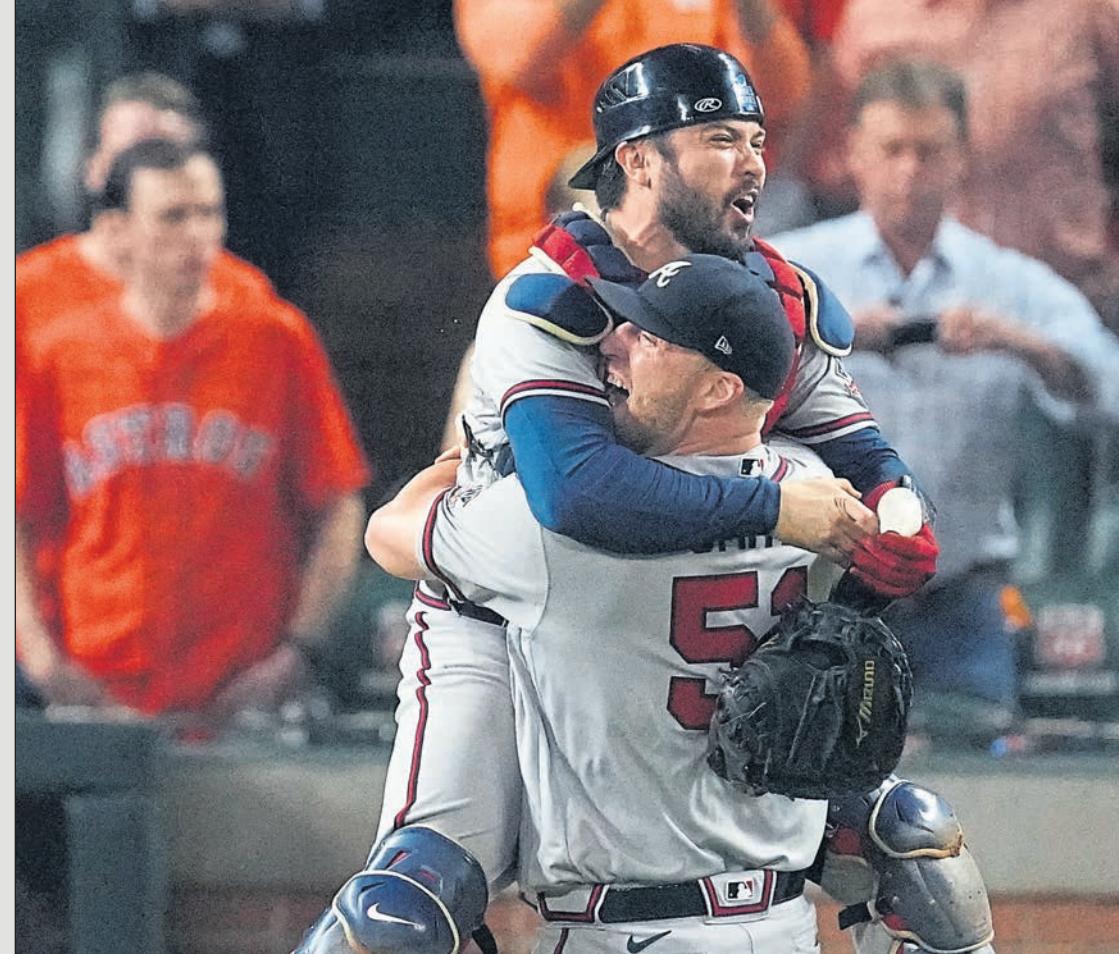
A star grows dim in baseball's sky
As Henry Aaron passes by.
A shutout vote for baseball's Hall,
Though Schilling nearly gets a call.
Bucs, Brady ride on cruise control
And stay at home for Super Bowl.
Chiefs dethroned, Tampa Bay is king
And Brady gets his seventh ring.
Lombardi Trophy tossed from boat —
Pass completed by football's GOAT.
Prep for Tokyo goes off the track,
With leaders talking sexist smack.
McDowell exults, Daytona bass —
Grabs first win, eludes last-lap crash.
Djokovic's season underway,
Ninth Aussie crown on resume.
A morning drive, a roll, a tree —
Woods wrecks his speeding SUV.
Shattered leg, orthopedic mess.
Any more golf? Anyone's guess.
Kyle Larson, banned for racist crack,

Second Quarter

Opening day but no at-bats
When COVID scraps the Mets at Nats.
Atlanta stripped of All-Star Game,
With Georgia's voting law to blame.
Gonzaga gasps, comes up for air
On Jalen Suggs' half-court prayer.
Stanford women make curtain call,
Beat Arizona, Pac-12 ball.
Next night, the Baylor Bears shift gears.
Zags' perfect season disappears.
Matsuyama, the Masters man,
Sets major milestone for Japan.
No-hitters, once rare Beaujolais,
Are now served up most every day.
Rich Euro clubs conspire, bolt.
Rogue league shot down as fans revolt.
Medina Spirit, Churchill Downs;
Bob Baffert, seven Derby crowns.
Failed drug test puts the win in doubt
And Churchill Downs kicks Baffert out.



Tampa Bay quarterback Tom Brady celebrates with the Vince Lombardi Trophy after winning Super Bowl 55 on Feb. 7 in Tampa. The Buccaneers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs 31-9.



Atlanta Braves pitcher Will Smith, front, and catcher Travis d'Arnaud celebrate after winning the World Series over the Houston Astros on Nov. 2 in Houston. The Braves won 7-0.

Sue Ogrocki / AP

See ODE, page B3

Without NHL, Russia emerges as favorite for Olympic gold

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH
Associated Press

Russia, OAR, ROC – whatever the name, now that the NHL is out of the Beijing Olympics, the Russians will be the favorites for the gold medal.

After the NHL withdrew from the Beijing Olympics on Wednesday to save a league schedule ravaged by virus outbreaks on numerous teams, Europe-based players are set to dominate the Olympic men's tournament.

That puts the Russians, competing in Beijing as ROC for Russian Olympic Committee, in a strong position to retain the gold medal it won in 2018 under the Olympic Athletes from Russia name. The name changes were required as part of Russia's sanctions for various doping-related issues across multiple Olympic sports.

Just as it was four years ago, the Kontinental Hockey League remains the strongest league outside of the NHL. Russia has used the big-spending SKA St. Petersburg and CSKA Moscow clubs to keep some talented younger Russians at home when they might otherwise have moved to North America.

The Russian roster will be less familiar to North American fans than the 2018 lineup led by Pavel Datsyuk and Ilya Kovalchuk, who haven't officially retired but haven't played any hockey this season. Kovalchuk may be in Beijing in a manager role for the Russian Hockey Federation. Some 2018 gold medalists are now in the NHL, including Minnesota Wild forward Kirill Kaprizov, Ottawa Senators defenseman Artem Zub and two of the three goaltenders: the New York Rangers' Igor Shesterkin and Islanders' Ilya Sorokin.

Expect center Vadim Shipachyov, briefly of the Vegas Golden Knights in 2017-18, to star for the ROC. He has 21 goals and 36 assists in 40 games in the KHL this season for Dynamo Moscow. Experienced forward Mikhail Grigorenko is available because he moved back to Russia this season after spending 2020-21 with the Columbus Blue Jackets, and former New Jersey Devils wing Nikita Gusev is likely to make the roster, too. Former Los Angeles Kings defenseman Slava Voynov has not played in the NHL since a 2014 do-



Alexander Zemlianichenko / AP
Russia's Vyacheslav Voynov, center bottom, celebrates with his teammates after scoring his side's second goal during the Channel One Cup ice hockey match between Russia and Finland in Moscow on Dec. 19.

mestic violence arrest and subsequent suspension, but he is also considered key to Russia's plans.

Finland's chance

The Russians can be beaten, though. Finland proved that Sunday with a 3-2 overtime win in Moscow during the Channel One Cup, a tournament used as a pre-Olympic tune-up for non-NHL players.

The game-winning goal was a bizarre one, awarded by the referees because of a penalty on a Finland breakaway facing the empty Russian net. The puck never entered the net. Finland won all three of its games in the tournament but needed overtime twice.

Former NHL players who are candidates for Finland include forwards Markus Granlund and Leo Komarov and defenseman Julius Honka. Komarov played a game for the Islanders earlier this season before agreeing to mutually terminate his contract.

Canada sent a team to the tournament too, beating Sweden but losing to Finland and Russia with a roster assembled from clubs in six different countries.

Two free agents, defenseman Jason Demers and center Eric Fehr, brought much-needed experience with 699 and 652 career NHL games, respectively, and both subsequently signed

with the same KHL team.

Former Montreal Canadiens coach Claude Julien is in line to be behind the bench for Canada, with ex-Arizona Coyotes captain Shane Doan the top candidate to serve as general manager.

Wearing throwback Soviet Union uniforms, Russia had wins over Canada, Sweden and the Czech Republic.

USA Hockey could soon turn to assistant executive director of hockey operations and retired NHL goaltender John Vanbiesbrouck as GM. Former Rangers coach David Quinn is a leading candidate to get the U.S. Olympic job overseeing a roster that include some college players.

Germany's year again?

The absence of the NHL creates opportunities for a surprise medalist. In 2018, that was Germany, which took silver after a 4-3 overtime loss to the Russians in the final.

The Germans were helped by their team cohesion, with players almost entirely drawn from their national Bundesliga and familiar with each other's play. The NHL's decision means MVP Leon Draisaitl is still waiting to represent his country at the Olympics. Germany beat Slovakia, Switzerland and a Russian "B" team in a tune-up tournament on home ice in November.



Special to the Chronicle
From left, Tom Hardesty and George Crichlow.

Citrus Hills players win pickleball finals

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Two teams from Citrus Hills recently took first and third place in pickleball, men's doubles, in the state finals.

George Crichlow and Tom Hardesty placed first and Randy Titkemeyer and Mitch Levine placed third in



Special to the Chronicle
From left, Randy Titkemeyer and Mitch Levine.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
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The **CHRISTMAS CHEER** continues!

We have more gifts to give during our **"5 DAYS & 5 WAYS TO SAVE"** Event! Now is the best time to trade into a new car, truck, or SUV. Vehicles are worth more during this event than at any other time, so this is the perfect opportunity to take advantage of year end discounts and incentives. Celebrate the New Year in a New Car from Eagle Buick GMC!

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TO SAVE!**



Mon. Dec. 27



Tue. Dec. 28



Wed. Dec. 29



Thu. Dec. 30



Fri. Dec. 31



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NFL							
AMERICAN CONFERENCE							
East		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	.367	227	
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	.394	243	
Miami	7	7	0	.500	.285	312	
e-N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	.250	428	
South		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	10	5	0	.667	.357	326	
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	.398	300	
e-Houston	3	11	0	.214	.207	372	
e-Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	.196	370	
North		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	10	6	0	.571	.334	315	
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	.369	303	
Pittsburgh	7	6	1	.536	.291	335	
Cleveland	7	7	0	.500	.292	305	
West		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	.385	296	
L.A. Chargers	8	6	0	.571	.379	370	
Denver	7	7	0	.500	.285	243	
Las Vegas	7	7	0	.500	.299	374	
NATIONAL CONFERENCE							
East		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	10	4	0	.714	.401	293	
Phila.	7	7	0	.500	.364	308	
Washington	6	8	0	.429	.283	351	
N.Y. Giants	4	10	0	.286	.238	331	
South		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	10	4	0	.714	.410	306	
New Orleans	7	7	0	.500	.313	285	
Atlanta	6	8	0	.429	.258	384	
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	.271	313	
North		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	11	3	0	.786	.359	302	
Minnesota	7	7	0	.500	.361	342	
e-Chicago	4	10	0	.286	.240	349	
e-Detroit	2	11	1	.179	.243	366	
West		W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	10	4	0	.714	.378	284	
L.A. Rams	10	4	0	.714	.386	303	
San Francisco	8	7	0	.533	.377	334	
Seattle	5	9	0	.357	.282	282	
x-Eliminated from playoffs							
y-clinched playoff spot							
y-clinched division							
Thursday's Game							
Tennessee 20, San Francisco 17							
Saturday's Games							
Cleveland at Green Bay, 4:30 p.m.							
Indianapolis at Arizona, 8:15 p.m.							
Sunday's Games							
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.							
Buffalo at New England, 1 p.m.							
Detroit at Atlanta, 1 p.m.							
Jacksonville at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.							
L.A. Chargers at Houston, 1 p.m.							
L.A. Rams at Minnesota, 1 p.m.							
N.Y. Giants at Phila., 1 p.m.							
Phila. at Washington, 1 p.m.							
Tampa Bay at Carolina, 1 p.m.							
Chicago at Seattle, 4:05 p.m.							
Denver at Las Vegas, 4:25 p.m.							
Pittsburgh at Kansas City, 4:25 p.m.							
Washington at Dallas, 8:20 p.m.							
Monday's Game							
Miami at New Orleans, 8:15 p.m.							
Sunday, Jan. 2							
Atlanta at Buffalo, 1 p.m.							
Carolina at New Orleans, 1 p.m.							
Jacksonville at New England, 1 p.m.							
Kansas City at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.							
Las Vegas at Indianapolis, 1 p.m.							
Miami at Tennessee, 1 p.m.							
N.Y. Giants at Chicago, 1 p.m.							
Phila. at Washington, 1 p.m.							
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.							
Denver at L.A. Chargers, 4:05 p.m.							
Houston at San Francisco, 4:05 p.m.							
Arizona at Dallas, 4:25 p.m.							
Detroit at Seattle, 4:25 p.m.							
L.A. Rams at Baltimore, 4:25 p.m.							
Minnesota at Green Bay, 8:20 p.m.							
Monday, Jan. 3							
Cleveland at Pittsburgh, 8:15 p.m.							

FLORIDA LOTTERY

Friday's winning numbers

Mega Millions jackpot
\$187 million
Pick 5 Midday
1-1-5-7-8, Fireball: 8
Powerball jackpot
\$400 million
Drawings as of 3 p.m. Friday

ON THE AIRWAVES

NBA

12 p.m. (ESPN): Atlanta Hawks at New York Knicks
2:30 p.m. (ABC): Boston Celtics at Milwaukee Bucks
5 p.m. (ABC): Golden State Warriors at Phoenix Suns
8 p.m. (ABC): Brooklyn Nets at Los Angeles Lakers

10:30 p.m. (ESPN): Dallas Mavericks at Utah Jazz

MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL

1:30 p.m. (ESPNU): Diamond Head Classic, 7th Place Game

4 p.m. (ESPNU): Diamond Head Classic, 5th Place Game

Teams TBA

6:30 p.m. (ESPN2): Diamond Head Classic, 3rd Place Game

Teams TBA

9 p.m. (ESPN2): Diamond Head Classic, Final: Teams TBA

BOXING

8 p.m. (FOX): PBC Fight Night: Vito Mielnicki Jr. vs. Nicholas DeLomba

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

2:30 p.m. (ESPN): Camellia Bowl – Georgia State vs Ball St.

9 p.m. (ESPNU): Union Home Mortgage Gasparilla Bowl – UCF vs Florida (Taped)

NFL

4:30 p.m. (FOX, NFL): Cleveland Browns at Green Bay Packers

8:15 p.m. (NFL): Indianapolis Colts at Arizona Cardinals

U.S. OLYMPIC TRIALS

12:30 p.m. (NBC): Ski Jumping

RODEO

2 p.m. (CBS): Cowtown Christmas Championship (Taped)

WINTER SPORTS

4 p.m. (NBC): Snowboarding Visa Big Air (Taped)



Chris O'Meara / AP

Central Florida wide receiver Ryan O'Keefe, left, and head coach Gus Matzahn holds their trophies after winning the Gasparilla Bowl over Florida on Thursday in Tampa.

UCF

From page B1

Malzahn said. "The best is yet to come. We're fighting against the three big in-state schools. A lot of them, the logos are really cool, but I really believe we're the program of the future."

It was the first time the two teams played since Florida won 42-0 during its 2006 national championship season. The Gators also won 58-27 in 1999.

Florida led 10-9 at half-time behind Chris Howard's 26-yard field goal with 1:36 left in the second quarter.

O'Keefe had a 74-yard run in third quarter, setting up Bowser's TD run from 4 yards out to put UCF up 16-10. Florida regained the lead, 17-16, on its next possession when Malik Davis had a 19-yard rushing TD.

Another twist, Olympic plans:

No roaring crowds; in fact, no fans.

Raise a glass, a dry martini –

Novak knocks off Berrettini.

Twenty-first Slam, Wimbleton sprees.

Rombauer wins, Medina shows.

No Baffert, here's how Preakness goes:

Rombauer wins, Medina shows.

Canoe brutal and unbowed

At Cowboys' home with record crowd.

Games greenlighted by IOC

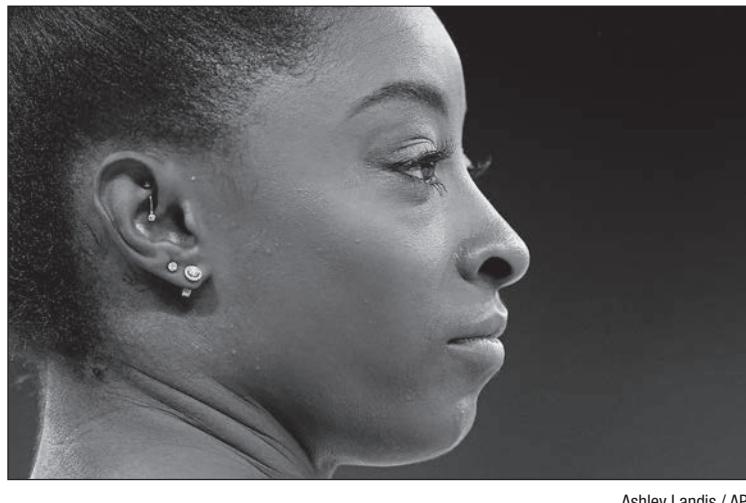
Even if COVID's running free.

Mickelson takes the PGA.

Oh, he believes in yesterday.

Fans swarm fairway, bidding scene

As Lefty, Koepka walk toward green.



Ashley Landis / AP

Simone Biles stands on the mat during the warm-up prior to the artistic gymnastics balance beam final at the 2020 Summer Olympics on Aug. 3 in Tokyo.

2021

As COVID-19 impacts sports, athletes continue to achieve – and struggle



Gerry Broome / AP

The Tampa Bay Lightning celebrate winning the Stanley Cup over the Montreal Canadiens on July 7 in Tampa.



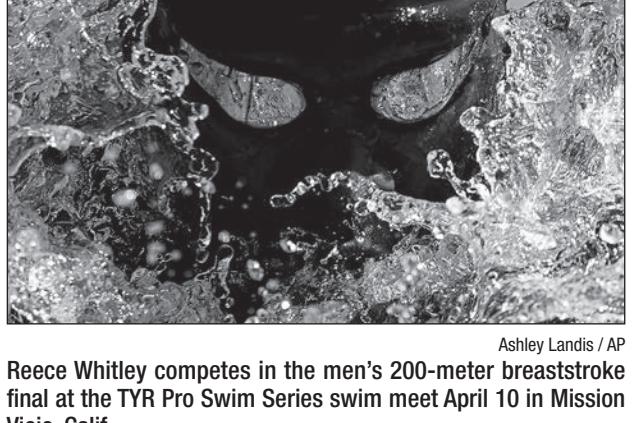
Francisco Seco / AP

Brazil's Gabriel Medina crashes on a wave during the bronze medal heat of the men's surfing competition at the 2020 Summer Olympics on July 27 at Tsurigasaki beach in Ichinomiya, Japan.



Dmitri Lovetsky / AP

Anna-Maria Alexandri of Austria competes in the Duet Free Routine Preliminary on Aug. 2 at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.



Ashley Landis / AP

Reece Whitley competes in the men's 200-meter breaststroke final at the TYR Pro Swim Series swim meet April 10 in Mission Viejo, Calif.



Chase Stevens / AP

Tyson Fury lands a left to Deontay Wilder in a heavyweight championship boxing match Oct. 9 in Las Vegas.



Anne-Christine Poujoulat / AP

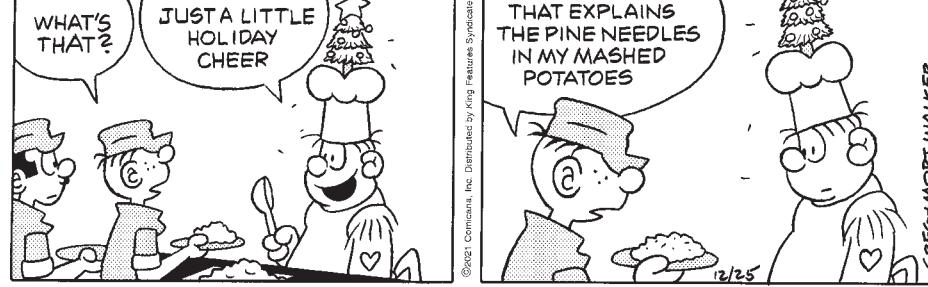
Italy's Kristian Sbaragli, left, and France's Bryan Coquard, right, lie on the ground after crashing during the first stage of the Tour de France on June 26 in Brest, France.



Luca Bruno / AP

Red Bull driver Max Verstappen is airborne over Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton on Sept. 12 during the Italian Formula One Grand Prix at Monza, Italy.

BEETLE BAILEY



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WIZARD OF ID



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GARFIELD



FORT KNOX



PICKLES



ASTROGRAPH

By EUGENIA LAST

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25

Consider the possibilities. Turn a dream into a reality. Put a strategy in place and discuss your plans with someone you respect. A positive change at home or to how you handle personal matters will help you head in an inviting direction.

Don't hesitate to take advantage of an opportunity. Live in the moment and do what makes you happy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Share your thoughts and enjoy time with friends or relatives. Changing how you approach others will prompt them to show interest in something you want to pursue.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Don't shy away from letting others know how you feel. Be bold, and you'll find out what's possible and how best to move forward. It's up to you to act if you want things to change.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) Work in conjunction with others, and good things will transpire. Helping people will make you feel good and inspire you to make a difference.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) A positive mindset will make a difference during negotiations. Choose your battles wisely and focus on what makes you happy and helps you stay out of trouble. Make an end-of-year-to-do list.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You can enjoy a fun day with family and friends or spend time doing something that puts a twinkle in your eye. Generosity and wishing others well will boost your morale and inspire you to make a difference.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) You can acknowledge others' success, but you should refrain from making a fuss or showing envy. The less you share about your personal life, the better. Be gracious, appreciative and loving. Listen and learn.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Pay attention to what others want. Your actions will turn a difficult day into one of joy for you and those around you. Surprise someone with a special gift, thought or show of affection.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Someone will exaggerate or make you feel inadequate.

Rise above any controversy you face and offer kindness, understanding and a fun-loving approach to life, love and happiness.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Take control before someone steps in front of you. Pay attention to what's being said and done, and carefully monitor situations from a distance. Steer clear of family feuds and manipulative individuals trying to stir up trouble.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Concentrate on what you need to accomplish. Being disciplined and maintaining a calm and peaceful attitude will help you avoid a discussion that is bound to put you in a no-win situation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 22) It's up to you to bring about change. Consider what makes you happy and head in that direction. Curb indulgent spending, and you'll feel better about yourself. A kind gesture will bring you closer to a loved one.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Refuse to let anyone bait you into an argument. Refrain from sharing your plans and beliefs. Being a good listener will save you from an uncomfortable situation. Get along with everyone.

FAMILY CIRCUS

THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil Keane

DENNIS THE MENACE



"I GUESS ALL THOSE TIMES YOU HAD ME SITTIN' IN THE CORNER... SANTA MUST'VE BEEN LOOKIN' THE OTHER WAY."

BABY BLUES

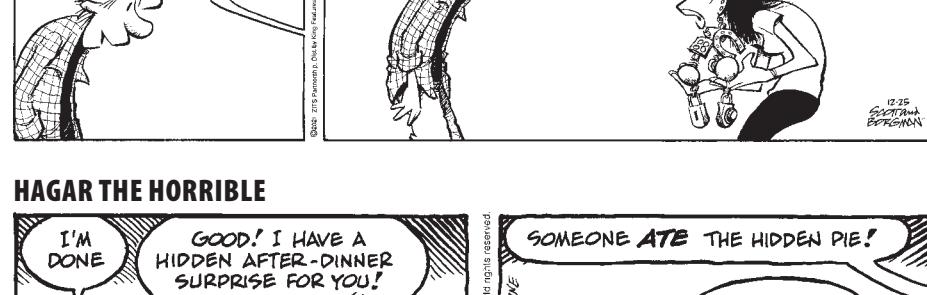


CURTIS

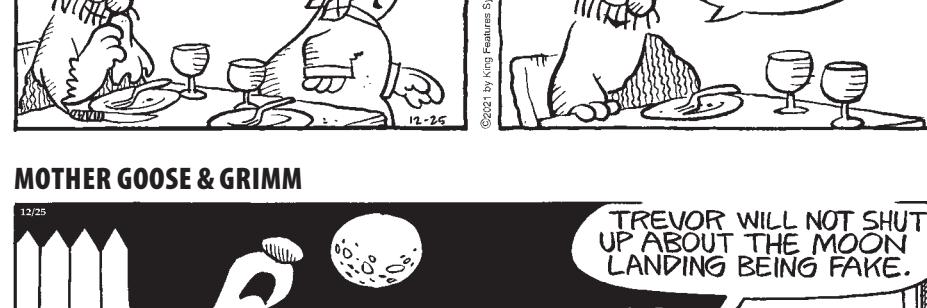


"MERRY CHRISTMAS, LOVE RAY

ZITS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM



MUTTS



SALLY FORTH



TODAY'S MOVIES

Citrus Cinemas 6 Inverness; 844-462-7342 Code 187

Saturday, Dec. 25 "American Underdog" PG –

11:30 a.m., 3:30, 7:45, 10:45 p.m.

"Sing 2" PG – noon, 1, 3:45, 7,

9:40 p.m.

"The King's Man" R –

11:45 a.m., 3, 7:30, 10:30 p.m.

"The Matrix Resurrections" R –

11:15 a.m., 2:45, 6:45, 10:15 p.m.

"Spider-man: No Way Home" PG13 – 11 a.m., 2:30, 3, 6:30,

7:15, 10, 10:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 26 "American Underdog" PG –

11:30 a.m., 3:30, 7:45, 10:45 p.m.

"Sing 2" PG – noon, 1, 3:45, 7,

9:45 p.m.

"The King's Man" R –

11:45 a.m., 3, 7:30, 10:30 p.m.

"The Matrix Resurrections" R –

11:15 a.m., 2:45, 6:45, 10:15 p.m.

"Spider-man: No Way Home" PG13 – 11 a.m., 2:30, 3, 6:30,

7:15, 10, 10:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 29 "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (2000) PG – 3 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 31 "The Polar Express" (2004) G –

3 p.m.

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

HomeFront Preview

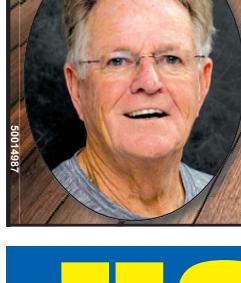
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 Citrus Publishing located in Crystal River Florida is currently seeking a Full Time Lead Press Operator. Our central office is in Crystal River, FL printing newspapers that serve Citrus, Sumter, Marion and Levy Counties. Applicants must have a minimum 5 years' experience running a Goss Community/DGM 430 printing press. This is a night shift position, four days per week.

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Citrus County Chronicle

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1624 North Meadowcrest

Blvd.

Crystal River, Fla. 34429

Office 352-563-3275 or

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Will assist w/ Thrift Shoppe operations including receiving & evaluating merchandise, sales, cash management, customer service and supervision of volunteers

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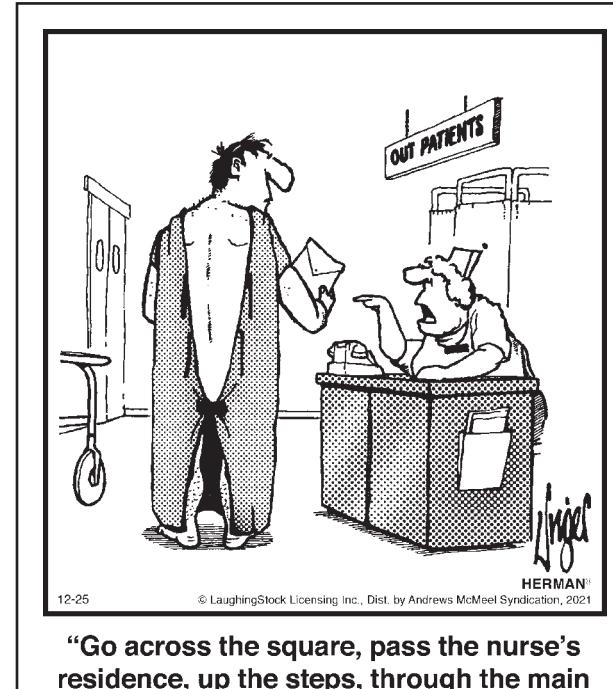
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model, 1771 sq ft on .5 acre
golf course lot with rear
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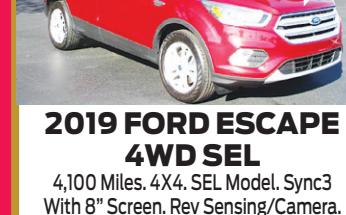
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2021 FORD ECOSPORT FWD SE

550 Extra Low Miles, Power Moonroof, Rear View Camera, 1.0 L3 Turbo. NPR1513

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2018 FORD ESCAPE FWD SEL

Sel Pkg. Safe & Smart Pkg. Nav, Leather. Adaptive Cruise. Lane Keeping. Blis. More. NPR1493

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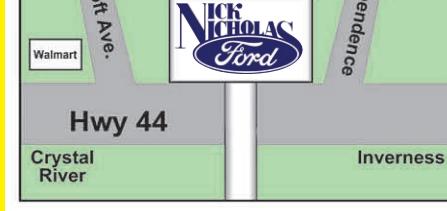
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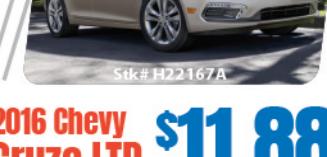
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2017 Buick Encore \$23,349



2019 Chevy Silverado 1500 \$43,752

2013 Kia Soul...Stk #18312.....	\$10,324
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2017 Dodge Grand Caravan...Stk #18398.....	\$18,995
2017 Jeep Compass...Stk #18405.....	\$20,337
2017 Ford Escape...Stk #P18370.....	\$23,248
2017 Ford Explorer...Stk #18306.....	\$23,573
2020 Chevy Silverado 1500...Stk #P18303.....	\$47,949
2017 Cadillac Escalade...Stk #P18368.....	\$56,199



**New Chevy 2021
TRAX AWD LT** | **0% for
72 mos**

\$2,639 Due at signing. After all other offers. 0\$ Security Deposit. Tax, title, license, and dealer fees extra. Mileage charge of .25/Mile over 32,500 Miles. For well qualified buyers only. See dealer for complete details.

Offer expires 11/30/2021.



**New Chevy 2021
Equinox LT** | **0% for
72 mos**

\$3,309 Due at signing. After all other offers. 0\$ Security Deposit. Tax, title, license, and dealer fees extra. Mileage charge of .25/Mile over 32,500 Miles. For well qualified buyers only. See dealer for complete details.

Offer expires 11/30/2021.

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