

# Niece suspects elderly aunt is being isolated by her son

**DEAR ABBY:** My husband and I have an elderly (90-plus) aunt who lives with her son in a town about four hours away. She corresponds by letter with us regularly, and we always write back. However, it has become apparent that she's not receiving our letters because she doesn't make any comments on any of the things we write to tell her about. We suspect that her son is withholding her mail because we have written to him in the past to express our displeasure about how he treats his mother's emotional and safety needs.



**DEAR ABBY**

In the last letter we received from her, she told us she expected to spend Christmas in her basement apartment while her son and his wife's family have Christmas festivities upstairs. It broke our hearts, but we realize that since we're so far away, there's little we can do. We've tried sending letters without our return address on the envelope, etc. to get past her son's scrutiny, but we really don't believe she's getting her mail.

Should we contact the police or social services to do a wellness check on her, or do you have another suggestion? We know she occasionally goes to a senior center in town. Should we write to her in care of the senior center? Your comments are appreciated.

-- **SUSPICIOUS IN GEORGIA**

**DEAR SUSPICIOUS:** Your relative may be having memory issues, or your fears may be genuine. Is it possible to talk with her on the phone or visit her to make an assessment? If someone suspects that an older person is being physically, emotionally or financially abused, it should be reported so the matter can be investigated. You can do that by contacting Adult Protective Services in your aunt's state or the National Domestic Violence hotline at thehotline.org or 800-799-7233.

**DEAR ABBY:** A few years ago, I found some flirtatious and slightly risqué messages between my husband and a female

business associate. My husband agreed that they were wrong and says he has discontinued those kinds of conversations. He has stayed in contact with her, and their friendship remains.

After dealing with the hurt for more than two years, I finally told him a few months ago the only way I would be

OK with their friendship is if he introduced me to her. He promised he would, but he hasn't followed through. This week I saw on our phone bill

that while on a recent business trip he was texting with her late into the night and early in the morning. I confronted him, but he continues to say they are just friends, and he is doing nothing wrong.

I'm heartbroken. I feel he has betrayed my trust. What should I do?

-- **DISRESPECTED IN TEXAS**

**DEAR DISRESPECTED:** Your husband is doing something wrong. He's hurting you and threatening the marriage. What you should do now is ask your doctor or your health insurance company to refer you to a marriage and family therapist, schedule some visits and insist that your husband join you. If he is interested in saving the marriage, he will agree. If not, you may need to reconsider your future and consult an attorney.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

# Millions of gallons of sewer water overflow after storms



Jeronimo Nisa/The Decatur Daily via AP

Untreated sewage overflows from a manhole Tuesday on Central Parkway, in Decatur, Alabama.

The Associated Press

**DECATUR, Alabama** — Days of rain have left parts of Alabama awash in millions of gallons of dingy water that overflowed from sanitary sewer systems.

On Wednesday, reports submitted to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management showed more than 18.5 million gallons of sewer water spilled over the past 10 days around Birmingham and Tuscaloosa, where the National Weather Service said some spots have received more than 6 inches of rain so far this week.

In the Tennessee Valley, about 4.8 million gallons of sewage escaped from sewer pipes in Decatur last Thursday to Saturday, with most ending up in Dry Branch Creek, the Decatur Daily reported. The general manager of Decatur Utilities, Ray Hardin, said upgrades are continuing, but a city leader said he wants more action.

"I'm sensing a lack of urgency. I guess I want to see someone at DU running around like their hair's on fire trying to resolve this," City Council member Billy Jackson, whose district includes most of Dry Branch Creek, told the newspaper.

Sanitary sewer systems are designed to keep sewage in and rainwater out. Decatur's

aging system, much of it clay pipe installed a half-century ago, is failing in that role. Heavy rains cause water to enter the sewer pipes, mixing with the sewage and exceeding the pipe's capacity. The result, as could be seen Tuesday in the city, is diluted sewage gushing from manholes.

A state reporting tool showing sewage overflows by location and amount is fairly new and there's no way to say whether recent spills are abnormally high, said Jerome Hand, a spokesman for the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. It's also impossible to say whether all the problems are linked to storms or something else, he said.

"It's probably just too much rain going through the system but we don't know for sure," Hand said. "We require these systems to report them and we will investigate them and help them get back into compliance."

The problem carries health risks. Sherri Davidson, state epidemiologist for the Alabama Department of Public Health, told the Decatur newspaper. Sewer overflows contain bacteria, viruses and intestinal parasites such as hookworms, she said. Even if people avoid sewer water, sewage can be tracked inside homes on shoes or by pets.

# weather

	TONIGHT	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON
<b>A little late-night snow</b>	Cloudy with a snow shower	Occasional snow and rain	A little snow	Mostly cloudy, some snow	
<b>Baker City</b>	28	44 30	44 33	42 24	41 23
<b>La Grande</b>	30	40 30	40 34	38 26	38 22
<b>Enterprise</b>	28	39 27	39 32	37 23	35 19

Comfort Index takes into account how the weather will feel based on a combination of factors. A rating of 10 feels very comfortable while a rating of 0 feels very uncomfortable.

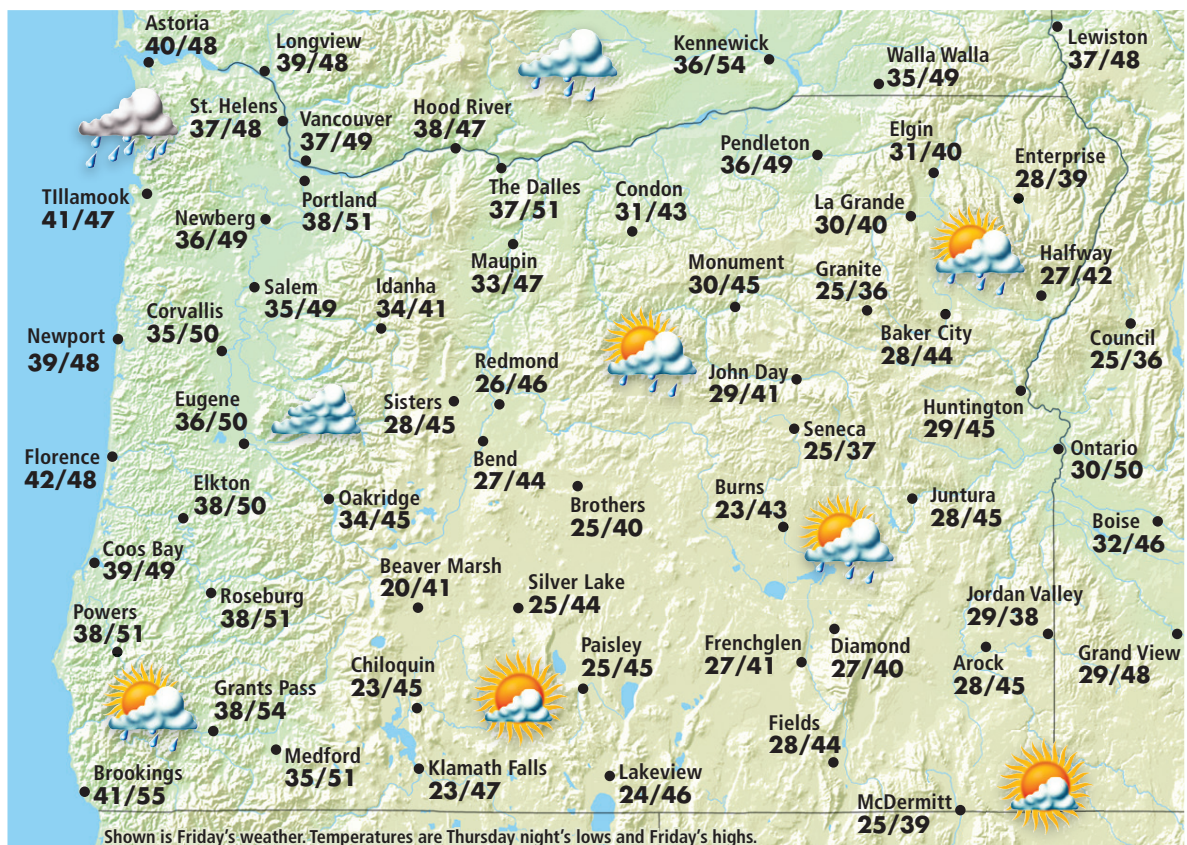
ALMANAC			
<b>TEMPERATURES</b>	Baker City	La Grande	Elgin
High Tuesday	48°	52°	48°
Low Tuesday	22°	23°	24°
<b>PRECIPITATION</b> (inches)			
Tuesday	0.00	0.00	0.00
Month to date	0.28	2.27	6.85
Normal month to date	0.23	0.42	0.94
Year to date	0.56	3.82	15.44
Normal year to date	1.03	2.05	4.11

TUESDAY EXTREMES			
<b>NATION</b> (for the 48 contiguous states)			
High: 89°	Naples, Fla.		
Low: -24°	West Yellowstone, Mont.		
Wettest: 2.04"	Wakefield, Va.		
<b>OREGON</b>			
High: 70°	Brookings		
Low: 12°	Meacham		
Wettest: 0.01"	Astoria		

AGRICULTURAL INFO.			
<b>HAY INFORMATION FRIDAY</b>			
Lowest relative humidity	50%		
Afternoon wind	W at 6 to 12 mph		
Hours of sunshine	7.1		
Evapotranspiration	0.05		
<b>RESERVOIR STORAGE</b> (through midnight Wednesday)			
Phillips Reservoir	25% of capacity		
Unity Reservoir	55% of capacity		
Owyhee Reservoir	74% of capacity		
McKay Reservoir	63% of capacity		
Wallowa Lake	50% of capacity		
Thief Valley Reservoir	102% of capacity		
<b>STREAM FLOWS</b> (through midnight Tuesday)			
Grande Ronde at Troy	7170 cfs		
Thief Valley Reservoir near North Powder	177 cfs		
Burnt River near Unity	41 cfs		
Umatilla River near Gibbon	2260 cfs		
Minam River at Minam	343 cfs		
Powder River near Richland	474 cfs		

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## AROUND OREGON AND THE REGION



REGIONAL CITIES			
<b>City</b>	<b>FRI. HI/Lo/W</b>	<b>SAT. HI/Lo/W</b>	<b>City</b>
Astoria	48/42/sh	49/40/r	Lewiston
Bend	44/29/pc	47/35/r	Longview
Boise	46/31/c	45/38/r	Meacham
Brookings	55/43/c	52/44/r	Medford
Burns	43/24/c	43/32/sn	Newport
Coos Bay	49/36/sh	50/42/r	Olympia
Corvallis	50/38/sh	47/39/r	Ontario
Council	36/25/sn	35/31/sn	Pasco
Elgin	40/31/sf	41/34/sn	Pendleton
Eugene	50/39/sh	48/40/r	Portland
Hermiston	53/40/pc	52/41/r	Powers
Hood River	47/38/sh	47/37/r	Redmond
Imnaha	40/29/sf	42/36/sn	Roseburg
John Day	41/29/pc	43/37/sn	Salem
Joseph	38/24/sf	38/31/sn	Spokane
Kennewick	54/39/pc	51/42/r	The Dalles
Klamath Falls	47/24/c	47/34/r	Ukiah
Lakeview	46/26/c	45/33/r	Walla Walla

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Baker City Herald THE OBSERVER