

Crabby distant relative is an unwelcome freeloader

DEAR ABBY: My husband is an amazing guy. We have a very nice life except for an older sort-of family member who is living with us.

"Nathan" has been living in the house for years, but he isn't a blood relative. He's my husband's late step-father's brother. Nathan is a several-times-divorced curmudgeon who was living in a shed. He was allowed to stay here to get on his feet and, partially, out of respect for the stepfather.

Nathan refuses to help out in any way. He comes and goes as he pleases and is living rent-free. We pay the mortgage and all the

bills. Nathan buys food and stuff for himself, but then will eat the household food my mother-in-law buys.

I'm tired of the garbage he makes. He smokes in his room, and he's nasty, rude and demanding. He needs to move out or pay up, but my husband doesn't want to do anything. Advice?

— UNHAPPY AT HOME

DEAR UNHAPPY: Just this. Realize that nothing will change until your husband is finally willing to put his foot down and insist on some changes, or the freeloader leaves this earthly plane for the next. I would have

used the phrase "goes to heaven," but it appears Nathan is already experiencing heaven right here on Earth, so do not expect him to move on his own.

DEAR ABBY: I was recently informed that my best friend of 10 years, "Darlene," planned to ghost me as soon as she got pregnant. I'm shocked that she would say such a thing or plan to do it. I always thought I was a good friend.

But now Darlene and her husband are getting a divorce, and she has been all chummy. I have a sour taste in my mouth. Do I stay friends and get over it, or give her her wish and disappear?

— UNFRIENDED IN THE WEST

DEAR UNFRIENDED: Are you sure the person who informed you about her plan is credible? Could they be jealous of the close friendship you have with Darlene?

Frankly, it would be incredibly stupid for a person planning to ghost someone to tell a mutual friend who might leak it before the fact.

Talk to Darlene! Do not end the friendship unless you are absolutely certain what you were told was the gospel.

DEAR ABBY: My 82-year-old mother made a special request of her visiting relatives on Christmas Day. She asked everyone to hand over their cell-phones for the entire celebration

upon entering or "don't come." She said she would return them as we left.

Certain family members had major meltdowns because of her request.

My mother, as always, provided hors d'oeuvres, dinner and gifts for all 23 people. Do you think this was a fair request?

— NOT A BIG DEAL

DEAR NOT: Your mother wanted to encourage more than superficial communication. As she indicated, if anyone felt her request was too much of an imposition, they were free to refuse her invitation.

The oldest rule of entertaining is: The host makes the rules. Of course it was a fair request!

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

In Nevada desert, a technology firm aims to be a government

CARSON CITY, Nev. — In the Nevada desert, a cryptocurrency magnate hopes to turn dreams of a futuristic "smart city" into reality. To do that, he's asking the state to let companies like his form local governments on land they own, which would grant them power over everything from schools to law enforcement.

Jeffrey Berns, CEO of Nevada-based Blockchains LLC, envisions a city where people not only purchase goods and services with digital currency but also log their entire online footprint — financial statements, medical records and personal data — on blockchain. Blockchain is a digital ledger known mostly for recording cryptocurrency transactions but some local governments have adopted it for everything from documenting marriage licenses to facilitating elections.

The company wants to break ground by 2022 in rural Storey County, 12 miles east of Reno. It's proposing to build 15,000 homes and 33 million square feet of commercial and industrial space within 75 years. Berns, whose idea is the basis for draft legislation that some lawmakers saw behind closed doors last week, said traditional government doesn't offer enough flexibility to create a community where people can invent new uses for this technology.

"There's got to be a place somewhere on this planet where people are willing to just start from scratch and



EYRC Architects/Blockchains LLC via AP

This undated illustration shows a proposed "smart city" in Nevada. A cryptocurrency company that owns 67,000 acres in rural northern Nevada wants state government to grant technology companies power to form local governments on land they own.

say, "We're not going to do things this way just because it's the way we've done it," Berns said.

He wants Nevada to change its laws to allow "innovation zones," where companies would have powers like those of a county government, including creating court systems, imposing taxes and building infrastructure while making land and water management decisions.

The prospect has been met with intrigue and skepticism from Nevada lawmakers, though the legislation has yet to be formally filed or discussed in public hearings. Most in the Democratic-controlled Legislature are eager to diversify Nevada's tourism-dependent economy, but many fear backlash against busi-

ness incentives as they struggle to fund health care and education.

This proposal differs from the big tax rebates they have grown wary of offering, like the \$1.3 billion given to Tesla to build its northern Nevada battery factory or the billions New York and Virginia offered Amazon to build new corporate headquarters.

But it raises deeper issues about increasing tech companies' grip on everyday life at a time when antitrust regulators and Democrats in Congress allege tech giants Facebook and Google are controlling markets and endangering people's privacy.

Blockchains LLC and so-called innovation zones were a key part of Gov. Steve Sisolak's January State of the State address,

when he outlined plans to rebuild a more diversified economy after the coronavirus pandemic.

Sisolak, whose campaign and affiliated political action committee received a combined \$60,000 from the company, said the proposal would transform Nevada into "the epicenter of this emerging industry and create the high-paying jobs and revenue that go with it."

The governor's office declined to comment further on innovation zones. But with Sisolak's backing, the idea could garner serious consideration in the Legislature.

"I don't know enough yet to say whether I'm comfortable with this as the next step or not. But, look, it's a big idea and Nevada has been built on big ideas, so let's hear it out," said state

Sen. Ben Kieckhefer, a Republican who sponsored blockchain-related legislation in 2017 and 2019.

If lawmakers back the proposal, technology companies with 50,000 acres of land that promise a \$1 billion investment could create zones governed by three people like county commissioners. The draft legislation says two of them initially would be from the company itself.

In Storey County, which is home to Tesla's factory, officials are waiting for more information before offering opinions but say questions still need to be answered.

Commissioner Lance Gilman, who owns the Mustang Ranch brothel and bought most of the county's land to turn it into an industrial park

decades ago, has supported luring technology companies to the area and growing its population. But Gilman, who worked in marketing for Blockchains LLC from 2018 to 2019, said there are many unknowns about ceding control to a new jurisdiction that falls within county borders.

"(The bill) wants the host county to let it form, become successful, not pay them very much money, and eventually let them take over the whole county and all the operations, if it becomes successful," Gilman said. "If it doesn't become successful, who becomes responsible for all the stuff that was built in the meantime?"

The county's master plan doesn't permit residential development in the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center, where most of Blockchain LLC's property lies, but it allows for 3,500 homes in Painted Rock, a subsection of the company's 67,000 acres.

Berns said officials told him in an informal discussion two years ago that they weren't interested in zoning for more homes, a meeting that former County Manager Pat Whitten confirmed. Berns understands that elected leaders in Storey County may not want an experimental city in their backyard but believes the idea should be a state decision because of its potential to "singularly define Nevada going forward."

"We bought 70,000 acres of land in the county. What did they think we were going to do?" Berns said.

— Associated Press

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weather

	TONIGHT	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON
	Overcast with snow, 1-3"	A snow squall, up to 1"	Morning snow showers	A rain or snow shower	Mostly cloudy
Baker City	26	39 25	39 28	41 31	42 33
La Grande	31	40 26	40 32	43 34	47 34
Enterprise	27	37 20	36 23	40 29	46 35
Comfort Index™	0	3	3	3	3

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

TEMPERATURES	Baker City	La Grande	Elgin
High Tuesday	41°	39°	36°
Low Tuesday	29°	33°	33°
PRECIPITATION (inches)			
Tuesday	Trace	0.93	0.90
Month to date	0.28	2.38	3.00
Normal month to date	0.33	0.63	1.35
Year to date	0.65	3.42	7.31
Normal year to date	1.13	2.26	4.52

TUESDAY EXTREMES

NATION (for the 48 contiguous states)	
High: 87°	West Palm Beach, Fla.
Low: -46°	Ely, Minn.
Wettest: 2.23"	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
OREGON	
High: 53°	Eugene
Low: 21°	Crater Lake
Wettest: 1.87"	Meacham

AGRICULTURAL INFO.

HAY INFORMATION FRIDAY	
Lowest relative humidity	55%
Afternoon wind	W at 4 to 8 mph
Hours of sunshine	0.0
Evapotranspiration	0.04
RESERVOIR STORAGE (through midnight Wednesday)	
Phillips Reservoir	9% of capacity
Unity Reservoir	50% of capacity
Owyhee Reservoir	50% of capacity
McKay Reservoir	45% of capacity
Wallowa Lake	38% of capacity
Thief Valley Reservoir	96% of capacity
STREAM FLOWS (through midnight Tuesday)	
Grande Ronde at Troy	1520 cfs
Thief Valley Reservoir near North Powder	59 cfs
Burnt River near Unity	11 cfs
Umatilla River near Gibbon	114 cfs
Minam River at Minam	N.A.
Powder River near Richland	88 cfs

WEATHER HISTORY

Severe thunderstorms roared across northeastern Indiana and northwestern Ohio late in the day on Feb. 18, 1992. The storm produced hail and funnel clouds.

SUN & MOON

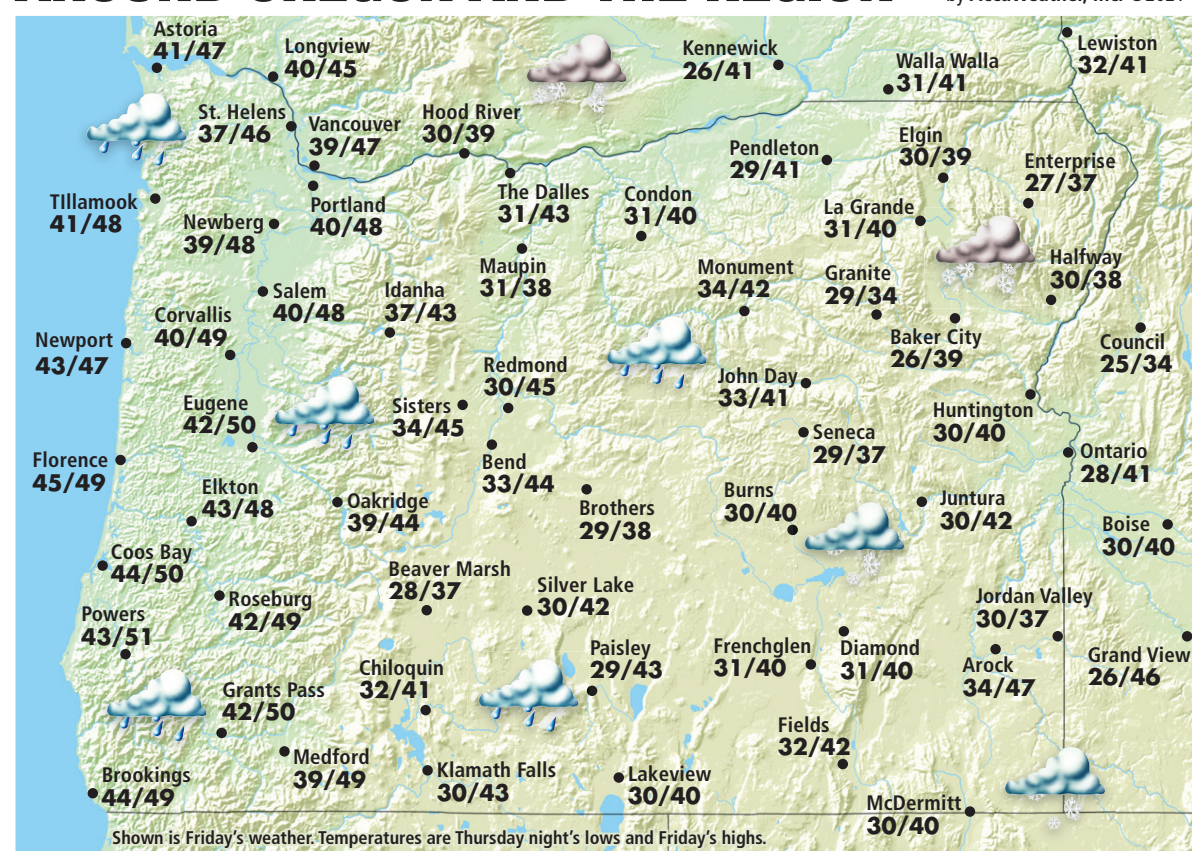
	THU.	FRI.
Sunrise	6:49 a.m.	6:47 a.m.
Sunset	5:24 p.m.	5:26 p.m.
Moonrise	10:03 a.m.	10:29 a.m.
Moonset	none	12:47 a.m.

MOON PHASES

First	Full	Last	New
Feb 19	Feb 27	Mar 5	Mar 13

AROUND OREGON AND THE REGION

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REGIONAL CITIES

City	FRI.		SAT.	
	HI/LO/W	HI/LO/W	HI/LO/W	HI/LO/W
Astoria	47/38/r	47/44/c	Lewiston	41/27/sh
Bend	44/27/sf	42/32/sn	Longview	45/37/r
Boise	40/29/c	39/25/pc	Meacham	39/24/sn
Brookings	49/40/r	49/40/sh	Medford	49/38/sh
Burns	40/24/sn	38/22/sn	Newport	47/40/r
Coos Bay	50/41/r	50/42/sn	Olympia	46/36/r
Corvallis	49/38/r	49/41/c	Ontario	41/27/c
Council Bluffs	34/21/sn	35/24/sf	Pasco	45/27/pc
Elgin	39/25/sf	39/33/sf	Pendleton	41/31/pc
Eugene	50/41/r	49/42/c	Portland	48/40/r
Hermiston	43/33/pc	46/41/c	Powers	47/43/sh
Hood River	39/34/r	45/37/c	Redmond	45/26/sn
Imnaha	42/25/sn	39/23/sf	Roseburg	49/40/r
John Day	41/26/sf	38/27/sf	Salem	48/38/r
Joseph	36/21/sn	35/23/sf	Spokane	34/28/sn
Kennewick	41/28/pc	44/40/pc	The Dalles	43/34/c
Klamath Falls	43/27/sh	41/24/c	Ukiah	37/25/sf
Lakeview	40/26/c	37/18/sf	Walla Walla	41/31/pc

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice

RECREATION FORECAST FRIDAY

ANTHONY LAKES	PHILLIPS LAKE
Snow, 1-3"	Not as cold
21 13	37 26
MT. EMILY REC.	BROWNLEE RES.
P.M. snow showers	Snow and rain
29 22	40 25
EAGLE CAP WILD.	EMIGRANT ST. PARK
Cold with flurries	A little snow
26 13	34 24
WALLOWA LAKE	MCKAY RESERVOIR
A bit of a.m. snow	Inc. clouds
36 21	42 34
THIEF VALLEY RES.	RED BRIDGE ST. PARK
Not as cold	A snow squall
39 25	40 26