

Dinner-and-drinks invite makes teetotaler uneasy



DEAR ABBY
ADVICE

DEAR ABBY: My husband, “Dan,” and I do not consume alcohol, mostly because of our family history. Several years ago while Dan was at a work event, a consultant, “Ken,” took him and some co-workers out for dinner. Ken ordered a bottle of wine for the table. Not wanting to cause a scene, my husband drank the glass poured for him. Now Ken has invited Dan and me to join him and his wife for an evening out, and he wants to “meet early for drinks.” Dan is sure Ken will buy

another bottle to share. I think Dan should give Ken a heads-up beforehand. Dan thinks it would be rude to refuse a drink and doesn't want to have to go into an explanation as to why we don't. We don't care if the people we are with drink alcohol. Is there a polite way to decline without offending? Should it be ahead of time or at the restaurant? — **RESPECTFULLY DECLINE**

DEAR RESPECTFULLY: It is perfectly acceptable to refuse alcohol. For various reasons, many people forgo “the grape” (and the harder stuff) these days. If a server asks your husband what beverage he would like, your husband should state his preference — be it sparkling water, a soft drink, a juice drink, etc. There is no shame

in it, and it isn't rude. That the host is providing alcohol is not a mandate to indulge, particularly if the guest has a problem with it. If Ken pushes, Dan should simply tell him the two of you generally prefer not to drink alcohol.

DEAR ABBY: I am 30 weeks pregnant with my second child. I have always been slender, so like many expecting women, I am somewhat self-conscious of my changing (and ever-growing) figure. I was at the park today with my 2-year-old son when an older woman smiled and asked me when I was due. When I told her, she replied, “Oh, my God. Are you sure there aren't twins in there?” I thought her comment was appalling. Since when is it OK to comment on someone else's

body? I was left feeling embarrassed, angry, and on top of that, enormous.

I know I shouldn't care what other people say or think, but pregnancy is also a hormonal time, and I can't seem to get past her nasty comment. What ever happened to “If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all”? A simple “Congratulations,” or “How exciting!” would have been a far more appropriate and well-received response.

I'm sending this in the hope that ignorant people who say things like this will read it and realize how hurtful their comments can be to expectant mothers. Also, how should I respond if someone else makes a similar comment? — **TEN**

MORE WEEKS TO GO DEAR TEN MORE WEEKS: Two responses come immediately to mind. The first would be to tell the person who made the thoughtless comment, “Wow, that was tactless!” Or say, “Nope. It's just one healthy baby in there.” Of course, a third option is to say nothing and walk away.

DEAR READERS: I'm wishing you a happy, healthy 2022. Whew, folks, I can't believe we made it so quickly through 2021. I will join you tonight toasting a new year that will be a less stressful year for all of us. If you are celebrating this evening, please take measures to protect not only your own health but also the safety of others. — **LOVE, ABBY**

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Widespread flight cancellations continue as omicron spreads

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Hundreds of flights were cancelled Wednesday, Dec. 29, as the omicron variant creates havoc both for travelers and for airlines that are having to cobble together flight crews as pilots, flight attendants and ground crews become infected or are exposed to others who have been.

More than 850 flights were cancelled by midday Dec. 29 and that number has ticked higher throughout the day, according to data from the flight-tracking website FlightAware. There were nearly 1,300 cancellations for flights entering, leaving or inside the U.S. Dec. 28, and about 1,500 on Dec. 27.

Cancellations began to spike the day before Christmas during what is already a buzzing pace for airlines this time of year.

Delta, United and JetBlue have all said that the omicron variant was causing enough staffing issues that flights were cancelled.

SkyWest led U.S. carriers with 195 cancellations, followed by United with 158 and Delta with 103. SkyWest, a regional airline based in Utah, has suffered an elevated level of cancellations after severe weather hit several of its hubs, but it's reporting the same staffing issues due to COVID-19.

The Pacific Northwest was slammed with cold and heavy snow over the weekend. Among U.S. airports, Seattle-Tacoma had the highest percentage of incoming and outgoing flights cancelled Wednesday, according to FlightAware.

Omicron has intensified already significant staffing issues for airlines, which winnowed workforces in 2020 as air travel



The handler of a Samoyed runs with her dog before the judges in the working group category at the Westminster Kennel Club dog show, on June 13, 2021, in Tarrytown, N.Y. The Westminster Kennel Club's annual dog show has become the latest event to be postponed or canceled in New York as the number of coronavirus cases surges.

collapsed, only to be broadsided when vaccination rates jumped and millions of people felt comfortable flying again this year.

That could translate to travel headaches for hundreds of thousands of people if cancellations maintain the current pace into the weekend. The Transportation Security Administration expects the Monday after New Year's will be one of the busiest days of the holiday season.

According to TSA checkpoint data, the numbers of people flying this holiday season far exceeds

last year — before COVID-19 vaccinations were available — but still trails 2019 traveler numbers.

Virus postpones Westminster Kennel Club's annual dog show

NEW YORK — The Westminster Kennel Club's annual dog show has become the latest event to be postponed or canceled in New York as the number of coronavirus cases surges.

The club's board of governors announced Wednesday, Dec. 29,

it was postponing its 2022 event, scheduled for late January, to later in the year. A new date wasn't given.

“The health and safety of all participants in the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show are paramount,” the group said in a statement. “We appreciate the community's continued interest and support as we delay the show to a time when we can safely convene.”

The 144-year-old dog show attracts thousands of competitors from around the U.S. and

is normally held in February, with semifinal and final rounds at Madison Square Garden. Last year, it was moved to June and held outdoors at the Lyndhurst estate in suburban Tarrytown, north of New York City. Spectators weren't allowed, and human participants had to be vaccinated or newly tested.

A Pekingese named Wasabi won best in show, beating out a whippet, a French bulldog, an old English sheepdog, a German shorthaired pointer, a Samoyed and a West Highland white terrier.

With COVID-19 cases now exploding around the U.S., the postponement comes less than two weeks after more than 8,500 canines, owners and handlers converged for another top U.S. dog show, the American Kennel Club National Championship in Orlando, Florida.

After almost 2 years, water park reopens at Disney World

ORLANDO, Fla. — The big waves are returning to Walt Disney World.

The theme park resort said Tuesday, Dec. 28, that it will reopen its Typhoon Lagoon water park after an almost two-year hiatus.

The water park closed in March 2020 as the coronavirus started spreading throughout the U.S. While Disney World's other theme parks reopened in summer 2020 with virus safety protocols in place, the water park stayed closed.

Visitors to Typhoon Lagoon will be able to swim in its massive wave pool, slide down its water coaster and meander down its lazy river starting on Jan. 2.

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weather

	TONIGHT	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
Partly cloudy and frigid	Cloudy and cold	High clouds and very cold	Cloudy, snow; chilly	A bit of snow and rain	
Baker City	-2	14	3	19	9
Comfort Index™	0	0	0	0	0
La Grande	-2	24	14	23	20
Comfort Index™	0	0	0	0	1
Enterprise	0	23	14	34	21
Comfort Index™	0	0	3	0	0

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 Wednesday	21°	23°	25°
Low Wednesday	-4°	3°	4°
PRECIPITATION (inches)			
Wednesday	Trace	0.03	0.02
Month to date	0.36	0.83	4.65
Normal month to date	0.80	1.77	3.53
Year to date	5.37	10.81	26.69
Normal year to date	9.01	17.29	25.71

AGRICULTURAL INFO.

HAY INFORMATION SATURDAY	
Lowest relative humidity	30%
Afternoon wind	SSE at 6 to 12 mph
Hours of sunshine	1.3
Evapotranspiration	0.03

RESERVOIR STORAGE (through midnight Thursday)

Phillips Reservoir	1% of capacity
Unity Reservoir	21% of capacity
Owyhee Reservoir	16% of capacity
McKay Reservoir	17% of capacity
Wallowa Lake	15% of capacity
Thief Valley Reservoir	17% of capacity

STREAM FLOWS (through midnight Wednesday)

Grande Ronde at Troy	898 cfs
Thief Valley Reservoir near North Powder	0 cfs
Burnt River near Unity	15 cfs
Umatilla River near Gibbon	139 cfs
Minam River at Minam	161 cfs
Powder River near Richland	24 cfs

WED. EXTREMES

NATION (for the 48 contiguous states)	
High: 89°	Harlingen, Texas
Low: -33°	Hallock, Minn.
Wettest: 2.43"	Oxnard, Calif.

OREGON	
High: 48°	Brookings
Low: 6°	Meacham
Wettest: 0.22"	Ontario

WEATHER HISTORY

A snowstorm in El Paso, Texas, on Dec. 31, 1982, brought the monthly total there to 18 inches, which is 14 inches more than the town usually gets in an entire winter.

SUN & MOON

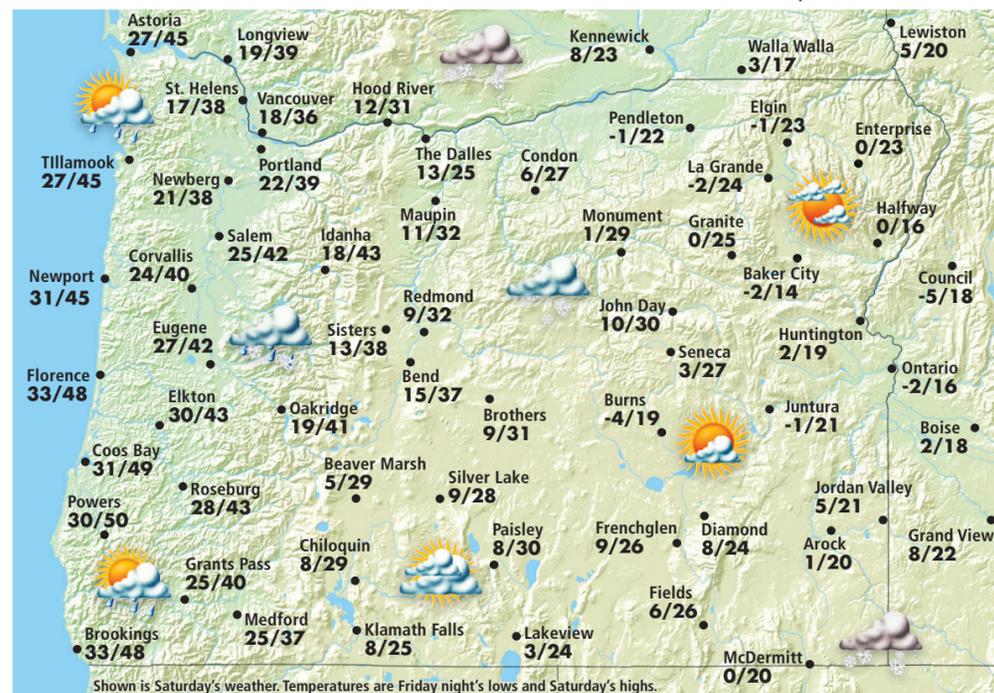
	FRI.	SAT.
Sunrise	7:32 a.m.	7:32 a.m.
Sunset	4:19 p.m.	4:20 p.m.
Moonrise	5:19 a.m.	6:40 a.m.
Moonset	2:15 p.m.	3:07 p.m.

MOON PHASES



AROUND OREGON AND THE REGION

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REGIONAL CITIES

City	SAT. Hi/Lo/W	SUN. Hi/Lo/W	City	SAT. Hi/Lo/W	SUN. Hi/Lo/W
Astoria	45/40/r	46/40/r	Lewiston	20/14/c	32/23/pc
Bend	37/28/c	41/39/c	Longview	39/33/c	44/39/sh
Boise	18/2/pc	21/13/pc	Meacham	23/12/c	25/22/pc
Brookings	48/35/c	49/44/pc	Medford	37/23/c	38/34/pc
Burns	19/-2/pc	22/8/pc	Newport	45/37/c	47/43/r
Coos Bay	49/35/c	50/48/c	Olympia	37/34/c	42/37/sh
Corvallis	40/29/c	43/41/r	Ontario	16/4/pc	18/8/pc
Council	18/8/c	18/9/pc	Pasco	20/15/c	27/19/c
Elgin	23/10/c	25/16/pc	Pendleton	22/9/c	35/30/pc
Eugene	42/30/c	46/42/c	Portland	39/29/c	44/41/sh
Hermiston	24/15/c	26/19/pc	Portland	50/31/c	49/46/r
Hood River	31/13/sn	31/26/c	Redmond	32/18/c	39/33/c
Imnaha	28/20/c	33/28/pc	Roseburg	43/29/c	46/43/c
John Day	30/19/c	36/26/pc	Salem	42/32/c	45/44/r
Joseph	24/19/c	34/23/pc	Spokane	14/10/c	25/21/sf
Kennewick	23/15/c	26/18/c	The Dalles	25/17/sn	28/23/c
Klamath Falls	25/7/pc	32/24/pc	Ukiah	27/15/c	34/24/pc
Lakeview	24/6/pc	28/16/c	Walla Walla	17/13/c	26/25/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 SATURDAY

Location	Forecast	High	Low
ANTHONY LAKES	Not as cold	17	12
MT. EMILY REC.	Cloudy	19	17
EAGLE CAP WILD.	Low clouds	14	5
WALLOWA LAKE	Low clouds	24	19
THIEF VALLEY RES.	Cloudy and frigid	14	3
PHILLIPS LAKE	Low clouds	24	6
BROWNLEE RES.	Cloudy and cold	24	11
EMIGRANT ST. PARK	Cloudy	23	12
MCKAY RESERVOIR	Cloudy and cold	27	17
RED BRIDGE ST. PARK	Cloudy and cold	24	14