Memories of woman cloud devoted dad's happiness

DEAR ABBY

DEAR ABBY: I have been married to my wife for two years, after being together for 10 years. We have two kids with a third on the way. Our relationship is great. It's healthy.

I just have this feeling of loneliness. I feel like I have my children and that's it. My mind often wanders to a woman from the past. I would never leave my children because they are my world. I just cannot control or ignore these chronic feelings of unhappiness and loneliness. I'll be honest: I wish I could just have one conversation with said woman. I don't know what to do.

— RON IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR RON: "One conversation" with the woman from your past won't fix what has gone wrong with your marriage. You have a responsibility to your wife and your growing family. What you are experiencing could be symptoms of depression. You may be feeling overwhelmed with the responsibilities you now carry and subconsciously yearning for the carefree years you enjoyed before you were formally married. Before you feel more alienated than you already do, I urge you to talk this out with a licensed psychotherapist.

DEAR ABBY: I have a friend who has a habit of giving me unsolicited gifts. It's little things like string lights for my patio or a small toy for my daughter, but it makes me feel obligated to give her a gift back.

I would rather not be stuck in this continual gift exchange loop, especially during a pandemic when you're not supposed to be seeing people outside your household. This friend has shown up unannounced at my doorstep to drop off a gift without letting me know she's coming.

The last gift she offered I refused because it was an offensive toy that wasn't age appropriate for my daughter. Was I right to do that? How can I stop this cycle without hurting my friend's feelings?

— GIFTED IN THE WEST

DEAR GIFTED: Understand that this friend may not give you these gifts out of generosity, but because it gives her an excuse to interact with you. You have a right to refuse any item intended for yourself or your child that you feel is inappropriate. Jump off the gift-giving treadmill by telling this person her friendship is enough and you will no longer accept any gifts because it makes you uncomfortable.

DEAR ABBY: I have an older relative who uses the word "whatever" when she is done discussing something. I don't think she realizes how dismissive it comes across to others. It's as if she doesn't care about the other person's opinion or comments. It creates a barrier with family, and I think people distance from her because of it. I avoid talking to her because it's so blunt and rude. How can I explain that the word now has a negative connotation and should be avoided?

— STAYING AWAY TO NOT GET HURT

DEAR STAYING AWAY: Address it the next time she uses "whatever" in conversation with you. ASK if she is using the word because she isn't interested in what you are trying to convey and what she means by it. THEN explain how hearing it made you feel, because it may not have been her intent. (If it was, then you, too, have a right to distance yourself.)

News of the Weird

Florida's new python-sniffing dogs have first success

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Truman, the python-sniffing black Labrador retriever, recently tracked down his first snake in a new program Florida is using to eradicate the invasive species.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recently began training Truman and another dog named Eleanor to detect a python's scent and alert handlers when they've come across one. The first success was last week when Truman found an 8-foot Burmese python in the Rocky Glades Public Small Game Hunting Area in Miami-Dade County.

"We've got to stay innovative. We've got to try new approaches and the detector dogs is just one area where we're doing that," commission Executive Director Eric Sutton. told commissioners during an update Dec. 9.

He showed commissioners pictures of the dogs during a virtual meeting, including one with Truman standing behind the massive snake he found.

"They're hard workers, commissioners. They really are very dedicated and you can see that they're very proud and they should be," Sutton said.

Estimated to number between 100,000 and 300,000, pythons have become a threat to the fragile Florida Everglades ecosystem as they devour native mammals and birds, disrupting the natural balance of predator and prey. They've been successful at reproducing in the swampy Everglades because they have no predators. Females can lay up to 100 eggs.

Trainers use python-scented towels and live pythons with surgically implanted trackers to teach the dogs to pick up a snake's scent. The dogs were trained for more than a month before going out in the wild, according to the agency's website.

And while Burmese pythons have been known to eat small alligators and small deer, Truman and Eleanor are trained to stay about 3 feet away from the reptiles.

The battle to contain the pythons in the Everglades and nearby areas has been a difficult one for Florida, and Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis made increasing eradication efforts a budget priority. He also signed a bill that allows the use of drones to track down the snakes.

Sutton told commissioners snake hunters hired by the state captured about 6,300 pythons over the last four years. He said nearly 40% of that total was in 2020 and credited the governor for the increased attention on the problem.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission via AP

Dog handler Paula Ziadi praises Truman after he tracked down an 8-foot-python Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020, in Miami-Dade County, Florida. The state's Fish and Wildlife Conservation is beginning a new program to use dogs to sniff out invasive pythons.

Blue Sky Rescue of Zhong County via AP

A drone equipped with a flamethrower on Dec. 10, 2020, burns a wasp nest at a village in Zhong county near Chongqing municipality in southwestern China. A drone has been converted into the flying flamethrower in central China in a fiery campaign to eradicate more than 100 wasp nests.

Flamethrower drone incinerates wasp nests in China

BEIJING — A drone has been converted into a flying flamethrower in central China in a fiery campaign to eradicate more than 100 wasp nests.

Blue Sky Rescue, a volunteer group that conducts search and rescue and other emergency work, have teamed up with villagers in Zhong county near the city of Chongqing.

They raised 80,000 yuan ($12,200) to buy a drone and equip it with a gasoline tank and an arm-length nozzle.

Videos released by Blue Sky show a recent mission by the six-arm drone. It hovers above a hive as large as a suitcase before swooping down. The drone operator flips the ignition switch, and the drone spits bursts of fire onto the hive.

"The burning ashes of the wasp's nest gradually peeled off and fell, and the surrounding residents applauded and praised the rescue team," said an article on a local news app run by state-owned Chongqing TV.

The article quotes a resident thanking Blue Sky for helping the village: "Now we don't have to worry about being stung by a wasp."

Blue Sky said it has destroyed 11 hives so far. There are more than 100 to go.

— Associated Press

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weather

	TONIGHT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED
	Rain and drizzle late	Rain tapering off	Showers around	A morning shower; colder	Partly sunny and chilly
Baker City	36	42 / 35	44 / 31	38 / 17	31 / 12
Comfort Index™	4	1	4	3	3
La Grande	39	47 / 38	49 / 32	37 / 22	31 / 18
Comfort Index™	3	0	3	2	1
Enterprise	38	47 / 40	49 / 32	35 / 19	29 / 18
Comfort Index™	4	1	7	2	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 Thursday	44°	45°	42°
Low Thursday	33°	36°	36°
PRECIPITATION (inches)			
Thursday	Trace	0.15	0.48
Month to date	0.07	0.43	1.32
Normal month to date	0.53	0.97	1.73
Year to date	3.29	16.44	35.11
Normal year to date	9.70	15.87	22.48

AGRICULTURAL INFO.

HAY INFORMATION SUNDAY	
Lowest relative humidity	60%
Afternoon wind	S at 4 to 8 mph
Hours of sunshine	0.5
Evapotranspiration	0.03
RESERVOIR STORAGE (through midnight Friday)	
Phillips Reservoir	8% of capacity
Unity Reservoir	33% of capacity
Owyhee Reservoir	45% of capacity
McKay Reservoir	25% of capacity
Wallowa Lake	26% of capacity
Thief Valley Reservoir	49% of capacity
STREAM FLOWS (through midnight Thursday)	
Grande Ronde at Troy	917 cfs
Thief Valley Reservoir near North Powder	3 cfs
Burnt River near Unity	10 cfs
Umatilla River near Gibbon	176 cfs
Minam River at Minam	N.A.
Powder River near Richland	101 cfs

THURSDAY EXTREMES

NATION (for the 48 contiguous states)	
High: 84°	Hollywood, Fla.
Low: -21°	Angel Fire, N.M.
Wettest: 2.00"	Milton, Mass.
OREGON	
High: 54°	Hermiston
Low: 27°	Keno
Wettest: 0.34"	North Bend

WEATHER HISTORY

Dry weather is usually in the cards at Las Vegas, Nev., but a rare heavy rainstorm hit the city on Dec. 19, 1984. Local flooding deposited silt in area drainage ways, requiring subsequent spadework.

SUN & MOON

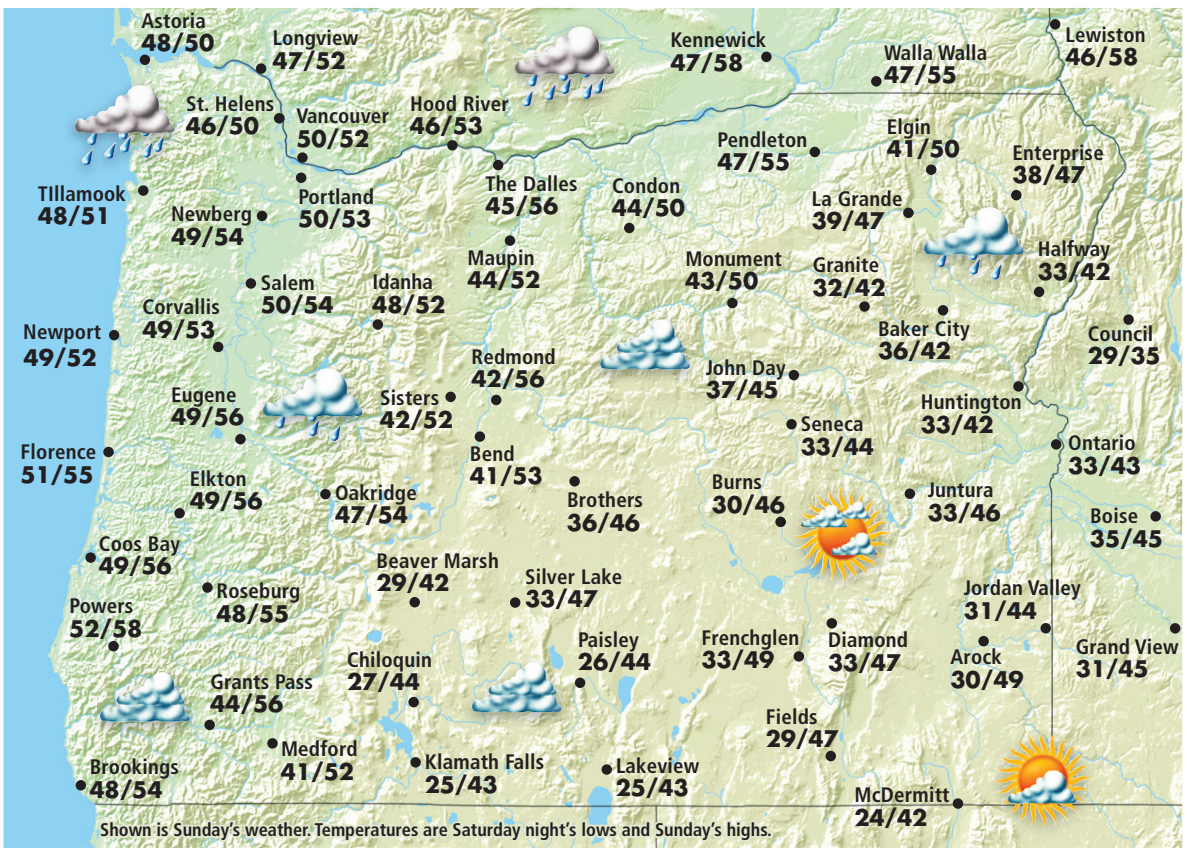
	SAT.	SUN.
Sunrise	7:28 a.m.	7:28 a.m.
Sunset	4:12 p.m.	4:12 p.m.
Moonrise	11:30 a.m.	11:54 a.m.
Moonset	9:51 p.m.	10:57 p.m.

MOON PHASES

First	Full	Last	New
Dec 21	Dec 29	Jan 6	Jan 12

AROUND OREGON AND THE REGION

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2020



REGIONAL CITIES

City	SUN. Hi/Lo/W	MON. Hi/Lo/W	City	SUN. Hi/Lo/W	MON. Hi/Lo/W
Astoria	50/45/r	52/39/r	Lewiston	58/45/r	57/38/r
Bend	53/36/r	52/25/r	Longview	52/49/r	51/35/r
Boise	45/38/c	51/31/pc	Meacham	43/38/r	47/29/r
Brookings	54/46/r	53/39/r	Medford	52/38/c	52/36/r
Burns	46/25/c	48/25/c	Newport	52/48/r	51/42/r
Coos Bay	56/47/r	53/39/r	Olympia	51/45/r	51/34/r
Corvallis	53/48/r	54/36/r	Ontario	43/32/c	46/32/pc
Council	35/32/sn	38/24/c	Pasco	58/42/c	61/38/r
Elgin	50/42/r	52/33/c	Pendleton	55/44/r	56/35/r
Eugene	56/49/r	56/38/r	Portland	53/48/r	53/41/r
Hermiston	57/42/c	58/38/r	Powers	58/49/r	55/37/sh
Hood River	53/44/r	55/38/r	Redmond	56/39/r	55/29/r
Imnaha	49/40/r	53/35/c	Roseburg	55/44/r	53/40/sh
John Day	45/35/r	52/27/c	Salem	54/47/r	53/37/r
Joseph	44/37/r	45/30/c	Spokane	47/37/c	50/32/r
Kennewick	58/40/c	57/37/r	The Dalles	56/43/r	59/40/r
Klamath Falls	43/21/c	42/24/pc	Ukiah	44/41/r	48/29/r
Lakeview	43/23/c	42/20/c	Walla Walla	55/45/c	58/37/r

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

RECREATION FORECAST SUNDAY

ANTHONY LAKES
Rain and snow
37 30

MT. EMILY REC.
Rain tapering off
43 38

EAGLE CAP WILD.
Snow, 1-3"
38 30

WALLOWA LAKE
Rain and drizzle
44 37

THIEF VALLEY RES.
Rain and drizzle
42 35

PHILLIPS LAKE
Bit of rain, snow
42 33

BROWNLEE RES.
Rain and drizzle
39 32

EMIGRANT ST. PARK
A little a.m. rain
43 40

MCKAY RESERVOIR
Rain and drizzle
55 44

RED BRIDGE ST. PARK
Rain tapering off
47 38