

TODAY

It's Saturday, Feb. 27, the 58th day of 2021. There are 307 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In **1933**, Germany's parliament building, the Reichstag, was gutted by fire; Chancellor Adolf Hitler, blaming the Communists, used the fire to justify suspending civil liberties.

In **1922**, the Supreme Court, in *Leser v. Garnett*, unanimously upheld the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed the right of women to vote.

In **1939**, the Supreme Court, in *National Labor Relations Board v. Fansteel Metallurgical Corp.*, effectively outlawed sit-down strikes.

In **1942**, the Battle of the Java Sea began during World War II; Imperial Japanese naval forces scored a decisive victory over the Allies.

In **1951**, the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, limiting a president to two terms of office, was ratified.

In **1968**, at the conclusion of a CBS News special report on the Vietnam War, Walter Cronkite delivered a commentary in which he said the conflict appeared "mired in stalemate."

In **1973**, members of the American Indian Movement occupied the hamlet of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, the site of the 1890 massacre of Sioux men, women and children. The occupation lasted until the following May.

In **1982**, Wayne Williams was found guilty of murdering two of the 28 young Blacks whose bodies were found in the Atlanta area over a 22-month period. Williams, who was also blamed for 22 other deaths, has maintained his innocence.

In **1991**, Operation Desert Storm came to a conclusion as President George H.W. Bush declared that "Kuwait is liberated, Iraq's army is defeated," and announced that the allies would suspend combat operations at midnight, Eastern time.

In **1998**, with the approval of Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's House of Lords agreed to end 1,000 years of male preference by giving a monarch's first-born daughter the same claim to the throne as any first-born son.

In **2003**, children's television host Fred Rogers died in Pittsburgh at 74.

In **2010**, in Chile, an 8.8 magnitude earthquake and tsunami killed 524 people, caused \$30 billion in damage and left more than 200,000 homeless.

In **2015**, actor Leonard Nimoy, 83, world famous to "Star Trek" fans as the pointy-eared, purely logical science officer Mr. Spock, died in Los Angeles. Boris Nemtsov, a charismatic Russian opposition leader and sharp critic of President Vladimir Putin, was gunned down near the Kremlin.

Ten years ago: "The King's Speech" won four Academy Awards, including best picture; Colin Firth won best actor for his portrayal of Britain's King George VI. Frank Buckles, the last surviving American veteran of World War I who'd also survived being a civilian prisoner of war in the Philippines in World War II, died in Charles Town, West Virginia, at 110.

Five years ago: Hillary Clinton overwhelmed Bernie Sanders in the South Carolina primary. A cease-fire brokered by the United States and Russia went into effect across Syria. "Fifty Shades of Grey" nabbed five prizes at the Golden Raspberry Awards: worst screenplay, actor, actress, screen combo, and film of the year in a tie with "Fantastic Four."

One year ago: U.S. stocks posted their worst one-day drop since 2011, as worldwide markets plummeted amid growing anxiety about the coronavirus; the Dow tumbled nearly 1,200 points. President Donald Trump declared that a widespread U.S. outbreak of the virus was not inevitable, even as top health authorities at his side warned that more infections were coming.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Joanne Woodward is 91. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader is 87. Actor Barbara Babcock is 84. Rock musician Adrian Smith (Iron Maiden) is 64. Country singer Johnny Van Zant is 61. Basketball Hall of Famer James Worthy is 60. Actor Adam Baldwin is 59. Actor Grant Show is 59. Actor Noah Emmerich is 56. R&B singer Chilli (TLC) is 50. Chelsea Clinton is 41. Actor Brandon Beemer is 41. Rock musician Jake Clemmons (Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band) is 41. R&B singer Bobby V is 41. Singer Josh Groban is 40. Actor Kate Mara is 38. TV personality JWOWW is 35.

—Associated Press

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

COVID-19

Amid pandemic, flu has disappeared

February is usually the peak of influenza season, but not this year

BY MIKE STOBBE

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — February is usually the peak of flu season, with doctors' offices and hospitals packed with suffering patients. But not this year.

Flu has virtually disappeared from the U.S., with reports coming in at far lower levels than anything seen in decades.

Experts say that measures put in place to fend off the coronavirus — mask wearing, social distancing and virtual schooling — were a big factor in preventing a "twindemic" of flu and COVID-19. A push to get more people vaccinated

against flu probably helped, too, as did fewer people traveling, they say.

Another possible explanation: The coronavirus has essentially muscled aside flu and other bugs that are more common in the fall and winter. Scientists don't fully understand the mechanism behind that, but it would be consistent with patterns seen when certain flu strains predominate over others, said Dr. Arnold Monto, a flu expert at the University of Michigan.

Nationally, "this is the lowest flu season we've had on record," according to a sur-

veillance system that is about 25 years old, said Lynnette Brammer of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Hospitals say the usual steady stream of flu-stricken patients never materialized.

At Maine Medical Center in Portland, the state's largest hospital, "I have seen zero documented flu cases this winter," said Dr. Nate Mick, the head of the emergency department.

Ditto in Oregon's capital city, where the outpatient respiratory clinics affiliated with Salem Hospital have not seen any confirmed flu cases.

Nationally, "this is the lowest flu season we've had on record," according to a surveillance system that is about 25 years old, said Lynnette Brammer of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It's beautiful," said the health system's Dr. Michelle Rasmussen.

The numbers are astonishing considering flu has long been the nation's biggest infectious disease threat. In re-

cent years, it has been blamed for 600,000 to 800,000 annual hospitalizations and 50,000 to 60,000 deaths.

Flu death data for the whole U.S. population is hard to compile quickly, but CDC officials keep a running count of deaths of children. One pediatric flu death has been reported so far this season, compared with 92 reported at the same point in last year's flu season.

"Many parents will tell you that this year their kids have been as healthy as they've ever been, because they're not swimming in the germ pool at school or day care the same way they were in prior years," Mick said.



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

LANDSLIDE BURIES ROAD NEAR ASTORIA

Ken Matson was hanging out Monday in his garage along Old U.S. Highway 30 near Astoria when he heard what sounded like a street sweeper outside. When he and his wife, Cheryl, got outside, they saw a large chunk of the steep ridge above had crashed down and buried the road just north of their house, one of the few homes beneath the former Blue Ridge military housing development at Tongue Point. It destroyed a shed and pushed a truck, a boat and a trailer down a hill. City crews helped sandbag and trench around the house to divert water and mud. The road outside their house is controlled by the U.S. Department of Labor, which oversees the Tongue Point Job Corps Center down the road. Local officials have reached out to the federal agency and U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici for assistance.

Edward Stratton, The Astorian

ROSEBURG

Oregon fines Days Inn \$31K for price gouging during wildfire

SCOTT CARROLL

The (Roseburg) News-Review

The Days Inn by Wyndham in Roseburg has been fined \$31,000 for overcharging dozens of area residents who sought rooms after fleeing the Archie Creek Fire.

SUBH Investment LLC, which does business as Days Inn by Wyndham in Roseburg, entered into an agreement, known as an assurance of voluntary compliance, with the Oregon Department of Justice on Monday.

Devon Kumar, who lives in a suburb of Portland, is listed with the state as the owner of the Days Inn. He declined to comment Wednesday. Kumar was represented in the agreement by Portland attorney James Dowell.

Kumar agreed to pay \$31,000 in fines to the Oregon Department of Justice, spread out in payments over the next six months.

Kumar has already refunded 31 customers a total of \$4,860 in overcharges, according to court documents.

If the Days Inn violates any terms of the agreement it can face contempt of court charges and fines of up to \$25,000 for each violation. The outstanding balance on the fines would also be due immediately.

Kumar also agreed to take steps to ensure that Days

Inn management and staff know about state laws connected to price gouging and "are trained to recognize and identify potential violations" of state laws that govern such overcharges. Kumar also agreed to notify the Department of Justice of any potential violations of the law.

At the time of the fire, the Days Inn rented or offered to rent at least 31 rooms at a price that was at least 15% higher than the normal room price, the agreement said.

The single highest rate Days Inn charged in October was \$150 a night, yet during the fire the hotel rented 12 different rooms for over \$200 a night, including six rooms for over \$300 a night, the Department of Justice said.

IDAHO

Hundreds of wolves could be killed under new legislation

NICOLE BLANCHARD

Idaho Statesman

BOISE, Idaho — State lawmakers have introduced a bill that aims to cut Idaho's wolf population by two-thirds and remove most hunting regulations for the animals in much of the state.

Former Sen. Jeff Siddoway told a state House committee this week that the aim of the bill is to address what he called "the increasing wolf population that we've been living with" since the animals were reintroduced to Idaho in 1995.

Wolves were removed from Endangered Species Act protections in Idaho and surrounding states in 2011, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has managed the state's wolf population since then.

Earlier this month, the Fish



Dawn Villella/AP, file

A gray wolf roams at the Wildlife Science Center in Forest Lake, Minnesota

and Game Department said there are an estimated 1,556 wolves in the state now.

The bill designates nine hunting units in Central Idaho where the agency would "retain management authority and will be able to sell licenses and tags to manage the wolves

in those areas," Siddoway said.

In the remaining units around the state, wolves would be classified as predators instead of their current designation as big game animals.

"When you make that reclassification to a predator, you still have to have a hunting license to shoot that predator, but there are no seasons, no limits," Siddoway said.

Currently, each hunter is limited to killing 15 wolves per calendar year.

The bill would still require hunters to report wolf kills to Fish and Game.

The reclassification would also allow hunters to shoot wolves from motorized vehicles, including ATVs, helicopters and snow machines.

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