

## DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at [dearabby.com](http://dearabby.com) or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



**Dear Abby:** I have been with the same man for almost 30 years. We are not married and have no children together. He is 15 years older than I am.

We have been living in his house for the past seven years. I feel more like a renter than a partner in this relationship. I give him money every month, and we sleep in separate rooms. He wants to control everything in his house, including how to clean, cook or what we eat. I bite my lip to avoid starting a confrontation.

He is a lifelong bachelor, while I have two adult children and a couple of grandkids. I'm not sure how much more of this I can take. I work all day; he doesn't. I want to leave, but at the same time, I care and worry about him. What should I do?

— *Disillusioned in Illinois*

**Dear Disillusioned:** Quit biting your lip. Gather your courage and start an honest conversation with your housemate in which you tell him you have been unhappy with the status quo for a long time. Then outline the changes that would make you happy. If he isn't willing to compromise, then pack your bags and leave because you will know the feelings you have for him are not mutual.

**Dear Abby:** I've been "friends" with a woman for 25 years. For a time, we were best friends and did everything together, but we couldn't be more different. It caused many fights and disagreements over the years. She has deeply hurt and em-

barrassed me countless times. She ruined birthdays, damaged other relationships — even ruined my bachelorette party. I don't know why I still bother with her. I think because of our deep roots, it's hard to let go.

At the moment, we haven't spoken in more than two months, and I know she's upset with me yet again. Should I reach out and mend the bond? Do I use this as a stepping stone to start moving on? I love her, but I know it really is a toxic relationship.

— *Off Again in New Jersey*

**Dear Off Again:** Please reread the last sentence of your letter. Do not bother reaching out and trying to mend the breach in your relationship. You cannot fix what's wrong with this old friend, but you can move on. Her silence is giving you the opportunity. Take it!

**Dear Abby:** My son is getting married in a couple of weeks. Due to COVID-19, he and his fiancée are having to downsize the list of invitees. This includes asking those who have already RSVP'd "yes" and/or have already given them a wedding gift not to attend. Should they return the wedding gifts to those they are disinviting to the wedding?

— *Wondering in the South*

**Dear Wondering:** Your son and his fiancée should at least OFFER to return the gifts. Considering the reason for the downsizing, some of the no-longer-invited guests may tell them to keep them along with their good wishes, while others will not.

## Iditarod

## Continued from A5

Numerous mushers have tried to crack the five-title barrier over the past three decades only to fall short. Four-time champions and familiar names to fans are the late Susan Butcher, Martin Buser, Lance Mackey, Doug Swingley and Jeff King.

Seavey said the goal has been to get the fifth title, which puts a musher in a pretty elite group, but he's also realistic about what it means.

"I don't hold any misconceptions that this would somehow change me," he said before the race. "We see that in sports quite a lot where we focus so much on one thing and the assumption that it is if you win, this is somehow miraculously going to solve all your other problems. That's not the case."

Seavey said at the finish line he tries to give himself a little time after each win to revel in it, but then it's time to focus on the next thing, whatever it is.

"Whatever you're doing, give it your whole attention and

we'll dwell on the records or the numbers when we're too old to keep doing it. That's the time to look back at it," he said. "But right now, I want to keep moving."

He completed the 848-mile trail in 7 days, 14 hours, 8 minutes and 57 seconds. Seavey has won titles in 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2021.

The victory also marks Seavey's return to the race that has been a part of his family's history since the start. His grandfather, Dan Seavey, placed third in the first Iditarod in 1973.

Seavey finished second to his father, three-time winner Mitch Seavey, in the 2017 race. Shortly after, Iditarod officials announced that four of Dallas Seavey's dogs tested positive for a banned opioid painkiller.

Seavey vehemently denied giving his dogs any painkillers. A year later, the Iditarod reversed course and cleared Seavey of any wrongdoing. But he skipped the Iditarod until this year, choosing to compete with his dogs in Europe instead.

He said he holds no animosity toward the Iditarod and said the entire Seavey family loves the race and what it means to Alaska. "I think things are all good with the Iditarod right now," he said.

The pandemic didn't stop the Iditarod from starting March 7 with 46 mushers. During the race, mushers have bypassed most rural Alaska villages that normally serve as checkpoints as a safety precaution, leaving the competitors to sleep in tent camps outside towns or under the stars in temperatures that have reached minus 55 degrees.

Since then, nine have scratched including fan favorite Aliy Zirkle, who was injured in a fall in what she has said would be her last race. Another musher, Gunnar Johnson, was withdrawn after he tested positive for COVID-19. That left 36 teams on the trail.

The race route was changed and shortened this year. Mushers started the race near Willow, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of Anchorage. From there, they traveled to the ghost town of Iditarod and then

turned back around to finish in Willow.

A normal race is about 1,000 miles (1,609-kilometer), and takes mushers across the wilds of Alaska from Willow to the finish line in Nome, on the state's Bering Sea coast.

Though the race was shortened, Seavey said he doesn't think there should be an asterisk beside his name as the 2021 champion because the trail is different every year.

Seavey has started the race from the Anchorage area, from Fairbanks when there wasn't enough snow further south, and he's done the race's northern and southern routes.

"When you beat everybody that shows up, you win on the trail they give you," Seavey said.

Defending champion Thomas Waerner didn't race this year because of uncertainty in arranging travel during the pandemic. He was stuck in Alaska for months after winning last year, and only got home to Norway after hitching a ride on a vintage airplane flying from Anchorage to its new home at a museum in Norway.

## Canzano

## Continued from A5

That lavish hotel suite ends up as part of the final narrative for the outgoing commissioner. There were high hopes but the most memorable parts of Scott's tenure hit some of the wrong themes. Other major conferences were talking about NCAA Tournament shares, College Football Playoff payouts and media-rights mega-deals. But the so-called "Conference of Champions" was stuck on chartered flights, Scott's \$5 million-a-year salary, a lavish downtown-San Francisco palace, shaky officiating and a Pac-12 Network that mostly frustrated fans while it bled cash.

Scott is out officially in June. His contract was not renewed. Scott received a \$1.9 million interest-free loan from the conference when he was hired more than a decade ago. The loan will be paid back in full as part of Scott's separation agreement, Andrew Walker, a conference spokesperson said.

The search firm hired by the Pac-12 hasn't yet begun to make contact with candidates. As of last week it was still in the "listening" phase, consulting with the 12 university presidents to determine what qualities they'd like to see in the next commissioner.

I'm good with the Pac-12 taking some time and getting this hire right.

How about someone who would be willing to take a commercial flight? Or pass on the "Sky Villa" because he or she understood it was a bad look? Or maybe just someone who will spend some time on Pac-12 campuses, grasping the challenges of daily university life?

What's lacked most in the last decade is a connection between the campuses and the conference headquarters. It's why I'll be curious to see if Scott's replacement is a former sitting athletic director or maybe just someone who takes the job and announces that the first order of business is to spend a week on each of the campuses, listening.

Washington State president Kirk Schulz, told me, "You've got 12 schools, they're like 12 children. You have to love 'em all different. I want the commissioner to show up at Pullman (and other schools) and say, 'What can I do to help you succeed?'"

Scott is on his final big trip on the company dime this week in Las Vegas. A conference source said that this year Scott stayed at Park MGM hotel like everyone else. So maybe "Champagne Larry" has learned something. Or maybe his hotel choice was rooted in necessary COVID-19 "bubble" protocols, as all 11 teams that participated in the men's basketball tournament stayed at the same hotel this year.

In prior years the teams have been scattered along The Strip. With a pandemic going on, and swaths of Las Vegas still shut down, the decision was made to keep the members together. The optics of that — a conference finally united — look far better.

I've talked to a handful of the conference's presidents and chancellors in the last few

months. They're engaged and interested in rectifying and rebuilding the brand of the Pac-12. One president told me that there's renewed hope and enthusiasm. Another suggested the conference's CEO Group was blown away by what the search firm shared with them. Another said it will just be nice to stop talking about Larry Scott and start talking about what the Pac-12 can become with new leadership.

This is a conference that has so many good stories to tell. Oregon State, for example, was picked by some to finish dead last in men's basketball this season. Wayne Tinkle's Beavers are now headed to the tournament as a No. 12 seed after defeating Colorado Saturday night in the Pac-12 tournament championship game.

The Pac-12 has great coaches, wonderful facilities, dedicated athletes and good geography. It's got some of the best stadium-backdrop landscape in

America. Also, this conference has droves of alumni who are eager to see the Pac-12 succeed.

The point here isn't to beat up on Scott and turn him into a victim. Truth is, I think Scott meant well. His hire was a corollary from the folksy act of his predecessor, Tom Hansen. Scott wasn't warm and engaging. He could be awkward in public appearances and struggled to connect with his staff. He acted suspiciously like one of those Fortune 500 CEOs, busy managing up to the board members, not down to his staff. It drove the athletic directors in the conference nuts because, in the end, they felt dismissed and ignored.

Never more so than this same week in 2014 when Scott met in Las Vegas with the conference athletic directors. It's an annual Saturday-morning meeting. But seven years ago a particularly frustrated room was engaged in a terse standoff with the conference commissioner.

Then-Utah AD Chris Hill was pressing Scott on budget issues and poor revenue distribution. Hill had the respect and support of the room. He was a senior member and well regarded by his peers. Hill pushed the commissioner for answers, asked some hard questions, and soon got cut off.

Scott sniped at Hill: "You're lucky for what you get."

The ADs didn't feel so lucky. The Pac-12 has a lot of work to do. It won't be easy to stay competitive with the Big Ten and SEC. They've got superior media-rights deals, larger stadiums and rabid fan bases. There's also the matter of what to do when the 11-year, \$92 million lease on the Pac-12 headquarters expires in late 2022. Maybe the offices will be moved right here to Las Vegas. Also, there's a network to save. But the right hire is out there, somewhere.

Probably someone who would never have stayed in that villa in the sky.

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YOUR HOROSCOPE *By Madalyn Aslan*

## Stars show the kind of day you'll have

★★★★ DYNAMIC | ★★★ POSITIVE | ★★ AVERAGE | ★ SO-SO | ★ DIFFICULT

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021:** Idealistic, reserved and romantic, you take pride in how you look and feel. This year, you can make lifestyle changes that will improve your health and vitality. Finances are challenging at first, but once you plan expenses you will do fine with extra to spare. If single, join a group of like-minded people seeking partners. If attached, plan a getaway to renew the love you share. GEMINI awakens your creativity.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**

★★★★ A house plant or fresh flowers will brighten your mood. So will a new outfit that you can wear to a party or job interview. If you go overbudget then just skimp on something else. Tonight: Treat yourself to dessert.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**

HHH Begin a balanced eating plan that includes no more meals on the run. Share self-help tips with friends or in an online group. Set an example with your no-nonsense approach. Others will follow your lead. Tonight: Work on budget revisions.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**

★★★★ It's the perfect time to take a break from social activities and reboot. Start a journal or keep a dream log. Your words may clarify a future direction. Herbal teas and mild exercise sound inviting. Tonight: Add songs to your playlist.

**CANCER (June 21-July 21)**

★★★ Plan an outing with friends you have not seen lately. Catch up on gossip. Someone may have hurt your feelings, so let them know and move on. It is never a good idea to harbor ill will. Tonight: Shop online.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**

★★★★ A project you began may finally bear fruit. Watch for signs that it has progressed. If you need to make revisions, ask others to join your team. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Tonight: Contact a friend from school.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**

★★★★ The keyword for today is travel. Opportunities to get out and about will present themselves, so plan a weekend getaway. Get a romantic partner or friend to join you. Make anything you do an adventure. Tonight: Watch a courtroom drama.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**

★★★ Expand your income stream. Offer services that stem from years of experience. Avoid get-rich-quick schemes advertised on social media. Consult a financial adviser or trusted friend. Stop overthinking and follow your instincts. Tonight: Give yourself a beauty treatment.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**

★★★ Take stock of different relationships in your life. Let go of those who may be toxic. Feelings between you and someone close may get intense, so talk things through. Postpone contracts for at least a week if possible. Tonight: Affectionate displays.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

★★★★ Reconsider a risky decision you may have made recently. If you play it safe you will have no doubts or fears. Pay attention to health matters, especially your teeth, bones and knees. No need to panic. Tonight: Make a commitment.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**

★★★★ Someone funny and charming may catch your eye. Don't be coy. Make yourself known. Sign up for lessons in a sport that you love. Keep that activity in mind when you plan your vacation. Tonight: A romantic interest might surprise you.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

★★★★ Emotions run high, so talk things out with those close to you. Researching your family tree may remind you to call an out-of-touch relative. Plan a reunion where you can connect with memories. Bring mementoes, anecdotes and photographs. Tonight: Spring cleaning.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

★★★ Today neighbors may get on your nerves. Think positive thoughts and send them good vibes. A higher-up who matters at work will listen to your ideas. Feedback may be better than you ever expected. Tonight: Gather for a family meeting.