

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



Dear Abby: My two daughters are not speaking to each other. “Amy,” the older, claims her sister started it. “Lisa,” the younger, claims Amy took Lisa’s son out to dinner and never told her. (This happened while he was living with me — another long story.)

Amy has had us at her house for Christmas for the past seven years. Lisa wants to have Christmas at her home this year. She told her aunt that if I don’t go there for Christmas, she will never speak to me again. I have tried hard to get Amy to make up with Lisa. I think Lisa wants things to go back to the way they were. (Amy doesn’t know what her sister said to their aunt.)

It feels to me like Lisa is asking me to pick which daughter I love more. How can I handle this without losing a daughter?

— *In the Middle in Massachusetts*

Dear in the Middle: Handle this by telling Amy that because you have celebrated Christmas at her home for the last seven years, you will be spending this one with Lisa. And if she gives you an argument, tell her that from now on you will be alternating celebrations with her sister because you do not want to be forced into the position of having to choose one daughter over the other.

Dear Abby: I am a 68-year-old man, married for 45 years. I have cheated on my wife for most of them. Am I sorry about it? No.

My wife shut me out of her life 25 years ago. She has her bedroom, and I have mine. Why did I stay with her? We had adopted two babies 30 years ago, and I wanted to give them an education and a good start in life, which is what we did.

How do I treat her? I treat her well, I think. I help her with the housework, keep our home in good condition inside and out, and she has her own car. I take her out for dinner once a week and we go dancing every Saturday night at the club. I’m a moderate drinker and non-smoker. I bathe four or five times a week. So, tell me, Abby, What’s WRONG with me? If you decide to print my letter, perhaps I’ll have an answer. Thanks, Abby. I enjoy your column very much.

P.S. Would I cheat on my wife if the opportunity presented itself in the future? Darned right I would!

— *No Regrets*

Dear No Regrets: If you are asking me what’s wrong with you for staying in your marriage, my answer would be that you did it for three decades for the sake of your children. I would add that since they are now all adults, it may be that you eventually adjusted to the lack of intimacy with your wife, so you substituted women who were available.

However, if you are asking me why your wife shut you out of her life 25 years ago, the only person who can answer that question is her. It may not be too late to ask.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Dec. 13, the 347th day of 2021. There are 18 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On **Dec. 13, 2000**, Republican George W. Bush claimed the presidency a day after the U.S. Supreme Court shut down further recounts of disputed ballots in Florida; Democrat Al Gore conceded, delivering a call for national unity.

In **1835**, Phillips Brooks, the American Episcopal bishop who wrote the words to “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” was born in Boston.

In **1928**, George Gershwin’s “An American in Paris” had its premiere at Carnegie Hall in New York.

In **1937**, the Chinese city of Nanjing fell to Japanese forces during the Sino-Japanese War; what followed was a massacre of war prisoners, soldiers and citizens.

In **1978**, the Philadelphia Mint began stamping the Susan B. Anthony dollar, which went into circulation the following July.

In **1981**, authorities in Poland imposed martial law in a crackdown on the Solidarity labor movement. (Martial law formally ended in 1983.)

In **1993**, the space shuttle Endeavour returned from its mission to repair the Hubble Space Telescope.

In **2001**, the Pentagon publicly released a captured videotape of Osama bin Laden in which the al-Qaida leader said the deaths and destruction achieved by the September 11 attacks exceeded his “most optimistic” expectations.

In **2002**, President George W. Bush announced he would take the smallpox vaccine along with U.S. military forces, but was not recommending the potentially risky inoculation for most Americans.

In **2003**, Saddam Hussein was captured by U.S. forces while hiding in a hole under a farmhouse in Adwar, Iraq, near his hometown of Tikrit.

In **2007**, Major League Baseball’s Mitchell Report was released, identifying 85 names to differing degrees in connection with the alleged use of performance-enhancing drugs.

In **2014**, thousands of protesters marched in New York, Washington and other U.S. cities to call attention to the killing of unarmed Black men by white police officers who faced no criminal charges.

In **2019**, the House Judiciary Committee approved two articles of impeachment accusing President Donald Trump of abuse of power in his dealings with Ukraine and obstruction of Congress in the investigation that followed.

Ten years ago: Early sound recordings by Alexander Graham Bell that were packed away at the Smithsonian Institution for more than a century were played publicly for the first time using new technology that read the sound with light and a 3D camera.

Five years ago: President-elect Donald Trump announced his choice of ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson to be secretary of state. Actor Alan Thicke, best remembered as the beloved dad on the ABC series “Growing Pains,” died in Los Angeles at age 69.

One year ago: The first vials of the Pfizer vaccine against COVID-19 began making their way to distribution sites across the United States. President Donald Trump said he was reversing an administration directive to vaccinate top government officials against COVID-19 while public distribution of the shot was limited to health care workers and people in nursing homes and long-term care facilities; hours earlier, the administration had confirmed that senior U.S. officials would be offered vaccines in the days ahead.

Today’s Birthdays: Actor-comedian Dick Van Dyke is 96. Country singer Buck White is 91. Music/film producer Lou Adler is 88. Singer John Davidson is 80. Singer Ted Nugent is 73. Rock musician Jeff “Skunk” Baxter is 73. Country singer-musician Randy Owen is 72. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is 71. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke is 68. Country singer John Anderson is 67. Singer-actor Morris Day is 65. Actor Steve Buscemi is 64. Rock musician John Munson (Semi-sonic; Twilight Hours) is 59. Actor-reality TV star NeNe Leakes is 55. Actor-comedian Jamie Foxx is 54. Actor Lusia Strus is 54. TV personality Debbie Matenopoulos is 47. Rock singer-musician Thomas Delonge is 46. Actor James Kyson Lee is 46. Actor Kimee Balmilero (TV: “Hawaii Five-0”) is 42. Actor Chelsea Hertford is 40. Rock singer Amy Lee (Evanescence) is 40. Actor Michael Socha is 34. Actor Marcel Spears (TV: “The Mayor”) is 33. Singer Taylor Swift is 32. Actor Maisey Stella is 18.

ANNE RICE • 1941-2021

Novelist helped breathe new life into vampire stories

BY JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK — Anne Rice, the novelist whose lush, best-selling gothic tales, including “Interview With a Vampire,” reinvented the blood-drinking immortals as tragic antiheroes, has died. She was 80.

Rice died late Saturday due to complications from a stroke, her son Christopher Rice announced on her Facebook page and his Twitter page.

“As a writer, she taught me to defy genre boundaries and surrender to my obsessive passions,” Christopher Rice, also an author, wrote. “In her final hours, I sat beside her hospital bed in awe of her accomplishments and her courage.”

Rice’s 1976 novel “Interview With the Vampire” was later adapted, with a script by Rice, into the 1994 movie directed by Neil Jordan and starring



Rice

Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt. It’s also set to be adapted again in an upcoming TV series on AMC and AMC+ set to premiere next year.

“Interview With the Vampire,” in which reporter Daniel Molloly interviews Louis de Pointe du Lac, was Rice’s first novel but over the next five decades, she would write more than 30 books and sell more than

150 million copies worldwide. Thirteen of those were part of the “Vampire Chronicles” begun with her 1976 debut. Long before “Twilight” or “True Blood,” Rice introduced sump-tuous romance, female sexuality and queerness — many took “Interview With the Vampire” as an allegory for homosexuality — to the supernatural genre.

“I wrote novels about people who are shut out life for various reasons,” Rice wrote in her 2008 memoir “Called Out

of Darkness: A Spiritual Confession.” “This became a great theme of my novels — how one suffers as an outcast, how one is shut out of various levels of meaning and, ultimately, out of human life itself.”

Though Rice had initially struggled to get it published, “Interview With a Vampire” was a massive hit, particularly in paperback. She didn’t immediately extend the story, following it up with a pair of historical novels and three erotic novels penned under the pseudonym A. N. Roquelaure. But in 1985, she published “The Vampire Lestat,” about the “Interview With a Vampire” character she would continually return to, up to 2018’s “Blood Communion: A Tale of Prince Lestat.”

In Rice’s “Vampire Chronicles,” some critics saw only cheap eroticism. But others — including millions of readers — saw the most consequential interpretation of vampires since Bram Stoker.

DEADLY TORNADOES



Gerald Herbert/AP

A collapsed factory and surrounding areas are seen in Mayfield, Kentucky, on Sunday after tornadoes caused catastrophic damage.

‘Not knowing is worse’

Hopes dwindle of finding more twister survivors in candle factory rubble

BY BRUCE SCHREINER AND DYLAN LOVAN

Associated Press

MAYFIELD, Ky. — Workers on the night shift at Mayfield Consumer Products were in the middle of the holiday rush, cranking out candles, when a tornado closed in on the factory and the word went out: “Duck and cover.”

Autumn Kirks pulled down her safety goggles and took shelter, tossing aside wax and fragrance buckets to make room. She glanced away from her boyfriend, Lannis Ward, and when she looked back, he was gone.

On Sunday, he was among scores of people feared dead in the rubble of the factory and elsewhere across the state.

Gov. Andy Beshear initially warned Sunday that the state’s overall death toll from the outbreak of twisters Friday night in Mayfield and other communities could exceed 100. But later in the day, he said the number might turn out to be half that, citing details from the candle company.

“We are praying that maybe original estimates of those we have lost were wrong. If so, it’s going to be pretty wonderful,” the governor said.

Kirks and others could only wait in agony for news of their loved ones amid the rescue ef-



Mark Humphrey/AP

Arthur Byrn, left, Carole Dowdy, center, and Carla McDonald console each other after an outdoor service was held at First Christian Church in Mayfield on Sunday. The church building was heavily damaged.

fort. “Not knowing is worse than knowing right now,” she said. “I’m trying to stay strong. It’s very hard right now.”

Kentucky was the worst-hit state by far in an unusual mid-December swarm of twisters across the Midwest and the South that leveled entire communities and left at least 14 people dead in four other states.

Forty people who were inside the candle factory were pulled out soon after the twister struck, authorities said. The number of people who had been in the factory was initially put at 110. Rescuers had to crawl over the dead to get to the living at a disaster scene that

smelled like scented candles.

But by the time churchgoers gathered Sunday morning to pray for the lost, more than 24 hours had elapsed since anyone had been found alive. Instead, crews recovered pieces of peoples’ lives — a backpack, a pair of shoes and a cellphone with 27 missed messages were among the items.

Layers of steel and cars 15 feet deep were on top of what used to be the factory roof, the governor said.

Four twisters hit the state in all, including one with an extraordinarily long path of about 200 miles long, authorities said.

Landslide near Florence shuts down Highway 101

The Register-Guard

All lanes of U.S. Highway 101 near Florence were closed due to a landslide Saturday.

According to the Oregon Department of Transportation, the landslide happened about 10 miles north of Florence. The road was cleared and reopened at about 6 p.m., following an initial alert sent out at 1:15 p.m., according to ODOT spokesman Matt Noble.

“About 40 yards of dirt and rock is covering the roadway,” according to the alert.

The landslide was likely caused by the heavy rain at the coast, weakening the hillside, Noble said.

“That’s typically what causes those landslides to happen, especially on Highway 101 on what is already a slowly eroding hillside as it is,” he said.