

# THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW



## GIVE THEM A HAND

The winners of the annual Spokesman-Review winter coloring contest warmed the judges' hearts with their art.  
**ARTS & LEISURE, 7**

SUNDAY, December 25, 2022

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Spokane, Washington

## Computer system besets Spokane VA

Mann-Grandstaff workers claim reduction in employees, longer wait for veterans to receive care stemmed from switch to Oracle Cerner

By Orion Donovan-Smith  
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

WASHINGTON - In the middle of December 2021, Bernadine Bank handed a letter to the chief of medicine at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center.

After thanking her supervisor for the opportunity to start the Spokane hospital's gynecology clinic five years earlier, Bank got right to the point.

"It is with a heavy heart that I write to inform you of my resignation from the VA," the doctor

wrote. "I think it will come as no surprise that I am leaving mainly because of the Cerner EMR."

By then, it had been more than a year since the Department of Veterans Affairs began using Spokane as the testing ground for an electronic medical record system,

or EMR, developed by Cerner Corporation under a \$10 billion contract signed by the Trump administration in 2018.

While the project has been sold as an overdue update to the VA's

See **VA, 12**

### FURTHER REVIEW

#### THE TIMELINE OF THE SYSTEM'S IMPLEMENTATION

Two years after it was installed at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center, the Cerner Millennium software still doesn't work well.  
**NEWS, 8-9**



## A LONG, SLEEPLESS NIGHT is no way to stay safe in the sleigh



**SHAWN VESTAL**  
SPOKESMAN COLUMNIST



Santa Claus should thank his lucky stars he didn't crash that sleigh last night.

Because covering the globe in one unbroken 23-hour shift makes him - to say nothing of Dancer, Dasher and the gang - a fatigue-related accident just waiting to happen. In fact, it's just as he passed over our part of the globe that he would have been at "maximum sleepiness" and most susceptible to making a sleep-deprived mistake.

That's the takeaway from

a recent paper by researchers at Washington State University, who analyzed the potential impacts of a Christmas all-nighter on Santa - "an overweight, older male seasonal worker and his reindeer-propelled global distribution team," as a WSU news release put it.

The paper's authors concluded that Santa, like anyone working extended hours on little sleep, should take steps to offset fatigue by sleeping

See **VESTAL, 10**

### PATIENCE, PERSISTENCE KEY TO SALLIS' TIME AT GU

Nebraska's first five-star basketball recruit finds his place among the Bulldogs' deep lineup. **SPORTS, 1**

### SPIN CONTROL: TRY OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Taking a break from politics, Spokesman-Review columnist Jim Camden tests your yuletide knowledge. **NW, 1**

### HOUSEKEEPER IS ALSO COUSIN, WOMAN LEARNS

Spokane real estate agent discovers new relatives through DNA-matching app. **ARTS & LEISURE, 1**

## MURRAY HOPES TO BE ROLE MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE CONGRESS

As head of Senate's Appropriations Committee, she seeks a more effective Congress in era of divided government

By Orion Donovan-Smith  
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

### We the People COMMUNITY PROJECT

Each week, The Spokesman-Review examines one question from the Naturalization Test immigrants must pass to become United States citizens.

**Today's question: Who is one of your state's U.S. senators now?**

WASHINGTON - In the final legislative act of the 117th Congress, House and Senate lawmakers last week passed a \$1.7 trillion omnibus appropriations package, averting a government shutdown and funding federal programs through the end of the fiscal year.

While members of Congress

surely would have liked to leave the Capitol earlier, it was appropriate timing for what's informally dubbed a "Christmas tree bill," so called because - as one of the few pieces of legislation that routinely passes in most years - it winds up bedecked in various measures that otherwise wouldn't become law.

It was also a reminder of the power wielded by the head of the Senate Appropriations

See **MURRAY, 10**

## Christmas Bureau coming up short; donations needed

Wednesday marks last day to contribute; program has met goal 17 straight years

By Nina Culver  
FOR THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW



### CHRISTMAS FUND • 2022

RAISED: **\$489,505.51**

GOAL: **\$600,000**

HOW TO DONATE: **NEWS, 10**

Christmas Day has arrived. The toys and books provided by the Christmas Bureau have been unwrapped, providing Christmas cheer to those struggling to make ends meet. But the work isn't done.

The annual holiday aid program is a joint venture of Catholic Charities Eastern Washington, Volunteers of America and the Spokesman-Review.

The fundraising goal this year was increased to \$600,000 to pay for the grocery store vouchers, toys and books that the Christmas Bureau gives out. Inflation has driven up the price of toys and books, and even the cost to store the gifts purchased throughout the year has increased.

As of Christmas Day, the total collected is \$489,505.51, which is still a long way from the goal. But history has shown the Spokane community is generous, and it's still possible to meet that goal if Spokane taps into that deep generosity it is known for. This is a time when no donation is too small and every dollar collected is important. A gift as small as \$30 can pay for a toy or a grocery

See **CHRISTMAS, 10**

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**\$3**

*A* wish for Peace and Joy.  
Have a blessed holiday season.

