

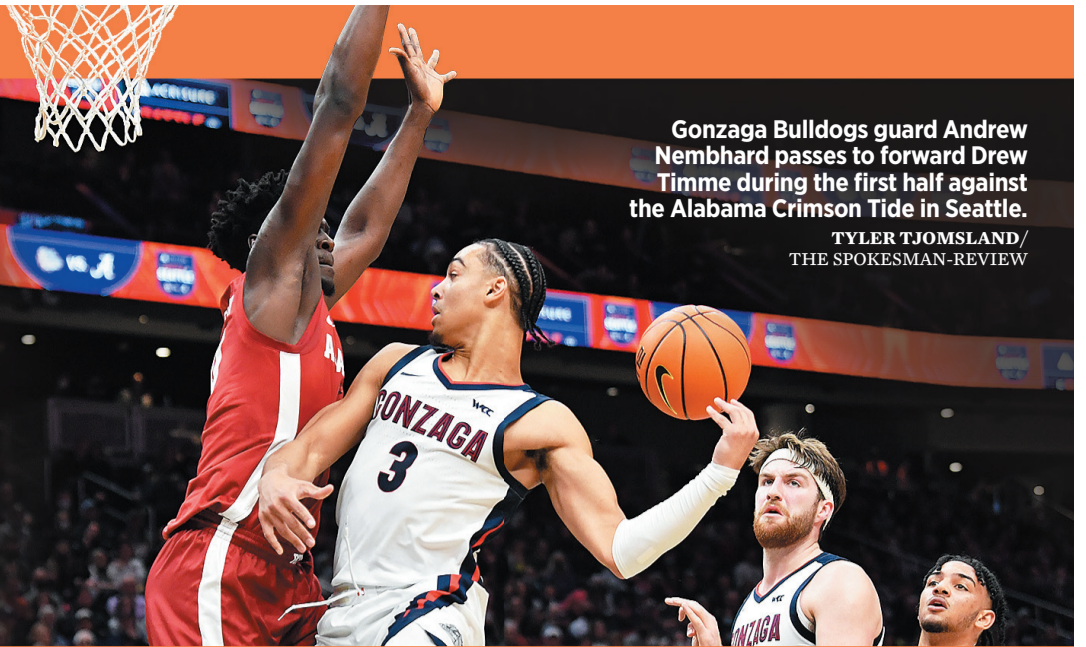
BATTLE IN SEATTLE

ALABAMA BLITZKRIEG

Jaden Shackelford tied his career high with 28 points as the Crimson Tide surged past Gonzaga for a 91-82 win. The Bulldogs did themselves no favors, shooting 13 of 25 from the free-throw line. **SPORTS, 1**

Gonzaga Bulldogs guard Andrew Nembhard passes to forward Drew Timme during the first half against the Alabama Crimson Tide in Seattle.

TYLER TJOMSLAND/
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW



THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

SUNDAY, December 5, 2021

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Spokane, Washington

TROUBLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

In more than 40 interviews with *The Spokesman-Review*, veterans and current and former VA employees described a system that continues to slow down treatment and threaten patient safety more than a year after a transition VA officials described as "flawless." Some declined to speak on the record, fearing retribution, while others chose to come forward after months of warnings they said fell on deaf ears within VA.

'VETERANS HERE ARE TIRED



OF BEING GUINEA PIGS'

By Orion Donovan-Smith and Arielle Dreher | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Mike Tonkyn had to go to Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center three times to get his blood drawn.

Charlie Bourg's cancer diagnosis was delayed several months, and now he needs surgery.

Heather Hill saw several of

her patients suffer withdrawals after going weeks without medications to treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

Others went months without insulin, accidentally got a double-dose of remdesivir to treat COVID-19 or went through withdrawals after going with-

out anti-seizure medication.

More than a year after the Department of Veterans Affairs began testing a new electronic health record system at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center, veterans who rely on the Spokane hospital and the health care workers who count

on the software to do their jobs say flaws in the system continue to threaten patients' safety, even as VA last week announced plans to roll it out in Walla Walla and other cities early next year.

See **VETERANS, 7**

Families happy to pick up gifts in person

Christmas Bureau returns to a live event after a year off due to the coronavirus pandemic



CHRISTMAS FUND • 2021
RAISED: **\$118,504.10**
GOAL: **\$535,000**
HOW TO DONATE: **NEWS, 10**

By Nina Culver
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

After a week of good weather, the first day of the Christmas Bureau dawned chilly and wet.

That did not stop the hundreds of people who lined up Saturday outside the front gates and into the parking lot of the Spokane County Fair and Expo Center.

The Christmas Bureau provides a grocery store voucher to each family and a toy and a book for each child.

The first person in line was Karen Bradley. She arrived around 8 a.m. to get gifts for her two children, though the doors didn't open until 10 a.m.

Bradley, who has visited the Christmas Bureau before, said she's glad it's in person this year instead of virtual. Not looking for anything in particular, Bradley said she would wait to see what was available.

"It's a surprise," she said. "It always is."

See **BUREAU, 10**



COLIN MULVANY/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

MORE ON HOLIDAYS



LOCAL GIFT GUIDE

The Spokesman-Review features department has you covered for presents in Spokane. **TODAY, 1**

Ashley Figueroa, 7, left, her sister Marvelin, 6, right, and their cousin Marbella Figueroa, 4, wrangle the toys they chose Saturday at the Christmas Bureau.

COUNCIL OKS FUNDING FOR SHELTER

City leaders begrudgingly approve funding for upgrades, repairs for emergency housing on Cannon Street, adding to \$1.9 million tab. **NW, 1**

WE THE PEOPLE: U.S. ENTERS WWII

On Dec. 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. While the raid was a complete success, the Americans did not sue for peace as the Japanese hoped. **NEWS, 10**

SPOKESMAN COLORING CONTEST IS BACK

It's once again time for our annual mitten coloring contest. It's open for children 12 and younger, and all entries are due by 5 p.m. on Dec. 20. **TODAY, 3**

Classifieds... **Classifieds 1**

Business..... **Business 1**

Lotteries **News 4**

Television..... **Today 4**

Obituaries..... **NW 6**

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