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## NEWS

### Popularity of New Year's resolutions wanes in 2022



**Moira K. McGhee**  
news@reidnewspapers.com

The tradition of ringing in the New Year with a celebration has been around for 1,000s of years. However, it's not always taken place on Dec. 31/Jan. 1 as it is now. Ancient celebrations often coincided with the farming year. Agriculture was life, so ancient resolutions usually had something to do with fruitful harvests. Consider some of these ancient resolutions and how they've changed over time.

Babylonians made resolutions to return borrowed farm equipment  
Medieval knights made resolutions to maintain their knightly values  
Romans offered sacrifices to Janus and made resolutions of good behavior for the coming year

Early Protestants made resolutions more religious or spiritual in nature, which often focused on developing stronger moral character and increasing restraint against earthly pleasures

In modern times, New Year's celebrations often include counting down the clock, which culminates with a kiss (or kisses) when the clock strikes midnight. New Year's resolutions made on New Year's Day or shortly thereafter

•Please see 2022,  
Page 4

## COVID-19 sticks around for New Year

**Moira K. McGhee**  
news@reidnewspapers.com

As we rang in the New Year, the COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately entered its third year of causing havoc in Oklahoma and around the globe. The pandemic lingers like an unwanted guest who refuses to leave, but many people are hopeful that 2022 will finally see the virus wane.

On an extremely sobering note, data tracked by Johns Hopkins University indicates Oklahoma had the nation's worst COVID-19 death rates in 2021. Data showed one death per 403 Oklahomans last year, another heartbreaking statistic hanging over the state.

Current numbers are also discouraging. In the most recent COVID-19 Situation Update from the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) posted on Dec. 31, 2021, a total of 708,938 cases have been reported in the state since the pandemic began. The current seven-day rolling average was 2,104 compared to 2,626 on Dec. 31, 2020.

Since the first cases were reported in the U.S. in January 2020, at least 1 in 5 residents of Ottawa County have been infected with COVID-19, for a total of 6,667 reported cases. However, like everywhere, this is probably underreported.

The Ottawa County Health Department reports numbers weekly, so the most current week reported ran from Dec. 22 to Dec. 29. During this period, the county reported 80 new cases. While cases have stayed about the same recently, they're still very high.

Closer to home, Miami has had 3,533 residents with COVID infections recover and 51 people have passed away from the virus. These numbers are from the most recent Community Data report available from OSDH on Dec. 27, 2021. On that day, Miami was still reporting 68 active cases.

Making matters worse, the newest variant, Omicron, made its way into Oklahoma on Dec. 21, 2021. However, this version might



have a silver lining. While Omicron appears to be spreading much faster than other variants, it also shows indications that it will be short-lived, and many infections have been relatively mild compared to some variants.

Infectious-disease experts have been noted for their astonishment at the speed of Omicron's spread, but they've also said the surge may be measured in weeks rather than months like previous surges. When discussing the ongoing pandemic, anything considered positive is good news.

Interim Commission of Health Keith Reed said in a recent press release that "getting your COVID-19 shot is the best way to protect yourself and others, even from new variants like this one. Wearing a mask, especially in crowded indoor places, can also help protect you from infection. And if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, tests can tell you if you are currently infected and are available at pharmacies across the state."

Unfortunately, case numbers are on the rise again in Ottawa County, like much of the country. Holiday travel, indoor gatherings and the new variant are probably all contributing to the current spread.

The daily average of reported cases in

•Please see COVID,  
Page 4

## LOCAL

### Area schools offer students, staff free COVID testing

As COVID cases continue to spike throughout Ottawa County, area schools are trying to ensure student and staff safety by offering free COVID-19 testing.

Beginning Jan. 4, Miami Public Schools are offering free voluntary COVID testing for MPS students, staff and families. Call 918-961-0087 to make an appointment. Free testing was made possible by the Oklahoma Schools COVID-19 Prevention Program Grant.

To continue providing the safest learning environment for its students, Commerce Public Schools applied for and received an Oklahoma State Department of Education grant that funded a full-time school nurse for the district.

Their new school nurse is authorized to offer free COVID-19 testing to students with parental consent and to school staff.

Anyone looking for nearby COVID-19 testing sites can visit the Oklahoma State Department of Health website at <https://oklahoma.gov/covid19/testing-sites.html>.



## Miami mayor, Nashville recording artist deliver cakes for charity

Miami native and Nashville recording artist Keith Anderson (left) presents a blueberry cheesecake to Chief Ethel Cook, which she won after placing the winning bid of \$1,000. Cook hands off her check to Mackenzie Garst, executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa County, while Miami Mayor Bless Parker (right) gives Garst additional cash donations that were received.

**Moira K. McGhee**  
news@reidnewspapers.com

What started as the purchase of cream cheese at a local store wound up benefitting two local organizations. Miami mayor Bless Parker turned a negative experience into something positive and the community once again proved how much it cares.

The woman happened to be the mayor's mom, Margaret Anderson, and she was buying a large amount of cream cheese to make cheesecakes for Christmas.

The mayor said he had no idea there was a shortage of cream cheese and there was no limit on how many could be purchased.

"My mother was having a conversation with a friend of hers in the next aisle while they were both checking out," explained Parker. "Well, the lady behind them heard



Nashville recording artist and Miami native Keith Anderson (left) presents Gordon William Jr.'s check for \$1,500 to Miami Salvation Army director Debbie Hillestad while Mayor Bless Parker presents her with the cash donations. Williams had the winning bid but was out of town during the presentation.

that she was my mother and was upset about the amount of cream cheese she was buying.

"So, she goes to the Miami Area Sh\*tshow Facebook page and makes

a post about my mom being entitled and privileged because she's the

•Please see Charity,  
Page 8

“

Stay tuned for more cheesecake auctions and consider placing a bid for a local charity to be part of the [#negativeintopositive](https://www.instagram.com/negativeintopositive) campaign.



# 2022

•Continued from Page 1

have also been around for many years, but they morphed into mostly health-focused or financial-focused changes for self-betterment.

Some common resolutions of years past included:

- Lose weight
- Exercise more
- Get organized
- Save more money/spend less money
- Quit smoking
- Quit drinking
- Learn a new skill/hobby
- Live life to the fullest
- Spend more time with family and friends
- Travel more

However, the tradition of setting what's often an unrealistic goal at the start of the year seems to be falling to the wayside. Some people feel like they don't need any more pressures, especially in light of the difficulties faced over the last couple of years with an ongoing pandemic and the disruptions it's caused.

As 2021 faded into 2022 and after spending time talking to people about resolutions and researching what this year's popular resolutions might be, it's obvious that most people just aren't interested in making resolutions for

the new year. It was much the same as 2020 became 2021.

Many people have decided they have enough to deal with coping with the uncertainty brought on by COVID-19. However, some people are taking a lighthearted stance to resolution making or declaring more of an ongoing way of life than making a serious resolution. Still others are setting personal or business-related goals that they prefer not to deem a "resolution."

For those still wanting to make a traditional New Year's resolution, there are some well-published "secrets" to keeping them. Set smaller, attainable goals you truly want to reach. Be more specific when setting these goals. For example, instead of saying you want to lose weight, set a realistic and healthy amount to lose.

Whether you're making a resolution for 2022 or skipping the tradition altogether, psychologists around the nation encourage people to only do what feels right to them.

For those interested in learning more about the history of New Year's resolutions, History.com has an interesting story about the customs in ancient times at [www.history.com/news/the-history-of-new-years-resolutions](http://www.history.com/news/the-history-of-new-years-resolutions).

# COVID

•Continued from Page 1

Ottawa County on Jan. 1, 2022, was 11, which indicated a 14-day change of plus 3%. Hospitalizations during the last 14 days were up 23% and the average number of people testing positive for COVID-19 over the last 14 days was up by 8%.

While deaths in Ottawa County have remained at about the same level, hospitalized COVID patients are rising to the point that area hospitals are feeling the strain. According to self-reported numbers, the average occupancy rates of the Intensive Care Unit at Freeman Health System in Joplin is 93%, Mercy Hospital Joplin is 83%, Integris Miami Hospital is 81% and Integris Grove Hospital is 88%.

Despite the rising numbers, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued looser rather than tighter guidelines on isolation periods for people infected with COVID-19. These guidelines, issued on Dec. 29, 2021, recommend reducing isolation/quarantine from 10 days to five.

Under the new guidelines, if you test positive for COVID-19, regardless of your vaccination status, you should still isolate yourself at home. If you have COVID-19 symptoms, stay home for five days from the onset of symptoms and until they're improving. Also, if you have a fever, continue isolation until it's been at least 24 hours since your fever has passed, without using fever-reducing medication.

If you test positive but don't have symptoms, stay home for five days. As long as no symptoms develop, you're released from isolation. You can resume normal activities, but it's still recommended that you wear a mask for five more

days anytime you're around other people.

If you've been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you may need to quarantine.

If you've been boosted or completed a two-dose vaccination series within the last six months or a one-dose series within the last two months, wear a mask for the next 10 days while around people. Get tested on day five.

If you aren't boosted or you're completely unvaccinated, quarantine yourself at home for five days, then wear a mask around people for five more days. If you can't quarantine, wear a mask for 10 days while around people and get tested on day five.

If you've been exposed, no matter your vaccination status, if you develop symptoms, get tested and stay home for at least five days to stop the spread. Then, wear a mask for at least another five days.

To provide yourself the best protection available and protect others in the community, follow the full CDC COVID-19 guidelines. Get vaccinated and boosted, always wear a mask in public and maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet apart from others. Wash your hands often for 20 seconds and don't touch your face. Most of all, if you're sick, stay home to prevent giving it to others.

For the latest updates on COVID-19 from the CDC, visit its website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov). Further details about its current isolation and quarantine recommendations can be found at [www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html](http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html).

# S U D O K U

		6			4			
	2	9	5			7		6
	8		6					3
		5					6	7
	3						5	
8	6					9		
9					6		3	
2		3			5	6	1	
			8			2		

## Friday's Sudoku

7	4	9	2	3	1	6	8	5
8	2	6	9	5	7	1	3	4
3	5	1	4	6	8	7	2	9
1	9	2	5	7	3	4	6	8
5	7	3	6	8	4	9	1	2
4	6	8	1	2	9	3	5	7
6	1	4	8	9	5	2	7	3
9	3	5	7	1	2	8	4	6
2	8	7	3	4	6	5	9	1

Sudoku uses pure logic and requires no math to solve. It is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers.

The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once.

# C R Y P T O Q U I P

Y W H F G D Q V A V Q O K P B A P D A U K  
 S Y H W C P P O A B G S C Y D H , Y ' M  
 V Q F A U K F ' O K A U O P Z Y D H A U K Y O  
 Z K Y H U A Q O P B D M .

**Friday's Cryptoquip:** WHICH CHEMICAL ELEMENT OCCURS IN ABUNDANCE IN MOUTH ORGANS WITH TASTE BUDS? TONGUE-STEN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals R

# C R O S S W O R D

### Across

- 1) Moistens
- 5) Old Testament feature
- 10) Like a wrung-out dishrag
- 14) Cast-of-thousands production
- 15) Not called for
- 16) Eye feature
- 17) "Cheers" quencher
- 18) "Let's Make a Deal" options
- 19) Fish parts
- 20) Quaint accommodations
- 23) It's quickened by fear
- 24) Bones in arms
- 25) Where some people shop
- 28) Topmost point
- 30) Equine color
- 31) Columbus' port
- 33) Gave a meal to
- 36) Cheerfully energetic
- 40) Melancholy
- 41) Desert islands
- 42) Steakhouse specification
- 43) "Things that go\_ in the night"
- 44) One with equal billing
- 46) Astrological ram
- 49) It's full of hot air
- 51) Product improvement slogan
- 57) "Unattractive" Jamaican fruit
- 58) Jungian "self"
- 59) A bit off-the-wall
- 60) "In a minute"
- 61) Remove a brooch
- 62) Buffalo is on its shore
- 63) Winged god of love
- 64) Hangs tough

65) They may cover a lot of ground

### Down

- 1) Jack on "Dragnet"
- 2) Sword with a blunted tip
- 3) Going into overtime
- 4) Removing windshield ice, e.g.
- 5) Evidence of melting
- 6) People with upturned noses
- 7) Be extremely fond of
- 8) Angler's need
- 9) Costa \_, California
- 10) Large over-the-shoulder bag
- 11) Birdlike
- 12) Brainy group
- 13) Attach with glue
- 21) Mother Teresa, e.g.
- 22) Harold's film partner
- 25) Eyes, poetically
- 26) Novelist Ephron

### 27) Placed down

- 28) "No ifs, \_ ... "
- 29) Com eater's leftover
- 31) Breathe convulsively
- 32) Suffix with "ethyl"
- 33) Daring deed
- 34) Cornell of university fame
- 35) Beatifican, now and then
- 37) Casino, to a gambler
- 38) Scottish head covering
- 39) Inferior substitutes
- 43) Originates
- 44) Bay of Pigs people
- 45) Small digit
- 46) Improper use
- 47) Extreme effort
- 48) Arctic dwelling
- 49) Cuts, as hair
- 50) Fess up to
- 52) Julia of "Addams Family Values"
- 53) "The King and I" role
- 54) Hawaiian crop
- 55) "National Velvet" novelist Bagnold
- 56) Some loaves

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21						22				
			23						24					
25	26	27						28	29					
30						31	32					33	34	35
36					37	38						39		
40				41							42			
			43						44	45				
46	47	48						49	50					
51					52	53					54	55	56	
57					58						59			
60					61						62			
63					64						65			

### Answers to Friday's crossword

C	A	S	A		C	R	A	P	E		B	I	T	T
A	N	O	N		O	I	L	E	R		A	M	A	H
S	K	A	T		S	C	A	R	S		K	A	N	E
T	H	R	E		E	M	I	N	U	T	E	E	G	S
					L	Y	O	N	S		P	R	O	S
D	A	D	O	E	S					T	R	O	Y	
A	S	A	P		O	O	H	E	D		L	E	T	
T	H	R	E		B	Y	F	I	V	E	C	A	R	
A	Y	E			D	I	E	T	S		H	O	N	E
					O	D	O	R			A	M	U	S
S	W	A	M	I		K	L	E	B	A	B	I	L	L
T	H	R	E		D	O	L	L	A	R	B	I	L	L
R	O	I	L		I	L	E	U	S		I	D	E	A
I	S	L	E		E	L	I	D	E		E	L	A	N
P	E	S	T		M	A	N	E	S		R	E	N	D