

Science and Digital Briefs

By Shopper Editor Dave Bunting

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Military recruit bonuses \$50,000

The U.S. Army, for the first time, is offering a maximum enlistment bonus of \$50,000 to highly skilled recruits who join for six years.

Maj. Gen. Kevin Vereen, head of Army Recruiting Command, told AP that shuttered schools and the competitive job market over the past year have posed significant challenges for recruiters.

Two years of the pandemic has made it more difficult to recruit in schools and at public events, and the competition for quality workers has intensified as young people weigh their options.

Some, said Vereen, are taking what he calls a gap year, and “are making the decision that they don’t necessarily need to work right now.”

Includes excerpts from the Associated Press.

Info: shpr.fyi/army50k

COVID to “drop dramatically”

Scientists are seeing signals that COVID-19’s alarming omicron wave may have peaked in Britain and is about to do the same in the U.S., at which point cases may start dropping off dramatically.

The reason: Omicron has proved so wildly contagious that it may already be running out of people to infect.

“It’s going to come down as fast as it went up,” said Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Hospitalizations are expected by everyone to soon decline drastically as the currently active Omicron version causes no symptoms in 40% of cases and much less severe common flu-like symptoms in almost all other cases.

Omicron has a 91% lower chance of causing death than the Delta variant of COVID-19. People with Omicron infections are 74% less likely to need to be placed in the intensive care unit (ICU) with a 53% reduction in risk of being hospitalized.

“The duration of hospital stays was approximately 70% shorter, with the median of stays being 1.5 days for Omicron, compared to about five days for Delta

The University of Washington’s own highly influential model projects that the number of daily reported cases in the U.S. will crest at 1.2 million by Jan. 19 and will then fall sharply “simply because everybody who could be infected will already be infected,” according to Mokdad.

A new [study](#) of nearly 70,000 Covid patients in California found out of more than 52,000 Omicron patients, not a single patient went on a ventilator.

Media should focus on the much lower hospitalizations and deaths, but they continue to unjustifiably focus on infections or cases thus wrongly scaring the public.

The Associated Press has recently told its editors and reporters to avoid emphasizing case counts in stories about the disease.

Contains excerpts from [DailyWire](#) and other sources.

Info: shpr.fyi/coviddrop



Orcas leaving

Southern Resident orcas spent just 102 days in Puget Sound in 2021, fewer days than any other year on record.

This means it has been hard for researchers to determine how the Southern Resident orcas are doing, because they are simply not being observed.

The hope is that the orcas [have been off the coast of Vancouver Island](#) where they may have been able to find more Chinook salmon, their main food source.

However, while they do appear a little more robust than other years, their numbers are still at the lowest they’ve been in decades — the result of years of starvation as they struggle to get enough Chinook in the Puget Sound.

Info: shpr.fyi/orcasfewdays



Maine’s rotating ice disk is back.

The disk has begun to form in the Presumpscot River, where it [partially formed in 2020](#) but failed to draw a worldwide audience like in its [first appearance in 2019](#).

Includes excerpts from [The Associated Press](#).

Info: shpr.fyi/icedisk

Last nine years all among 10 hottest-ever

The nine years spanning 2013-2021 all rank among the 10 hottest on record, according to an annual report a US agency released Thursday, the latest data underscoring the global climate crisis.

Open the link below for a good matter-of-fact non-sensational article about warming.

Info: shpr.fyi/hottestyears



Third Grade Random Acts of Kindness

St. Francis third-grader Olivia Priebe already has learned an important life lesson.

Doing something kind for someone else makes her happy.

So she pitched in Sunday morning with her classmates to hang candy canes on cars as a surprise for people attending mass at the church.

It’s the latest “random act of kindness” done by the students of Marsha Collins’ class.

“Every month they do different random acts of kindness to help prepare for confirmation,” Collins said. “It shows them that even though they’re in third grade, they can do things to impact others.”

Collins paired up students, giving them a bag with candy canes and simple instructions to hang the canes on the drivers’ doors.

“Each car gets one candy cane,” she said, and just to make sure the candy ended up on the proper door, “What do you look for? The steering wheel.”

The students made quick work of the cars in the first parking lot, adding classic red-and-white or multicolor canes to each vehicle.

“It’s just a little something to brighten the day,” Collins said.

Third-grader Carson Miller said it’s nice to do something kind for others.

“It makes them happy,” he said.

A label on each cane said recipients were “RACKed” with a Random Act of Christmas Kindness from the third-grade class.

Info: whig.com

*Dave Bunting, Jan. 17, 2022
References in links below items.
See these columns on my blog:
daverant.com*