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Lost Ring

Lost: Man's Gold ring with Large Black Onix insert with a diamond in the Onix. Believe lost at the Veterans Day Memorial Program at the Groton School Nov. 8th. Generous Reward. Contact George Alberts Jr. at 605-380-4568 or 605/397-8161.

Middle School Music Department to host 4th Annual Talent Show

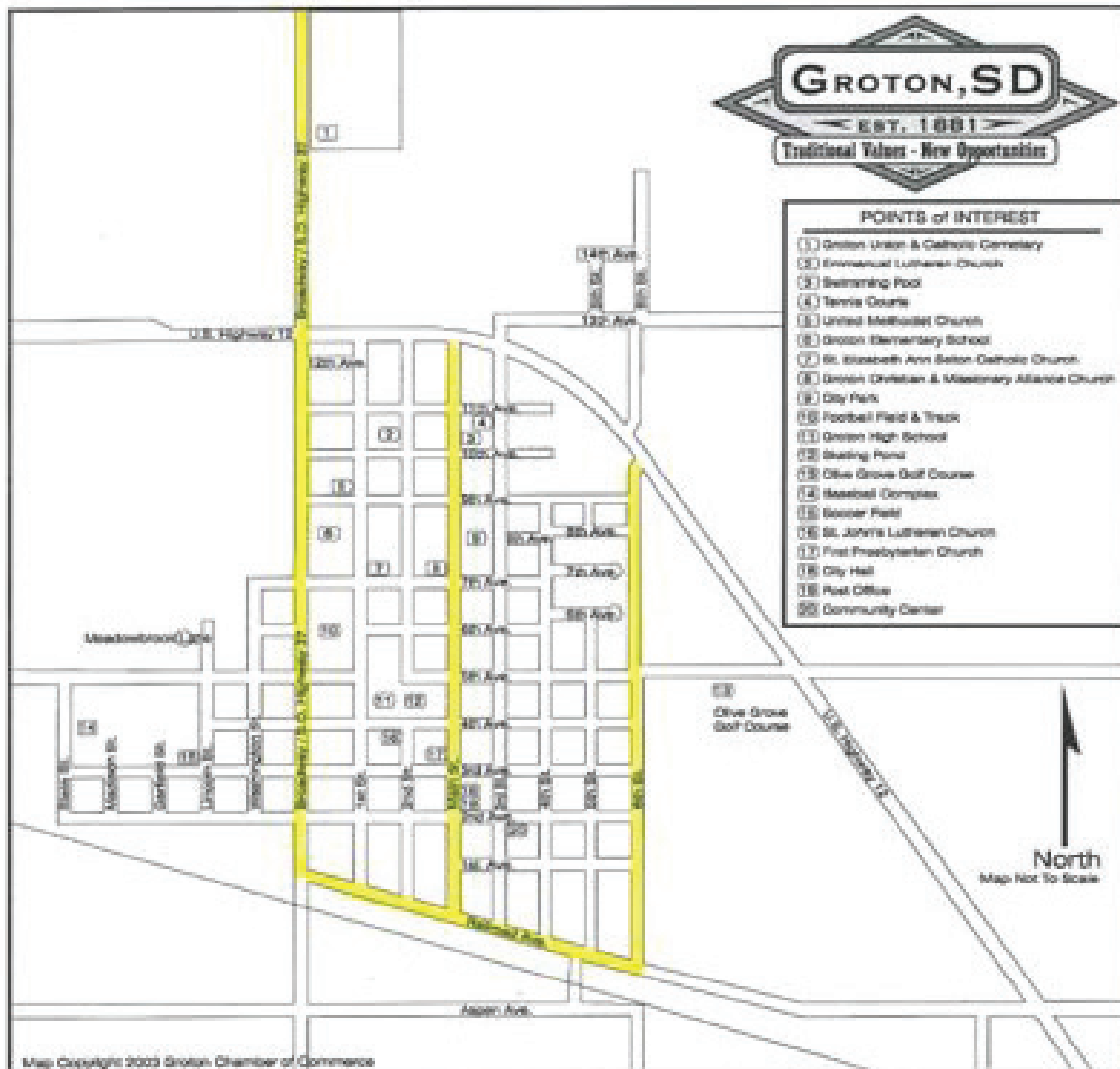
On Thursday March 12th, the Groton MS School Music Department will be hosting our Country Western Talent Show. The event will be held at the Groton High Old Gym at 7:00 pm. The talent show is a fundraiser for the MS Music Students to earn money for their future music trips. The show will consist of talent acts made up of middle school students and popcorn. For people that purchase tickets in advance there will be a drawing for special prizes at the end of the show. The general admission cost is \$5.00. Tickets will not be sold at the door, but a \$5.00 donation will be requested. The 6th Grade Band, 6th Grade Band Girls, 6th Grade Band Boys, JH Band, and JH Show Choir will also perform. You can get your tickets from any MS Music Student. Come enjoy a fun-filled night of talent and music. Thank you all for your support!

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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Notice of Garbage Pickup- Effective March 11th



Groton residents are asked to bring their garbage to the following locations until further notice:

Railroad Avenue, Main Street, Sixth Street, & Highway 37

Residents of the Broadway Mobile Home Park need to take their garbage to **Hwy 37**.

Residents north of 13th Avenue (Olson and Jacobson Development) need to bring their garbage to the **Bus Barns**.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated during the spring thaw.

Please bring your garbage bags & cans to these streets for Tuesday pickup

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The Creative Girls took second place in the elementary level of Improv. The Northeast South Dakota Destination Imagination Tournament was held Saturday at the Groton Area High School. Pictured are Arianna Dinger, Aurora Washenberger, McKenna Krause, Aubrey Craig, Novalea Warrington and Raelynn Feist. Their team managers are Joni Groeblichhoff and Laura Washenberger. The team will advance to state competition March 28th in Pierre. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Organized Chaos Destination Imagination Team of Carter Barse, Rylie Rosenau, Alyssa Fordham and Jack Dinger placed first in the senior division of Improv at the NE Region DI Tourney held Saturday in Groton. Their team managers are Tina Fordham and Pam Barse. They will compete in the state tournament March 28th in Pierre. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The Super Smart Super Heros placed first in the Elementary Improve at the NE Region Destination Tournament held Saturday in Groton. Pictured left to right are Camille Craig, Claire Schuelke, Keira Weismantel, Shaydon Wood and Addison Hoffman. Their team managers are Julie Milbrandt and Darcy Wood. They will advance to the state tournament March 28th in Pierre. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The Solar Planet Dumping competed in the middle school Scientific Division at the NE Region Destination Imagination Tournament held Saturday. Pictured are Gavin Khali, Axel Warrington, Jacob Tewskbury, Rebecca Poor, Jeslyn Kosel and Natalia Warrington. Their team managers are Tina Kosel and Sarah Tewskbury. (Photo by Tina Kosel)



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The Rising Stars is a non-competitive group of students that are just beginning their Destination Imagination journey. Pictured left to right are Cierra Lier, Gideon Rix, Jack Shuelke, Ayce Warrington, Rachel Dobbins and Aubrie Lier. Their team managers are Tracy Rix and Amy Warrington. (Photo by Tracy Rix)

South Dakota Destination Imagination Update

From State Affiliate Director Dean Fenenga

Where we are at today.

SE tournament cancelled due to Tri-Valley concern about Coronavirus

State Affiliate tournament being closely monitored through CDC, Pierre school district and DI corporate.

As I type this it is still on. I will have a final decision by next wednesday, but the only way I see it still happening is SD stays with the 8 positive patients until then. As a hospital employee I am skeptical...

We have back up plans if there is a global... not good, but plans...

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Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Foxes 10, Jackelopes 9, Coyotes 9, Chipmunks 8, Shih Tzus 7, Cheetahs 5

Men's High Games: Roger Spanier 213, Brad Waage 212, Roger Colestock 193

Women's High Games: Vicki Walter 159, Karen Spanier 156, Brenda Waage 152

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 585, Rick Carlson 550, Roger Spanier 518

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter 446, Sue Stanley 421, Nicole Kassube 420

Conde National League

March 9 Team Standings: Cubs 33, Giants 24, Mets 24, Tigers 23, Pirates 20, Braves 20

Men's High Games: Troy Lindberg 226, Ryan Bethke 224, Russ Bethke 214, Lance Frohling 202

Men's High Series: Troy Lindberg 542, Lance Frohling 539, Russ Bethke 526

Women's High Games: Vickie Kramp 181, 168; Mary Larson 159; Joyce Walter 156

Women's High Series: Vickie Kramp 466, Joyce Walter 448, Mary Larson 408

Groton Coffee Cup League

March 10 Team Standings: Ten Pins 27, Biker Chix 26, James Valley 21, Kens 14

High Games: Sam Bahr 201, 191, Vickie Kramp 175, Mary Jane Jark 155

High Series: Sam Bahr 529, Vickie Kramp 450, Joyce Walter 423

Older Americans Act Heads to President's Desk

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) applauded the U.S. House's final passage of the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020. Johnson is an original cosponsor of the bipartisan bill which will reauthorize critical social and nutrition services for older Americans. Earlier this year, he saw the benefits of the program first-hand when he delivered Meals on Wheels to seniors. This legislation now heads to the president's desk to be signed into law.

"For years, the OAA has provided a diverse range of services for older Americans with the greatest social or economic needs," said Johnson. "As someone who helped introduce this bipartisan bill, I'm proud to support the reauthorization of many critical services – like Meals on Wheels – to more than 41 million older Americans. Seniors deserve their independence, and I'm looking forward to seeing this important legislation signed into law."

The Supporting Older Americans Act:

- Clarifies existing authority to provide caregiver and long-term care services to those with Alzheimer's disease at any age.
- Clarifies that screening for malnutrition is included as part of nutrition screening within broader routine health screenings in the definition of disease prevention and health promotion services. Adds reducing malnutrition to the purpose of nutrition services programs under OAA.
- Adds screening an individual's immunization status to the definition of disease prevention and health promotion services and adds infectious diseases and vaccine-preventable diseases to evidence-based health promotion programs.
- Requires the Assistant Secretary for Aging to provide technical assistance on how to deliver evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion programs for different populations in a variety of different settings, such as in local communities and rural areas.

State Basketball Tournaments still on

After consultation with the Department of Health, the Governor's Office, and our state tournament venues today, the SDHSAA State Basketball tournaments scheduled for this weekend and next weekend remain on as scheduled. The SDHSAA joins the Department of Health and the Governor's Office in asking that those who are vulnerable or at-risk (older adults, individuals with serious chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes) to avoid large events and cheer on your team from home. All events will be broadcast on SDPB television and/or sdpb.org. In addition, anyone who feels sick or is having symptoms should not attend. We urge those who are attending to follow CDC recommendations in terms of washing hands, maintaining personal space, and more.

Our venues will take additional precautions with the athletes, including frequent disinfection of game equipment (game balls, chairs, locker room facilities, etc) and teams will not be engaging in pre and post game handshakes or participating in any other non-essential contact.

We will continue to work with the state agencies to monitor and assess the situation. If there are any additional changes to the state tournaments, the SDHSAA will issue a statement with that information. We thank you for your patience as we continuously monitor information on this ever-changing situation.

-Dan Swartos, SDHSAA Executive Director

Tax assessment freeze program deadline approaching

PIERRE, S.D. – Elderly and disabled South Dakotans have until April 1 to apply for property tax relief under South Dakota's Assessment Freeze for the Elderly and Disabled Program.

Under the program, for tax purposes, the homeowner's property assessment is prevented from increasing. If the actual value of the home increases, the homeowner still pays property taxes on the former (lower) value.

To be eligible for the Assessment Freeze for the Elderly and Disabled Program, individuals must meet the following qualifications:

Have incomes of less than \$29,071.25 for a single-member household (only one individual in the household) or less than \$36,339.06 for a multiple-member household

Have owned or retained a life estate in a single-family dwelling, in fee or by contract to purchase, for at least one year and have been a resident of South Dakota for at least one year

Have resided for at least 200 days of the previous calendar year in the single-family dwelling

Be 65 years of age or older or disabled

Un-remarried widows/widowers of those who were previously qualified may still qualify in some circumstances. The valuation limit for the program is \$199,550.55 or more of full and true value, meaning that property valued above those limits is not eligible unless the applicant has previously qualified.

Deadline to apply for the program is April 1, 2020, and applications must be submitted to the applicant's local county treasurer's office.

Applications are available at local county treasurer offices and on the Department of Revenue's website at https://dor.sd.gov/media/lekdwclr/pt-38_2020_assessment-freeze.pdf

For additional information on the assessment freeze or other property tax relief programs, please contact the Department of Revenue's property tax division at 1-800-829-9188.

Bates Township Equalization

Bates Township Equalization Meeting Notice:

The Bates Township Board of Equalization will meet at the Clerk's home on Tuesday, March 17th, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

All persons disputing their assessments are requested to notify the clerk prior to the meeting.

Betty Geist

Bates Township Clerk

14523 409th Ave

Conde, SD 57434

(0304.0311)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$11.75. 18695

Bates Township ROW Notice

Bates Township Board of Supervisors reminds all landowners and tenants that the road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the township road. This ditch is to be maintained and mowed. Any crops planted in the road right-of-way will be mowed and expenses charged to the landowner.

Landowner is responsible for spraying all noxious weeds.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors

Betty Geist

Township Clerk

(0304.0311)

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DAKOTA NEWS NOW IMPROVES OVER THE AIR SIGNAL FOR KSFY & KDLT VIEWERS

SIOUX FALLS – Television viewers across many parts of eastern South Dakota will notice a drastic improvement in their over-the-air channel options.

Over the past several months, engineers at DAKOTA NEWS NOW and Gray Media Group have been working on a complex system to improve the signal strength and coverage of KSFY and KDLT.

This was accomplished by adding the KSFY signal to KDLT transmission towers in Aberdeen, Plankinton, Mitchell, Huron, Watertown, Brookings and Springfield. The KDLT signal was added to the KSFY tower in Pierre.

This means viewers using an antenna, who were only able to see KSFY, will now be able to see KDLT (NBC) and Antenna TV programming. In addition, viewers who were only able to see KDLT can now see KSFY (ABC), CW, and MeTV programming.

The changes will be noticeable in areas surrounding the communities of Aberdeen, Pierre, Plankinton, Watertown, Brookings, Mitchell and Springfield.

“Our team has been working hard to make these changes a reality,” DAKOTA NEWS NOW President & General Manager Jim Berman said. “We are happy to be able to improve our signal across the region. We’re particularly thrilled to be able to restore that signal in the Aberdeen area.”

KSFY was forced to take down its tower in Aberdeen in 2016 after concerns about the safety of the structure.

Viewers may have to do a rescan of their television to pick up the additional channels. Viewers who watch KSFY, KDLT or their affiliated channels through a cable or satellite provider will not notice any changes.

Last month, DAKOTA NEWS NOW announced plans for a news bureau in Pierre.

The bureau is a shared partnership with KOTA TERRITORY NEWS and BLACK HILLS FOX in Rapid City. Both stations, as well as KSFY and KDLT are owned by Gray Media Group, INC.

The Pierre News Bureau should be operational by June.

Signal improvements and the Pierre newsroom were two of the commitments made by Gray Media Group as it sought approval from the FCC to purchase KDLT and merge operations with KSFY.

The two organizations combined news operations on January 13, using the new brand DAKOTA NEWS NOW. Together, the stations also added two additional hours of news each weekday.

Thune, Cardin, Smith, and Kuster Introduce Legislation to Increase Telehealth Services in Nursing Facilities

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Ben Cardin (D-Md.), members of the Senate Finance Committee, and U.S. Reps. Adrian Smith (R-Neb.) and Ann Kuster (D-N.H.) today introduced companion versions of the Reducing Unnecessary Senior Hospitalizations (RUSH) Act of 2020, bipartisan, bicameral legislation to facilitate greater use of telehealth in skilled nursing facilities.

“South Dakota has led the way in utilization of telehealth, and the RUSH Act acknowledges the success we have seen from using technology to coordinate care for seniors in nursing facilities,” said Thune. “By establishing a voluntary Medicare alternative payment model, the RUSH Act creates the right incentives for nursing facilities to work with a provider group to adopt telehealth to reduce avoidable emergency department visits.

“Greater use of telehealth in skilled nursing facilities will benefit patients and doctors, reducing expensive and unnecessary hospital visits,” said Cardin. “I’m proud to be a partner on the bipartisan RUSH Act that will continue to increase the availability of telehealth through Medicare and help deliver better health outcomes across the country.”

“The RUSH Act brings needed innovation to Medicare, lifts burdensome regulations, and will ultimately benefit patients,” said Smith. “This legislation builds on new technologies and improved connectivity to use telehealth in skilled nursing facilities, allowing patients to be treated in place rather than transferring them to a hospital. This bipartisan bill will help transform rural health care and improve lives.”

“Unnecessary hospital stays can place a significant financial burden on providers and senior patients alike,” said Kuster. “The RUSH Act will reduce this burden, cut down on costs, and expand access to care in our rural communities through telehealth options – all while reducing the risk of patients contracting an infection in a hospital. I’m pleased to join my colleagues to introduce this commonsense legislation and I will continue working to improve health care delivery across the Granite State.”

“Long-term care residents tend to be underserved when local providers aren’t able to respond to nursing home requests quickly enough to avoid an emergency room visit and possible hospital readmission,” said Joshua Hofmeyer, senior care officer of Avera eCARE. “Via telemedicine, local caregivers can have around-the-clock access to teams that specialize in geriatric medicine, providing urgent care, fall assessments, medication reviews, behavioral health services, medical directorship and more. We are greatly encouraged by the positive ways in which this legislation could positively impact the delivery of senior care services and improve access to quality and timely care.”

“We strongly support Senator Thune’s leadership and other sponsors for introducing the RUSH Act,” said Dan Holdhusen, director of government affairs for the Good Samaritan Society. “Its features will give needed recognition by the Medicare program to existing remote tele-health technologies to care for individuals that we serve in long-term care communities, especially in rural and frontier areas that we serve in South Dakota and other less populated parts of the country.

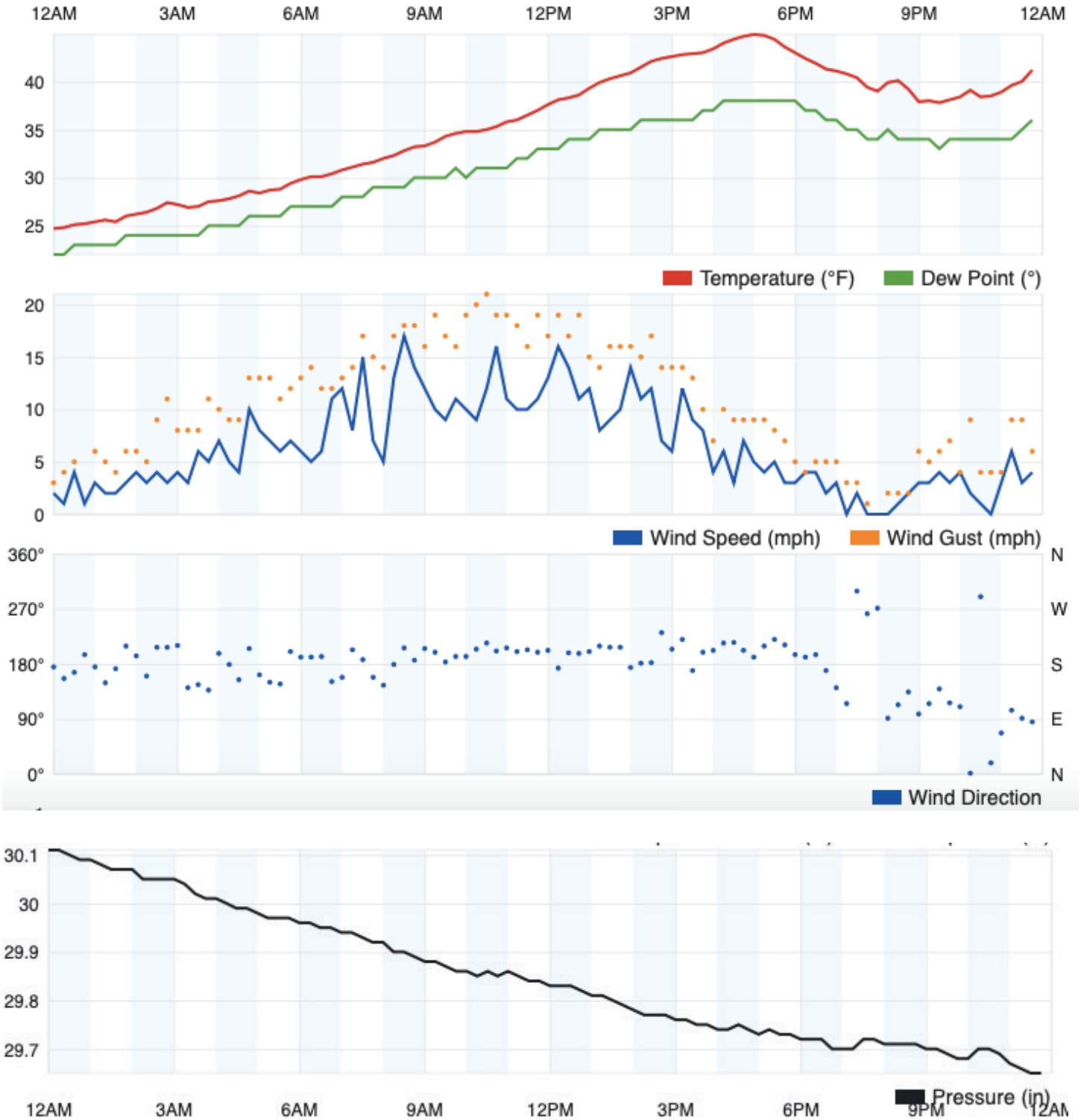
The RUSH Act would allow Medicare to enter into voluntary, value-based arrangements with medical groups to provide acute care to patients in skilled nursing facilities using a combination of telehealth and on-site staff. Working together to coordinate care, the providers can avoid a more costly patient transfer to the emergency department. If the model generates savings, they would be shared between the medical group and the skilled nursing facility. While skilled nursing facilities with a star rating of less than three are eligible to participate in the model, they would not be eligible for shared savings until they successfully achieve a three star rating.

As further incentive to improve quality of care, facilities in the Medicare Special Focus Facility program would be ineligible to participate in the program. If the program does not save money over time, Medicare would be required to terminate it.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Breezy.
Chance Rain
then Mostly
Sunny

High: 40 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 20 °F

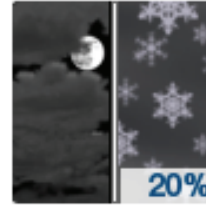
Friday



Sunny

High: 38 °F

**Friday
Night**



Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance Snow

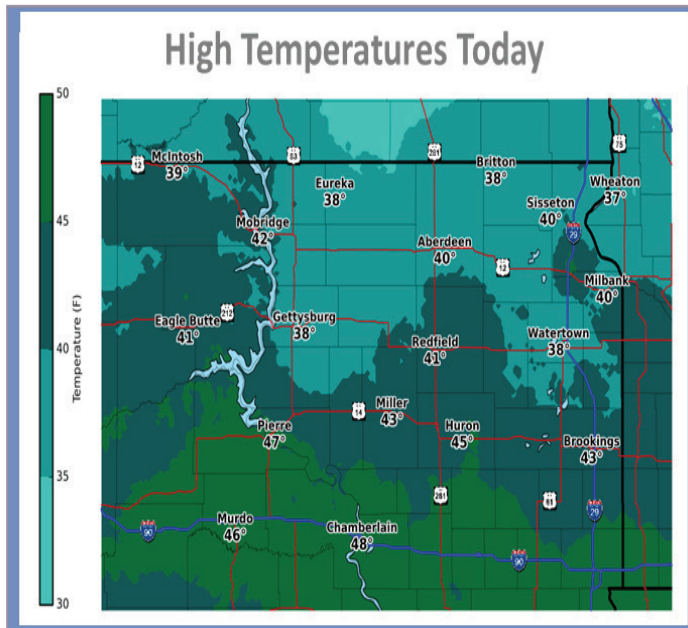
Low: 17 °F

Saturday



Slight Chance
Snow

High: 32 °F



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
www.weather.gov/abr



Today:

35 to 45°F

Gusty northwesterly winds. Light rain and snow this morning in northeastern SD and western MN.

Friday:

30 to 45°F

Cooler in NE SD
Mostly dry conditions. Increasing easterly winds along and west of the Missouri River.

3/12/2020 4:53 AM

Light rain, possibly mixing with snow and sleet will cross northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota this morning. Gusty northwesterly winds and cooler temperatures are expected today with highs in the 30s and 40s. Mostly dry, but cool conditions will continue during the day on Friday.

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Today in Weather History

March 12, 1995: Rapid snowmelt, due to warm temperatures, caused widespread flooding of streams, low areas, and farmland. Many roads were covered with water, and some were washed out. Some utility poles and lines were damaged. High water levels destroyed some schools, houses, and other buildings. Day County was especially stricken, with damage to roads alone estimated at \$75,000. Ice jams exacerbated the flooding on some culverts and streams.

1928: The St. Frances dam near Santa Paula, California, burst before midnight, sending 138,000 acres of water rushing down the San Francisquito Canyon, killing 450 people. The dam was designed and built between 1924 and 1926 by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, then named the Bureau of Water Works and Supply.

1976: A massive tornado outbreak spawned tornadoes in the Great Lakes and Midwest, including 9 in northern Indiana and extreme southern Michigan. A tornado missed President Ford's motorcade by a quarter-mile near O'Hare. The next morning, he got out of his vehicle to view the damage.

1993: An incredible blizzard known as "The Superstorm" struck the eastern United States on this date through the 15th. The storm was described as the most costly non-tropical storm ever to hit the U.S., doing an estimated \$6 billion in damage. The storm was as strong as a hurricane regarding winds and low pressure. The pressure dropped to an incredible 28.35 inches of mercury or 960 millibars when then the storm was located over the Chesapeake Bay. Boston, Massachusetts, recorded a wind gust to 81 mph, the most substantial wind they had recorded since Hurricane Edna in 1954. Also, as the storm was intensifying over the Gulf of Mexico, a wind gust to 99 mph was recorded by an offshore oil rig. It dumped incredible amounts of snow from Alabama to New England. The snow amounts were significant everywhere, but for places like Birmingham, Alabama, the 17 inches recorded brought the city to a standstill for three days. Mount Leconte, North Carolina, recorded 60 inches of snow. Practically every weather station in West Virginia established a new 24-hour snowfall record during the event. Syracuse, New York was buried under 43 inches of snow. The storm killed 220 people, and another 48 lost at sea. The storm also brought a 12-foot storm surge and 15 tornadoes to Florida, where 51 people were killed. Air travel was brought to a halt as every major airport from Atlanta north was closed during the height of the storm. During the late evening into the early morning hours of the 13th, a vicious squall line swept through Florida and spawned 11 tornadoes resulting in five fatalities. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 110 mph at Alligator Point and 109 mph at Dry Tortugas. Exceptionally high tides occurred along the western Florida coast. A 13-foot storm surge occurred in Taylor County, Florida, resulting in 10 deaths with 57 residences destroyed. A 5 to 8-foot storm surge moved ashore in Dixie County. Over 500 homes were destroyed, with major damage to another 700 structures. [Click HERE](#) for more information from the University of Illinois.

1888 - A blizzard paralyzed southeastern New York State and western New England. The storm produced 58 inches of snow at Saratoga NY, and 50 inches at Middletown CT. The blizzard was followed by record cold temperatures, and the cold and snow claimed 400 lives. New York City received 20.9 inches of snow, Albany NY reported 46.7 inches. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1954 - A blizzard raged from eastern Wyoming into the Black Hills of western South Dakota, while a severe ice storm was in progress from northeastern Nebraska to central Iowa. The ice storm isolated 153 towns in Iowa. Dust from the Great Plains caused brown snow, and hail and muddy rain over parts of Wisconsin and Michigan. (11th-13th) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A tremendous four day storm raged across California. Winds of 90 mph closed mountain passes, heavy rains flooded the lowlands, and in sixty hours Squaw Valley CA was buried under 96 inches (eight feet) of snow. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Unseasonably cold weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S., with gale force winds along the Middle Atlantic Coast. A storm in the Pacific Northwest produced rain and gale force winds. Crescent City CA received 2.27 inches of rain in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

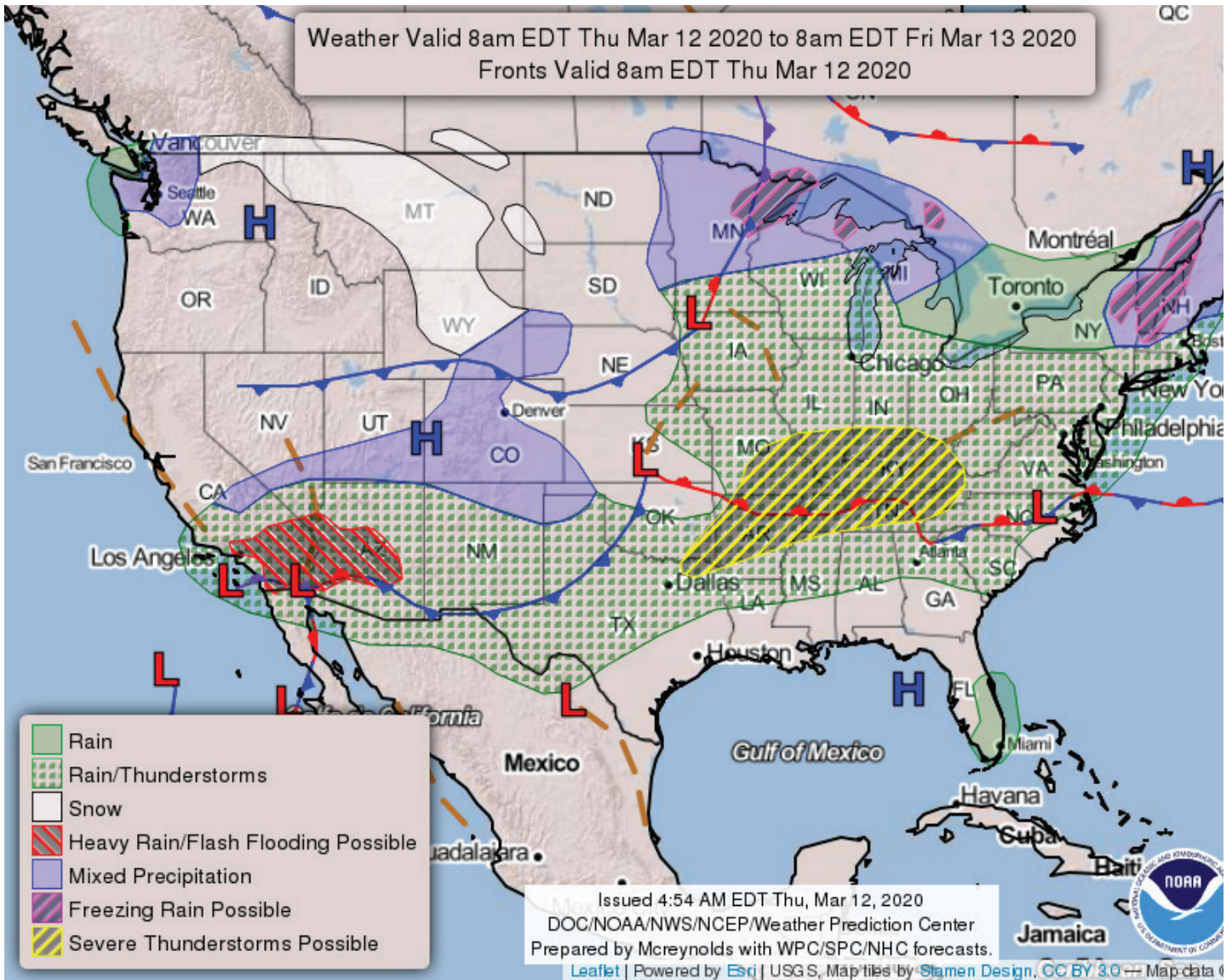
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 45 °F at 4:55 PM
Low Temp: 25 °F at 12:00 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 10:16 AM
Snow

Record High: 72° in 2016, 1934
Record Low: -20° in 1897
Average High: 38°F
Average Low: 18°F
Average Precip in March.: 0.33
Precip to date in March.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.35
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 7:36 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:49 a.m.



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LEAD ME, LORD

A little boy was hanging onto the leash of a large dog with all of his strength. An amused observer asked, "Where are you taking your dog?"

"Well," he replied, "first I want to see where he's going. Then I'll take him there as long as I can hold on to his leash."

Often we chose to go in a certain direction and try to force God to come with us. We have a goal in mind, a destination in sight, or a course charted for our lives by selfish desires. We try to push God into the gaps, squeeze Him into the corners, or pull Him in the direction we want to go.

However, we were created to be God-led. There are times when God leads us by pulling us along His paths, and it seems as though He is working against our interests. There are also times when God works behind the scenes to accomplish His purpose in our lives. Then, there are times when we do not realize that what is going on is in our best interests. But, the best times are those times when we go to Him in trust before beginning a journey, asking Him to guide us, guard us, and give us clear directions before taking the first step.

Someone once said, "Go slow to go fast." If we patiently look for God, and then wait upon God in prayer, and search His Word for His directions, we will be able to sense His Spirit's influence in our lives, and know where He wants us to go.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to look to You before we begin any journey in life. May we look to You willingly for Your guidance and trust in You completely before we take life into our own hands. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Genesis 24:27 & 48 Praise the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham," he said. "The Lord has shown unfailing love and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master's relatives."

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 03/14/2020 Youth Girls/Boys Basketball Tourney Grades 4th-6th (Baseball/Softball Foundation Fundraiser)
 - 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - 04/04/2020 Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
 - 04/25-26/2020 Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
 - 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
 - 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - 05/11/2020 Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
 - 06/05/2020 Athletic Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
 - 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/20/2020 Shriner's Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/22/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ladies Invitational
 - 06/26/2020 Groton Businesses Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
 - 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
 - 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
 - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
 - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
 - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
 - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
 - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
 - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
 - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
 - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
-
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
-
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

05-06-09-25-35

(five, six, nine, twenty-five, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

02-11-24-29-50, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 2

(two, eleven, twenty-four, twenty-nine, fifty; Star Ball: four; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$8.6 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$80 million

Powerball

04-29-49-50-67, Powerball: 2, Power Play: 4

(four, twenty-nine, forty-nine, fifty, sixty-seven; Powerball: two; Power Play: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$110 million

St. Patrick's Day parades nixed, from New York to Dublin

By JENNIFER PELTZ and DON BABWIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade has been postponed for the first time in its 258-year history because of coronavirus concerns, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced on Wednesday.

The postponement of the March 17 parade adds to the roster of events and holidays upended around the world by the spreading infection. Chicago, Boston, and even the Irish capital of Dublin, have cancelled St. Patrick's Day parades.

The New York parade honoring Irish heritage dates back longer than the United States and draws tens of thousands of marchers and throngs of spectators to Manhattan's Fifth Avenue.

Cuomo, a Democrat, said while the risk of transmission might be lower in an outdoor gathering, health experts had urged him to call it off.

"While I know the parade organizers did not make this decision lightly, public health experts agree that one of the most effective ways to contain the spread of the virus is to limit large gatherings and close contacts, and I applaud the parade's leadership for working cooperatively with us," Cuomo said in a statement.

The governor's statement did not say when this year's parade will take place, if at all. But Mayor Bill de Blasio tweeted late in the night that he promises the parade will go on, "whether it's in the heat of summer or on a clear fall day."

The coronavirus has spurred quarantines, lockdowns and other measures in spots around the globe. And it has sunk annual events from Lunar New Year festivities in China to the South by Southwest music, film and tech festival in Austin, Texas.

The New York City metropolitan area has been home to one of the largest outbreaks in the U.S., with many cases linked to one community in the suburb of New Rochelle.

In Chicago, the city's mayor said she couldn't risk the kind of gathering that scientists warn could hasten the further spread of COVID-19.

"Like cities across the nation, we concluded that having a parade at this time posed an unnecessary risk to the public's health," Mayor Lori Lightfoot told reporters at a news conference with a supportive Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

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The mayor of Savannah, Georgia, later announced that city's 196-year-old St. Patrick's Day parade, scheduled for Tuesday, and a weekend festival had been called off as well.

Chicago's parade had been scheduled for Saturday, ahead of St. Patrick's Day on Tuesday.

"We all know what the St. Patrick's Day celebrations mean to the city of Chicago," said Pritzker, a Democrat. "Because of what we've seen nationally, and across the world, of the increased risk of large gatherings, this was the right call."

Indeed, it was deemed the right call in cities from Boston and Philadelphia to Denver, Dallas, San Francisco and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The cities of Dublin — the one in Ohio and the one in Ireland — also pulled the plugs on their parades.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The cancellations come as the number of confirmed coronavirus cases climbs. In the U.S., the total has topped 1,000. Worldwide, more than 119,000 have been infected, and more than 4,200 have died. Lightfoot's announcement came a day after officials announced that the number of cases in Illinois had climbed by eight to 19.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

Savannah's weekend festivities and March 17 parade draw crowds approaching a half million people, potentially more than tripling the size of the 146,000-resident city for a few days. Started by Irish immigrants to Georgia's oldest city in 1824, the March 17 parade has ballooned into a massive street party that's Savannah's most profitable tourism draw.

Mayor Van Johnson told a news conference he knew the decision to cancel would be unpopular with many. Nobody from the private group that organizes the annual parade attending the mayor's announcement. Bars, restaurants and other businesses had already stocked up on extra beer, food and gaudy green souvenirs in anticipation of the busy holiday.

"You've got a lot of people who rely on that money," said Melissa Swanson, owner of The Rail Pub in Savannah's downtown historic district. "It's part of your business plan."

In New York, the St. Patrick's Day Parade has a long history, which began in 1762. It's one of the world's largest Irish heritage festivities, featuring so many marchers that it takes them about six hours to finish the 1.8-mile (2.4-kilometer) route.

The event was a gay rights flashpoint in the 1990s as organizers excluded openly LGBT groups from marching, a stance that sparked protests, legal challenges and some boycotts by politicians. Organizers began easing the prohibition in 2015, and more LGBT groups have joined the lineup since then.

Associated Press Writers Russ Bynum contributed to this report from Savannah, Georgia and Don Babwin contributed from Chicago.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

What SD lawmakers have on the budget negotiating table

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — As the South Dakota Legislature enters its final day to finalize a budget on Thursday, lawmakers are squabbling over how to spend \$13 million in unexpected one-time funds.

Republican lawmakers spent much of Wednesday in closed-door meetings, negotiating competing proposals on how to use the money. It appears that a 2% inflationary increases to fund salaries for teachers, state employees and service providers is a safe bet. Nearly all lawmakers agree that should be prioritized. But several proposals remain on the negotiating table. Here's a look at the big items up for grabs on Thursday.

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HEMP

Gov. Kristi Noem kicked off the legislative session by saying she was ready to compromise with lawmakers on a hemp plan and that she would like to see it passed early in the session. But as the session concludes, the hemp bill is still in doubt.

Noem and Senate Republicans want to see \$3.5 million included in the bill to boost law enforcement and lab testing. Noem has argued the money is essential to the state implementing hemp "responsibly."

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm, the Platte Republican who championed the bill this year, said he is on board with the amount of funding. But it is not clear if his colleagues in the House agree. The House will vote on the bill on Thursday.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Noem and the Senate wants \$5 million to build a School of Health Sciences at the University of South Dakota, but some Republicans in the House are not convinced the university needs the money.

Representatives from the Board of Regents told lawmakers the \$5 million will allow them to get another \$4.5 million in matching funds from a donor. The money would allow them to build a new building to house programs to teach nursing and other healthcare fields.

Representatives from the university and healthcare groups support the proposal as a way to invest in the healthcare industry in the state.

But some House Republicans opposed it. They are arguing that universities don't need the money as much as counties that have been hit by flooding in the last year.

Rep. Sam Marty, a Prairie City Republican, said House Republicans were left out of budget discussions with the governor and Senate.

"They want my agg communities to pay for that," he said.

COUNTY ROADS

House Republicans want to send \$10 million to counties to help with road repairs after flooding hit many parts of the state last year.

The proposal contains a funding formula that, among other factors like population and bridges, prioritizes counties with gravel roads. Farmers rely on those roads to transport their crops and livestock, said Rep. Caleb Finck, a Tripp Republican.

WHAT ELSE

The Senate and House are going back and forth on a few other budget items like funding the statewide expansion of a crisis hotline, need-based college scholarships for South Dakota students and funds for college students studying to be South Dakota teachers.

3 more positive COVID-19 tests in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Three more people have tested positive for COVID-19 in South Dakota, bringing the number to eight.

Wednesday's update came after Gov. Kristi Noem announced on Tuesday the state's first five cases, including one person who died. That was a man in his 60s with underlying health problems.

The people who tested positive on Wednesday were all men and in their 40s, 50s and 60s. Two were from Minnehaha County; the the other was in Bon Homme County. The state's health lab is processing 11 more tests.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said that two of the cases were linked to travel and officials were still looking into the third case.

Noem encouraged those at risk to the virus to stay at home. But shortly before Noem spoke with reporters, the state's high school athletic association announced that the state basketball tournament would still proceed as planned. The organization consulted with the governor before deciding to keep the tournament on schedule.

Noem said she is not requesting additional funding from the Legislature as it enters its final day to set the budget on Thursday. She said the state is expecting funding from the federal government to help the

state's response.

The annual St. Patrick's Day parade planned Saturday for downtown Sioux Falls, South Dakota, has been canceled due to concerns over the new coronavirus. Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Jeff Griffin said Wednesday the decision to cancel the parade was made after consulting city and state officials and reviewing U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for mass gatherings.

"Our greatest priority is the health and welfare of all our citizens," Griffin said. The parade typically draws thousands of people from around the region.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover. In mainland China, where the virus first exploded, more than 80,000 people have been diagnosed and more than 58,000 have so far recovered.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

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Canadian firm starts US prep work for Keystone XL pipeline

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A Canadian company said Wednesday it has started preliminary work along the route of the proposed Keystone XL oil sands pipeline through the U.S. in anticipation of starting construction next month, as opponents await a judge's ruling on their request to block any work.

TC Energy spokeswoman Sara Rabern said the Calgary-based company was moving equipment this week and will begin mowing and felling trees in areas along the pipeline's 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) route within the next week or so.

The work is planned in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska, Rabern said. She did not provide further location details.

In April the company plans to begin construction at the line's border crossing in northern Montana. That would be a huge milestone for a project first proposed in 2008 that has since attracted bitter opposition from climate activists who say fossil fuel usage must be curbed to combat global warming.

The company also plans work next month on employee camps in Fallon County, Montana and Haakon County, South Dakota.

Environmental groups in January asked U.S. District Judge Brian Morris to block any work. They said clearing and tree felling along the route would destroy bird and wildlife habitat. The judge in December had denied a request from environmentalists to block construction because no work was immediately planned.

The request by environmentalists came days after the Trump administration approved a right-of-way allowing the \$8 billion line to be built across federal land.

"It is irresponsible for TC Energy to jump the gun before Judge Morris rules on our motion," Stephan Volker, an attorney for the Indigenous Environmental Network and North Coast Rivers Alliance, said Wednesday.

Keystone XL was rejected twice under former President Barack Obama over worries it could make climate change worse.

The pipeline would transport up to 830,000 barrels (35 million gallons) of crude oil daily from western Canada to terminals on the U.S. Gulf Coast.

President Donald Trump has been a strong proponent. The Republican issued a special permit for the pipeline last year after Morris had blocked the project in November 2018, citing potential spills and other

environmental concerns.

A legal challenge to Trump's permit is pending before Morris.

Another oil pipeline in TC Energy's Keystone network in October spilled an estimated 383,000 gallons (1.4 million liters) of oil in eastern North Dakota. Critics say a damaging spill from Keystone XL is inevitable given the length of the line and the many rivers and other waterways it would cross beneath.

Oglala Sioux Tribe approves medical, recreational marijuana

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe passed a referendum to legalize medical and recreational marijuana on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, according to preliminary results from the tribe's election commission.

A proposal to allow alcohol in the tribe's casino failed.

The results of Tuesday's vote will be certified by the end of the month. In the tally from all precincts announced on Wednesday morning, both medical and recreational marijuana passed by wide margins, with 82% of voters approving medical marijuana and 74% approving recreational pot. The alcohol proposal failed by 12 percentage points.

The Oglala Sioux will become the only Native American tribe to set up a cannabis market in a state where it's otherwise illegal. The tribal council is next supposed to enact laws for how marijuana will be legalized and regulated. According to initial plans, the tribe will not take ownership of cannabis production or retail, but license individuals and put a retail tax on pot. The Tribal Council will take up the issue on March 31.

Chase Iron Eyes, a spokesperson for the tribe's president, Julian Bear Runner, said the vote reflected the difference in how many tribal members perceive alcohol and marijuana. He called alcohol a "poison" that was forced on the tribe; whereas he described marijuana as a "healing plant" that presented a path out of poverty and historical trauma.

Iron Eyes said that though traditional Lakota society still eschews both alcohol and pot, people were swayed by the medicinal and economic potential in cannabis.

Tribal leaders have pitched setting up a marijuana resort near the tribe's casino in order to attract tourists visiting the Black Hills. They envision a small eco-tourism industry developing from the increase in visitors.

Rick Gray Grass, who is part of the tribe's executive leadership and pushed the marijuana proposal, said he hopes to have dispensaries open by August or September. He is still formulating the regulations that will be presented to the tribal council. He expected the council to limit people to purchasing an ounce of pot and enact security measures to prevent people from taking it off tribal land.

Still, the proposal sets up a potential conflict with federal and state authorities. The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe in the eastern part of the state attempted to grow and sell marijuana in 2015, but ended up burning its cannabis plants after conflicts with federal and state governments.

Gray Grass argued that the tribe's treaty with the federal government allows them to act as a sovereign nation. "I think we have a stronger stand on Pine Ridge," he said.

Tribal leaders said they want to cooperate with authorities in setting up a marijuana market and have discussed their plans with the U.S. attorney's office for the state. Federal and state law enforcement has not commented on the issue.

The tribe is also looking for ways to get people prescriptions for medical marijuana. Indian Health Services, which provides most of the healthcare on the reservation, will not prescribe marijuana because it is a federal agency. The tribe's current plans do not have special provisions for people with prescriptions.

South Dakota voters will also decide on medical and recreational marijuana legalization in a referendum on ballots in November.

If voters decide to legalize marijuana in the state, it could mean a boom for the tribe's marijuana market. They would have a head start in growing and selling pot, making tribal members the only retailers in the state for a period.

Trent Hancock, a marijuana producer from Oregon who has helped the tribe formulate its pot plans,

hoped that tribal members could sell \$100 million of the product in a year under that scenario.

Ex-priest guilty of stealing cash donations in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A former priest accused of stealing \$260,000 in cash donations from the Diocese of Rapid City has been found guilty on all 65 charges against him.

Marcin Garbacz, 41, had no reaction when a judge read the federal jury verdicts Tuesday on wire fraud, money laundering, filing false tax returns and transporting stolen money, according to the Rapid City Journal.

Garbacz committed the crimes between July 2012 and April 2018 when he was serving as chaplain and teacher for the Rapid City school system.

Garbacz spent the stolen money on expensive artwork and religious objects, a diamond ring, a grand piano, a Cadillac and other pricey items, prosecutors said.

"The cache of worldly treasures accumulated by this common thief looks like something from 'Raiders of the Lost Ark,'" U.S. Attorney Ron Parsons said. "He bought it all using money he stole from his parishioners — money that was intended to help the church and help the poor. The selfishness and greed of it all is mind-boggling."

Garbacz could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison on each of the 59 wire fraud and money laundering counts, up to 10 years for transporting stolen money and up to three years for each of the five tax crime charges.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. 'THINGS WILL GET WORSE THAN THEY ARE RIGHT NOW' Sweeping travel bans accelerate, walling regions apart as the newly declared coronavirus pandemic unfolds and financial markets plunge.
2. TRUMP RESTRICTS TRAVEL FROM EUROPE In a rare Oval Office address, the U.S. president sharply restricts passenger travel from 26 European nations to the U.S. and moves to ease the economic cost of a viral pandemic.
3. BIG EVENTS CANCELED IN AMERICA The NBA postpones its season after one its players tested positive for COVID-19, NCAA tournaments are on but mostly without fans and New York's St. Patrick's Day Parade has been postponed for the first time in its 258-year history.
4. WORLD MARKETS SINK ON PANDEMIC NEWS Shares tumble in Europe and Asia after the new coronavirus was declared a pandemic and the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell into bear market territory.
5. PROTESTS WANE AS VIRUS GRIPS GLOBE The novel coronavirus pandemic has muted protests from Hong Kong to Baghdad to Beirut as civil disobedience and government crackdowns on protests fizzle.
6. WHERE SANDERS MISCALCULATED The democratic socialist did not build a strong coalition of black, young and working-class voters energized by his transformative vision for America, an AP analysis finds.
7. TOM HANKS HOSPITALIZED WITH NEW VIRUS The Oscar winner and his actress-singer wife Rita Wilson are in isolation in an Australian hospital for treatment of COVID-19.
8. AUSTRALIAN CARDINAL APPEALS VERDICT Lawyers for George Pell, the most senior Catholic ever convicted of child sex abuse, cite reasonable doubt as to why the verdict should be thrown out while prosecutors argue that it must stand.
9. WHO IS USING NEW SOCIAL MEDIA SITES TO SHOP Thousands of Cubans are using newly available mobile internet to grapple with shortages of basic goods that are worsening under tougher U.S. sanctions.
10. UTAH JAZZ PLAYER IS PATIENT ZERO Rudy Gobert, a 7-foot-1 center from France, becomes the first player in the NBA to test positive for the new coronavirus, AP learns.

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Americans snap to attention on virus as big events canceled

By **MICHELLE R. SMITH, MARTHA BELLISLE and RACHEL LA CORTE** Associated Press

A basketball tournament, with no fans. A St. Patrick's Day, with no parades. College campuses, with no students. Corporate headquarters, with barren cubicles. California's governor urged people to avoid even small social gatherings, if they can't remain six feet apart.

The nation snapped to attention on Wednesday as the new coronavirus was declared a pandemic, stocks slid into bear market territory and the American public finally began to come to grips with the outbreak. The NBA said it would suspend its season until further notice. President Donald Trump held a rare prime-time address from the Oval Office to calm the public.

Health and government officials have been sounding the alarm about the virus for nearly two months as it infected and killed thousands of people, pinballing from China to Iran to Italy and beyond before striking Seattle in the first deadly outbreak in the U.S.

But Wednesday was the moment that the larger American public came to the dawning realization that the toll of the virus would be unavoidable for months to come, perhaps longer.

In the matter of hours Wednesday afternoon, the signs were everywhere. The NCAA announced that the rite of spring for so many Americans — its college basketball tournament — would be played before largely empty arenas. Around the same time, the White House scheduled a nationally televised address. News feeds lit up with cancellations of St. Patrick's Day parades, major university systems in California, New York and elsewhere ending classes for the term and late night comedians making plans to film without live studio audiences.

CBS Evening News anchor Norah O'Donnell solemnly declared during Wednesday evening's broadcast that two employees of the network had tested positive and those who worked closely with them had been asked to self-quarantine.

Later in the day, Hollywood icon Tom Hanks announced that he and his wife have tested positive for the virus. Just as the Hanks news was bouncing around the internet and on people's phones, the NBA said it would pause its season until further notice.

"The NBA will use this hiatus to determine next steps for moving forward in regard to the coronavirus pandemic," the league said in a statement.

In his prime-time address, Trump declared that he is sharply restricting passenger travel from 26 European nations to the U.S. beginning late Friday, at midnight. Trump said the month-long restrictions won't apply to the United Kingdom, and there would be exemptions for "Americans who have undergone appropriate screenings." He said the U.S. would monitor the situation to determine if travel could be reopened earlier.

"We are all in this together," Trump said.

The Oval Office address was an abrupt shift in tone from a president who has repeatedly sought to downplay the severity of the threat, telling people: "It will go away, just stay calm."

Many Americans shared a mindset similar to Trump's in recent weeks, but the events of Wednesday changed the mood.

Koloud 'Kay' Tarapolsi of the Seattle suburb of Redmond learned that two of her children will have to be kept home from school because their district closed for two weeks starting Thursday. Their Girl Scout activities including cookie-selling have already been curtailed.

"We're adjusting," she said. "If we avoid each other and listen to the scientists, maybe in a few weeks it will be better."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued among the most sweeping "guidance," urging an end to all events involving more than 250 people, and even small gatherings in spaces that don't allow for "social distancing."

"Not holding that concert or community event can have cascading effects — saving dozens of lives and preserving critical health care resources that your family may need a month from now," Newsom said in a statement late Wednesday.

Newsom's announcement is a recommendation, not a ban like the one Washington Gov. Jay Inslee imposed on all gatherings of 250 or more in Seattle's metro area. The San Francisco Bay Area and other

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American cities also have banned large gatherings of people, while celebrations including St. Patrick's Day parades in Chicago and Savannah, Georgia, were canceled.

The World Health Organization called the crisis a pandemic, a step it had previously resisted. Stocks plunged, with the S&P 500 on the cusp of falling into bear territory at nearly 20% lower than the record set just last month.

The Seattle Public School system said it would close for at least two weeks for its 53,000 students. COVID-19 has killed more than two dozen in the Seattle area.

Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Denise Juneau called it "an unprecedented situation."

As of Wednesday evening, 38 people had died in the U.S., while more than 1,300 people had tested positive for the new coronavirus.

That's far less than the toll in other parts of the globe: In Italy, where more than 12,000 people had tested positive and 800 people have died, the situation was so dire that all stores except pharmacies and food markets were ordered closed.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

Meanwhile, from UCLA to the University of Vermont, the number of colleges and universities canceling in-person classes and moving the rest of the semester online mounted.

In New York City, there have only been a few dozen people diagnosed with COVID-19, but the virus is still all that anyone was talking about.

Subway trains, usually jam-packed at rush hour, were unusually uncrowded Wednesday. City transportation officials reported that the number of people cycling to work in Manhattan over the East River bridges has soared 55% over the past few days as people have heeded the mayor's suggestion to avoid public transportation during peak hours.

Some grocery stores across the city, which ran out of hand sanitizer days ago, have seen shelves empty of other items, like bottled water. Public places have seemed a little less teeming, though tourist hubs like Times Square are still attracting plenty of people.

Late night comedians made plans to start filming without live audiences. NBC's "Late Night With Seth Myers" tweeted it was following guidance by New York City officials.

"We hope to do our part to help to decrease the rate of transmission in our communities," it wrote.

Even email boxes were papered with references to the new virus, as employers wrote to workers outlining new work-from-home procedures, and businesses sent emails to customers with subject lines like "Coronavirus update."

Holly Wagner, 20, a sophomore at New York University, said she had been planning on visiting Washington, D.C., over spring break, but now is worried the campus will shut entirely while she's gone, leaving her unable to retrieve belongings.

"I'm worried the situation is going to escalate and they're going to say, 'don't come back to the dorms,'" she said.

Rhode Island Gov. Gina Raimondo also asked residents not to organize or attend gatherings of more than 250 people, but stopped short of an outright ban. Still, at an afternoon news conference, she pleaded for people sick even with just aches and pains to stay home.

"We understand that people have to live their lives and and business has to continue," she said. "However, we only have one chance to contain this."

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

La Corte reported from Olympia, Washington, Smith from Providence. Associated Press writers Adam Geller, David B. Caruso and Theo Wayt in New York; Chris Grygiel in Seattle; Janie Har, Jocelyn Gecker, Olga Rodriguez and Juliet Williams in San Francisco; Robert Jablon in Los Angeles; Lisa Baumann in Seattle; Ken Ritter in Las Vegas; and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Marilynn Marchione in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Virus lockdown means Italy's old are isolated from relatives

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Natalina De Santis' three adult children come to her front door, bringing food to keep her healthy and books to relieve her boredom, but she doesn't let them in any more.

Widowed a few months ago and living alone, the 83-year-old resident of Rome is so afraid of catching the coronavirus that she foregoes all visits as the disease that is especially deadly for the elderly grips Italy. She insists they leave their care packages outside her door and then steps onto her balcony to wave to them.

"If I get sick, what would my children do?" she said in a telephone interview. "They'd have to come, they won't be able to leave me alone. So, to avoid all this, I stay in my home."

Still, De Santis takes comfort in the fact that she gets to see her children, even if they are on the street two floors below.

Elderly people all over the country are being separated from their loved ones as Italy has put in place drastic restrictions on everyday life to tame its dramatic surge in contagions. In a country with one of the world's oldest populations, the viral outbreak is taking its toll on family relationships, that bedrock of Italian life.

Two months ago, Caroline Santoro's 76-year-old father, his dementia worsening, was moved from his home in Rome where he lived with his wife to an adult care facility. Her 70-year-old mother then drove every day to visit him.

"Putting him in the residence was already a dramatic passage for her. But seeing him once a day was the only act of consolation for such a brutal turn" of events, Santoro said, speaking by telephone from home on the day that Italy implemented a nationwide lockdown in a desperate bid to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Then, last week, her family received a devastating notice from the care facility: visits to residents were now "absolutely" forbidden.

"That was the ultimate, the supreme solitude" that compounded the family's anguish for a husband, father and grandfather, Santoro said. Now her mother goes to the residence every two days to bring her husband freshly washed and ironed clothes.

"The controls are so severe now. Up to a few days ago she could at least stay at the door of his section" to peek in at him, she said. "Now someone comes downstairs and takes the clothing."

Some of the residents, whose dementia is less advanced, can keep in touch by telephone or video calls. But her father's illness is too advanced for verbal communication, she said, anguished.

"For us, it's hard. It is the physical contact, the physical nearness that is the essential channel of communication," she said.

Despite the sorrow, Santoro admitted that the safety measures are necessary. Still, the lack of human contact with her elderly parents has brought "great anxiety."

Compounding the anguish is her mother's decision, after the nationally-ordered lockdown, to isolate herself from the family, staying away from Santoro and her children — three sons, ages 11, 9 and 5.

Most people have only mild or moderate symptoms from the new coronavirus, such as fever and cough, but symptoms can be severe, including pneumonia, especially in older adults and people with existing

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health problems. The virus has infected 126,000 people worldwide and killed over 4,600, most of them in China. Over 68,000 people have recovered.

In Italy, the epicenter of Europe's coronavirus outbreak, roughly 23% of the population is over 65. Along with neighboring France, Italy has the largest number of people over 100. In France, medical units are common in assisted living facilities for those over 60 who need daily nursing care.

As COVID-19 cases ratchet up in France, visits to nursing homes by those younger than 15 are being discouraged. Since last weekend, some French facilities have gone into complete lockdown, informing residents' families by email in grim, capital letters that: "UNTIL NEW ORDERS, NO MORE VISITS ARE POSSIBLE."

French President Emmanuel Macron has appealed to citizens not to visit their elderly relatives in nursing homes, adding "I know it can sometimes cause heartache."

With distrust of institutions deeply rooted in many an Italian's psyche, nursing homes and assisted-living setups are a relatively new phenomenon. With many adult children still living at home well into their 30s, older parents often rely on family members for help. Italians aren't terribly mobile, meaning when they strike out on their own, they remain near their childhood homes. And when aging parents need help, many families hire caretakers — often foreigners eager for room-and-board and monthly salaries of about 1,000 euros (\$1,100), far cheaper than a nursing home.

In Rosalia Giardino's condominium building near Rome's Janiculum Hill, several families are living with their elderly parents or, if they themselves are elderly, have at least one adult child living a block or two away. She's an exception.

Her 94-year-old mother lives in Castellammare di Stabia, 240 kilometers (145 miles) south of Rome. The national lockdown, announced Monday night and forbidding people to leave the towns of their official residence except for work and proven necessity, threatens to upend how she has managed to keep her mother, who uses a walker, still living in her home.

"Just two minutes ago I was on the phone talking to my brother," said Giardino. "I asked him, what do you think, can you go by car?"

She was referring to the restrictions on travel between cities. She and her brother, who also lives in Rome, alternate weekend trips down to Castellammare di Stabia to check up on their mother, especially since her Russian aide's Italian is poor and they struggle to understand what she tells them by phone. Giardino doesn't drive, so she usually makes the trip by bus.

Not long ago, purely as a precaution, Giardino put her mother on a waiting list at an assisted-living residence run by Catholic nuns, a five-minute walk from her Rome apartment. About a week ago, she looked at her cell phone and realized she had missed a call from the residence days earlier. In a panic that perhaps she had lost a potential place for her mother, Giardino dialed the nuns.

"When I called, they said, 'Don't worry, signora. With this virus, we are not letting anyone in,'" including new residents, Giardino said.

Associated Press writer John Leicester in Paris contributed.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

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Analysis: Facing virus outbreak, Trump's tactics fall short

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The escalating coronavirus crisis is presenting President Donald Trump with a challenge for which he appears ill-equipped, his favorite political tactics ineffective and his reelection chances in jeopardy.

A rare crisis battering the White House that is not of the president's own making, the spreading coronavirus has panicked global financial markets and alarmed Americans, many of whom have turned to the Oval Office for guidance and reassurances. But what they have found is a president struggling for a solution, unable to settle Wall Street and proving particularly vulnerable to a threat that is out of his control.

In an address to the nation Wednesday night, Trump announced a sweeping travel ban for much of Europe as well as a package of proposals to help steady the teetering economy. But he continued to play down the severity of the situation, painting it as a foreign threat that soon will be banished rather than focusing on managing the growing number of cases at home.

"This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history," Trump declared.

Addressing the economic costs, he added, "This is not a financial crisis, this is just a temporary moment of time that we will overcome together as a nation and as a world."

But the virus has appeared impervious to the Republican president's bluster.

The virus does not have a Twitter account and, unlike so many previous Trump foes, is resistant to political bullying or Republican Party solidarity. It has preyed on his lack of curiosity and fears of germs while exposing divides and inadequacies within senior levels of his administration. It has taken away Trump's favorite political tool, his rallies, from which he draws energy and coveted voter information.

And eight months from Election Day, it has endangered his best reelection argument — a strong economy — just as Joe Biden, the candidate emerging from the Democratic field, seems poised to take advantage of a political landscape upended by the virus.

"Crises of varying degrees produce fascinating and often consequential elections: Think 1860, 1932, 1968, 2008. Such races turn on questions of chaos versus order and favor the candidate who seems to offer the best chance of bringing order to the country in times of uncertainty," presidential historian Jon Meacham said. "What's interesting about those examples is that incumbents, or candidates of the incumbent party, lost all of them."

One of Trump's most potent political assets is his ability to read a room, or a moment, often eschewing long-term planning for instantaneous reaction.

But he was slow to come to grips with the threat posed by the coronavirus as it exploded in China, distracted by impeachment and unwilling to scare the markets by stirring panic or upsetting his trading partner in Beijing, Xi Jinping.

The virus first spooked Trump while he was in India two weeks ago, as a 1,000-point drop on Wall Street caused him to pepper aides with questions about the markets even as he was feted in New Delhi. But after he returned to the states, Trump continued to play down the virus, lashing into officials, including Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, for talking up the possible severity of the threat. He urged other aides, including Kellyanne Conway and senior economic adviser Larry Kudlow, to go on television and preach confidence, according to five White House officials and Republicans close to the White House. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss private conversations.

And as he has so often done before, Trump believed that through his force of will and ability to dominate a news cycle, he could alleviate the crisis, taking to both Twitter and the White House briefing room podium to dismiss the threat.

"It will go away, just stay calm," Trump said Tuesday after visiting Capitol Hill. "Be calm. It's really working out. And a lot of good things are going to happen."

The markets, unlike traditional political foes, have not listened.

And while Trump deemed the media coverage of the virus "a hoax" meant to create hysteria and tank

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his poll numbers, it is a harder sell to ask his supporters to dismiss media reports when they see people in their own communities getting sick, schools closing and local drugstores unable to keep hand sanitizer on the shelves.

Infighting erupted within the administration, as Trump blamed and then sidelined Azar, relegating the health secretary to a secondary role behind Vice President Mike Pence on the coronavirus task force. But while Trump empowered Pence and respected medical professionals to take the lead on briefings, he ignored his advisers' advice to let the vice president be the public face of the administration's response, according to the officials.

Unable to cede the spotlight, Trump spoke extemporaneously to reporters at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta on Friday, requiring the vice president, who addressed the media in Washington moments later, to correct the president's misstatements about the availability of testing kits and the fate of a cruise ship filled with coronavirus patients.

It was only on Monday, as he was flying from Florida back to Washington, that the economic severity of the crisis hit home for Trump, according to three of the officials and advisers.

In one cabin on Air Force One, Matt Gaetz, a Florida GOP congressman who had accompanied Trump to a series of Orlando fundraisers, had isolated himself after learning he'd come into contact with someone infected by the virus. And on the TV in Trump's aircraft office, Fox News was broadcasting dire graphics illustrating the single worst day for stock markets since the 2008 financial crisis.

By the time the plane touched down at Joint Base Andrews, Trump told aides he would change tactics and propose a broad economic stimulus to reassure investors. But the fate of his plan, which included a suspension of the payroll tax, remained unclear as the week went on and the markets' roller coaster ride continued.

"I think that in many ways this has made Trump a wartime president," said former campaign communications director Jason Miller. "This virus has no borders, doesn't discern between allies and foes and attacked the nation's health security and economic security. It is going to take continued bold action from the president."

After surviving impeachment, Trump has in earnest remade his White House staff to focus on reelection, prioritizing loyalty over experience. Increasingly focused on his campaign, Trump pushed aides to continue scheduling massive rallies, even as his Democratic foes had begun canceling theirs.

But late Wednesday, the White House announced that a trip to Colorado and Nevada had been cancelled. At least for now, no rallies were scheduled as a means to blunt the momentum of his likely general election foe, Biden, who offers himself as someone uniquely positioned to respond to the coronavirus.

As vice president, Biden helped manage the Ebola outbreak and has long shown an ability to comfort rattled voters. Moreover, the Trump campaign believes that scuttling normal political activity benefits Biden, who tends to draw small rally crowds and has had some eyebrow-raising moments when interacting with voters.

"This is something that doesn't hurt and probably actually helps Joe Biden," said Eric Trump, the president's son and frequent campaign surrogate. "This works for him on all fronts."

Biden, now in command of the Democratic race after a series of primary wins Tuesday, has drawn a clear comparison between how he would handle the crisis and the president's scattershot approach from the Oval Office.

"At this moment, when there's so much fear in the country and so much fear across the world, we need American leadership," Biden said. "We need presidential leadership that's honest, trusted, truthful and steady, reassuring leadership."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lemire has covered politics and the White House for The Associated Press since 2013.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/@JonLemire>.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

Global shares sink on pandemic news, waning hopes for fix

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares plunged Thursday after the World Health Organization declared a coronavirus pandemic and indexes sank on Wall Street.

France's CAC 40 slipped 6.6% to 4,307.17, while Germany's DAX lost 6.8% to 9,732.75. Britain's FTSE 100 plunged 5.7% to 5,542.17.

The future contract for the Dow Jones Industrial Average slumped 5.2% while the S&P 500's lost 5%.

On Wall Street overnight, the Dow fell into bear market territory, with a loss that dragged it 20% below the record set last month. The broader S&P 500, which professional investors watch more closely, is a single percentage point away from falling into its own bear market, which would end the longest bull market in Wall Street history.

There was no sign of a revival of confidence in Asia.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dived 4.4% to 18,559.63, its lowest close in four years. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dropped 7.4% to 5,304.60. South Korea's Kospi dipped 3.9% to 1,834.33. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 3.7% to 24,309.07, while the Shanghai Composite index shed 1.5% to 2,923.49.

Thailand's benchmark plunged 10% in the afternoon session, triggering a 30-minute halt to trading. It fell further after trading resumed, losing 11%. The Philippine market lost 10%, also resulting in a trading halt. In both cases the declines were the worst single-day losses since the 2008 financial crisis.

India's Sensex swooned 8.6%.

With the markets still falling, "we haven't seen, you know, a significant buy-in interest yet, so traders are still in the get-out mode. They just want to have it in cash," said Jackson Wong of Amber Hill Capital Ltd., in Hong Kong.

"So that's a typical panic mode, but whether this panic mode will stop in the short term, it really will depend on how the virus incident goes forward," Wong said.

The recent decline has been one of Wall Street's swiftest retreats of this magnitude. The fastest the S&P 500 has ever fallen from a record into a bear market was over 55 days in 1987.

Vicious market swings are becoming routine as investors rush to sell amid uncertainty about how badly the outbreak will hit the economy.

Some economies were already slowing before the viral outbreak even began to cause massive disruptions, first in central China where the virus originated and gradually across Asia.

President Donald Trump's announcement of travel restrictions for most European countries added to concerns over disruptions to travel and trade, while the WHO's warning over "alarming levels of inaction" by governments in corralling the virus further raised the alarm.

Trump hinted at plans for tax cuts and other economic relief late Monday, but he has yet to unveil any details. Lawmakers have resisted his proposal for a cut to payroll taxes.

"The market judgement on that (Trump's) announcement is that it's too little too late. And while travel restrictions on people coming from Europe are good from a health point of view, from the point of view of the economy, it's very, very bad news," said Michael McCarthy of CMC Markets.

He added, "there are real concerns imply not enough has been done to deal with the economic fallout of the virus and the verdict of the markets has been severe."

Wednesday's 1,464.90 point loss for the Dow wiped out its 1,167-point gain from Tuesday and stands as the index's second-largest point drop, trailing only Monday's plunge of 2,013.

Investors would like to see coordinated action from governments and central banks to stem the threat to the economy from the virus. Lower interest rates and government spending won't solve the crisis — only containment of the virus can — but they can spur business activity and help prop up demand.

"The sheer speed and the size of the falls we've seen and the huge volumes of shares exchanging hands here and around the globe tells us that we're not at the end of this as yet and we're likely to see further

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damage over the coming days and weeks," McCarthy said.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus, but the fear is that the global economy could tip into a recession, with slowdowns in production and a plunge in business activity as people stay home instead of traveling, shopping or dining out.

Many analysts expect markets to swing sharply until the number of new infections stops accelerating. In the United States, the number of cases has topped 1,000. Worldwide, more than 126,000 people have been infected, and over 4,600 have died.

Treasury yields, one of the loudest alarm bells on Wall Street about the economic risks of the crisis, remain well below 1%, with the yield on the 10-year Treasury at 0.74% from 0.83% late Wednesday. That's a sign of diminished demand for safe investments.

Strategists at Goldman Sachs on Wednesday sharply cut their expectations for earnings growth this year, saying it will lead to the end of the bull market for the S&P 500, which began more than a decade ago. It said it expects the drawdown to be brief, however, as earnings rebound later in the year.

A plunge in crude prices has wiped out profits for energy companies, while record-low Treasury yields are squeezing the financial sector. Strategists say S&P 500 earnings per share could fall enough to drag the index down to 2,450 in the middle of the year. That would be a nearly 28% drop from its record.

In other trading, benchmark U.S. crude lost \$1.64 to \$31.35 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost \$1.38 to \$32.98 per barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, the standard for international pricing, gave up \$1.76 to \$34.03 per barrel.

The dollar weakened to 103.78 Japanese yen from 104.53 yen on Wednesday. The euro inched down to \$1.1239 from \$1.1271.

Katie Tam and Phoebe Lai in Hong Kong contributed.

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Analysis: Sanders may have learned wrong lessons from 2016

By WILL WEISSERT and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bernie Sanders pledged to harness the energy from his first campaign to turn out more voters in 2020. He would build a coalition of black, young and working-class voters who were energized by his transformative vision for America to build a broad coalition that would make him an unstoppable force against Democratic rivals and President Donald Trump.

He was wrong.

Virtually every expectation that the Vermont senator carried into his second White House bid has been overturned by Joe Biden's dramatic comeback. The former vice president has emerged as the candidate preferred by African Americans from South Carolina to Mississippi and Michigan. Biden has also won voters without college degrees and made striking inroads in the suburbs that could be critical to control of the White House in November.

"Last night, obviously, was not a good night for our campaign, from a delegate point of view," Sanders said Wednesday in his first public comments since he lost Michigan, the state that solidified his insurgent campaign four years ago.

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Sanders isn't going anywhere immediately. He will be in Arizona on Sunday for a one-on-one debate against Biden. Arizona, which votes next Tuesday, is one of the few remaining bright spots on the primary calendar for Sanders. Having demonstrated new strength with Latinos this year, he hopes similar support in Arizona could at least momentarily blunt Biden.

But the hurdles are getting higher. Sanders needs to win 57% of the remaining delegates to wrest the nomination from Biden. Both the rules for allocating delegates and voting history suggest that will be difficult.

Sanders' challenge is demonstrated in part by his support among young voters. In Michigan, the largest of six states that voted last Tuesday, about 70% of voters under 30 backed Sanders. But they accounted for only 14% of voters, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the state's electorate.

Veteran Democratic strategist James Carville criticized Sanders' flawed belief that he could fundamentally change the electorate by relying on the young.

"There was no chance," Carville said. "Any political scientist with an IQ above room temperature could have told you that."

If one of Sanders' strongest constituencies doesn't turn out in large numbers, it may do him little good.

However long Sanders remains in the race, Biden's resurgence laid bare that, at his core, the senator is in some ways more of a cause than a candidate. And movement politics rarely lead to winning national elections.

Sanders' team also appears to have underappreciated the shift in the nation's suburbs away from Trump and toward centrist Democrats who were vital in sweeping the party back into control of the House in 2018.

Sanders' embrace of democratic socialism is particularly scary to such educated moderates, who, above all, are looking for the most "electable" candidate to take on Trump this fall.

"Bernie is Captain 35%. That's the magic number of the ultra-liberal, ultra-progressives that are standing with him bar none," Democratic pollster Jeff Pollock said. "He failed to grow."

As disappointing as that may be for Sanders, it's also a warning sign for Trump, who has repeatedly tailored his appeal to his most fervent supporters. Both men found success in 2016 in part because they could benefit from the public's harsh judgment of Hillary Clinton, who contended with both unwarranted sexism and self-inflicted wounds built up over more than three decades in the public eye.

Without Clinton as a foil in 2020, the appeal of Sanders didn't seem to expand beyond his most loyal supporters. Trump could face the same challenge in the fall.

"Joe Biden doesn't have those enemies," Pollock said.

Biden faces plenty of challenges. Trump and his allies are revving up their attacks on the former vice president and have been stunningly effective in defining their opponents in the past.

And, for better or worse, the public has a clear understanding of Sanders' view of the world, defined mostly by his unyielding push to scrap private insurance with a government-run system. Biden's doctrine often seems less clear beyond being the candidate seen as having the best chance to beat Trump.

"I cannot tell you how many people our campaign has spoken to who have said, 'I like what your campaign stands for. I agree with what your campaign stands for. But I'm gonna vote for Joe Biden because I think Joe is the best candidate to defeat Donald Trump,'" Sanders lamented Wednesday.

Simply being a more moderate, palatable alternative to Trump may not be enough to win an election, as Clinton learned in 2016 after she positioned her campaign as a unifying counter to divisive polarization.

"I have voted for a moderate Democrat every election since I was 18 and (Al) Gore was our candidate, and a moderate Democrat has lost every election," said Jennifer Epps-Addison, the co-executive director of the Center for Popular Democracy Action, which had endorsed Sanders.

Despite the best wishes of his fervent supporters, Sanders is showing no sign of expanding his support as Biden grows his diverse coalition of African Americans, working-class whites and suburbanites.

And Sanders is quickly running out of chances to prove he can win this race. Biden's campaign released a memo Wednesday night highlighting Sanders' shrinking path to the Democratic presidential nomination.

"Should our broad base of support remain — and we have seen no signs that would indicate other-

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wise — it will be nearly impossible for Sanders to recoup his current delegate disadvantage,” the Biden campaign wrote.

Peoples reported from New York.

EDITOR’S NOTE — Associated Press writer Will Weissert has been covering politics for the AP since 2012. AP National Political Writer Steve Peoples has been covering politics for the AP since 2011.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, “Ground Game.”

Iraq will investigate attack on base that killed U.S. troops

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq’s military on Thursday said it opened an investigation into a rocket attack hours earlier that killed three servicemen, including two Americans, at an Iraqi base housing coalition forces.

At least 12 coalition personnel were also injured late Wednesday by a barrage of rockets targeting Camp Taji base, located 27 kilometers (17 miles) north of Baghdad, according to a U.S.-led coalition statement. A truck rigged with 107 mm Katyusha rocket launchers was discovered by Iraqi security forces a few kilometers (miles) from the base following the attack.

A military statement from Iraq’s joint operations command said caretaker Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi ordered the investigation into what he called “a very serious security challenge and hostile act.”

The United Nations condemned the attack, saying it took “critical political attention away” from Iraq’s ongoing domestic challenges, which threaten to create power vacuum at the seat of Iraq’s government.

“The last thing Iraq needs is to serve as an arena for vendettas and external battles,” the statement said.

Heightened tensions between the United States and Iran in recent months were set in motion by a rocket attack in December on an Iraqi base that killed a U.S. contractor. American airstrikes targeting the Iran-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah followed, which led to protests at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad.

A U.S. drone strike in Baghdad then killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, a top commander responsible for expeditionary operations across the wider Mideast. Iran struck back with a ballistic missile attack on U.S. forces in Iraq, the Islamic Republic’s most direct assault on America since the 1979 seizing of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

Wednesday’s attack coincided with what would have been Soleimani’s birthday.

The potential power vacuum looming over Iraq comes after the prime minister-designate, Mohammed Allawi, withdrew his nomination earlier this month. That followed political squabbling over the naming of his cabinet. Shortly afterward, the caretaker premier, Abdul-Mahdi, said he would no longer carry out most of his official duties and called for early elections.

There are at least 5,200 U.S. troops in Iraq, training and advising Iraqi forces as part of a global coalition.

Locked out: Europeans grapple with new US travel ban

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — They had spent months planning their route, a 3,500-kilometer (2,200-mile) trans-America road trip, a voyage of a lifetime.

Just when it was within touching distance, with a flight into New Orleans booked for March 24, Jean-Michel and Christiane Deaux’s dream trip evaporated, falling victim to the new anti-virus travel ban announced Wednesday by U.S. President Donald Trump.

The French retirees were among legions of Europeans scrambling Thursday to adjust to the idea that the United States is now suddenly off-limits to them.

“We’ve been preparing this trip for years,” Jean-Michel Deaux said. “It was going to be a pilgrimage.”

Their March-May voyage would have taken them through multiple states, on a giant south-north loop. They planned to follow in the footsteps of the Marquis de Lafayette, the French aristocrat who fought

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with American colonists against the British. They wanted to see Amish communities in Pennsylvania, take in music in Memphis and ride a boat on the Mississippi. They even bought extra suitcases to carry gifts and souvenirs back to France.

"I've been studying the maps every night," Deaux said. "I had already pictured myself on the boat."

As the pandemic grips Europe and the U.S., it continues to ebb in China, where the first cases of COVID-19 emerged in December. It reported a record low of just 15 new cases Thursday and was cautiously monitoring new arrivals who were returning with the virus from elsewhere.

More than three-fourths of China's patients have recovered. Most people have only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, though symptoms can be severe, including pneumonia, especially in older adults and people with existing health problems. Recovery for mild cases takes about two weeks, while more severe illness may take three to six weeks, the World Health Organization says.

Trump, in a rare Oval Office address to the nation Wednesday night, said the monthlong restriction on travel from Europe would begin late Friday, at midnight.

While Trump said all European travel would be cut off, Homeland Security officials later clarified that the new travel restrictions would apply only to most foreign nationals who have been in the "Schengen Area" at any point for 14 days prior to their scheduled arrival to the United States. The area includes France, Italy, Germany, Greece, Austria, Belgium and others, and the White House said the zone has the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases outside of mainland China.

On the receiving end of the restrictions, Europeans struggled to make sense of it. And there were immediate howls of concern from the travel industry.

Deaux said he'd try to reschedule their voyage for later in the year, in hopes the virus passes.

"When I heard this morning, I was very disappointed but not surprised," he said. "All the preparations, ruined."

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

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World walls off as leaders warn viral pandemic will worsen

By **MATT SEDENSKY** and **JAMEY KEATEN** Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — People around the world became increasingly closed off from one another Thursday as sweeping travel bans accelerated, walling regions apart as a viral pandemic unfolds and financial markets plunge.

It was an outbreak moving, at once, both glacially and explosively, with a virus first detected three months ago in China creeping across borders and producing eruptive outbreaks that have crippled areas.

Even for a crisis that has brought no shortage of headlines, dizzying developments were flashing across screens: An official designation of "pandemic" from the World Health Organization, a dramatic halt to much travel between the United States and 26 European countries, and infections among beloved Hollywood stars, sports luminaries and political leaders. All of it came against a backdrop of plunging world economies that left not only Wall Street investors but people from all walks of life hurting.

"We will see more cases and things will get worse than they are right now," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

President Donald Trump, who had downplayed the virus for days, suddenly struck a different tone, delivering a somber Oval Office address announcing strict rules on travel from much of Europe to begin this weekend. The State Department followed with an extraordinary warning to Americans to "reconsider travel abroad" too. Local leaders warned things would only get worse.

"This will be a very difficult time," said Dr. Jeff Duchin a top public health official for the Seattle area,

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which has one of the biggest U.S. outbreaks. "It's similar to what you might think of as an infectious disease equivalent of a major earthquake that's going to shake us for weeks and weeks."

Across the U.S., where cases now number more than 1,300, a sense of urgency was pervasive.

Nursing homes turned away visitors, schools emptied of students and workplace cubicles went vacant. A rite of spring, college basketball's March Madness, was set to proceed in empty arenas, while professional basketball won't play at all. Joyous, booze-filled, green-splashed celebrations of St. Patrick's Day were called off. TV shows taped without audiences, rush-hour crowds in New York subway cars disappeared, and families hunkered down wondering what would come next.

"If we avoid each other and listen to the scientists, maybe in a few weeks it will be better," said Koloud 'Kay' Tarapolsi of Redmond, Washington, who has two children whose schools were being closed beginning Thursday.

As the pandemic grips Europe and the U.S., it continues to ebb in China, where the first cases of COVID-19 emerged in December. It reported a record low of just 15 new cases Thursday and was cautiously monitoring new arrivals who were returning with the virus from elsewhere.

More than three-fourths of China's patients have recovered. Most people have only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, though symptoms can be severe, including pneumonia, especially in older adults and people with existing health problems. Recovery for mild cases takes about two weeks, while more severe illness may take three to six weeks, WHO says.

More than 126,000 people in more than 110 countries have been infected. But WHO emphasized the vast majority are in just four countries: China and South Korea — where new cases are declining — and Iran and Italy, where they are not.

"We have called every day for countries to take urgent and aggressive action," said WHO's leader, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "We have rung the alarm bell loud and clear."

High-profile announcements of infections made the alarms even louder. Double Oscar winner Tom Hanks said he and his wife Rita Wilson tested positive. Australian officials say the couple are in a Queensland hospital and their close contacts would have to self-quarantine.

In Italy, soccer club Juventus said defender Daniele Rugani tested positive. In Iran, the senior vice president and two other Cabinet ministers were reported to have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Italy, already under unprecedented restrictions, tightened rules even more. Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte announcing the closure of pubs, restaurants, hair salons, cafeterias and other businesses that can't ensure a meter (yard) of space between workers and customers.

"In this moment, all the world is looking at us," Conte said, as the rules brought an eerie hush to places around Italy.

Asian shares plunged Thursday, following a drop of 1,464 points of the Dow Jones Industrial Average, putting the index 20% below its record set last month and into fearsome territory Wall Street calls a "bear market."

"There's a real feeling that we don't know where this ends," said Brad McMillan, chief investment officer for Commonwealth Financial Network.

Keaten reported from Geneva. Contributing to this report were Associated Press writers Maria Cheng in London; John Leicester in Paris; Colleen Barry in Soave, Italy; Nicole Winfield and Frances D'Emilio in Rome; Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington; Chris Grygiel and Lisa Baumann in Seattle; and Adam Geller, David B. Caruso and Theo Wayt in New York.

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Patient Zero: Gobert's health scare shuts down NBA for now

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

It started as a joke: Before leaving a post-practice interview session Rudy Gobert touched all the tape recorders that were placed before him on a table, devices that reporters who cover the Utah Jazz were using during an availability with him on Monday before a game with the Detroit Pistons.

It isn't so funny now.

Gobert is now the NBA's Patient Zero for coronavirus after becoming the first player in the league to test positive, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press.

The 7-foot-1 Frenchman is at the center of why the league has been shut down for the foreseeable future:

— Utah's game against Oklahoma City Wednesday night was canceled and the Pistons are among five teams that have played the Jazz — and Gobert — since the start of March, the others being Boston, Toronto, New York and Cleveland.

— Gobert shared the court with 50 opposing players in those games, plus 15 referees.

— One of the refs was Courtney Kirkland, who was to work the New Orleans-Sacramento game on Wednesday that got canceled because he had been on the court with Gobert two nights earlier, and who knows how many ballboys, stat-crew employees, security guards, attendants and others did as well.

— Then there's Gobert's own teammates and the Jazz coaches and staff. And everyone he's been on a plane with in recent days. Or shared a hotel elevator with. Or dined with. Or shook hands with. And so on, and so on.

"I'm sure I probably had contact with him," Detroit's Langston Galloway said.

He added, "Staying focused on that moment of interaction with a lot of different people and knowing that at the end of the day you might have touched the ball, you might have interacted with a fan and just being (cautious) with that going forward."

The shutdown could cost teams well into the hundreds of millions of dollars depending on how long the shutdown lasts. Those teams that have faced Gobert in recent days will likely face some testing. And some of those Jazz reporters said they were getting tested for COVID-19, just in case.

"It's unprecedented," Detroit Pistons coach Dwane Casey said. "I think it's the prudent thing to do. And what went on in Utah, I don't know all the information but that just shows you how fragile everything is right now."

This is the reality of the coronavirus, which was labeled a pandemic by the World Health Organization on Wednesday weeks after beginning its havoc-wreaking global run that has sickened well over 100,000 and killed more than 4,000.

Charlotte coach James Borrego said these are scary times in the NBA, and no one argued.

"They're all concerned and rightfully so," Casey said. "Everybody in our league should be concerned. I think everybody in our country right now, more than just basketball, is concerned. We all have to take care of ourselves and look out for our fellow man."

That's what Orlando's Evan Fournier did Wednesday night.

Fournier, a French national teammate of Gobert's, reached out to him after news of the diagnosis and leaguewide shutdown broke.

"Was just on the phone with Rudy," Fournier wrote. "He is doing good man. Lets not (panic) everyone. Love you all."

More AP NBA: https://twitter.com/AP_Sports and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

The new mask: Wave of global revolt replaced by virus fear

By ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — As 2019 gave way to 2020 in a cloud of tear gas, and in some cases a hail of bullets, from Hong Kong to Baghdad, from Beirut to Barcelona and Santiago, it seemed civil disobedience and government crackdowns on protests would dominate the international landscape.

Then came the coronavirus.

Protests, by their very nature driven by large gatherings, have been doused. Streets crammed with tens of thousands of chanting protesters are largely deserted. Masks worn to protect against tear gas are now worn to protect against the virus. A very different kind of fear has set in around protest camps and around the world.

The global unrest spanned three continents last year, fueled by local grievances but reflecting worldwide frustration at growing inequality, corrupt elites and broken promises. In Hong Kong, Beirut and Barcelona, images of euphoric protesters captured people's imaginations around the world even as they were beaten back, and in some cases, shot dead by police.

In most of these places, the protests had waned even before the outbreak — a combination of fear and fatigue giving way to resignation or apathy. The spreading new coronavirus has in some cases given authorities a means to further suppress the protests.

But the movements are not over. Even with the panic and adjusted daily behavior engulfing the world, some continue to demonstrate, insisting they have sacrificed too much to give up. With the street revolts' underlying causes largely unaddressed, those surviving remnants could eventually swell once more.

SIGNATURE FACE MASKS

Hong Kong's protesters made face masks a signature of revolt, wearing them to protect against tear gas and conceal their identities from authorities.

These same masks are now ubiquitous around the world -- worn by people from China and Iran, to Italy and America, seeking to protect against the coronavirus.

In Hong Kong, major anti-government protests that at times drew hundreds of thousands of marchers began to tail off late last year.

But smaller-scale gatherings continue to spring up, mostly to mark the anniversary of key incidents during last year's demonstrations, underlining the refusal of city leader Carrie Lam to give in to most of the movement's demands.

"The movement that began last June, while no longer regularly making the front pages, is still very much underway and Hong Kong remains on the brink," wrote Jeffrey Wasserstrom, a historian of modern China at the University of California, Irvine.

The government's handling of the virus outbreak may add to protesters' long list of grievances, he said.

Complaints include the selection of quarantine sites, Lam's refusal to close the border with China entirely and the stranding of Hong Kong residents in virus-hit parts of mainland China, although some returned home last week.

In Chile, protests that drew hundreds of thousands of people demanding social reforms late last year had dropped off dramatically during the southern hemisphere's summer months. Those who are never absent are the masked hard-liners who clash violently with police.

They call themselves the "first line" of defense for other protesters from police repression.

Despite the expanding coronavirus, Carlos Donoso, a 30-year-old tattoo artist, says he won't stop protesting.

"You could catch it in the disco, at the gym, in the supermarket. It's much more important what we're doing now," he said.

In India, fear of the virus has had almost no impact on an 85-day-long sit-in led by women in New Delhi's sprawling Muslim-majority neighborhood of Shaheen Bagh, now an epicenter of the protests over a disputed new citizenship law. Hundreds of women take turns maintaining the around-the-clock gathering.

The demonstrators demand the revocation of the citizenship law, which fast-tracks naturalization for

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religious minorities from several neighboring countries, but not Muslims. The law caused an explosion of communal violence and rioting in New Delhi, with dozens killed.

Organizers say more women and children were now participating in the sit-in after authorities closed all primary schools in the capital because of the coronavirus.

"We are also taking the necessary precautions by wearing masks," said Hena Ahmad, a protester.

In a twist, thousands of women across Mexico made their protests felt this week by staying home from work and school, to demonstrate against gender-based violence. And teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg called for digital protests for now, to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

'BETTER TO DIE PROTESTING'

The protest camps in central Beirut and Baghdad are subdued. The coronavirus was the last straw for two struggling protest movements that for a short while seemed like they might actually achieve at least some of the social change they so desperately aspired for.

Both countries, scarred by long conflicts and on the brink of economic collapse, erupted last October in unprecedented, spontaneous anti-government revolts, calling for revolutionary change. "Thieves!" they shouted to describe a hated and corrupt ruling class they blame for their current despair.

But security crackdowns, disputes among the protesters, economic exhaustion and a craving for normalcy greatly diminished the rallies in recent weeks.

Protesters in both countries now struggle to attract demonstrators with the added obstacle of outbreak worries. Both the Iraqi and Lebanese governments have called on citizens to avoid large gatherings, although they have not yet banned protests outright.

"What are you waiting for? Do not fear corona, you are dying anyway from the air you breathe!" shouted a woman in Beirut marching along with a small group of protesters, referring to Lebanon's chronic pollution and waste management troubles. "Better to die protesting."

To encourage protesters, Iraqis set up a sterilization booth on the edge of Baghdad's Tahrir Square for those entering the encampment at the center of their movement. Civil defense teams sterilized the square and the Turkish Restaurant, a Baghdad high-rise where protesters have been staging a sit-in, turning it into a potent symbol of the demonstrations.

On a recent day, protesters wearing face masks and protective suits marched in Tahrir Square.

"The demonstrations may make you ill, but they will not kill you," said Ali Salih, 30, who works as a volunteer paramedic for the protesters. "We gave at least 700 martyrs and more than 25,000 wounded. How can it end without fulfilling its demands?"

Associated Press writers Ken Moritsugu in Beijing, Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi, India, Eva Vergara, in Santiago, Chile, Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Samya Kullab in Baghdad contributed reporting. ____

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Most coronavirus patients recover, still anxiety, fear loom

By CARLA K. JOHNSON and VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Amid all the fears, quarantines and stockpiling of food, it has been easy to ignore the fact that more than 60,000 people have recovered from the coronavirus spreading around the globe.

The disease can cause varying degrees of illness and is especially troublesome for older adults and people with existing health problems, who are at risk of severe effects, including pneumonia. But for most of those affected, coronavirus creates only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, with the vast majority recovering from the virus.

According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe ailments may take three to six weeks to rebound. In mainland China, where the virus first exploded, more than 80,000 people have been diagnosed, but more than 58,000 already have recovered.

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Because the difference in impact can be so great, global health authorities have the difficult task of alerting the public to the virus' dangers without creating panic.

Already, the widespread consequences of the virus have been staggering, sending shock waves through the world's financial markets. Global oil prices sustained their worst percentage losses since the the Gulf War in 1991, and new restrictions were imposed in Italy and in Israel as the Holy Week approached.

But even some of the most vulnerable patients can fight their way through the disease.

Charlie Campbell's father, 89-year-old Eugene Campbell, has been diagnosed with the coronavirus and is hospitalized in Edmonds, Washington. Charlie Campbell said his father's doctor is cautiously optimistic, adding, "Under normal circumstances, he would discharge my dad, but these aren't normal circumstances."

Eugene Campbell came to the hospital from Life Care Center, a nursing home in Kirkland that has been linked to nineteen of Washington state's 23 coronavirus deaths.

"We went and saw him yesterday and he looked pretty good," Campbell said, noting that his father is breathing normally and his vital signs and heart rate are good. "He may be the oldest person to recover from coronavirus."

For some who've been quarantined, anxiety and dread that they will become stigmatized by friends, neighbors and co-workers have made them reluctant to acknowledge even the most modest health impact. A few patients with the virus who were interviewed by The Associated Press — all of them passengers on the Diamond Princess cruise ship that ended up quarantined off Japan — described symptoms that were no stronger than a regular cold or flu.

"It's been a 2 on a scale of 10," said Carl Goldman, hospitalized in Omaha, Nebraska, since Feb. 17, after developing a 103-degree fever on a chartered flight from Japan to the U.S.

Goldman is staying hydrated with Gatorade. He said he continued coughing more than two weeks after he first got sick, but would probably only have missed one day of work if he had been diagnosed with the cold or flu. He stays active by pacing in his room, trying to match his pre-sickness routine of 10,000 daily steps on the pedometer.

"I totally get this is where I need to be and I need to be cleared of this before I'm released," he said.

Greg Yerex, who was diagnosed along with his wife, Rose Yerex, on the Diamond Princess, said he had no symptoms and felt as healthy as he did on any other normal day.

"If I was home, I would be out doing everything I normally do," he said in an interview conducted via Facebook calls when the couple were still hospitalized in Nagoya, Japan. Rose Yerex tested negative when she got to the hospital.

For Greg Yerex, it was the couple's mental health that faced the biggest threat as they they spent days in quarantine, isolated from friends and family and deprived of any direct human contact.

"It's like being a prisoner," he said. "You pace, you worry, you fret, you imagine all sorts of things. You have no control."

Greg Yerez said that he and hsi wife, who have since been released from the hospital, plan to go to counseling to work through the mental stress they experienced.

Fellow cruise passenger Rebecca Frasure knows how they feel.

"I don't get to speak with anyone," she said in a Facebook call while still hospitalized in Nagoya. "I have a little window in my room, but cannot leave. The only contact I have is through Facebook messenger. I would never wish this on anyone."

Frasure said one of the things she found most frustrating was waiting for her test results to come back. Patients who have been diagnosed with the virus must have two consecutive negative tests before they can be released.

Frasure is now out of the hospital, but is worried about being stigmatized by her home community.

"Are they going to be afraid?" she wondered. "Are they going to criticize me for being home, thinking I brought virus back with me?"

This story corrects that the Gulf War was in 1991, not 1999.

Milko reported from Jakarta, Indonesia.

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In battle against virus, Trump restricts travel from Europe

By **JILL COLVIN, ZEKE MILLER, LISA MASCARO and ANDREW TAYLOR** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taking dramatic action, President Donald Trump sharply restricted passenger travel from 26 European nations to the U.S. and moved to ease the economic cost of a viral pandemic that is roiling global financial markets and disrupting the daily lives of Americans.

Trump, in a rare Oval Office address to the nation Wednesday night, said the monthlong restriction on travel would begin late Friday, at midnight. After days of playing down the coronavirus threat, he blamed Europe for not acting quickly enough to address the "foreign virus" and claimed that U.S. clusters were "seeded" by European travelers.

"We made a lifesaving move with early action on China," Trump said. "Now we must take the same action with Europe."

Trump said the restrictions won't apply to the United Kingdom, and there would be exemptions for "Americans who have undergone appropriate screenings." He said the U.S. would monitor the situation to determine if travel could be reopened earlier.

The State Department followed Trump's remarks by issuing an extraordinary global health advisory cautioning U.S. citizens to "reconsider travel abroad" due to the virus and associated quarantines and restrictions.

Trump spoke after days of confusion in Washington and in the face of mounting calls on the president to demonstrate greater leadership. At times, though, his remarks contributed to the uncertainty.

While Trump said all European travel would be cut off, Homeland Security officials later clarified that the new travel restrictions would apply only to most foreign nationals who have been in the "Schengen Area" at any point for 14 days prior to their scheduled arrival to the United States. The area includes France, Italy, Germany, Greece, Austria, Belgium and others, and the White House said the zone has the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases outside of mainland China.

The restrictions don't apply to legal permanent residents, immediate family of U.S. citizens or others "identified in the proclamation" signed by Trump.

And Trump misspoke when he said the prohibitions would "not only apply to the tremendous amount of trade and cargo, but various other things." The official proclamation released after Trump spoke made clear it applies to people, not goods and cargo.

The Oval Office address represented an abrupt shift in tone from a president who has repeatedly sought to play down the severity of the virus outbreak. Many Americans shared a similar mindset in recent weeks, but the grueling events of Wednesday changed the mood: Communities canceled public events nationwide, universities moved to cancel in-person classes, and families grappled with the impact of disruptions to public schools. The number of confirmed cases of the infection topped 1,000 in the U.S. and the World Health Organization declared the global crisis is now a pandemic.

Even as Trump spoke from behind the Resolute Desk, the pandemic's ferocious rewriting of American daily life continued. The National Basketball Association suspended its season, and Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks announced that he and his wife, Rita Wilson, had tested positive for COVID-19. The first confirmed case on Capitol Hill was reported in a legislative staffer.

After Trump spoke, the White House cancelled a planned trip by the president to Nevada and Colorado this week, "out of an abundance of caution." Trump's re-election campaign also postponed a planned March 19 event in Milwaukee that was set to feature the president.

After a week of mixed messages and false starts, and as government officials warned in increasingly urgent terms that the outbreak in the U.S. will only get worse, Washington suddenly seemed poised to act.

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Congress unveiled a multibillion-dollar aid package Wednesday that was expected to be voted on by the House as soon as Thursday.

"I can say we will see more cases, and things will get worse than they are right now," Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, said in testimony before the House Oversight and Reform Committee. He said the virus is "10 times more lethal than the seasonal flu."

S&P 500 futures went from a loss of about 0.4% before Trump spoke to a decline of 1.5% afterwards. The decline in the futures market followed a steep 4.9% drop in regular trading Wednesday. Wall Street investors are increasingly concerned that the Trump administration and other governments won't be able to do enough to prevent the virus outbreak from causing significant damage to the global economy.

After Trump's address, Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced a series of moves, including restrictions for 60 days on travel by servicemembers, Defense Department civilians and their families to, from and through the four counties currently designated by the Centers for Disease Control as the highest risk COVID-19 counties — China, Iran, South Korea and Italy.

In his remarks, Trump focused more on the threat of travel continuing to bring in illness when, in fact, in parts of the country there already is "community spread" — meaning people who don't have a known travel exposure are becoming infected.

In an omission that Democratic leaders called "alarming," Trump left unaddressed the testing backlog that is hampering efforts to learn just how many Americans already are infected. And while he warned the elderly to avoid risky crowds, advised nursing homes to suspend visitors and told sick people to stay home from work, he didn't address one of the biggest concerns — whether hospitals are equipped to handle the sick or will be overwhelmed.

Georgetown University public health expert Lawrence Gostin tweeted in reaction to Trump's speech, "Most of Europe is as safe as US," and COVID-19 "is already here; germs don't respect borders."

Trump said he was also directing agencies to provide unspecified financial relief for "for workers who are ill, quarantined or caring for others due to coronavirus," and asked Congress to take action to extend it. White House aides declined to provide details on Trump's announcement.

Trump said the U.S. will defer tax payments for some individual and business filers for three months to lessen the impacts of the virus outbreak. He said the Small Business Administration will also make low-interest loans available to businesses to help them weather the storm.

"This is not a financial crisis," he said. "This just a temporary moment of time that we will overcome together as a nation and as a world."

Trump also reiterated his call on Congress to pass a cut to the federal payroll tax in order to stimulate the economy, though that idea has been dismissed by many lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. He remained silent on his previous calls to provide assistance to industries hard-hit by the pandemic like airlines and cruise ships.

On Capitol Hill, House Democrats late Wednesday introduced an economic assistance plan that would provide free coronavirus testing nationwide and emergency funding to reimburse lost paychecks for those self-quarantining, missing work or losing jobs amid the outbreak.

The draft legislation contains a new, temporary federal sick leave benefit for coronavirus victims and caregivers -- two-thirds of an employee's monthly income for up to three months -- as well as a permanent mandate for employers to provide up to seven days of sick leave for their workers and 14 days leave in case of public health emergencies.

Facing a likely surge in unemployment claims, the package would also give states money for the newly jobless. It would provide additional funding for food and nutrition benefits for pregnant women, mothers and young children.

It also would up money for "meals on wheels" and food for low-income elderly people, as well as additional Medicaid funding for states facing a fiscal crunch.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, whom Trump tapped to negotiate with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, urged Congress "to pass legislation quickly." But while the ambitious package should breeze through the House on Thursday, Senate Republicans are likely to seek changes.

The administration had floated several other strategies, including the rare idea of declaring a national disaster that could potentially unlock funding streams, according to a person unauthorized to discuss the planning and granted anonymity. But Trump ultimately opted against taking that step Wednesday.

Trump, 73, is considered at higher risk because of his age and has repeatedly flouted the advice of public health experts, who have advised the public to stop hand-shaking and practice social distancing. But that didn't stop him from calling on fellow citizens to help combat the virus' spread. "For all Americans, it is essential that everyone take extra precautions and practice good hygiene. Each of us has a role to play in defeating this virus," he said.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

Congress' attending physician told staff there could be 70 million to 100 million coronavirus cases in the U.S. That's on par with other estimates. A Harvard official has estimated that 20% to 60% of adults will get the virus, noting it's "a pretty wide range."

In Washington, tourists still arrived at the U.S. Capitol, but an official unauthorized to discuss the situation and speaking on condition of anonymity confirmed that tours would soon be shut down.

Associated Press writers Luran Neergaard, Martin Crutsinger, Laurie Kellman and Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

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Trump ban on travel from Europe escalates pain for airlines

By **DAVID KOENIG** and **PAUL WISEMAN** AP Business Writers

President Donald Trump's decision Wednesday to impose a 30-day ban on most Europeans entering the United States is the latest stunning setback for an airline industry that is reeling from a drop in bookings and a surge in people who are canceling reservations for fear of contracting the coronavirus.

The ban, to begin at midnight Friday, won't apply to Americans trying to return home — though they will be subject to "enhanced" health screening — or to citizens of the United Kingdom. But Trump's move is sure to drastically escalate the disruptions facing global airlines and travelers on some of the most heavily traveled routes.

The disruption to air travel is also certain to ripple through economies, causing widespread damage to hotels, car rental companies, museums and restaurants.

In his address from the Oval Office, Trump said U.S. restrictions on people coming from China and other countries with early outbreaks of COVID-19 had held down the number of cases in the United States compared with Europe. He blamed the European Union for failing to immediately stop travel from China "and other hot spots," which he said had led to clusters of outbreaks in the U.S. being "seeded by travelers from Europe."

"After consulting with our top government health professionals," Trump said, "I have decided to take several strong but necessary actions to protect the health and well-being of all Americans. To keep new cases from entering our shores, we will be suspending all travel from Europe to the United States for the next 30 days."

Homeland Security officials later clarified that the restrictions would apply only to most foreign nationals who have been in the 26-nation Schengen area of Europe in the 14 days before their scheduled arrival in the United States. The Schengen countries, which do not restrict travel among each other, include Ger-

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many, France, Italy and Spain.

The ban won't apply to legal permanent residents of the United States or to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. This category of people will be detailed in a formal proclamation, the officials said.

Airlines have been slashing their flight schedules, especially on international routes, to cope with a sharp decline in travel demand among fearful customers. Business travel is slowing as companies impose restrictions on employee travel and major conferences are canceled.

An industry trade group warned that airlines worldwide could lose up to \$113 billion in revenue from the virus — several times the damage caused by the 2001 terror attacks in the U.S. Since mid-February, shares of American Airlines have dropped by nearly half, United Airlines by more than one-third, and Delta Air Lines more than one-fourth.

It isn't just U.S. airlines feeling the pain. Germany's Lufthansa plans to cut up to half its flights because of a "drastic" drop in bookings. In Asia, travel restrictions are taking a toll on that region's airlines. Cathay Pacific Airways warned Wednesday that it faces a "substantial loss" in the first half of this year. The Hong Kong-based airline canceled 90% of its flight capacity to the mainland at the start of February after Beijing told the public to avoid travel as part of efforts to contain the outbreak centered on the city of Wuhan.

With air travel and airline revenue plummeting, airlines are losing their appetite for new planes. On Wednesday, Boeing's stock fell 18% — its biggest one-day percentage drop since 1974 — and the iconic airplane manufacturer announced a hiring freeze.

There are nearly 400 daily flights from Europe to the U.S., according to FlightAware, a flight-tracking service. About 72.4 million passengers flew from the U.S. to Europe in the year ended last June, making it the most popular international destination, according to Transportation Department figures. About one-third of those passengers fly on U.S. airlines, the rest on foreign carriers. Trump didn't mention restrictions on Americans traveling to Europe.

Trump's Homeland Security secretary acknowledged that the ban will further upend the airline industry. "While these new travel restrictions will be disruptive to some travelers, this decisive action is needed to protect the American public from further exposure to the potentially deadly coronavirus," DHS Secretary Chad Wolf said in a statement issued shortly after the president's address.

Wolf said he will issue further details on extra screening for Americans who have been to Europe. They will be routed through select airports, but he did not name them.

Nicholas Calio, president of Airlines for America, a trade group for many large U.S. carriers, said the ban "will hit U.S. airlines, their employees, travelers and the shipping public extremely hard. However, we respect the need to take this unprecedented action."

American Airlines is "in contact with the federal government to understand and comply with this directive," said airline spokeswoman Shannon Gilson. "The health and safety of our customers and team members remains our highest priority."

American operates up to 15 flights a day to five countries that will be affected by the ban including France and Germany.

Henry Hartevelde, a travel industry analyst in San Francisco, said the ban will push airlines including American, Delta and United to reduce flights between the U.S. and Europe, and will cast a long shadow over the peak summer travel season.

"This is going to cause a lot of people on both sides of the Atlantic to reconsider where they are going to spend their summer vacation," he said. "Leisure travelers will stay close to home," while people traveling on business will be grounded by corporate restrictions, he said.

In January, the U.S. issued a similar ban on people coming into the country from China. That policy was later extended to people who had been in Iran.

The World Health Organization has labeled COVID-19 a pandemic, citing its alarming spread and severity.

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WHO declares coronavirus a pandemic, urges aggressive action

By JAMEY KEATEN, MARIA CHENG and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization declared the coronavirus a pandemic and urged aggressive action from all countries to fight it, as U.S. stocks plunged into bear market territory and several American cities joined global counterparts in banning large gatherings.

By using the charged word “pandemic” after shying away from calling it so earlier, the U.N. health agency sought to shock lethargic countries into pulling out all the stops.

“We have called every day for countries to take urgent and aggressive action. We have rung the alarm bell loud and clear,” WHO’s chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Wednesday.

“All countries can still change the course of this pandemic. If countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace and mobilize their people in the response,” he said. “We are deeply concerned by the alarming levels of spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction.”

After downplaying the threat of the virus for days, President Donald Trump announced in an Oval Office address he is sharply restricting European passenger travel to the U.S. and moving to ease the pandemic’s economic costs.

The NBA became the first major American sports league to suspend play, which raised questions about college basketball’s championships, which for now will be played without fans attending. In Italy, soccer club Juventus said defender Daniele Rugani tested positive.

Iran and Italy are the new front lines of the fight against the virus that started in China, the WHO said. “They’re suffering but I guarantee you other countries will be in that situation soon,” said Dr. Mike Ryan, the WHO’s emergencies chief.

For the global economy, virus repercussions were profound, with increasing concerns of wealth- and job-wrecking recessions. U.S. stocks wiped out more than all the gains from a huge rally a day earlier as Wall Street continued to reel.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 1,464 points, bringing it 20% below its record set last month and putting it in what Wall Street calls a “bear market.” The broader S&P 500 is just 1 percentage point away from falling into bear territory and bringing to an end one of the greatest runs in Wall Street’s history.

WHO officials said they thought long and hard about labeling the crisis a pandemic — defined as sustained outbreaks in multiple regions of the world.

The risk of employing the term, Ryan said, is “if people use it as an excuse to give up.” But the benefit is “potentially of galvanizing the world to fight.”

Underscoring the mounting challenge: soaring numbers in the U.S. and Europe’s status as the new epicenter of the pandemic. While Italy exceeds 12,000 cases and the United States has topped 1,300, China reported a record low of just 15 new cases Thursday and three-fourths of its infected patients have recovered.

China’s totals of 80,793 cases and 3,169 deaths are a shrinking portion of the world’s more than 126,000 infections and 4,600 deaths.

“If you want to be blunt, Europe is the new China,” said Robert Redfield, the head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

With 12,462 cases and 827 deaths, Italy said all shops and businesses except pharmacies and grocery stores would be closed beginning Thursday and designated billions in financial relief to cushion economic shocks in its latest efforts to adjust to the fast-evolving crisis that silenced the usually bustling heart of the Catholic faith, St. Peter’s Square.

In Iran, by far the hardest-hit country in the Middle East, the senior vice president and two other Cabinet ministers were reported to have been diagnosed with COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus. Iran reported another jump in deaths, by 62 to 354 — behind only China and Italy.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte said it was necessary to “go another step” in toughening the already unprecedented travel and social restrictions that took effect Tuesday by shuttering pubs, restaurants, hair salons, cafeterias and other businesses that can’t operate with a meter (yard) of space between workers

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and customers.

"In this moment, all the world is looking at us for the number of infections, but also ... see great resistance," Conte said on Facebook Live.

These measures are on top of travel and social restrictions that imposed an eerie hush on cities and towns across the country.

Still, the effectiveness of travel restrictions and quarantines will likely drop substantially as COVID-19 spreads globally, making it impossible for countries to keep out the virus. Health officials will also need to be more flexible in their coordinated response efforts, as the epicenters are likely to shift quickly and dramatically.

For most, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for a few, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illnesses, including pneumonia. But the vast majority recover: People with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while more severe illness may take three to six weeks, WHO says.

In the Mideast, most of the nearly 10,000 cases are in Iran or involve people who traveled there. Iran's semiofficial Fars news agency said they include Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri. Iran's ministers for cultural heritage, handcrafts and tourism, and for industry, mines and business were also infected, the agency said.

The United States snapped to attention with its spreading caseload and the impact of canceled events. The NCAA said it would play March Madness with no fans, and the NBA said it would suspend its season until further notice. Cities canceled St. Patrick's Day parades, and several colleges shut down. Actor Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson said they had the virus. He had been working in Australia when they felt ill with slight fevers, his statement said.

Officials in Seattle announced that public schools would close for about 53,000 students and large gatherings were banned in San Francisco and in Washington state, the hardest-hit U.S. state, with 29 deaths.

The virus upended the U.S. presidential campaign, with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders canceling rallies and leaving open the possibility that future campaign events could be impacted. Trump's campaign insisted it would proceed as normal, although Vice President Mike Pence conceded future rallies would be evaluated "on a day to day basis."

And at a Congressional hearing in Washington Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, sounded an alarm: "Bottom line, it's going to get worse."

Leicester reported from Paris, Cheng reported from London. Also contributing were Colleen Barry in Soave, Italy; Nicole Winfield in Rome; Sylvie Corbet in Paris; Geir Moulson in Berlin; Pan Pylas in London; LLazar Semini in Tirana, Albania; Matt Sedensky in Bangkok; Joe McDonald and Ken Moritsugu in Beijing; Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo; Tales Azzoni in Madrid, Alan Clendenning in Phoenix and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea.

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Trump officials emphasize that coronavirus 'Made in China'

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — There's one thing the Trump administration wants Americans to remember about the coronavirus pandemic: It carries the "Made in China" label.

Trump administration officials, on the defensive about their own handling of the virus, have repeatedly reminded people that the virus started in Wuhan, a city in China's Hubei province, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo referring to it as the "Wuhan coronavirus."

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President Donald Trump's national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, went even further on Wednesday. "Unfortunately, rather than using best practices, this outbreak in Wuhan was covered up," O'Brien said at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative-leaning think tank in Washington. "There's lots of open-source reporting from China, from Chinese nationals, that the doctors involved were either silenced or put in isolation, or that sort of thing, so that the word of this virus could not get out. It probably cost the world community two months."

O'Brien said that if experts would have had those two months to get ahead of the spread of the virus, "I think we could have dramatically curtailed what happened both in China and what's now happening across the world."

O'Brien's remarks seemed to be aimed at countering a disinformation campaign that Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., says China's Communist Party is waging to blame the U.S. for the virus so it can dampen discontent in China, distract from true infection rates and "save face internationally."

"The Chinese military portal Xilu.com recently published an article baselessly claiming that the virus is 'a biochemical weapon produced by the U.S. to target China,'" Rubio wrote.

China, however, says it is helping the international community battle the virus. U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun told reporters at U.N. headquarters in New York that Beijing is working closely with other countries and have provided medical supplies to nations, including Korea, Japan and Italy.

"We are sending medical teams to countries that need that, and we will do whatever to join the international community to fight this virus ... because we have only one world, we need to join hands, we need to show solidarity."

Rubio claims that besides China, disinformation is coming from Russia and Iran, the hardest-hit country in the Middle East.

"In Qom, ground zero of Iran's coronavirus outbreak, a prominent cleric accused the United States of introducing the virus 'to damage (the city's) culture and honor,'" Rubio wrote.

While Trump has lauded Chinese President Xi Jinping's work to respond to the virus, Trump himself has referred to "China's Coronavirus situation." Trump has been criticized for playing down the virus, contradicting his own public health officials and concentrating more on the economic fallout from the outbreak. In a speech to the nation Wednesday night he referred to the "foreign virus" that "started in China." (He also worked in some digs at Europe for letting it spiral out of control there.)

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover. In mainland China, where the virus first exploded, more than 80,000 people have been diagnosed and more than 58,000 have so far recovered.

Health professionals, who depend on China for access to the country, have publicly praised Beijing for its response, noting that it is difficult to spot a new virus during flu season when there are numerous alerts about atypical pneumonia and other respiratory problems.

On Capitol Hill, Robert Redfield, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, praised China's work to control the spread of coronavirus. "They really have now got control of their outbreak," Redfield told the House Oversight and Reform Committee on Wednesday.

Chinese health officials informed the WHO about the new virus on Dec. 31. By Jan. 8, it had been identified as a new coronavirus, a large family that causes the common cold and more serious illnesses including SARS, which also began in China. By Jan. 12, Chinese scientists had sequenced the virus' genetic makeup and shared it with WHO, drawing praise for their transparency and swift action.

O'Brien is right, however, in noting some missteps in China.

The local Wuhan health commission reported no new cases from Jan. 5-10 and again from Jan. 12-16. China's Lunar New Year rush — the world's largest annual human migration — began to get underway, with millions of people passing through Wuhan, a major transit hub. A recently submitted complaint to

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the country's National Health Commission alleged that during this period, officials with the Wuhan health commission told doctors they were not allowed to report about the new virus, letting patients wander around freely instead of being isolated.

China's foreign ministry has taken offense at people blaming China. After Pompeo called it the "Wuhan coronavirus," the ministry's spokesman said the description was "despicable," disrespected science and stigmatized China.

Other Republicans also have specifically pointed how the outbreak was first reported in China.

Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., a dentist who is self-quarantined after coming into contact with an infected individual, called it "Wuhan virus" and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy called it the "Chinese coronavirus."

On Thursday, leaders of the Asian Pacific American, Hispanic, Black and Native American congressional caucuses called on McCarthy and Gosar to apologize and noted that the CDC's chief medical officer, Dr. Mitch Wolfe, has said, "Stigma is the enemy of public health."

Associated Press writers Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington and Edith Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Fuel, flour, diapers: Cubans turn to social media for basics

By ANDREA RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — "Where to find it?" and "Whatever you want" and "What do you need?"

These are the names of some of the social media groups catering to thousands of Cubans who are using newly available mobile internet to grapple with shortages of basic goods that are worsening under tougher U.S. sanctions.

Armed with internet access on cellphones that came into general use last year, Cubans are forming online chat groups to share tips about where to find dish detergent, chicken, diesel fuel and other scarce essentials. They do so on WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook.

Without the chat groups, people would have to "spend all day going around the city" looking for things that they need, said Claudia Santander, a graphic designer who administers a dozen WhatsApp groups at no charge.

Now, for example, someone can ask about a certain product — toilet paper or milk powder or soap — and another person on the chat might reply within minutes to say which store in Havana, the Cuban capital, is stocking it.

"I've been able to sort out" diaper and other purchases since joining several social media groups aimed at locating essential items, said Havana resident Laura Vela, who has a young child.

Some of the groups have waiting lists of people anxious to get the benefits of being a member. WhatsApp limits group chat sizes to 256 people, while other platforms accept thousands.

Shopping through social media is easing life for many on the island, but it may be exacerbating inequality and making things harder for those without internet connections. Moreover, people get discounts on data if they pay with badly needed dollars through companies outside Cuba, meaning those without U.S. currency are at a disadvantage.

"A lot of people can't afford" to buy phone data or a good phone, said Lucía March, a writer. For those who can, she said, "the usefulness is obvious and it's something that represents, above all, development and also helps open people's minds a little,"

Cuba doesn't have classified ads in official newspapers. Some businesses offer sales on the internet, but the social media groups help people grapple almost in real time with constant challenges.

Cooking oil might vanish from shelves, but then it returns and there is no flour. One day there is no but-

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ter and the next there is no cheese. Many people, particularly those not getting information from a social media network, can spend hours fruitlessly searching for household items.

Cubans have been used to struggling for the basics since the collapse of their benefactors in the Soviet Union decades ago, but the situation deteriorated in 2019 after U.S. President Donald Trump escalated sanctions. The economic woes of Venezuela, a key provider of oil to Cuba, has also hurt the Caribbean country.

As a result, there have often been long lines at shops as well as rationing of products. Many people then turned to social media to try to find what they need.

Cuba began to provide data for cellphones in December 2018, and now has more than 3 million lines in service.

It costs the equivalent of \$5 for 400MB and \$20 for 2.5GB, although more discounts have become available recently. Average monthly salaries are between \$20 and \$50, although many people receive remittances from relatives abroad.

In recent months, Cuban authorities have started to promote websites — www.compraspacuba.com is an example — that allow people to pay in dollars through Visa and Mastercard for items including flowers, meat, mattresses and air conditioners.

Although the use of such websites is not widespread, they could increase inequality between those with access to dollars and foreign credit cards, and those who don't, or don't have relatives living abroad who can help them out.

Some people have used the internet to campaign on issues such as the abuse of women, or to engage in unofficial journalism, drawing criticism from authorities in the one-party state who have warned against any anti-government activism.

Ted Henken, a Latin America expert at Baruch College, City University of New York, said many Cubans use social media for personal or non-political reasons. But he said the use of social media has broader implications for society because it is "much more free, social and spontaneous."

Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson test positive for coronavirus

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tom Hanks and his actress-singer wife Rita Wilson have tested positive for the coronavirus, the actor said in a statement Wednesday.

Hanks said the couple were in Australia and felt tired, with colds, body aches and slight fevers. "To play things right, as is needed in the world right now, we were tested for the coronavirus and were found to be positive," Hanks said.

The 63-year-old Oscar-winner said they will be "tested, observed and isolated for as long as public health and safety requires."

"Not much more to it than a one-day-a-time approach, no?" added Hanks.

Hanks had been in Australia shooting an untitled Elvis Presley biopic directed by Baz Luhrmann. Hanks plays Presley's manager, Colonel Tom Parker. The film, currently slated for release in October 2021, has suspended production, Warner Bros. said.

Australia has confirmed more than 120 cases of infection, with three deaths from COVID-19.

Hanks and Wilson, 63, were married in 1988. In 2013, Hanks disclosed that he has type 2 diabetes. He is easily the most famous person yet to publicly announce a positive test for the virus, which the World Health Organization on Wednesday declared a pandemic.

Hanks also posted his message on social media with an image of a surgical glove in a garbage can. He signed off saying that he would "keep the world posted and updated." Said Hanks: "Take care of yourselves!"

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover from the new virus. According to the World Health Organization,

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people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

NCAA tournaments are on _ for now _ but mostly without fans

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

The NCAA basketball tournaments are on — for now — though the buzzer-beaters, upsets and all the other shining moments will take place in mostly empty arenas.

Trying to avoid spreading the new coronavirus that has become a global pandemic, the NCAA on Wednesday decided the men's and women's Division I tournament games will be off-limits to the general public. The major college conferences followed the NCAA's lead, one by one announcing their league tournaments would go on the rest of the week with restricted fan access.

"I think the right answer is we considered every option available to us," NCAA President Mark Emmert told The Associated Press. "The notion of cancellation, however, is one that is pretty draconian because we're dealing with student-athletes for whom participating in a national championship is a life long dream.

"We debated every option available to us, but that's the one nobody wanted to pursue."

A few hours later, the NBA suspended its season after Utah Jazz player Rudy Gobert tested positive for COVID-19, and re-opened questions about whether the NCAA had gone far enough.

The NCAA did not immediately return a request for comment following the NBA's announcement.

The NCAA's plan is to conduct both tournaments, which begin next week, with only essential staff and limited family in attendance.

"The decision was based on a combination of the information provided by national and state officials, by the advisory team that we put together of medical experts from across the country, and looking at what was going to be in the best interest of our student-athletes, of course," Emmert told the AP in a phone interview. "But also the public health implications of all of this. We recognize our tournaments bring people from all around the country together. They're not just regional events. They're big national events. It's a very, very hard decision for all the obvious reasons."

Emmert said the NCAA wants to move the men's Final Four on April 4 and 6 from Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium to a smaller arena in the area. The NCAA also will consider using smaller venues for second-week regional sites currently set to be played at the Toyota Center in Houston, Madison Square Garden in New York, Staples Center in Los Angeles and Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

"We have to determine the availability of the sites, obviously, but it doesn't make good sense to have a football stadium be empty," Emmert said.

All sites for next week's men's games will remain the same unless conditions in those areas force relocation, he said. Or worse.

The NCAA said tickets already purchased will be refunded.

First- and second-round sites for the women's tournament will become official next week. Those games are usually played at or near the campuses of the highly seeded teams.

"It's really sad. Obviously it's disappointing for all our fans," said Louisville women's coach Jeff Walz, whose team is ranked No. 6 in the latest AP poll. "At the same time I completely understand for the health and safety of the fans and student-athletes and everyone involved."

The decision applies to more than just men's and women's basketball. All NCAA-sponsored championships including hockey's Frozen Four will be affected.

But the men's basketball tournament is the crown jewel, one of the most popular events on the American sports calendar. March Madness draws hundreds of thousands of fans to arenas from coast to coast. The men's tournament generated more than \$900 million in revenue last year for the NCAA and its member schools, though the majority of that was from a media rights deal with CBS and Turner that pays about

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\$800 million per year.

"We're like any enterprise of this size, we have business interruption insurance, and a variety of other things but we'll sort that out in due course," Emmert said.

Emmert said CBS and Turner plan to broadcast the games as usual. Other media members will be allowed into the arenas to cover the games, but how many is still being determined, he said.

Emmert said a protocol for the medical screening of people entering the arenas is still being worked out, too, along with what constitutes essential staff (bands? cheerleaders?) and how to define family members.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the virus.

Around the country, many colleges and universities in recent days have been shifting to virtual classes and telling students to extend their spring breaks, encouraging them to stay away from campus.

"A number of schools, including schools that their president are on our board, have indeed closed down campuses and made other accommodations and so it was part of the discussions," Emmert said. "And people recognizing they were making those decisions for good reasons, and doesn't that logic continue over to athletic competitions?"

The 68-team field for the men's basketball tournament is scheduled to be announced Sunday and the 64-team women's tournament field is to be unveiled Monday. Games begin Tuesday and Wednesday on the men's side in Dayton, Ohio, where earlier in the day the governor said he would issue an order to restrict spectator access to indoor sporting events.

Wednesday's conference tournament games in places such as Kansas City, Missouri; Nashville, Tennessee; and Las Vegas will be the last of this season college basketball season played in front of large crowds. Many fans were not happy about that.

"We were going to be here for the whole tournament. Now it's trying to find a flight home, go back to hotel and cancel, see if they let us cancel the rest of it," said Maryland fan Tim White, 44, from Baltimore, who made the trip to Indianapolis for the Big Ten Tournament.

"This is a bit overblown, I believe. I'm definitely disappointed. You take the fans out of it, you might as well not have the tournament. With the NCAA Tournament, that's what makes the excitement when a 14th (seeded) team beats a three. Fans get behind that team where there is no support, it changes outcomes, unfortunately."

The National Association of Basketball Coaches canceled its convention Wednesday night, which was scheduled to be held in Atlanta during Final Four weekend.

There are eight first- and second-round sites for the men's tournament, scheduled to be played March 19-22. Locations include Cleveland; Spokane, Washington; Albany, New York; Sacramento, California; and Omaha, Nebraska.

The women's tournament first- and second-round games begin March 21 and will be played at 16 sites. The second-week regionals will be played in Dallas; Greenville, South Carolina; Portland, Oregon; and Fort Wayne, Indiana. The Final Four will be held at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans where the NBA's Pelicans play on April 3 and 5.

Emmert said because of the outbreak the situation remains fluid.

"This will be a continuing story," he said.

AP Sports Writers Tom Withers in Cleveland; Mike Marot in Indianapolis; and AP Basketball Writers Doug Feinberg in New York contributed to this report.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

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Sanders isn't dropping out, but where does he go from here?

By STEVE PEOPLES, WILSON RING and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — Bernie Sanders is vowing to press ahead with his presidential campaign at least long enough to debate Joe Biden this weekend, even while acknowledging his deficit in the Democratic race may be insurmountable.

The Vermont senator on Wednesday offered no further details on what his campaign may look like before or after he and Biden — the last two major candidates vying for the Democratic presidential nomination — spar Sunday night on stage in Arizona. The only thing on Sanders' public schedule was taping an appearance on Wednesday's "Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon."

And that will continue to raise questions — as unlikely as it may seem less than two weeks after losing his once-commanding front-runner status — about how long Sanders will persist against increasingly daunting odds, especially as the pressure within his own party increases exponentially.

Sanders addressed reporters in Burlington after offering no public statements Tuesday night, when he suffered a devastating defeat in Michigan and losses in Missouri, Idaho and Mississippi. Sanders noted that he won North Dakota and that the continuing count in Washington state remained close — but admitted he was trailing badly in the race to secure enough delegates to clinch the nomination before the Democratic National Convention in Milwaukee.

"While our campaign has won the ideological debate, we are losing the debate over electability," Sanders said, meaning Democrats think Biden has a better chance of beating President Donald Trump in the fall. "That is what millions of Democrats and independents today believe."

He was quick to add that he thinks he's the stronger choice, and that he could show that during Sunday's debate. Sanders promised to press Biden for answers about millions of Americans who don't have health insurance, a criminal justice system he said unfairly targets and punishes minorities and raising the federal minimum wage.

After that, though, Democrats' desperate desire to defeat Trump could affect his calculus. Should Sanders get out soon, he could save Democrats months of a messy and expensive primary fight. But an early departure would also deprive the party's most passionate supporters, including many young people, of the one man who embodies the dramatic change they crave.

Sanders also noted that he was winning a greater percentage of young voters while Biden continues to run up the score with older ones.

"Today, I say to the Democratic establishment, in order to win in the future, you need to win the voters who represent the future of our country," Sanders said. "And you must speak to the issues of concern to them. You cannot simply be satisfied by winning the votes of people who are older."

Sanders has indeed been widely favored over Biden by voters under 30, but he has not delivered on his strategy of getting them to the polls in great numbers, according to AP VoteCast surveys of voters in Tuesday's Democratic primaries. Also problematic for him: Sanders showed no overwhelming strength with voters age 30 to 44, typically a larger share of the vote than the young, in Michigan and Missouri.

Sanders' mathematical path to winning enough delegates for the nomination is rapidly disappearing.

Sanders now needs 57% of the delegates not won so far to get to 1991, the magic number to win the nomination. Both delegate allocation math and voting history show how unlikely it is for Sanders to hit that goal and overtake Biden.

That Sanders was vowing to soldier on was hardly a surprise. The 78-year-old democratic socialist is nothing if not willing to take on the political establishment against all odds — and Sanders' closest allies are happy to see him stay in the race, even if the rest of the party is not.

"The process of unity isn't just this pie-in-the-sky, vague, butterflies-in-your-tummy type of feeling," New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of Sanders' highest-profile supporters, said Wednesday in an interview on Capitol Hill. "It requires real coalition building, and coalition building requires plans and commitments to electorates to figure out how we unify. And so I think that this is a good opportunity for us to come together."

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RoseAnn DeMoro, former executive director of National Nurses United and a Sanders confidant, said Sanders "has a mandate not to abandon the movement."

"Heroes aren't made, they're cornered," DeMoro said. "He is cornered."

Four years ago, under similar pressure in a primary match-up against Hillary Clinton, Sanders fought on for months before ultimately backing Clinton in July. Sanders has repeatedly insisted that he and Biden are friends and that he will back the former vice president if he's the party's nominee — he just may not be ready to yet follow through on that promise.

Still, Sanders didn't say Wednesday where he plans to travel next. His campaign is opening five offices in Arizona on Wednesday night, using top supporters rather than the candidate himself.

Adding to the uncertainty is the spread of coronavirus, which forced both Sanders and Biden to cancel campaign events Tuesday night in Cleveland and prompted Sanders' team to say it would evaluate future events on a case-by-case basis.

Beyond the debate, the primary calendar could get even bleaker for Sanders. Next week, four more states vote and while he is hoping his support with Hispanic voters can lift him in Arizona, Sanders may struggle in two of the most important ones, Illinois and Florida — where some voters could be alienated by his recent comments defending Fidel Castro's communist government in Cuba.

"Trump must be defeated, and I will do everything in my power to make sure that happens," Sanders said. "On Sunday night, in the first one-on-one debate of this campaign, the American people will have the opportunity to see which candidate is best positioned to accomplish that."

Peoples reported from Philadelphia. Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Seth Borenstein in Washington contributed to this report.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

Shot 9 times during mosque massacre, survivor overcomes fear

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — When the gunman walked into the Al Noor mosque, Temel Atacocugu was kneeling for Friday prayers. He looked up into the man's face, thinking he was a police officer because of his paramilitary outfit. Time slowed. Atacocugu saw a puff of smoke come from the raised gun, felt a bullet smash into his teeth, and thought, "Oh, my God, I'm dying."

But despite being shot nine times, Atacocugu survived the attack at Al Noor, one of two mosques in the city of Christchurch that were attacked on March 15 last year, in New Zealand's deadliest modern-day mass shooting.

On Sunday, New Zealand will commemorate the 51 people who were killed in the attacks. Atacocugu, 45, is slowly overcoming his own physical and psychological injuries from that day. And he's even found himself ready to face a childhood fear: sharks.

On the day of the attacks, Atacocugu was in a buoyant mood when he walked into the mosque. An active man who loves soccer, fishing and running, he'd just finished his last acupuncture session for a sports injury and was feeling in great shape.

Growing up in Turkey, he'd been through compulsory military training, so he quickly realized what was happening. Medical staff would later tell him he was incredibly fortunate that the bullet, which struck his upper jaw, deflected downward rather than continuing into his brain or an artery.

Atacocugu says that after that first shot to his mouth, he leapt up in shock and was shot four more times in both legs. People were screaming. Another worshipper rushed at the gunman and was killed, but it gave Atacocugu a couple of seconds to react, and to run as best he could.

There was no obvious way out, so he laid down motionless on the floor. He was later shot four more times in his left arm and leg as the gunman fired indiscriminately into the piles of bodies.

Atacocugu spent a month in a hospital and underwent four operations that included bone and skin grafts.

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He'll need at least three more surgeries in the months to come.

"The biggest change after the attack was that I can't be free the same as before," Atacocugu says. "Because very limited moving around. And I was feeling like a little baby, because somebody has to look after me all the time."

Yet his physical recovery a year later is remarkable. The wheelchair and cane are gone. His left arm remains weakened, but when he walks down the street or plays with his Labradoodle dog, Max, Atacocugu's limp is barely noticeable.

A few weeks ago, he started playing soccer again with a group of his friends, joking that these days he's being outrun by fit men in their 70s. In one game, he showed off his skills by tackling, spot kicking and back-heeling a pass.

Atacocugu's mental recovery is taking longer. He's been seeing a psychologist who's helping him work through the images and flashbacks that still haunt him.

"He's trying to pull out the dark spot from my brain," he says.

Atacocugu has experienced bouts of depression and has been taking antidepressants since the shooting. He figures he'll need to keep taking the medication for at least another year. He's found that his memory and ability to concentrate have also been affected.

He says he doesn't want to keep working at the kebab shop he ran with a business partner at the time of the attack and is now trying to sell his stake. He's helped out at the shop a couple of times since the shooting but has found himself nervous around strangers, not wanting to explain.

"It's just too crowded and too big," he says. "People keep asking, 'Oh, what's happened to your arm?'"

Atacocugu says he's thinking instead of turning back to his skills as a painter and decorator. It's more peaceful, he says, working alongside a trusted crew with only a single customer to deal with at any one time. He's also recently put in an offer to buy a new home in Christchurch, which he hopes will help him make a fresh start.

Atacocugu moved to the South Pacific country after meeting a New Zealand woman in Turkey and marrying her in 2001. They thought Christchurch would be a good place to raise their children, in an environment that seemed friendly and safe. The couple separated in 2016 and Atacocugu stayed in Christchurch to be near his two teenage sons.

He plans to attend the trial of the 29-year-old Australian white supremacist who is accused of carrying out last year's massacre. Brenton Tarrant has pleaded not guilty to charges of terrorism, murder and attempted murder, and his trial is scheduled to start in June. If found guilty, he faces life imprisonment.

Atacocugu says the way that New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and people throughout the country came together in unity after the shooting shows the gunman has already failed in his quest to sow division. Hate, he says, has lost and love has won.

"As a human, yes, I'm so angry," Atacocugu says. "But also, deep of my heart, my religion makes me calm down and be patient. So I know the New Zealand law system is going to punish this man, this terrorist, as much, as high as can be possible, under the law."

Over the past year, Atacocugu has found moments of peace during two overseas trips. One was to Turkey, where he spent time with his mother and other family members and friends. The other was a trip to Saudi Arabia for the hajj, the annual pilgrimage that most Muslims are required to perform during their lifetime. Atacocugu was among 200 survivors and relatives from the Christchurch attacks who traveled to Saudi Arabia as guests of King Salman.

"Pretty much my whole life is upside down and changed," Atacocugu says. "But spiritually, in a religious way, I'm much stronger than I used to be."

That newfound strength has filtered through into other aspects of his life. Atacocugu recalls watching the "Jaws" movies when he was a boy, an experience that for months left him terrified of swimming.

Years later, he drew up a list of new things to experience during his life, including diving with sharks. Still, he could never quite get over that childhood fear.

But he says that after he was shot, he began to think about it a lot.

A couple of months ago, he drove to the southern end of New Zealand and, on a picture-perfect day,

went on a tour boat and was submerged in a protective metal cage among great white sharks that swam within a body length of him. The experience left him exhilarated.

"I faced my fear," he says.

Lawyers: Chelsea Manning attempts suicide in Va. jail

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chelsea Manning's legal team said Wednesday that the former intelligence analyst tried to take her own life Wednesday, but was transported to a hospital where she is recovering.

Manning has been in jail since May 2019 for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks. She was scheduled to appear in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia, on Friday for a hearing on a motion to terminate the civil contempt sanctions stemming from that refusal.

In the motion filed last month, Manning's lawyers argued that Manning has shown during her incarceration that she can't be coerced into testifying before a grand jury.

Manning served seven years in a military prison for leaking a trove of documents to WikiLeaks before President Barack Obama commuted the remainder of her 35-year sentence in 2017.

Alexandria Sheriff Dana Lawhorne said Wednesday: "There was an incident at approximately 12:11 p.m. today at the Alexandria Adult Detention Center involving inmate Chelsea Manning. It was handled appropriately by our professional staff and Ms. Manning is safe."

Andy Stepanian, a spokesman for Manning's legal team, said in a statement Wednesday that Manning "remains unwavering in her refusal to participate in a secret grand jury process that she sees as highly susceptible to abuse."

An earlier version of this story said Andy Stepanian is a lawyer for Chelsea Manning. Stepanian is a spokesman for Manning's legal team.

Will heat stop the spread of new virus? No one really knows

By MARIA CHENG and VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — As outbreaks of the new coronavirus that first emerged in China continue to spread in more than 100 countries — particularly those experiencing winter — one of the biggest unanswered questions is how it will behave in warmer weather.

Like influenza, the new disease is a respiratory infection belonging to a family of viruses that typically survive longer in colder environments. Most people experience only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, but older adults and people with existing health problems may have more severe illnesses, including pneumonia.

The virus has reached every continent except Antarctica but has yet to cause major outbreaks in the Southern Hemisphere. Some key questions on how the virus might behave once the temperature rises:

WILL THE VIRUS RETREAT IN HOT WEATHER?

No one knows. The new coronavirus was identified only in late December and most scientists say there is simply no data to suggest the COVID-19 cases will start declining in warmer weather.

"We have to assume that the virus will continue to have the capacity to spread, and it's a false hope to say yes, it will just disappear in the summertime like influenza," said Dr. Michael Ryan, the World Health Organization's emergencies chief.

Dr. Dale Fisher, a senior consultant in infectious diseases at the National University of Singapore, was similarly unconvinced that hot weather would significantly slow its spread.

"Maybe after it's been around for a few years and most of the world has had it, maybe then it will settle into a more flu-like pattern," he said. "Since we have no natural immunity to this, we're all much more vulnerable, no matter what the weather is."

But Dr. Mohammad Sajadi, an associate professor of medicine at the University of Maryland, thinks weather might play a role. He and colleagues found a striking temperature similarity among regions with sustained outbreaks of COVID-19: between 5 and 11 degrees Celsius (41 and 52 degrees Fahrenheit).

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"If we're right about seasonality, that could help with surveillance and other public health measures," Sajadi said.

HOW HAVE RELATED VIRUSES BEHAVED?

The new virus is genetically related to SARS and MERS. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome first broke out in China in late 2002 and ultimately sickened about 8,000 people worldwide before it was declared contained in July 2003.

But the arrival of summer wasn't what stopped SARS. Extraordinary measures that included shutting down travel from epicenters in Asia and Canada and a mass culling of palm civets that spread the disease to humans were largely credited for curbing the disease.

Although the transmission of Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome has never been entirely interrupted, its spread to humans from camels is mostly sporadic, sparking limited outbreaks since being identified in 2012.

"I don't think there's anything we can say about seasonality and the coronavirus based on what we've seen with SARS and MERS," said Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. "I've been in the Arabian peninsula when MERS is spreading in 110-degree (43 degrees Celsius) heat just fine," he said.

WHY HASN'T THE VIRUS CAUSED SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE EPIDEMICS?

It could be too early; past pandemics have sometimes taken months to reach every country in the world. Surveillance might also be an issue. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to those for numerous other diseases, including flu, measles and malaria, so detecting cases of the new virus is challenging.

Benjamin Cowling, head of the Epidemiology and Biostatistics Division at the School of Public Health at Hong Kong University, said he suspects wider outbreaks exist in countries that already have confirmed cases, such as Thailand and Vietnam.

"Most of the typically hot countries, we think, have not been testing as aggressively as some of the colder ones have been," he said.

Cowling also said that how people behave in winter environments is likely having an effect.

"People are more likely to spend time indoors in colder weather than they are in the summer," he said. "More time indoors means that people are more likely to be in the same rooms together and thus get infected."

Sajadi, the professor who found the temperature similarities, acknowledged epidemics are influenced by numerous factors but hypothesized that countries with cooler weather might be worse affected by the coronavirus, noting that even southern parts of countries with big outbreaks, like Italy and Iran, have not been hit as badly.

But, Cowling said, higher temperatures are unlikely to fully stop the continued spread of the virus.

"I don't think we can count on it stopping in the summer. It may slow down, but it won't be stopped," he said. "At this rate, we would expect every country in the world to have cases in about nine months — we're headed towards that now. "

Cheng reported from London.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Weinstein gets 23 years in sentence hailed by accusers

By MICHAEL R. SISK, TOM HAYS and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein was sentenced Wednesday to 23 years in prison after breaking his courtroom silence with a rambling plea for mercy in which he professed to be “totally confused” by the #MeToo movement that spelled the Hollywood producer’s downfall.

His accusers — those who testified against him and many others who have spoken out elsewhere against the former Hollywood mogul — hailed the near-maximum punishment for his rape and criminal sex act convictions as long overdue.

The 67-year-old Weinstein, who arrived at the courthouse Wednesday in a wheelchair and was taken to a hospital after complaining of chest pains hours after the court hearing, could spend the rest of his life behind bars.

He was convicted last month of raping a once-aspiring actress in a New York City hotel room in 2013 and forcibly performing oral sex on former TV and film production assistant Mimi Haley in 2006. He faced a minimum of five years and a maximum of 29 years in prison.

The conviction marked the first criminal fallout from a raft of allegations that the Oscar-winning movie producer used his clout to lure women, sexually assault or harass them and then silence them.

“Although this is a first conviction, this is not a first offense,” Judge James Burke said in imposing the sentence.

Weinstein, who did not testify during the trial, addressed his accusers, saying, “To all the women who testified, we may have different truths, but I have great remorse for all of you.” But he also argued that men are being accused of “things that none of us understood.”

“Thousands of men are losing due process. I’m worried about this country,” he said in a calm but creaking voice. “I’m totally confused. I think men are confused about these issues.”

Both of the women Weinstein was convicted of assaulting told the court about the damage he did to them, and the empowerment they felt when testifying against him.

“Rape is not just one moment of penetration. It is forever,” said the 2013 rape accuser, who recalled a moment during the trial when she left the witness stand in tears and then could be heard screaming from an adjacent room.

It was, she said, “the day my voice came back to its full power,” she said.

Asked later about her reaction after the sentence, she wiped her eyes, raised her arm and nodded her head.

Haley broke down in tears as she told the court the 2006 attack scarred her deeply and “stripped me of my dignity as a woman.” The encounter made her rethink her career in the entertainment business and left her feeling afraid of retaliation, she said.

The Associated Press typically does not name people, without their consent, who say they were sexually assaulted. It is withholding the rape accuser’s name because it is not clear whether she wishes to be identified.

Weinstein, who has maintained that any sexual activity was consensual, showed no reaction to the sentence.

In his address to the court, he touched on his past charitable fund-raising, his filmmaking career and a pledge that his new “mission is to help people.” He said his “empathy has grown” since his downfall.

Weinstein reported chest pains later in the day at Rikers Island Jail Complex and was taken back to a locked jail ward at Bellevue Hospital, a spokesperson of his said. He remained there, where he spent time after conviction, as of Wednesday night.

Years of whispers about Weinstein’s alleged behavior burst into public view in The New York Times and The New Yorker in 2017. In the aftermath, more than 90 women, including Gwyneth Paltrow, Salma Hayek and other actresses, publicly accused Weinstein of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The takedown energized the #MeToo movement for speaking up about sexual assault.

Time’s Up, an organization created in the wake of #MeToo, on Wednesday hailed the women who testi-

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fied against him for "the impact that they have had on our culture at large."

Weinstein lawyer Donna Rotunno bristled at his sentence, saying the judge and jury had "caved" in a #MeToo and media atmosphere where Weinstein "really never had a fair shake from day one."

"We were looking for fairness, and we didn't get it," Rotunno said.

Weinstein's lawyers sought a five-year sentence — the shortest possible in the case — citing his age and frail health.

Prosecutors said the man once celebrated as a titan of Hollywood deserved a harsh sentence that would account for decades of alleged wrongdoing.

The sentence "puts sexual predators and abusive partners in all segments of society on notice," said Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr.

Weinstein was convicted on two counts: criminal sex act and rape in the third degree. He was acquitted of the more serious charges against him of first-degree rape and two counts of predatory sexual assault.

Now that Weinstein has been sentenced, his lawyers can move forward with a promised appeal. He also faces rape and sexual assault charges in California, where Los Angeles District Attorney Jackie Lacey tweeted Wednesday that her office was working on extraditing him. No arraignment date has yet been set.

On Twitter, follow Mike Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak and Tom Hays at twitter.com/aptomhays

Congress acts to limit Trump on military action in Iran

By **MATTHEW DALY** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defying a veto threat, Congress has approved a bipartisan measure to limit President Donald Trump's authority to launch military operations against Iran.

The House gave final legislative approval to the measure Wednesday, 227-186, sending it to Trump. The president has promised to veto the war powers resolution, warning that if his "hands were tied, Iran would have a field day."

The resolution, sponsored by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., declares that Trump must win approval from Congress before engaging in further military action against Iran. Kaine and other supporters say the measure is not about Trump or even the presidency, but instead is an important reassertion of congressional power to declare war.

Six Republicans joined 220 Democrats and independent Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan to support the measure. Six Democrats and 180 Republicans opposed it. In the Senate last month, eight Republicans backed the resolution.

The resolution "sends a clear message that the American people don't want war with Iran and that Congress has not authorized war with Iran," said Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

While tensions with Iran have abated since a U.S. drone strike that killed Iran's top general in early January, the resolution clarifying Congress' power to declare war is still important, Engel said.

"Congress doesn't have to wait until the president alone decides to use military force again," Engel told House members during floor debate Wednesday. "It's our responsibility to do something, because we know the tensions could flare up again at a moment's notice. Iran has not been deterred as the administration promised."

Texas Rep. Michael McCaul, the top Republican on the Foreign Affairs Committee, called the war powers measure "divisive and irresponsible" and based on a false premise.

"It orders the president to terminate hostilities against Iran. The problem is, for the other side, we are not engaged in hostilities in Iran," McCaul said.

If the U.S. military launches strikes in Iran, "I believe that the president would need to come before this body to ask for a new authorization" for the use of force, McCaul said. "But that is not what we are facing."

The House vote marked a rare exertion of authority from Congress, which also moved to impose restrictions on U.S. involvement with the Saudi-led war in Yemen last year after U.S.-based journalist Jamal

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Khashoggi was killed in a gruesome murder at Saudi Arabia's consulate in Turkey. Trump promptly vetoed that measure.

The Democratic-controlled House passed a separate, nonbinding resolution on Iran in January, a few weeks before the Senate approved Kaine's resolution. Two-thirds votes in the House and the GOP-run Senate would be needed to override an expected Trump veto.

Kaine hailed the House vote.

"For years, Congress has abdicated its responsibility on matters of war, but now a bipartisan majority in both the Senate and House has made clear that we shouldn't be engaged in hostilities with Iran without a vote of Congress," he said in a statement.

The legislation "doesn't prevent the president from defending the United States against imminent attack," but instead "demands that the decision of whether or not we go on offense and send our troops into harm's way should only be made after serious deliberation and a vote of Congress," Kaine added. "If President Trump is serious about his promise to stop endless wars, he will sign this resolution into law."

In a statement of administration policy, the White House said the resolution should be rejected "because it attempts to hinder the president's ability to protect" U.S. diplomats, forces, allies and partners, including Israel, from the continued threat posed by Iran and its proxies, including militia groups and foreign fighters in Syria.

"Iran has a long history of attacking United States and coalition forces both directly and through its proxies," the White House said, adding the congressional resolution could hinder Trump's ability to protect U.S. forces and interests in the region.

"This joint resolution is untimely and misguided. Its adoption by Congress could undermine the ability of the United States to protect American citizens whom Iran continues to seek to harm," the White House said.

Tehran responded to the U.S. attack on its top general, Qassem Soleimani, by launching missiles at two military bases in Iraq that house American troops. The attack caused traumatic brain injuries in more than 100 U.S. soldiers, the Pentagon said.

Democrats and Republicans alike criticized a briefing by the Trump administration shortly after the drone strike, saying U.S. officials offered vague information about a possible attack being planned by Iran but no substantial details.

Kaine has long pushed for action reasserting congressional power over military conflict. At the request of Republican senators, he removed initial language that targeted Trump in favor of a generalized statement declaring Congress has sole power to declare war. The resolution also directs Trump to terminate use of military force against Iran or any part of its government without approval from Congress and commends Trump for killing Soleimani, who was long designated a terrorist by the U.S.

"No one lamented the loss of Mr. Soleimani. No one," said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md. "That's not what this bill is about."

The resolution "is about our Constitution, the authority of this body to declare or not declare war," Hoyer added. "It ought to be the representatives of the people that take them to war, not a president — any president, Democrat or Republican. This is about our responsibility."

'Remain in Mexico' is just one US response to asylum-seekers

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The Supreme Court has allowed the Trump administration to continue making asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for their U.S. court hearings. It may be the most far-reaching measure in a series of policies the government has put in place over the last year amid an unprecedented surge of asylum-seeking arriving at the border, many from Central America.

The Trump administration has enacted at least five policies since the beginning of last year that officials contend are designed to address asylum claims that don't have merit and to confront a sharp increase in border arrests to a 13-year high in May. Here is a look at the policies and what they do.

RETURN TO MEXICO TO WAIT FOR HEARINGS

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A Supreme Court decision on Wednesday affected the fate of a policy often called "Remain in Mexico." It was introduced in January 2019 and gradually expanded to all major crossing corridors.

Migrants arriving at the border are turned back to Mexico and must wait there for their court hearings in the U.S. Critics say it's a reckless and inhumane program that has subjected countless asylum seekers to kidnapping, extortion and violence in Mexico border cities where gangs wield tremendous power.

About 60,000 immigrants have been sent back to Mexico under the program. Six in 10 of them are from Honduras and Guatemala. Mexicans and unaccompanied children are exempt.

About 18% of people subject to the policy, known officially as "Migrant Protection Protocols," are caught crossing the border illegally after their initial encounter, according to Border Patrol Chief Rodney Scott.

FLY TO CENTRAL AMERICA TO SEEK ASYLUM THERE

The administration has flown more than 800 people to Guatemala since November, denying them a chance to claim asylum in the United States. Instead, they can apply for asylum in Guatemala, which is stricken with poverty and violence.

Very few people actually apply for asylum in Guatemala, and many simply return home. Some call it "deportation with a layover."

All people sent to Guatemala so far are from El Salvador and Honduras. They are subject to the policy because they passed through Guatemala on the way to the U.S.

The government plans to expand the "Asylum Cooperative Agreements" program and start sending people back to Honduras and El Salvador to request asylum there as well.

LIGHTNING-FAST ASYLUM HEARINGS

About 4,000 Mexicans and Central Americans have been deported after failing initial screenings for asylum that are administered with very little turnaround time. They get one day to prepare while in Customs and Border Protection custody, where lights are on around the clock. During that time, they get a maximum of 60 to 90 minutes to call attorneys and cannot leave call-back numbers.

Asylum-seekers who appeal failed screenings are connected by phone to an immigration judge who reaches a final decision within two days.

More than 2,500 people have been put in a version of the program for Central Americans called "Prompt Asylum Case Review" and nearly 1,200 have been put in a version for Mexicans called "Humanitarian Asylum Review Process," Mark Morgan, CBP's acting commissioner, said in late February.

QUICK DEPORTATION FLIGHTS TO CENTRAL AMERICA

The U.S. government can now more quickly deport immigrants back to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Under a new policy, U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials can electronically verify citizenship of people who have final removal orders, avoiding the exercise of obtaining paper travel documents from a consulate, which officials say can take one to two weeks. They do not leave CBP custody, which typically lack beds and showers.

About 17,000 people have been subject to the "Electronic Nationality Verification" policy, Morgan said in late February. Many are bused to a Border Patrol processing center in Tucson, Arizona, and flown home from there.

Kevin McAleenan, then-acting Homeland Security Secretary, said in September that it "gives us the ability to return migrants without any claim of fear to their countries of origin in an expedited manner."

FLIGHTS TO GUADALAJARA FOR MEXICAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS

In January, the administration said it would begin deporting about 250 Mexicans a week on flights to Guadalajara from Tucson, Arizona, more than 1,000 miles (1,640 kilometers) apart. Authorities believe repeat attempts are less likely if they are returned deep in Mexico.

Mexicans from states that border the United States are ineligible. A similar effort to fly deportees to Mexico City ended in 2012 as the Obama administration struggled to fill planes.

AP Exclusive: Inside massive DEA raid targeting drug cartel

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

CHANTILLY, Va. (AP) — In the darkness, the team suits up quietly, putting on their helmets and tactical gear. Federal agents lug battering rams, bolt cutters and heavy weaponry by foot up a hill on a residential California street that's softly aglow from street lamps. Then the agents turn onto the walkway of their target's home.

"Police! Search warrant!" one officer yells as agents bang on the front door. "Police search warrant!" And then three thunderous bangs as the task force breaks down the front door.

Moments later, a reputed member of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, known as CJNG, is walked out in handcuffs.

In early-morning raids Wednesday, agents fanned out across the United States, culminating a six-month investigation with the primary goal of dismantling the upper echelon of CJNG and hoping to get closer to capturing its leader, one of the most wanted men in America. There's a \$10 million reward for the arrest of Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera.

The gang controls between one-third and two-thirds of the U.S. drug market. It is so violent that members leave piles of bodies in streets and hanging from overpasses in Mexico, and they fill the city of Guadalajara with mass graves. They carry machine guns and hand grenades. They once used rocket launchers to shoot down a Mexican military helicopter.

More than 600 people have been arrested during the operation in recent months, more than 15,000 kilos of meth was seized and nearly \$20 million taken as search and arrest warrants were executed. About 250 were arrested Wednesday.

"El Mencho and his associates prey on the addicts, and they prey on small towns where they can act as bullies and infiltrate these small towns," said Wendy Woolcok, the special agent in charge of Drug Enforcement Administration's special operations division. "They promise hope, and they deliver despair."

For the U.S, combating Mexico's fastest-growing and most violent gang is a top priority. Law enforcement officials believe the gang has drug distribution hubs in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Houston and Atlanta. It is believed to have a presence in 24 of Mexico's 32 states.

Unlike other cartels, CJNG shows no reluctance in directly attacking police and army patrols and is blamed for the deadliest attacks against law enforcement forces in Mexico. In eliminating rivals, it has carried out spectacular acts of violence.

"Their propensity to violence is a big part of it, they're very violent organization, they're a well-armed organization, but really the gasoline that was thrown on the fire was synthetic drugs," said Bill Bodner, the special agent in charge of the DEA's field office in Los Angeles.

The Associated Press had exclusive access to the raid outside Los Angeles and the national command center. In California, about a dozen team members prepped early Wednesday for their target. They searched the home, a stately, salmon-colored Spanish Colonial-style with a large chandelier in the foyer, palm trees in the front yard, and crawled on the ground to look under cars, including a black Lexus, in the driveway. No shots were fired.

Victor Ochoa, 34, was arrested on drug charges. The DEA alleges he acts as a stash house manger for the cartel. He remained in custody at the Los Angeles County jail Wednesday evening and it wasn't clear whether he had a defense attorney.

At the command center tucked inside a nondescript government building in northern Virginia, a group of a dozen analysts and agents sat behind computer screens inside a conference room that's been converted into a command center. As agents were banging down doors across the country, the phones rang at the command center and analysts recorded the number of arrests and amount of drugs seized on printed worksheets.

An analyst entered the information into a DEA computer screen as other analysts ran phone numbers, addresses and nicknames found inside the homes being searched.

The special agent in charge of the special operations division assembled with her team in front of a heat

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map — red dots glowing darker and darker as more arrests are made, primarily in Texas, California and New Jersey. By 9 a.m., more than 60 people had been taken into custody.

Assistant Attorney General Brian Benczkowski, head of the Justice Department's criminal division, called the operation "the most comprehensive action to date in the Department of Justice's effort to disrupt, dismantle and ultimately destroy CJNG"

While Mexican drug cartels made their money predominantly from marijuana in past decades, the market has somewhat dissipated with the state-level legalization of cannabis in dozens of states across the U.S.

Now, they've turned to methamphetamine and fentanyl, selling it at almost 14 times the price it cost to make and flooding the streets of the U.S., fueling homelessness and the opioid crisis, and leaving behind another trail of bodies: from overdoses.

The Jalisco Cartel was formed in 2010 from a wing of the Sinaloa cartel based in the western city of Guadalajara. While it once specialized in producing methamphetamine, like most Mexican cartels it has expanded into multidrug shipments including fentanyl, cocaine, meth and heroin.

The cartel is led by the elusive Oseguera, whose bodyguards once shot down a Mexican military helicopter to prevent his arrest. In recent weeks, prosecutors have brought charges against his son, Nemesio Oseguera, also known as "El Menchito" and his daughter, Jessica Johanna Oseguera.

And officials say he's more dangerous than reputed Mexican drug kingpin and escape artist Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, who as leader of the Sinaloa cartel ran a massive drug conspiracy that spread murder and mayhem for more than two decades.

"I think the threat from El Mencho and CJNG is greater right now because in my opinion, at the time Chapo was captured or at the time he was kind of at his at his heyday, so to speak, the Sinaloa Cartel was fractured, it was a little broken up," Bodner said.

El Chapo was a little flashier, but Mencho and the Jalisco gang see their drug business as just that -- business, Bodner said.

"They have a little bit more discipline. They're not necessarily into the partying and living the good life, it's just about the business of drug trafficking and control, and that's what makes them scarier, Bodner said.

The Jalisco cartel is also known for brazen tactics such as driving around in convoys of pickup trucks marked with the letters "CJNG" and for circulating videos of heavily-armed cartel gunmen in military-style dress. While Mexico says it is no longer concentrating on detaining drug lords, the Mexican government has extradited Oseguera's son and has detained some of his associates.

Associated Press writer Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

Tiger Woods elected to the World Golf Hall of Fame

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Already among the greatest on the golf course, Tiger Woods will join them in the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Woods was elected Wednesday to be part of the 2021 induction class, a decision with as much suspense as a tap-in. Woods shares the PGA Tour record with 82 career victories, and his 15 majors are second only to Jack Nicklaus. He has 11 other victories in tours around the world, including Europe, Japan, Asia and Australia.

PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan called Woods with the news. He is not at The Players Championship this week because Woods says his back was not quite ready.

"I am both honored and humbled to be inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame," Woods said in a statement. "This past year has been such an incredible journey and the support I've received from my family, friends and fans has been overwhelming. This achievement is the ultimate recognition to never give up and keep chasing."

Woods was a lock before he returned from reconstructive knee surgery after winning the 2008 U.S. Open for his 14th major, and before he returned from a fourth back surgery to win his 15th major last

year at the Masters.

No other player has won at rate like the 44-year-old Woods.

The first to win the U.S. Amateur three straight times, Woods already had two victories in seven starts on tour. He set or tied 20 records at the Masters when he won by 12 shots in 1997 at age 21. By the time he turned 30, he already had 46 victories on the PGA Tour and 10 majors.

He remains the only player to hold all four professional majors at the same time.

Off the course, he was a catalyst for unprecedented growth, and he was largely responsible for television network deals that set prize money soaring.

"Tiger has done more for the game of golf than anyone ever thought possible, and his historic feats on the course are only one aspect of his impact," Monahan said. "His imprint on the game is immeasurable, and his unparalleled legacy is one we look forward to celebrating."

The Hall of Fame selection process was changed last year to lower the age to 45 during the induction year. It had been 50, and it was 40 when the World Golf Hall of Fame began in 1998 in St. Augustine. Among his peers, Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and Vijay Singh already are in the Hall of Fame.

A subcommittee of media, Hall of Fame members and golf administrators whittled the ballot to 10 finalists — four male players, four female players and two contributors. The 20-member selection committee — nine from the media, seven administrators and four Hall of Fame members — voted Wednesday, with 75% required for election.

The induction class has a maximum of four members, with others to be announced later. Still to be determined is the date and location for induction.

Other finalists were Johnny Farrell, Pdraig Harrington and Tom Weiskopf from the male competitor category; Susie Maxwell Berning, Beverly Hanson, Sandra Palmer and Dottie Pepper from the female competitor category; and Tim Finchem and Marion Hollins from the contributor category.

Corporate debt loads a rising risk as virus hits economy

By **PAUL WISEMAN, BERNARD CONDON and CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Business Writers**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A gyrating stock market is seizing headlines as the coronavirus threatens corporate profits and economic growth. Yet it's in the normally temperate bond market, where companies go to borrow money, where the gravest dangers may lurk.

Investors fear that businesses that have borrowed heavily, especially energy, airline and cruise line companies, will struggle to pay their debts as customers cancel trips and hunker down at home. The shutdown of normal business is shrinking demand for energy in particular, sending oil prices sinking and intensifying pressure on indebted oil-and-gas production firms.

The numbers are enormous.

Having binged on borrowing, companies that are outside the financial sector owe \$9.6 trillion in the United States — up more than 50% in a decade. Worldwide, companies have issued \$13 trillion in bonds, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. That's twice what they owed in the financial crisis year of 2008. Corporate debt in China alone has soared from virtually nothing to \$590 billion.

Add in what companies owe banks and other creditors, and their debts come to \$75 trillion worldwide, up from \$32 trillion in 2005, the Institute of International Finance says.

Struggling to meet debt payments under the pressure of a virus-induced economic slump, companies are more likely to lay off workers, delay investments and cut costs. All of which could deepen any economic downturn.

Still, optimists note that banks are far healthier than they were in 2008, when millions of homeowners were saddled with mortgages they couldn't pay. And central banks are striving to limit the damage. The Federal Reserve has stepped up its daily short-term lending to help businesses meet short-term financing needs such as meeting payrolls.

"I don't think we have anything shaping up like 2008 or 1929, particularly in the United States," said

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Kenneth Rogoff, a Harvard economist who has written about the history of financial crises.

Over the past decade, though, companies have borrowed heavily to capitalize on record-low rates. Many have used the proceeds not to hire or expand but to issue dividends to shareholders or to buy back their own stock.

The strain is showing. In the United States, the bonds of such iconic names as Macy's and Kraft Heinz have been downgraded to junk status.

Bonds for cruise lines have sunk along with their stocks. Standard & Poor's Global Ratings warned that its rating for Carnival Corp. could be cut to its lowest level before junk. Carnival's Diamond Princess and Grand Princess ships were badly hit by the virus.

So far, airlines aren't "at immediate risk," said Philip Baggaley, an analyst at S&P, adding: "But this is a new virus and more widespread one than previous cases such as SARS and swine flu, so it's hard to predict beyond the near term, and it could certainly be worse than current expectations."

Companies had been selling tens of billions in new bonds each month. That pace ground to halt in late February. Companies started canceling sales as investors balked at buying corporate bonds. In the last week of that month, no U.S. company sold new bonds, according to S&P. That's virtually unheard of outside of a holiday or an emergency like the financial crisis.

The canceled sales coincide with perilous times for many companies. Oxford Economics has warned that nearly \$4 trillion of U.S. corporate bonds will come due within five years — a "massive wall of maturities," it calls it.

Corporate America has used new bond sales to pay off old bond holders, akin to homeowners during the housing bubble paying off their mortgages with proceeds from new mortgages. Now, the corporate refinancing cycle is shuddering.

"High debt levels make the corporate sector in key economies, including the U.S., particularly vulnerable to the sharp slowdown in global economic activity," said Eswar Prasad, a former top economist at the International Monetary Fund official who teaches at Cornell University.

On Wall Street, the corporate bond market turned chaotic this week when a standoff between Saudi Arabia and Russia sent oil prices plunging 25% Monday, the biggest drop since the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

"I've never seen anything like this in 30 years of trading," said John Dixon, who trades junk bonds at Dinosaur Financial Group. "People are confused."

The U.S. energy industry is especially vulnerable.

"That's been a ticking time bomb," said Alexis Crow of the consultancy PwC.

The shale boom, which catapulted the U.S. into the world's largest oil producer once companies learned to extract oil cheaply from shale rock formations, was fueled largely by debt. Many of those bills will come due in the next few years. With now-shrunk oil prices and high bond yields, many of the smaller operators won't be able to repay loans or refinance.

In an industry where 200-plus oil producers filed for bankruptcy protection in the past five years, more such filings are expected, especially among small companies. Analysts were expecting companies to struggle to repay debts when oil was around \$50 a barrel. This week, it's been trading between \$30 to \$35.

"This industry has funded the shale gale with cheap and available credit for 10 to 15 years," said Hassan Eltorie, director at IHS Markit. "Now that cheap and available credit is no longer there."

The 88 oil and gas producers tracked by IHS, large and small, have a combined debt load of about \$225 billion, Eltorie said. About a third of outstanding debt is coming due within four years.

Borrowing costs will be especially high for gas-focused producers because of the bleak outlook for natural gas prices, according to IHS Markit. Smaller companies focused on natural gas were already struggling with high debt loads and low gas prices. Chesapeake Energy, a shale producer that's long struggled to contain costs amid falling natural gas prices, saw its bonds due in the next three years trading at 25 cents to 35 cents on the dollar Wednesday.

Overall, the quality of corporate bonds has deteriorated in recent years, suggesting more defaults ahead. Companies worldwide have issued \$3.6 trillion in bonds rated "BBB" — one notch above junk. BBB bonds account for 54% of investment-grade corporate bonds, up from 30% in 2008.

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If ratings agencies downgrade BBB-rated bonds to junk, many investors will seek to sell them, putting even more pressure on markets. On Wednesday, S&P reduced the bonds of Sabre Corp., which makes airline ticketing technology, to junk status, saying that damage from the virus would hurt cash flow.

With the market so volatile, some bond investors can't find buyers, raising the prospect of a "liquidity crisis" similar to the 2008 financial crisis. Prices plunged as investors ran for the exits.

"This is truly systemic in a way that we haven't seen since 2008," said Michael Lewitt, who's been trading debt since the 1980s.

Money manager Marilyn Cohen is telling her clients with bonds to stay calm and ride out the storm and not force her to sell in a market with so few buyers. But not everyone is listening.

"One lady said she wanted to sell, and I said, 'To who?'" Cohen recalled.

Condon and Bussewitz reported from New York.

AP Business Writers Stan Choe in New York and Martin Crutsinger in Washington contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, March 12, the 72nd day of 2020. There are 294 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On March 12, 1980, a Chicago jury found John Wayne Gacy Jr. guilty of the murders of 33 men and boys. (The next day, Gacy was sentenced to death; he was executed in May 1994.)

On this date:

In 1864, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed command as General-in-Chief of the Union armies in the Civil War.

In 1912, the Girl Scouts of the USA had its beginnings as Juliette Gordon Low of Savannah, Georgia, founded the first American troop of the Girl Guides.

In 1913, Canberra was officially designated the future capital of Australia.

In 1925, Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen died in Beijing.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered the first of his 30 radio addresses that came to be known as "fireside chats," telling Americans what was being done to deal with the nation's economic crisis.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman announced what became known as the "Truman Doctrine" to help Greece and Turkey resist Communism.

In 1955, legendary jazz musician Charlie "Bird" Parker died in New York at age 34.

In 1987, the musical play "Les Miserables" opened on Broadway.

In 1993, Janet Reno was sworn in as the first female U.S. attorney general. A three-day blizzard that came to be known as "The Storm of the Century" began inundating the eastern third of the U.S. A series of bombings in Mumbai, India, killed 257 people (the explosions were allegedly masterminded by India's most wanted man, Dawood Ibrahim).

In 1994, the Church of England ordained its first women priests.

In 2003, Elizabeth Smart, the 15-year-old girl who vanished from her bedroom nine months earlier, was found alive in a Salt Lake City suburb with two drifters, Brian David Mitchell and Wanda Barzee. (Mitchell is serving a life sentence; Barzee was released from prison in September 2018.)

In 2009, disgraced financier Bernard Madoff pleaded guilty in New York to pulling off perhaps the biggest swindle in Wall Street history.

Ten years ago: Two suicide bombers killed 55 people in near simultaneous blasts in Lahore, Pakistan, the fourth attack in a week. Lindsey Vonn capped a historic season with her third straight overall World Cup title in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

Five years ago: Two Ferguson, Missouri, police officers were shot and wounded in front of the police department during a protest; U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder denounced the shooter as a "damn punk."

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NASA launched its Magnetospheric Multiscale spacecraft on a billion-dollar mission to study the explosive give-and-take of the Earth and sun's magnetic fields.

One year ago: More countries, including the entire European Union, grounded the Boeing jetliner involved in two deadly crashes or banned the plane from their airspace; leaving the United States one of the few remaining operators of the Boeing 737 Max 8. Prosecutors said Hollywood stars Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin were charged along with nearly 50 other people in a scheme in which wealthy parents bribed college coaches and other insiders to get their children into some of the most elite schools in the country. (Huffman pleaded guilty to fraud and conspiracy and served 12 days in a federal prison.) With just 17 days to go before Britain's scheduled departure from the European Union, the British Parliament rejected the deal, delivering a blow to Prime Minister Theresa May's authority as leader. (May would step down as Conservative Party leader in June.)

Today's Birthdays: Politician, diplomat and civil rights activist Andrew Young is 88. Actress Barbara Feldon is 87. Former broadcast journalist Lloyd Dobyns is 84. Actress-singer Liza Minnelli is 74. Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, is 73. Singer-songwriter James Taylor is 72. Former Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., is 72. Rock singer-musician Bill Payne (Little Feat) is 71. Actor Jon Provost (TV: "Lassie") is 70. Author Carl Hiaasen (HY'-ah-sihn) is 67. Rock musician Steve Harris (Iron Maiden) is 64. Actress Lesley Manville is 64. Actor Jerry Levine is 63. Singer Marlon Jackson (The Jackson Five) is 63. Actor Jason Beghe is 60. Actor Courtney B. Vance is 60. Actor Titus Welliver is 58. Former MLB All-Star Darryl Strawberry is 58. Actress Julia Campbell is 57. Actor Jake Weber is 57. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., is 52. Actor Aaron Eckhart is 52. CNN reporter Jake Tapper is 51. Rock musician Graham Coxon is 51. Country musician Tommy Bales (Flynnville Train) is 47. Actor Rhys Coiro is 41. Country singer Holly Williams is 39. Actor Samm (cq) Levine is 38. Actress Jaimie Alexander is 36. Actor Tyler Patrick Jones is 26. Actress Kendall Applegate is 21.

Thought for Today: "A proverb is a short sentence based on long experience." — Miguel de Cervantes, Spanish novelist, dramatist and poet (1547-1616).

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