

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 1 of 75

- [1- Basketball Tourney Cancelled](#)
- [1- State DI Tournament is Cancelled](#)
- [2- SD Newswatch: Sioux Falls biotech firm rushing to develop coronavirus treatment](#)
- [4- Middle School Talent Show](#)
- [8- Bates Township Notices](#)
- [9- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [11- PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 by Joe Schwan](#)
- [12 - From the Moscow Times: Dream Island: Both Open For Business and "Coming Soon"](#)
- [14- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [15- Weather Pages](#)
- [18- Daily Devotional](#)
- [19- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [20- News from the Associated Press](#)



State DI Tournament is Cancelled

The decision has been made for the State DI Board. Pierre school district has limited travel regarding school events and activities to district only for the next 4 weeks, and possibly longer. There is no possibility of postponing due to availability.

Globals is still on at this moment, and the State AD will be trying to break into Adam's time to get a better picture. There is a plan that can be implemented as is, as it opens every team we assign up for the lottery.

Basketball Tourney Cancelled

The Youth Girls/Boys Basketball Tourney for Grades 4th-6th scheduled for Saturday in Groton has been cancelled.

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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Sioux Falls biotech firm rushing to develop coronavirus treatment

By: Bart Pfankuch

A Sioux Falls company — with its team of scientists and a herd of genetically engineered cows — is working feverishly to develop an effective treatment for people infected with the coronavirus.

SAb Biotherapeutics has emerged as a major player in the effort to isolate and generate a viable antidote to the fast-moving virus that is sweeping across the world and the United States, so far sickening more than 140,000 and killing several thousand.

Eddie Sullivan, CEO of SAb, said the company is working on producing a polyclonal antibody therapeutic to coronavirus that it expects will be ready for the pre-clinical and clinical-trial evaluations by the end of the summer, paving the way for a potential treatment shortly thereafter, depending on the pace of regulatory approval.

"The important thing to know is that our capacity and technology allow us to produce a candidate therapeutic more rapidly than any other technology available," Sullivan said.

If successful, Sullivan said, SAb's coronavirus treatment has the potential to be extremely effective because it may not only kill the virus but also help to reduce symptoms of the disease. These include fever, dry cough and shortness of breath, which can appear two to 14 days after exposure. Some patients with the disease, especially the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, can die.

"Our therapeutic will neutralize the virus, because it's a polyclonal antibody," Sullivan said. "But it also works in conjunction with the rest of the immune system to not only eliminate the virus, but to help the patient with inflammation and all the other things associated with activation of the immune system."

For nearly 20 years, SAb has been developing and perfecting a unique method of using genetically engineered cows as the source from which to harvest antibodies that can fight human diseases such as influenza, diabetes and cancer. The company originated at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and moved its headquarters to Sioux Falls in 2002, Sullivan said. The company now operates from a site on 60th Street North in Sioux Falls, just southwest of the intersection of Interstates 90 and 229.

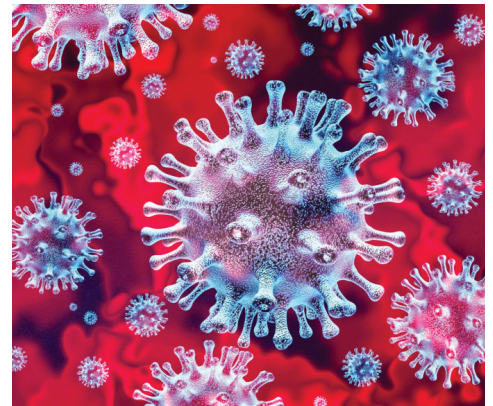
SAb is focused on producing antibodies targeted at the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes the COVID-19 disease, commonly referred to as the coronavirus that is causing illnesses and deaths.

The virus has infected about 140,000 people and killed more than 4,700 worldwide; South Dakota had eight known cases with one death as of March 12, though Gov. Kristi Noem said she expects more cases will become known as the virus takes hold.

Polyclonal antibodies are the proteins created by the body to fight invading diseases by creating an immune response that attacks and ideally kills the invading pathogen.

The first big breakthrough by SAb was developing a way to genetically engineer the cows so that rather than producing bovine antibodies, the cows produce human antibodies that effectively fight diseases in people.

Furthermore, the company has developed an immuno-therapy platform in which the antibodies created by the cows are targeted at specific diseases, making them far more effective and faster than other treatments at fighting specific diseases within a human being.



This image shows a microscopic view of the COVID-19 virus.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 3 of 75

"What it allows us to do is to vaccinate these animals, or immunize them, in the same way we would to immunize ourselves against influenza or any other type of disease where we're creating these antibodies inside our own bodies," Sullivan said. "We're doing that inside these animals, producing larger quantities of highly targeted antibodies against a disease of interest, and then we're harvesting those antibodies from the animals."

The antibodies are harvested from the cows' plasma within their blood. In a harmless procedure, the plasma is removed from the cows two or three times per month.

Sullivan said the company does not work directly with the actual virus, but rather subunits of the virus that are not infectious, so the animals are not harmed and there is no chance of the process spreading the virus to humans.

SAb had previously developed antibodies it believes will be effective in fighting other diseases related to the coronavirus, including the common flu. None of SAb's therapeutics has yet to make it to market, though its flu treatment and others are in clinical development, including a treatment for the Middle East Respiratory Coronavirus, a disease very similar to COVID-19.

"You have to know that regardless of whether there is what you might consider an emerging disease, like coronavirus or any other, there are very specific requirements that any company with any candidate product has to go through in order to be able to move it into the clinic," Sullivan said. "That requires development of the product, testing of the product, evaluation of the safety of the product, and all that must be done prior to initiating a clinical trial and putting it into humans."

To speed up development of a COVID-19 treatment, the staff and scientists at SAb are working through the complicated processes associated with bringing a treatment to the public by completing as many steps as possible at the same time.

The company recently started producing antibodies targeted specifically at treating COVID-19, Sullivan said. The company is now partnering with federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration and university researchers to simultaneously go through the process of testing and approval rather than taking those steps in a linear fashion, Sullivan said.

"We have essentially lit up our entire network of universities and other government agencies and partners we have worked [with] in the past in order to not only develop the product, but move it into testing and eventually into the clinic as quickly as possible," he said. "The speed at which we can move depends upon a lot of these various groups and how fast they can move as well."

Meanwhile, other companies and scientists are working to develop a vaccine for COVID-19 that would be given to healthy people in order to prevent them from contracting the disease. Both points of attack — preventive vaccines and therapies that treat the sick — are needed to successfully slow or stop a virus from spreading, Sullivan said.

A separate segment of the biotherapy industry is looking for ways to alter or repurpose existing products to see whether they are effective at treating COVID-19, Sullivan said. SAb is hopeful that any product it develops will be more effective than repurposed medications because its antibodies will be targeted specifically at COVID-19.

SAb, which has about 50 employees, has found South Dakota to be a great place to perform its research and development of therapeutic treatments, Sullivan said. The environment is welcoming to the cows that produce the antibodies, and the region has provided a stable pool of competent researchers and employees, he said.

"Great science happens in South Dakota, and we have the opportunity to do something that can be helpful all over the world," Sullivan said.

Middle School Talent Show



Ashley Johnson and Jeager Kampa were the Masters of Ceremony at the Middle School Talent Show held Thursday. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



Gretchen Dinger had a flute solo entitled, "Be Our Guest." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



The sixth grade band performed "The Magnificent Seven." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



The sixth grade band girls played, "Tomorrow." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)

Groton Daily Independent

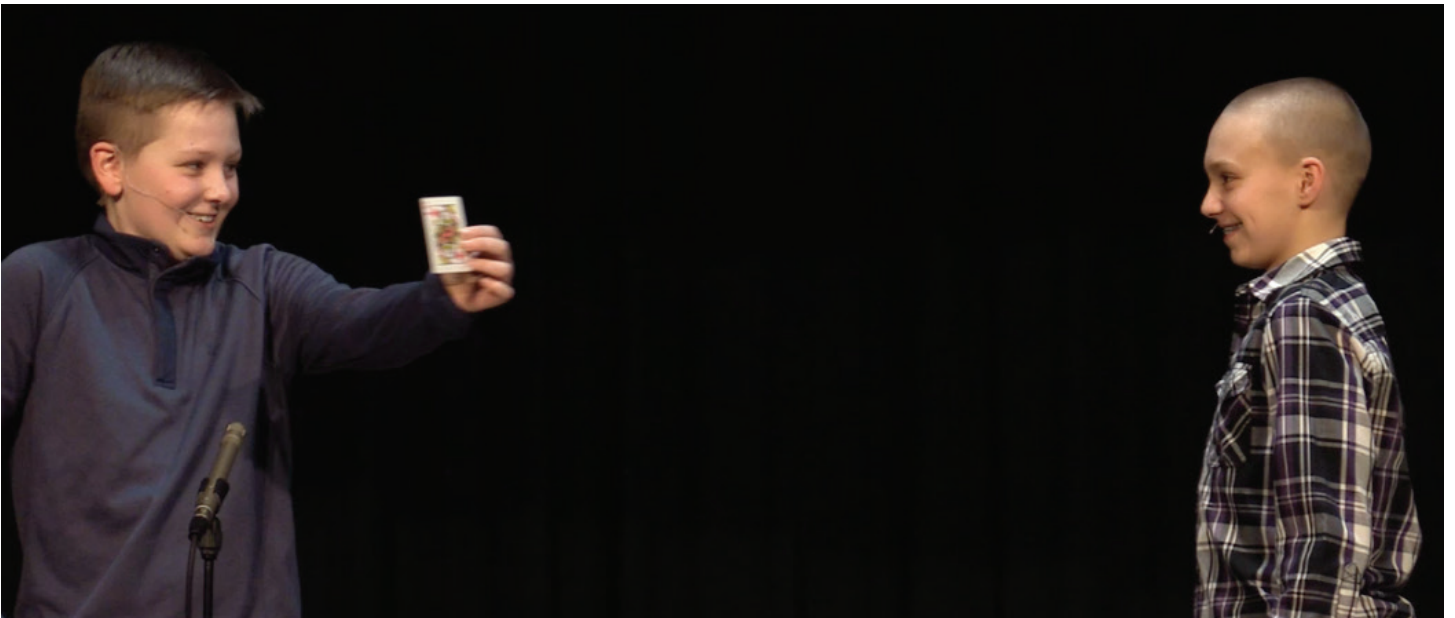
Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 5 of 75



Camryn Kurtz sang a solo entitled, "Hallelujah." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



Karsten Flihs played a piano solo entitled, "One Call Away." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



Logan Warrington and Jayden Schwan had the "Best" Magic Show. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 6 of 75



The junior high band performed, "All Summer Long." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



Roni Tank sang a solo entitled, "Song for the Broken Hearted." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



Emily Clark played a piano solo entitled, "March of the Clones." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 7 of 75



Ellie Weismantel, Cadance Tullis and Emily Clark had a Mallet Ensemble and they performed, "High Hopes." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



Jerica Locke and Rylee Dunker had a mallet duet entitled, "Hakuna Matata." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 8 of 75



The sixth grade boys band performed, "Seven Nation Army." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



The junior high show choir performed, "Life is a Highway." (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)

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)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$12.93. 18694

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 9 of 75

Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

Yes, indeed, it got worse. By a lot. We're at 1660 cases in 46 states, up from 1240 in 42 states yesterday at this time. That's around a 33% increase in cases in 24 hours, and we're running out of states--I guess that's one number that won't go up much more, no matter how bad it gets.

Top 3 states are now accounting for over half of cases; that would be WA with 420, NY with 328, and CA with 252. MA is at 108. The double-digit case numbers now top out at 49, and there are 21 states with these kinds of numbers, with another 21 plus DC in single digits. We've added holdout states AK, ME, ND, and WY to the list of those reporting cases. Only ones left with no reported cases are AL, ID, MT, and WV. A couple of days ago, AL and WV were not testing; I don't know whether that has changed.

41 patients have died: 31 in WA, 4 in CA, 2 in FL, and 1 each in NJ, GA, SD, and KS.

This is all pretty much as expected; we knew there were going to be more and more cases and that the numbers would increase in an exponential fashion. No surprises there. The big news is on the what-we're-doing-about-it front. We're finally starting to show a significant response. For starters:

Major sporting events are being cancelled left and right. The NCAA basketball tournaments and all their spring championships are cancelled, the NAIA has done the same, MLB has suspended operations and pushed back the opening day for two weeks, the NBA has suspended its season, the NHL has suspended its season.

Several state and local governments have banned events for 250 or more participants; those include three counties around Seattle, WA, and Santa Clara County, CA. California's governor has issued an advisory that large events should be cancelled. Ohio's governor has ordered large sporting events will be held without spectators. New York has limited events with over 500 participants.

Broadway in New York has closed down. Disneyland, Disneyworld, and Orlando's Universal Studios are closed through the end of the month.

Schools are closing across the country too. I received word this morning that Washington schools in the three most affected counties are closed for six weeks, through April 24. Colleges and universities are extending Spring Break and going to online classes. High schools are suspending extracurricular activities. Many schools are limiting visitors.

Nursing homes and hospitals are limiting or banning visitors.

I am well aware that I am missing all kinds of other events, governments, places that have taken action to prevent crowds from gathering. Above is simply a sampling of what I've been seeing.

In South Dakota, the state basketball tournaments began this weekend. After the day games today, the evening events were limited in attendance. A small number of spectators is permitted, and they may attend only games for their own teams. After each game, the venue is emptied out before fans of the next two teams are admitted. We still have no word about how the High School Activities Association is planning to handle next weekend's tournaments; but there is word Sioux Falls schools may not permit their teams to participate. That would put a crimp in the festivities, given they have 3 of the 8 teams in one tournament and 2 of the 8 in another. I am not sure that, by next weekend, there will be tournaments at all irrespective what the Sioux Falls schools do. And honestly, I'm thinking there shouldn't be.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 10 of 75

All of this is enormously disruptive, both socially and economically. These cancelled events represent a great deal of economic activity. People whose jobs depend on them will not get paid. School closings put parents in a bad way for child care while they're at work; not everyone can work remotely. People who have to miss work without pay will suffer; a great many of them won't be able to pay the rent or feed the kids in a population where 40% of families don't have \$400 for an emergency. Children from food-insecure families might not have enough to eat without their school lunches. These effects will ripple through the economy, and people will suffer greatly.

And yet I support all of these cancellations and postponements. It is time we face the fact that the leading infectious disease specialists agree we've lost the race to contain this virus. Since we can no longer contain it, the best we can do now is to flatten the curve, to reduce the numbers of new cases each day so that our medical resources are not overwhelmed by demands they cannot meet. Delaying the development of new cases buys time to work the first wave of cases through the system before the next one and the next one and the one after that arrive.

For the cases who become critically ill, there is a need for specialized equipment to keep them alive until their lungs can heal; this equipment is very limited in supply, and it's not the sort of stuff you just order on 2-day delivery from Amazon Prime: We're going to have to make do with what's currently available. Too many patients needing it at once means some will die who could have been saved simply because there is no way to treat everyone who needs treatment. So delaying the new cases is urgently important. Efforts must intensify toward that end.

Time to serious up and deal with this. Let's see whether we can reduce the number of funerals in upcoming weeks. I am recommending everyone avoid large events, no matter how young and healthy you are. Worship from home on Sunday; I think God will understand. Do a phone meeting or Skype instead of putting a bunch of people together in a room. Try to do your shopping at off hours, and get it done in fewer, less frequent trips. This isn't the time for clothes and home décor shopping; just buy essentials and get out of the store. Skip the theme park and the big game and the crowded mall. Eat at home for a couple of weeks. If you have the option to work from home, take it. Stay off crowded public transit if you can. Encourage your local school officials to at least suspend extracurricular activities, limit visitors, and educate students about precautionary measures.

And exercise precautions yourself--all the things we've already been talking about--social distancing, hand hygiene, cleaning surfaces and objects, avoiding touching your face. Every person who doesn't catch this until later--much later if possible--gives us a better chance of being able to serve all the patients who show up needing help. If we could buy a couple of weeks or a month, we might still turn this thing in a better direction and save some lives. Anything you do to help is important. Here's your chance to be a hero, and you don't even have to dive into a raging river to rescue someone.

This isn't primarily about protecting yourself; after all, most of you are not at risk for serious disease at all. This is about serving the public by slowing the spread of an infection that kills some of your fellow citizens. Consult your value system, and consider your priorities.

Be well. Help others stay well.

Things are happening so fast that all of the data I've posted here will be wrong in a few hours. What won't be wrong is the values portion of the program. Please consider it seriously, and I'll be back to update you as needed.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

by JOE SCHWAN, Groton Area Superintendent

The South Dakota Department of Health is providing guidance and leadership to all South Dakota residents including public school districts regarding the nationwide concerns over the spread of COVID-19 also known as the Coronavirus.

Precautions recommended by the Department of Health to help in avoiding illness include

Follow CDC's Travel Health Notices if you are traveling internationally.

Contact your medical provider if you become ill after international travel.

Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze (with a tissue or into your sleeve).

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or alcohol-based hand gel with at least 60% alcohol).

Stay home if you are sick.

These recommendations are drawing new and increased attention with the widespread concern over the Coronavirus but are good advice any time and would be effective against many kinds of illness. We will continue to encourage good hand washing techniques by our students and staff members and ask that students stay home when they're sick. We currently have a good supply of appropriate disinfecting surface cleaners used by the custodial staff in cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces. We continue to have hand sanitizer available throughout each building for general use.

We will continue to follow the guidance of the CDC and state and local health officials about preparedness and responsiveness to this public health risk. We appreciate your understanding and support of these guidelines as we all work together to protect our kids and our communities.

Dream Island: Both Open For Business and "Coming Soon"

By Anna Belokur, The Moscow Times

During his 1959 visit to the United States, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was famously denied a visit to Disneyland. Upon returning home, he vowed that the Soviet Union would have its own theme park, and set about designing an elaborate fantasy kingdom large enough to compete with Disneyland. The plan was abandoned after Khrushchev's ouster, and Russia's quest for a large-scale theme park wouldn't be realized for another 60 years, until "Dream Island" opened this month in Moscow. The Moscow Times' Anna Belokur spent an afternoon determining whether the park, whose creation budget rivals that of Dubai's Burj Khalifa skyscraper, has lived up to Khrushchev's dreams.

In both Russian and foreign media, comparisons between Dream Island and Disneyland have been constant. Dream Island itself can't seem to make up its mind about whether Disneyland is the idol or the enemy, at times drawing directly on its American counterpart while at others declaring itself to be the sole product of Russian innovation with no need for foreign influences. Russian characters (including the Snow Queen and a Soviet-sourced Mowgli) coexist alongside expat

Smurfs and Ninja Turtles. Both parks pump vanilla-scented air throughout the premises, but you'd never find so much horseradish and dill in a Disney restaurant. When asked about the Disney-like castles that grace the park's facade and interior, creator Amiran Mutsoev claims that the architecture was inspired by iconic Moscow buildings like the GUM and TSUM shopping centers and the gothic towers of the Stalin era. In short, Dream Island has made real Khrushchev's desire to create a Russian Disneyland - without actually invoking the name of Walt Disney.

Children's responses to the park were seemingly enthusiastic. A small girl pointed to a dinosaur and



Russia's decades-in-the-making answer to Disneyland, "Dream Island," was opened to the public this week — but it's still a work in progress. / Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency



Dream Island strives to deliver whimsy and delight to visitors of all ages and governmental standings.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 13 of 75

screamed "It's real!" while another gave a shy hug to a Smurf. Parents, however, were a bit harder to please. After her seat failed to deploy upwards on a ride, an irate mother was allowed to bypass the long line for a second turn, while a skeptical father tested the structural integrity of one of the haunted house's gargoyles by rapping it firmly on the head. Many, however, seemed to take the park's flaws in stride. A father and son duo who were exploring the Snow Queen's (mostly-empty) palace treated the illogical design as entertainment in itself ("Is there anything down there?" "Nope, just another locked door.")

At this stage, it's fair to say that the park is still a work in progress, and rules of conduct have yet to be firmly enforced. Children lounge on roped-off bits of grass, teenagers budge forward in line, and grandmothers accidentally enter mislabeled bathrooms. Extension cords are exposed, animatronic dinosaurs bear marks of recent assembly, elaborate corridors lead to dead ends, and large expanses of space lie empty. Several of the main rides and attractions remain under construction, although it's not immediately clear to what extent. Despite the many flaws, however, there is something endearing about the whole setup. And hey, a little extra horseradish never killed anyone.

If you — or more to the point, your children — are looking for cutting-edge rides, this isn't the place for you. If you're looking for beloved characters brought to life, this isn't the place for you. But if you don't mind taking things as they come (or don't come), and you're willing to wander down a few dead ends, Dream Island does deliver some theme park magic with a uniquely Russian feel.

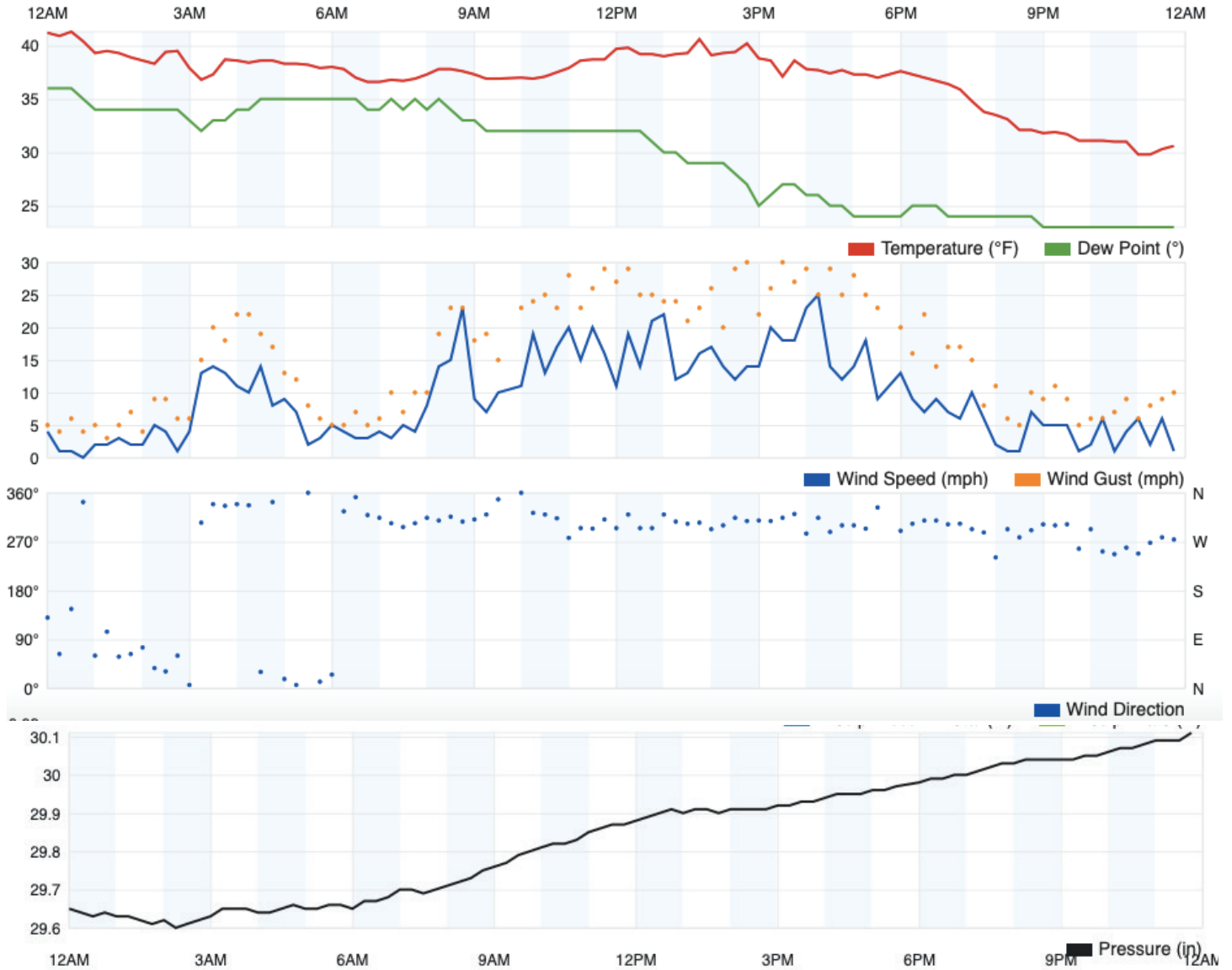
It might, however, be best to wait a few months.

To learn more, visit the park's official site [here](#). The park operates from 12:00-22:00 on weekdays and from 10:00-22:00 on weekends. Tickets start at roughly \$26, with various Fast Pass options available.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 14 of 75

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 15 of 75

Today



Sunny

High: 33 °F

Tonight



Increasing
Clouds

Low: 15 °F

Saturday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 31 °F

Saturday
Night



Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance Snow

Low: 24 °F

Sunday



Chance Snow
then Chance
Rain/Snow

High: 41 °F

Friday

mildest temps south



Highs: 26-50°F

Fri Night/Sat

snow likely central/south
accumulations possible



Highs: 25-41°F



Aberdeen, SD

3/12/2020 2:17 PM

Friday should be dry, but expect snow to move into parts of central and southern South Dakota Friday night and Saturday. Measurable snow looks likely over those parts of the state. Northeast South Dakota may see little if any snow.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 16 of 75

Today in Weather History

March 13, 1971: During an evening thunderstorm in Moody County, South Dakota, lightning destroyed a transformer plant in Coleman. Damages were estimated at \$250,000.

March 13, 1997: A winter storm began with widespread freezing drizzle, creating icy roadways and walkways, before changing over to snow. Before the snow was over, 2 to 8 inches had fallen on an already expansive and deep snowpack. The winds accelerated to 20 to 40 mph, resulting in widespread blowing and drifting snow. Visibilities were reduced to near zero at times, making travel treacherous. Many roads again became blocked by snowdrifts, and several were closed. Many area schools were still closed, adding to an already substantial total of days missed for the winter season. Some people were stranded and had to wait out the storm. Some airport flights were canceled. The icy roads and low visibilities resulted in several vehicle mishaps as well. There was a rollover accident west of Mobridge and an overturned van 7 miles west of Webster. On Interstate-29, there were several rollover accidents, including vehicles sliding off of the road. Some snowfall amounts included, 4 inches at Timber Lake, Mobridge, Eureka, Leola, Britton, and Clark, 5 inches at Leola, 6 inches at Waubay and Summit, and 8 inches at Pollock.

1953: An F4 tornado cut an 18-mile path through Haskell and Knox counties in Texas. 17 people were killed, and an eight-block area of Knox City was leveled.

1989: Residents of the southern U.S. viewed a once in a lifetime display of the Northern Lights. This solar storm also caused the entire province of Quebec, Canada, to suffer an electrical power blackout.

1990: Thunderstorms produced severe weather from northwest Texas to Wisconsin, Iowa, and Nebraska during the day and into the night. Severe thunderstorms spawned 59 tornadoes, including twenty-six strong or violent tornadoes, and there were about two hundred reports of large hail or damaging winds. There were forty-eight tornadoes in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa, and some of the tornadoes in those three states were the strongest of record for so early in the season, and for so far northwest in the United States. The most powerful tornado of the day was one that tore through the central Kansas community of Hesston. The F5 tornado killed two persons, injured sixty others, and caused 22 million dollars damage along its 67-mile path. The tornado had a lifespan of two hours. Another tornado tracked 124 miles across southeastern Nebraska, injuring eight persons and causing more than five million dollars damage during its three-hour lifespan.

1907 - A storm produced a record 5.22 inches of rain in 24 hours at Cincinnati, OH. (12th-13th) (The Weather Channel)

1951 - The state of Iowa experienced a record snowstorm. The storm buried Iowa City under 27 inches of snow. (David Ludlum)

1977 - Baltimore, MD, received an inch of rain in eight minutes. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - A winter storm produced heavy snow in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, and the Lake Tahoe area of Nevada. Mount Rose NV received 18 inches of new snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Unseasonably cold weather prevailed from the Plateau Region to the Appalachians. Chadron NE, recently buried 33 inches of snow, was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 19 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Residents of the southern U.S. viewed a once in a life-time display of the Northern Lights. Unseasonably warm weather continued in the southwestern U.S. The record high of 88 degrees at Tucson AZ was their seventh in a row. In southwest Texas, the temperature at Sanderson soared from 46 degrees at 8 AM to 90 degrees at 11 AM. (The National Weather Summary)

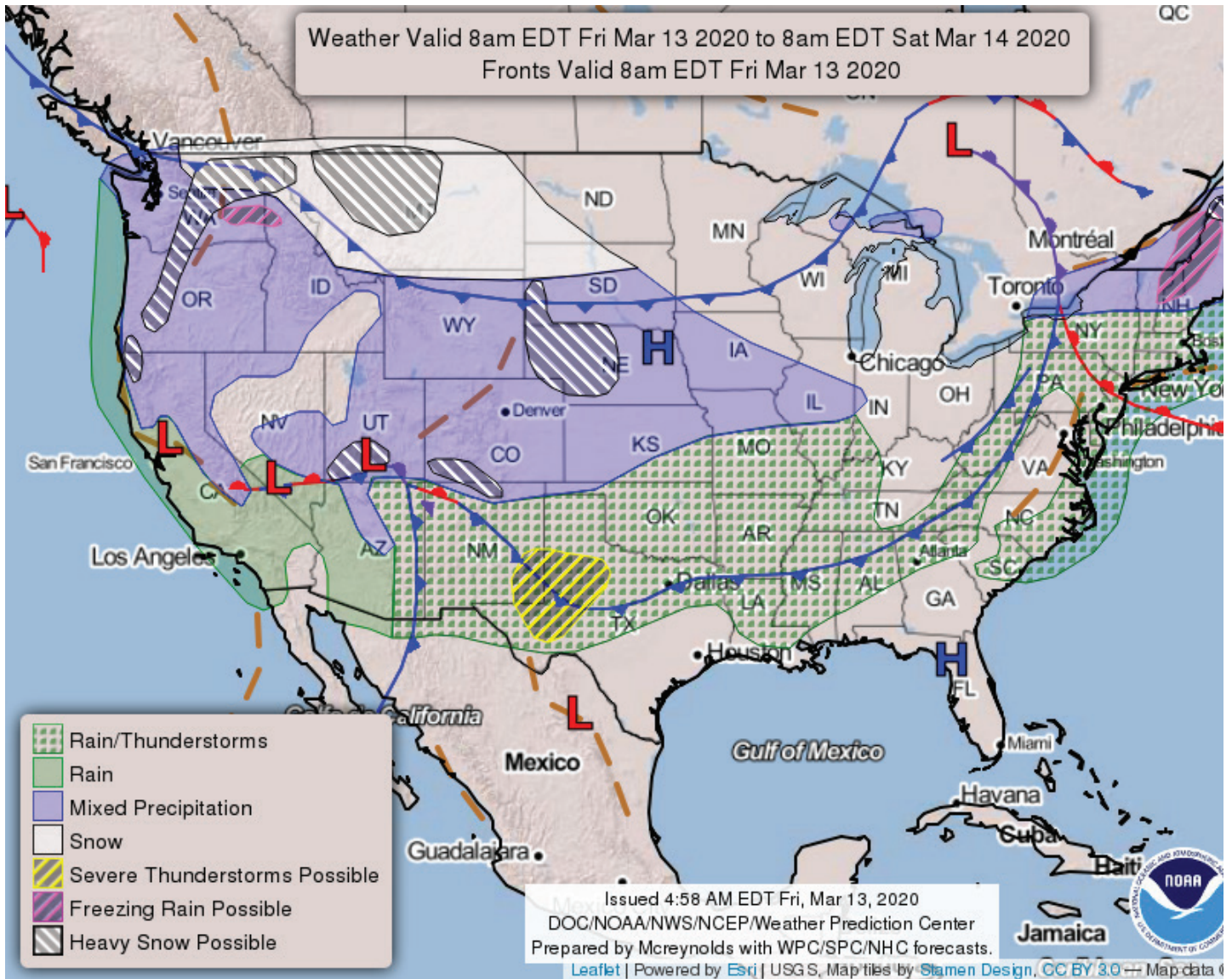
Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 17 of 75

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 41.3
Low Temp: 29.8
Wind: 25
Snow

Record High: 71° in 2012
Record Low: -28° in 1896
Average High: 38°F
Average Low: 19°F
Average Precip in March.: 0.36
Precip to date in March.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.38
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 7:38 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:47 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 18 of 75



LIFE IS CHOICE

Some politicians are notorious for the ability to explain away all of the issues without taking a stand on any of them. One politician was recognized as being as spineless as spaghetti. Once when asked a question he said, "Part of my friends favor one side of that issue and part of them favor the other side of that issue. I am in favor of my friends!"

No matter what is at stake, it is always possible to find people who will take opposing sides of any given issue. There are even times when the topic under consideration does not matter. People will still take sides and argue for the sake of arguing. Often the issue is fleeting or frivolous and not worth serious discussion or debate. Still, sides are chosen, positions staked out, and battle lines drawn.

There is one issue, however, that confronts everyone. It is the issue of who will be the Lord of our lives. Joshua once confronted the people of Israel and said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve." The people had to make a choice between the God whom they knew they could trust or the gods they knew who had always failed them.

We, too, must make that choice. What we decide will determine our destiny. Chose the God you can trust – today!

Prayer: Father, give us courage to make the right choice and choose the living God! May we stand firm in Your strength and always be faithful in our commitment to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Joshua 24:14-15 But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 19 of 75

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 03/14/2020 **CANCELLED** 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 Fun Night (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

State budget: Pay raises, hemp, bridges and USD building

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A boost for “the big three” — the nickname in the South Dakota Capitol for teachers, state employees and support providers — was the big-ticket item on the budget lawmakers approved Thursday, but they also had money left over to fund a hemp program, build several university buildings and send a bit of money to counties to repair aging bridges.

The Legislature met into the night as they completed the main part of the session for the year. They concluded with a vote on the \$4.9 billion budget that will take effect starting in July.

Not everyone was happy. Several especially conservative legislators voiced frustration with the budget-making process.

“This year has been especially acrimonious,” said Sen. Lance Russell, a Hot Springs Republican.

Rep. Taffy Howard, a Rapid City Republican, said that Gov. Kristi Noem undercut the process by announcing earlier in the week that the state could afford to fund 2% pay increases if they factored declines in Medicaid enrollment. Howard said the proposal didn’t give lawmakers enough time to dig into the proposal or account for the potential of the COVID-19 virus outbreak to cause an economic downturn.

The Republican governor told reporters before the budget vote that it was based on conservative financial projections and she was confident the budget could withstand an economic slump.

She watched from the galleries of both the House and Senate as they voted.

Sen. Reynold Nesiba, a Sioux Falls Democrat, said the process was more open and transparent than it was last year.

The budget had a bit more wiggle room than lawmakers anticipated when they convened in January. Better-than-expected revenues and declines in Medicaid eligibility allowed lawmakers to send nearly \$55 million to funds for state employees, teachers and people who work at community programs that are mostly funded by Medicaid. They also approved a nearly \$13 million boost this year to the health insurance pool for state employees.

Here’s a look at some other items they funded:

HEMP

As part of lawmakers’ proposal to legalize industrial hemp, they approved a crucial demand from the governor — allotting \$3.5 million that she says is necessary to “responsibly” startup and run a hemp program.

The governor wanted nearly \$1.9 million in one-time funds to start-up the program, and a commitment of another \$1.6 million to run it every year. Noem plans to spread the money across three state agencies, paying for up to 15 full-time staff positions, drug-testing equipment, drug-sniffing dogs and new drug storage space. The governor’s office has argued the money is necessary for law enforcement to distinguish between hemp and marijuana.

UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS

The University of South Dakota will get a special \$5 million allotment to build a School of Health Sciences. The building will allow the university to expand its medical programs.

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 School of Mines and Black Hill State University will also be renovating and expanding their libraries. The money will mostly come from a fund held by the universities for repairing and expanding facilities.

COUNTY ROADS AND BRIDGES

The Legislature used an unexpected excess of about \$4 million to repair county and township roads.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 21 of 75

After flooding hit many parts of the state last spring, many rural roads are still in disrepair. The Legislature sent the money as a way to help rural communities recover.

GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

Noem got most of what she asked the Legislature for this year for one-time spending items, including \$3.7 million for addiction treatment and law enforcement targeted at meth, \$4 million for corrections facilities, and \$5 million for grants to expand broadband access to rural areas of the state.

WHAT ELSE

The statewide expansion of a crisis hotline will get funding at about \$400,000 a year; lawmakers will put about \$1 million towards a college scholarship fund for people studying to be teachers in South Dakota; and people who provide care at senior centers and special needs programs funded by government dollars will get over \$2 million on one-time bonuses.

South Dakota Legislature clears hemp plan with Noem's OK

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — It took until nearly the final vote of the legislative session, but the South Dakota Legislature cleared a proposal to legalize industrial hemp on Thursday.

Gov. Kristi Noem said she intends to sign the bill into law after legislators made a crucial inclusion with the proposal — allotting \$3.5 million that the governor says is necessary to “responsibly” startup and run a hemp program. The governor vetoed a bill to legalize hemp last year, but agreed to approve it this year if it met four “guardrails” that she laid out to lawmakers, which included enforcement, regulation, transportation permitting, and funding.

Noem began the session saying that she wanted to see the hemp bill pass quickly through the Legislature, but it took until the final hours of the session for lawmakers to work out the bill. The main holdup was the money.

The governor wanted nearly \$1.9 million in one-time funds to start-up the program, and a commitment of another \$1.6 million to run it every year. Noem plans to spread the money across three state agencies, paying for up to 15 full-time staff positions, drug-testing equipment, drug-sniffing dogs and new drug storage space. The governor's office has argued the money is necessary for law enforcement to distinguish between hemp and marijuana.

Lawmakers argued the program could be implemented for much cheaper, but in the end agreed to meet the governor's number.

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm, the Platte Republican who sponsored the bill, said that some of that money could be returned to the general fund if it isn't spent. He has said he is not sure how many farmers will grow hemp this year. At least two hemp processors are looking to start operations under the proposal.

If Noem signs the bill, it contains an emergency clause that allows it to take immediate effect. The state would still need to get its hemp plan approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which can take up to 60 days.

Qualm said this may give farmers enough time this spring to purchase seeds and plant a hemp crop.

Thursday's Scores

By **The Associated Press**

GIRLS BASKETBALL Class B

Quarterfinal

Castlewood 45, Ethan 43

Corsica/Stickney 65, Irene-Wakonda 42

DeSmet 50, Faulkton 45

Faith 56, Howard 34

Governor says no new COVID-19 cases; lawmaker tested

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem on Thursday said the spread of the COVID-19 virus has been limited in the state with no new positive tests.

“We don’t have community spread at this time,” she told reporters.

She said that the eight people who tested positive for the coronavirus had traveled outside the state and that their contact with people in South Dakota was limited. Health officials are testing seven people with symptoms of the virus who came into contact with those people. The state’s health lab was waiting on results for 41 tests.

One of the men who tested positive for the virus died on Tuesday. He had underlying health problems and was in his 60s.

Shortly before Noem made the announcement on Thursday, the state’s public universities told students to stay away from campus for an extra week of spring break. They said the time would allow the six universities to prepare plans moving forward.

The state’s high school basketball tournament is scheduled to proceed this weekend, but officials announced that some divisions would limit the number of people admitted.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said the state has received \$4.5 million in federal funding to respond to the virus. But as lawmakers finalized the state budget that will take effect in July, they did not allot extra funds to respond to the virus.

The governor said the state has what it needs. The state health lab can test about 800 people for the virus.

A state lawmaker was being tested Thursday after feeling ill. Results for Republican Rep. Spencer Gosch of Glenham weren’t expected until Friday.

The mayor of Sioux Falls, South Dakota’s largest city, declared a state of emergency on Thursday to stop large gatherings in city-owned buildings and shutter community centers for two weeks. The City Council was to hold an emergency meeting Thursday night to approve Mayor Paul TenHaken’s proposals, aimed at slowing the spread of the virus. As of Thursday, three cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed in Minnehaha County, of which Sioux Falls is the county seat.

For most people, the 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 cases can take three to six weeks to recover.

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

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Coronavirus concerns disrupt work at US state capitols

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Mounting concerns about the coronavirus spread to state capitols across the country Thursday, as some lawmakers halted their sessions, shut out the public and scrambled to finish work on essential spending bills to keep government going.

Even in states with few confirmed cases of the COVID-19 disease, publicity over the cancellations of major sporting events, conferences and mass gatherings added to the pressure on state lawmakers to protect the public — and themselves — from potential exposure to the virus.

On any given day, hundreds or even thousands of people pass through state capitols, including school

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 23 of 75

children on tours, members of interest groups gathering for rallies, lobbyists, journalists and government employees.

"We feel it may be in the best interest for us not to be in this petri dish that we all show up in every week," Missouri Senate President Pro Tem Dave Schatz said Thursday while announcing that the chamber was suspending its regular sessions until at least March 30.

Both houses of the Illinois General Assembly canceled their scheduled sessions for next week. So did both chambers of the Delaware General Assembly, which also shut down public tours of its building. Delaware's legislative leaders said they would re-evaluate whether to resume session on a weekly basis, equating the missed days to a more familiar occurrence — snow days — that can be made up.

After adopting a budget plan Thursday with \$100 million for coronavirus-related needs, the Georgia General Assembly announced it was suspending its session indefinitely.

For most people, the 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 number of confirmed coronavirus cases is increasing. In the U.S., the total has topped 1,200, with three dozen deaths. Worldwide, more than 127,000 have been infected, and more than 4,700 have died.

Congress has closed public access to the nation's Capitol until April. But unlike Congress, which meets throughout most of the year, many state legislatures have regular sessions that are limited in length by their state constitutions. That means they can't afford to take as many days off if they are to finish their work by their deadlines.

Lawmakers in Washington state, where the greatest number of U.S. COVID-19 deaths have occurred, were scrambling to pass a budget that includes \$200 million for the state's coronavirus response before their 60-day session came to its scheduled adjournment Thursday.

In South Dakota, Republican state Rep. Spencer Gosch left the Capitol on Thursday to get tested for COVID-19 and other possible illnesses after coming down with a cough and chest congestion. Gosch said he was avoiding contact with people as a precaution. But his colleagues pressed forward with their work, trying to complete a budget on Thursday because it one was one of their final scheduled days for the session.

While the Missouri Senate took off for an extended spring break, the Missouri House pushed up its work — scheduling a rare Sunday meeting of the budget committee — to try to get its version of a spending plan completed next week so that it also could take a break.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz recommended that lawmakers pass the most important bills quickly so they can go home for the year. He proposed saving instead of spending \$1.2 billion of the state's projected \$1.5 billion budget surplus because of the uncertainties over how the pandemic will affect the economy.

Some state legislatures have chosen to continue meeting, though not in their normal fashion.

Connecticut lawmakers voted to change their rules to allow members to cast committee votes by phone while the governor's emergency public health declaration is in effect. They also postponed public hearings schedule for this week and next.

Leaders of the Maryland General Assembly announced that, starting next week, the public will no longer be invited to hearings for legislation. People will be encouraged to submit electronic comments to lawmakers instead of testifying in person.

"This decision is made for public health reasons — to do everything we can to increase social distancing and do everything within our power to ensure that we can limit the risk of the spread of this virus," Senate President Bill Ferguson and House Speaker Adrienne Jones said in a joint written statement.

The New Hampshire House, whose 400 members are second in size only to the U.S. House, has continue to meet despite coronavirus concerns because lawmakers are pushing up against a March 26 deadline to act on bills. State Rep. Judith Spang has been quarantined for more than a week because she recently traveled to Italy, where the coronavirus has hit especially hard.

Business at the Kansas Statehouse continued as almost as usual Thursday, with students acting as leg-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 24 of 75

islative pages, groups of visitors touring and the first floor set up with displays honoring Kansas' aviation industry. In Tennessee, Republican legislative leadership pushed back against Democratic calls to limit non-essential legislative meetings or even briefly halt the session.

Instead, House and Senate speakers released a statement Thursday encouraging the public to reschedule or postpone activities in the Capitol. The call came after both chambers had large groups invited onto their floors earlier that day — ranging from school groups to the Tennessee Titans football coach — who shook hands with many lawmakers.

Associated Press writers Randall Chase in Dover, Delaware; Jeffery Collins in Columbia, South Carolina; Stephen Groves in Pierre, South Dakota; Susan Haigh in Hartford, Connecticut; John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas; Steve Karnowski in St. Paul, Minnesota; Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tennessee; Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington; Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire; and Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland, contributed to this report.

Ellsworth airman faces murder charge in baby's assault death

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A senior airman stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base is now charged with murder after a baby he was accused of assaulting died.

James Cunningham, 26, of Rapid City was charged Thursday with second-degree murder, Lara Roetzel, chief deputy at the Pennington County State's Attorney Office, told the Rapid City Journal.

Cunningham earlier was charged with aggravated child abuse. The charge was upgraded after authorities say the baby died.

Police said someone called 911 on March 3 to report the baby was unresponsive at a Rapid City home. The baby initially was taken to a hospital in Rapid City, then was airlifted to a hospital in Sioux Falls.

Law enforcement learned Thursday that the child had died.

Cunningham remains in the Pennington County Jail on a \$10,000 cash-only bond. He is expected back in court March 19.

Base officials say the incident occurred off base and that they are assisting law enforcement agencies with the investigation.

Noem signs ban on faculty union into law

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem on Thursday signed a law that will ban faculty unions at state universities starting in July.

The law will stop university faculty from collective bargaining in their contracts with the Board of Regents. There are about 1,400 faculty spread across six universities in the state. The law does not include teachers at the state's special education schools for blind and deaf students.

Proponents of the bill argued it would give the universities more flexibility in hiring "professors of practice" — people who do not hold advanced degrees but have work experience. The union said the ban will have far-reaching effects on their ability to settle disputes with management and the universities' ability to attract new professors.

Noem signed six other bills into law on Thursday as the legislative session neared an end.

South Dakota lawmaker tested for virus as session continues

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota lawmaker was being tested for COVID-19 on Thursday as the Legislature met for one of its final days of the session.

Rep. Spencer Gosch, a Glenham Republican, was feeling ill and decided to get tested Thursday morning, House Speaker Steve Haugaard said. Gosch is avoiding contact with other people as a precaution.

Gosch said he had a cough that matched the symptoms of COVID-19, but that he was also being tested for other possible illnesses.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 25 of 75

The Legislature didn't immediately alter its schedule or routines. Lawmakers were trying to complete a budget by Thursday, which was the final work day aside from a day at the end of the month reserved for wrapping up business and responding to vetoes.

South Dakota has eight people who have tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. One patient who had underlying health problems died on Tuesday.

For most people, the 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 cases can take three to six weeks to recover.

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

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Jail death lawsuit likely headed for trial in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A wrongful death lawsuit by the family of a woman who died after becoming unresponsive in the Brown County Jail in 2015 may be going to trial after settlement talks broke off.

The family of Sarah Circle Bear is seeking damages and claiming negligence in the death of the 24-year-old woman.

The Argus Leader says a settlement hearing was held Wednesday at the federal courthouse in Sioux Falls, but no agreement was reached.

Circle Bear died at a hospital in July 2015 after she was held in custody on drug charges from Roberts County.

An autopsy showed Circle Bear died from acute methamphetamine toxicity.

Her family is questioning whether she received adequate care while in custody.

Premier League, Champions League call off matches

By JAMES ELLINGWORTH AP Sports Writer

DÜSSELDORF, Germany (AP) — The Premier League and the Champions League were both suspended Friday as the chaos stemming from the coronavirus outbreak continues to impact soccer.

Matches in England will be stopped until at least April 3 after five Premier League clubs said some players or staff were in self-isolation. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has tested positive for the virus, as has Chelsea winger Callum Hudson-Odoi.

"I had the virus for the last couple of days, which I've recovered from," Hudson-Odoi said in a video posted on social media. "I'm following the health guidelines and self-isolating myself from everybody for the week. I hope to see everybody soon and hopefully be back on the pitch very soon. Take care."

UEFA said it was stopping next week's games in all competitions, including the two remaining Champions League matches which had not been already called off — Bayern Munich vs. Chelsea and Barcelona vs. Napoli, both scheduled for Wednesday.

There have been more than 128,000 cases and 4,700 deaths globally since the virus outbreak started late last year. Most people quickly recover from the virus after experiencing 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.

According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks.

The decision from UEFA comes four days ahead of a meeting to decide the European soccer calendar,

including the possible one-year postponement of the 2020 European Championship.

Earlier Friday, Everton said one of its players had reported symptoms consistent with coronavirus. Bournemouth later said reserve goalkeeper Artur Boruc and four members of staff also had symptoms. Leicester said Thursday that three players had "extremely mild illness."

The suspension also covers England's Championship, League One, League Two and the top two women's divisions.

The French league also suspended games Friday. Following earlier suspensions in Italy and Spain, that leaves the German Bundesliga as the only one of Europe's top-five ranked leagues still playing this weekend.

The German league said Friday it will play upcoming games in empty stadiums and then vote on a suspension from Tuesday until April 2. That would only include one round of games before a scheduled break for international matches.

Two players from German second-division club Hannover 96 have tested positive for the virus.

More AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/Soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Stock markets recover after turbulent trading

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — European stocks rose Friday and Wall Street was set to gain on the open after turbulent trading in Asia and a day after the market's worst session in over three decades.

Shares rose in Paris and London but fell 6.1% in Japan following Wall Street's and Europe's biggest drop since the 1987 Black Monday crash.

Friday the 13th brought wild swings for some markets as governments stepped up precautions against the spread of the new coronavirus and considered ways to cushion the blow to their economies.

More central banks, including those of China, Sweden and Norway, intervened to flood credit markets with liquidity, a day after similar interventions from the U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank.

Benchmarks in Japan, Thailand and India sank as much as 10% early in the day, but India's Sensex gained 3.3% in afternoon trading. In Bangkok, the Thailand SET fell 1.3% after its 10% plunge triggered a temporary suspension of trading.

Markets worldwide have been on the retreat as worries over the economic fallout from the coronavirus crisis deepen and the meltdown in the U.S., the world's biggest economy, batters confidence around the globe.

Gains in Europe were the latest chapter in a period of remarkable volatility for financial markets, with major indexes plunging into bear market territory at record pace.

In France, the CAC 40 was up 5.1% to 4,250 while Germany's DAX climbed 4.2% to 9,545. Britain's FTSE picked up 4.9% to 5,493.

U.S. markets looked set for a stronger start, with the future for the Dow Jones Industrial Average up 4.9% and the future for the S&P 500 advancing 5.1%.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 jumped 4.4% to 5,539.30 after state and territorial leaders agreed to raise spending to counter the impact of the viral outbreak that has spread from central China across the globe, infecting 128,000 people.

"The governor of the Reserve Bank made it very clear this morning the levers of fiscal policy need to do their job here," Prime Minister Scott Morrison said after a meeting of top officials on Friday.

"We need to put budgets to work to keep people in work," said Morrison, whose federal government has already pledged \$11.4 billion in stimulus.

Losses narrowed in mainland China, where communities are recovering from the worst of the virus. The Shanghai Composite index fell 1.2% to 2,887.43. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.1%, to 24,032.91.

The overnight sell-off on Wall Street helped to wipe out most of the big U.S. gains since President Donald Trump took office in 2017.

The S&P 500 plummeted 9.5%, for a total drop of 26.7% from its all-time high, set just last month. That

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 27 of 75

puts it way over the 20% threshold for a bear market, officially ending Wall Street's unprecedented bull-market run of nearly 11 years. The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 2,352 points, or 10%, its heaviest loss since its nearly 23% drop on Oct. 19, 1987.

European markets fell 12% in one of their worst days ever, even after the European Central Bank pledged to buy more bonds and offer more help for the economy.

"Between the lack of a strong U.S. fiscal response and the latest travel ban for arrivals from Europe to the U.S., global markets appear to have been tipped over into a sell-everything mode," Jingyi Pan of IG said in a commentary.

Not all markets have suffered equally, but many are down by double-digits from just weeks earlier. Thailand's SET has lost nearly 40% and the Philippines' benchmark is down more than 30%.

Overriding concerns about the actual impact on business and trade is pessimism over how the crisis is being handled, with the "sum of all fears are culminating with the view that policymakers remain well behind the curve," said Stephen Innes of AxiCorp.

Despite the slight improvements in some markets, gloom prevailed in Asia on Friday. Tokyo's close at 17,431.05 was its lowest in nearly four years. South Korea's Kospi sank 3.4% to 1,771.44. Taiwan's benchmark lost 2.8%, while most Southeast Asian markets fell 1-2%.

The worldwide rout has come amid cascading cancellations and shutdowns across the globe — including Trump's suspension of most travel to the U.S. from Europe — and rising worries that the White House and other authorities around the world can't or won't counter the economic damage from the outbreak any time soon.

The coronavirus has killed more than 4,700, but for most people 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 illnesses, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the virus in a few weeks.

Initially, many hoped the virus would be contained in China. But as the damage and disruptions from the outbreak mount, the combined health crisis and the market retreat have heightened fears of a global recession.

Just last month, the Dow was boasting a nearly 50% increase since Trump took the oath of office on Jan. 20, 2017. It officially went into a bear market on Wednesday, finishing down more than 20% from its all-time high. For the S&P 500, this is the fastest drop since World War II from a record high to a bear market.

In other trading, the oil market, which suffered huge shocks a week ago as Saudi Arabia and Russia clashed over output cuts, was holding steady.

U.S. benchmark crude erased early losses, gaining \$1.77, or 5.6%, to \$33.27 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the standard for international oil pricing, picked up \$2.04, or 6.1%, to \$35.26 per barrel.

The dollar rose to 106.45 Japanese yen from 104.63 yen late Thursday. The euro fell to \$1.1165 from \$1.1181.

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

Virus darkens stages, silences orchestras across the US

By **MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — The stage at the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle is quiet. There is no music coming from the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the members of Pearl Jam won't tour. There is no one to admire the treasures at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

The ongoing fears surrounding the coronavirus have shuttered places where Americans — and foreign visitors — have long gathered to escape the world and also to engage with it. Almost everything that draws crowds has now sent them all away.

Wisconsin resident Ellen Moodie, 58, found herself in New York, twice rejected. She came for the Big East tournament at Madison Square Garden, but that was canceled. So she tried to catch a Broadway show, but those too were canceled. She admitted to being a little disappointed.

"We would love to see a show but understand the situation," she said.

The list of venues where Americans can no longer find entertainment or diversion continues to climb — so far scrapped or shuttered are everything from Coachella to Carnegie Hall, Major League Soccer, Disneyland and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Bob and Diane Erickson, of Cambridge, Minnesota, were taking no chances Thursday, hitting all of Nashville's major tourist destinations that were unaffected thus far, including The Grand Ole Opry and the Ryman Auditorium.

"We're just kind of watching it," said Bob Erickson. "And frankly, it's going to get bigger."

The closures of museums and theaters and concerts come even as families find their kids locked out of school with nothing to do and arts institutions worry about keeping the lights on without ticket sales.

"It's the people that are down here, trying to earn that dollar that it's going to affect the most," said Mike Beliles, of Wilmington, North Carolina, who was visiting Nashville. "It's the people who are trying to make ends meet and they aren't able to work."

For most people, the 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.

Apprehension of the virus has claimed an astonishingly varied list of events stretching beyond the traditional arts, from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo to the New York International Auto Show. Big events in big venues like the NBA season and NCAA basketball tournaments were felled by coronavirus, but smaller and less raucous get-togethers were also abandoned, too.

Around the country, bookstore appearances by James McBride, Louise Erdrich and many others were postponed or canceled during what is usually one of publishing's busiest seasons. The prize-winning author and illustrator Gene Luen Yang called off the tour for his graphic novel "Dragon Hoops."

The Brooklyn Public Library in New York suspended or postponed all public programs until at least the end of the month. Jakab Orsós, the vice president of arts and culture, called the move "only responsible action we could take." He said the virus is making those in the world of culture humble.

"It's a bitter lesson, that we are not the rulers of the universe. We got very comfortable thinking we could overcome everything. Sometimes we have to learn that there are stronger powers. It's larger than culture, it's universal," he said. "We have to change course. Whatever that is — we have to learn this message. This is a huge and important lesson, especially in the Western world."

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Thursday banned gatherings of 500 or more in the city, effectively forcing the hand of Broadway producers who had previously said that Broadway would be "open for business" unless advised not to by the government. Shows are now slated to resume the week of April 13.

Would-be theater attendees were turned away in the theater district, some shaking their heads in disbelief. "I had been hoping to catch one but it's all canceled," said Quinn Heath, 24, who was visiting from Boston.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 29 of 75

Closing all Broadway theaters for a month is unprecedented, said Laurence Maslon, an arts professor at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. "Nothing comes close to this amount of time ever."

Other theaters far from Broadway have closed their doors, including the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Southern California, which canceled or postponed all productions and programs through March 31. Coronavirus has altered the run of "Guys and Dolls" at the Ford's Theatre in the nation's capital.

The 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle closed the doors on "Sister Act," citing the state's mandated cancellation of public gatherings, and is now asking for donations to recover \$1 million in losses. The 1,600-seat Curran Theater in San Francisco decided to scrap performances of "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child."

Actors' Equity Association, which represents more than 51,000 actors and stage managers nationwide, called the decision to shutter Broadway "important" and urged lawmakers to come to the aid of workers in the arts.

"Today's decision means tremendous uncertainty for thousands who work in the arts, including the prospect of lost income, health insurance and retirement savings," the group said. "For every middle-class actor you see onstage, there are dozens of other workers behind the scenes and in an administrative capacity."

The virus' arrival came just as Americans shake off the winter blues and plan spring events — concerts, games and shows. But no more.

"This is one of the hearts of the season where we have really a lot going on," said New York Philharmonic president Deborah Borda. "It is going to be an enormous financial challenge involving millions of dollars for all of these institutions."

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.

Associated Press reporters Kristin M. Hall in Nashville, Tennessee, and Jocelyn Noveck, Jim Mustian, David Martin and Hillel Italie in New York contributed to this report.

Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>. Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

What's Happening: Life feels surreal; celebrities infected

The coronavirus pandemic has lent a surreal quality to the lives of millions of people around the globe. It has disrupted daily routines, overwhelmed hospitals, shuttered schools and offices and halted many sporting and entertainment events. If that weren't enough, many are also forced to grapple with fears about the financial toll, from lost jobs and businesses to shrinking retirement accounts.

These are some of the latest developments on Friday:

PEOPLE CONFRONT DISRUPTED ROUTINES

The intensifying spread of COVID-19 beyond Asia has dashed hopes for a quick containment, even with travel and social events curbed drastically. People fretted over the health risks to the elderly, threatened jobs and dwindling savings, while caring for children staying home from shuttered schools. China, where the outbreak emerged late last year, still accounts for more than 60% of global infections. But on Friday it reported just eight new cases and seven deaths. With China's caseload slowing, its government was helping other countries with its expertise, sending a medical crew to Italy and surplus supplies to Iran.

LEADERS AND CELEBRITIES INFECTED

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's wife Sophie Grégoire Trudeau is in isolation after testing positive for COVID-19, leaving the prime minister to go into isolation for 14 days as well even though he has no symptoms. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's communications director, Fábio Wajngarten, tested positive just days after traveling with Bolsonaro to a meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump and senior aides in Florida. The White House said Trump had almost no interaction with Wajngarten and does not plan to be tested or go into self-quarantine. Meanwhile, actor Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson remain isolated

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 30 of 75

in a hospital in Australia after testing positive for the new coronavirus. Hanks said they are taking the situation "one day at a time" and that they are staying isolated so as not to spread it to others. The virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, for most people but can be severe in some cases, especially older adults and people with existing health problems.

AMERICAN LIFE UPENDED

After first striking Asia, and then Europe, now America, too, is upending routines as the coronavirus affects just about every facet of American life. Most big tech companies in San Francisco and Seattle have told employees to work from home, emptying out the downtown neighborhoods that are a hub for tech and venture capital firms. The change came on suddenly and many feel unprepared. In Las Vegas, where so much of the economy is tied to big crowds from concerts, tournaments, conventions and tourists, many suddenly found themselves out of work. Across the nation, parents struggled to take care of children kept home from schools while families worried about dwindling retirement savings and the health of elderly parents.

ASIAN COUNTRIES SEEK TO STOP VIRUS' RETURN

Just as the spread of the disease is stabilizing in much of Asia, following a major outbreak in China and sizable ones in South Korea and Japan, it is popping up in new hotspots around the world. That has prompted those three nations to take measures to prevent the new coronavirus from coming back to where it first broke out. The South Korean government, which recently was complaining about global efforts to stop people arriving from the country, is now introducing new screening and border controls on people arriving from abroad, to prevent the reintroduction of the virus.

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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10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. **PANDEMIC INCREASINGLY TAKES OVER DAILY LIVES** The new coronavirus overwhelms hospitals, shuts schools and offices, halts U.S. presidential campaign rallies and global sports.
2. **EUROPEAN SHARES REBOUND AFTER DOW TUMBLES** European markets are mostly higher after a turbulent trading session in Asia following Wall Street's biggest drop since the 1987 Black Monday crash.
3. **FOR ASIA, A ROLE REVERSAL** As a virus pandemic spreads globally, China and other parts of Asia are scrambling to prevent it from coming back to where it broke out.
4. **PELOSI SAYS VIRUS AID PACKAGE CLOSE** The deal would reassure anxious Americans by providing sick pay, free testing and other resources amid the crisis.
5. **BIDEN'S CAMPAIGN EYES FLORIDA'S BIG PRIZE** The state's 219 delegates could be the knockout punch for Bernie Sanders after a dismal showing in the Michigan primary.
6. **US RETALIATES AGAINST IRAN-BACKED GROUP** The U.S. launches airstrikes in Iraq, targeting Shiite militia members believed responsible for the rocket attack that killed and wounded American and British troops at a base north of Baghdad.
7. **NEW ZEALAND ATTACKS LEAVE INDELIBLE MARK** As the anniversary of the massacre at two Christchurch mosques nears, three people directly impacted that day tell the AP how their lives have been changed forever.
8. **UTAH PASSES NEW ABORTION RULES** A measure approved by the Republican-controlled Legislature would ban most abortions if Roe v. Wade is overturned.
9. **'ONE DAY AT A TIME'** That's how Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson are taking their new coronavirus

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 31 of 75

infection while the Australian TV hosts who had interviewed Wilson await test results.

10. VIRUS STOPS SPORTS WORLD IN ITS TRACKS Leaders at all levels of sports, including the NCAA, NBA, NHL, Major League Baseball, golf, tennis and soccer, decide the risk of playing games was too great despite the billions left on the table.

Pandemic increasingly takes over daily lives, roils markets

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic has taken over daily lives around the globe, overwhelming hospitals, shuttering schools and offices, halting U.S. presidential campaign rallies and world sports while increasing fears about the financial toll.

The intensifying spread of COVID-19 beyond Asia has dashed hopes about a quick containment, even with travel and social events curbed drastically. And political leaders were among those infected or quarantined due to potential exposure.

Asian markets were sinking further Friday, after U.S. stocks had their greatest losses since the Black Monday crash of 1987 and bad European results. Benchmarks in Japan, Thailand and India sank as much as 10%. Losses in mainland China, where the virus is subsiding, were less severe.

In the United States, Congress neared a deal with the Trump administration on a sweeping aid package with sick pay, free testing and other resources to help reassure anxious Americans and calm markets, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

People fretted over the health risks to the elderly, threatened jobs and dwindling savings while caring for children staying home from shuttered schools.

While Washington scrambled to shape an economic rescue package, the European Union pushed back against President Donald Trump's sharp restrictions on travel from Europe to the United States, slamming Trump's "unilateral" decision and declaring the virus a "global crisis, not limited to any continent, and it requires cooperation."

Trump defended his decision to not notify all EU leaders ahead of the announcement. "When they raise taxes on us, they don't consult us," Trump said. "I think that's probably one in the same."

The spread of the virus in Europe, North America and the Middle East has drawn contrast with waning outbreaks in the hardest-hit nations in Asia.

China, where the virus emerged late last year, still accounts for more than 60% of global infections. But on Friday it reported just eight new cases and seven deaths. More than 64,000 people have been released from hospitals.

With China's caseload slowing, the government was helping other countries with its expertise. A Chinese medical crew was heading to Italy and surplus supplies were sent to Iran.

Chinese President Xi Jinping told the U.N. leader his nation wants to conduct joint research on drugs and vaccines and offer "as much assistance as it can" to countries where the virus is spreading. State media reported Xi told U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres by phone that economic and daily life are gradually returning to normal in China thanks to "arduous endeavors" at prevention and control.

South Korea reported 114 new cases and was near 8,000 overall. Officials said 177 patients were released from hospitals, making Friday the first day recoveries outnumbered new infections since the country's first patient was confirmed on Jan. 20.

The pandemic's new epicenter is Europe. Italy's death toll topped 1,000 on Thursday with more than 15,000 confirmed cases. France, Spain and Germany all exceeded 2,000 cases each.

In Italy's hardest-hit Lombardy region, hospitals were overwhelmed with both the sick and the dead. The country's restaurants, cafes and retail shops closed in a lockdown on personal movement, though grocery stores, pharmacies and markets were allowed to operate.

France, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Lithuania, Algeria and Slovakia shut down their schools, as did several states in Germany, including the capital, Berlin. Europe's most successful soccer team, Real Madrid, put all its players into quarantine after one tested positive. The Czech government tightened border checks

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 32 of 75

for some countries, and Slovakia closed its international airports and ground transport hubs.

Lawmakers in Denmark approved a temporary law giving authorities the ability to ban access to public places and stores and force people to undergo tests. Estonia declared "an emergency situation," meaning no gatherings in public spaces.

The Spanish royal palace said King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia have tested negative for the coronavirus. The royal couple took the test following the infection of Equality Minister Irene Montero, who had attended an event with the queen last week.

Europeans were adjusting to new U.S. travel restrictions, which exempted Britain and Ireland, raising questions about the policy's coherence.

In Iran, which exceeds 10,000 cases and 400 deaths, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif urged the Trump administration to immediately lift sanctions over the country's nuclear program. He said they made it difficult to import medicine and medical equipment, including to identify and treat coronavirus patients.

State-run TV reported a positive test and home quarantine for Ali Akbar Velayati, a trusted adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the 80-year-old leader of the Islamic Republic. Iran's senior vice president, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Revolutionary Guard members and Health Ministry officials are also infected.

Pakistani authorities quarantined about 4,000 pilgrims in tents and buildings in the southwestern border town of Taftan upon their return from Iran, officials said Friday.

Amid the fear, it can be easy to forget that more than half of the world's 128,000 people infected have already recovered. Most patients have only mild or moderate symptoms such as a fever or cold, though severe symptoms including pneumonia can occur, especially in older adults and people with existing health problems.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was isolating himself after his wife tested positive. She said she was experiencing uncomfortable symptoms but "I will be back on my feet soon." Trudeau's office said he has no symptoms of COVID-19 but will stay in isolation for 14 days.

Australian Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton is in isolation at a hospital after testing positive. He returned to Australia on Sunday from Washington, D.C., where he met U.S. Attorney-General William Barr and Trump's daughter, Ivanka, last week.

In Spain, a leading member of a far-right party tested positive for the virus. Several U.S. politicians were quarantining themselves as a protective measure after coming in contact with COVID-19 patients.

The Brazilian president's communications director tested positive just days after meeting with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort. Despite that, Trump has no immediate plans to be tested or to self-quarantine, the White House said.

Trump did, however, halt his trademark political rallies, leaving the U.S. presidential campaign trail all but empty with leading Democratic contenders Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders canceling events, too.

Across the U.S., where cases have topped 1,600, a sense of urgency was pervasive. Professional athletes and entertainers were among those infected.

Schools emptied of students and workplace cubicles went vacant. Crowded gatherings were restricted from New York to California, and dozens of cultural hubs were closed. Disneyland and Disney World will close in coming days. And sports fans couldn't cheer their favorite teams from the safety of their living rooms since basketball, baseball, hockey and other leagues canceled and postponed games.

Workers disinfected schools, public transit vehicles, government offices and places of worship. In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, the government launched a cleaning campaign for 10,000 mosques. The religious affairs minister called on each mosque to roll up carpets and spray disinfectant, while also urging Muslims to not shake hands or share a kiss on the cheek to avoid spreading the virus.

Amid all the cancellations in sports, the biggest athletic competition of them all — the Summer Olympics — was still firmly on the calendar. The International Olympic Committee and the Tokyo organizing committee were not considering canceling or delaying the Games, "absolutely not at all," Japan Olympics minister Seiko Hashimoto said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 33 of 75

A cancellation or postponement would ripple in thousands of directions, hitting sponsors, broadcasters and host businesses, plus the 11,000 Olympic and 4,400 Paralympic athletes now in training for their once-in-a-lifetime chance at glory. A flame-lighting ceremony was held Thursday in Greece, another sign the IOC hopes to go ahead with the Games now scheduled to open July 24.

The flame is to arrive in Japan on March 20 and will begin a four-month relay around the country on March 26. Tokyo organizers have downsized the torch arrival ceremony and will announce later if it will change the route or limit crowds.

Japan's parliament on Friday enacted a controversial law that would allow Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to declare a state of emergency if the country's outbreak worsens. A declaration would give him authority to force the closure of schools, confiscate private property to build medical facilities and order the transportation of emergency supplies, among other powers.

Associated Press writers Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea, Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Rod McGuirk in Canberra, Australia, Munir Ahmed in Islamabad, Pakistan, Jan Olsen in Copenhagen, Aritz Para in Madrid and David Rising in Berlin contributed to this report.

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Florida could be knockout punch for Sanders' 2020 campaign

By TAMARA LUSH and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Florida has never been known as a place of stability, especially in its politics.

And yet stability is what has been on the minds of many Democrats in the state who say they'll vote for former Vice President Joe Biden in Tuesday's presidential primary election instead of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.

"I like some of Sanders' ideas, but he's a little too extreme for me," said Jeanne Hilburn, a 76-year-old retired teacher who lives in the suburbs of Tampa. "A lot of Democrats are like me — we want stability."

As the race for the Democratic nomination enters a penultimate phase, with Sanders' campaign on the brink of collapse and Biden's ascendant, attention is turning to places like Florida, which is holding its primary on Tuesday along with Ohio, Illinois and Arizona. Florida has 219 delegates, the biggest prize of next week's election.

Few places hold the electoral cachet of Florida, which has been among the most coveted swing states in the last three decades, including during the contentious, chaotic recount of 2000. It is a vital state for President Donald Trump, who would have almost no path to reelection without it.

Biden's advisers are banking on a decisive Florida victory that sends a clear message that he is much better positioned to win the state and deny Trump a second term.

In 2016, Trump defeated Hillary Clinton here by 1.2 percentage points.

"Florida, as always, is pivotal in the outcome," said Nikki Fried, who is the state's agriculture commissioner and top elected Democrat and who endorsed Biden. "We are the ultimate swing state."

Sanders' support in Florida has always been tenuous. In the 2016 primary, he lost to Clinton by a nearly 2-to-1 margin. This year, Sanders angered a potentially large voting bloc — Cuban Americans — by praising Fidel Castro for implementing a literacy program in the communist nation.

"There is nothing positive you can say about the conditions in Cuba. If he doesn't understand that, it is hard to conceive that he will get any votes," said Xavier Suarez, who was the first Cuban-born mayor of Miami and is now running as an independent in the county mayoral race. "It's gonna be a massacre."

That leaves many Florida Democrats looking beyond the primary to November. Several groups have

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 34 of 75

banded together to register people to vote and mobilize for November.

One of the four groups, Organizing Together 2020, is led by Fried. It will hire employees, register voters, train volunteers and then turn everything over to the party after the July convention. Another of the groups is For Our Future, a super PAC that is made up largely of Mike Bloomberg's campaign apparatus.

A strong turnout in the Florida primary could give hope to Democrats, though it would be difficult to draw any conclusions for November given the state's high number of independents. And, to be sure, the coronavirus outbreak could keep some voters away from the polls and muffle any message from the turnout.

Democrats know it will be a challenge to sway voters here. About 3.6 million of the state's 13.6 million voters are registered independents, which means they can't vote in Tuesday's primary but are eligible to cast ballots in the general election.

"Florida is an interesting state. Depending on where you're at, we can be very conservative, or we can be very progressive," said St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman, a Democrat. "We also have a strong moderate and independent streak. Biden, I think he'll do well here with Democrats and independents. And with Republicans who are looking for an alternative to President Trump."

Ashley Walker, of Organizing Together, said a priority is grassroots door-knocking in counties that were close in 2016, like Pinellas, home to St. Petersburg, which Trump won by 5,500 votes, and in Pasco, a suburban county just north of Tampa where voters moved to Republican candidates in the 2018 Senate and gubernatorial races.

Walker says the aim is to siphon off votes there.

"The margins matter. We're probably not going to win Pasco County, but we're going to need to close the margins so we lose less badly," she said. "And in those counties that go back-and-forth between red and blue, like Pinellas, it's especially important to get organized early. To build relationships early."

Similarly, Biden's supporters have been paying visits to Spanish-language TV shows and broadening "diaspora outreach" efforts in South Florida. John Kerry, the former secretary of state and the Democratic presidential nominee in 2004, spoke about Latin America policy on behalf of Biden's campaign at a restaurant in Doral, the hub of Venezuelan exiles.

"We feel good about where we are in the state, but we are not taking anything for granted," said Carmen Torres, of Florida Hispanics for Biden.

Democrats don't have a lock on the Latino vote in Florida, particularly among the nearly 2 million residents who are originally from Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, where authoritarian socialist regimes have soured many exiles toward any left-leaning politicians.

A third of Cuban American midterm voters identify as Democrats, according to AP Vote Cast, a wide-ranging survey of the electorate. But the survey said a majority, 56%, of Cuban American midterm voters expressed approval of the way Trump was handling his job as president.

Daisy Baez, a former Democratic state lawmaker, is leading a group called "Dominicanos con Biden" to rally her fellow Dominican Americans to support the former vice president. A similar effort to rally Venezuelans will roll out on Sunday.

"We wanted to address our message to a specific community," Baez said. "We needed to piece it down in smaller parts."

As Sanders' chances diminish, Biden may also need to win over his challenger's fervent supporters if an endorsement follows. Some may not follow suit.

Nick Mora, 24, a Florida International University student, marched alongside 20 students on a recent afternoon on campus to persuade others to vote early for Sanders. Mora acknowledged Sanders' defeat earlier this week was disappointing but said they were not ready to give up yet.

"Let's just say Joe Biden does not have the same policy proposals as Bernie," Mora said. "I feel like the progressive movement is being pushed down, and there's not much we can do about it if we vote for Joe Biden, so we are still trying to fight till the end."

Lush reported from St. Petersburg, Fla.

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

Pentagon: US strikes Iran-backed group that hit Iraq base

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. launched airstrikes in Iraq, targeting the Iranian-backed Shiite militia members believed responsible for the rocket attack that killed and wounded American and British troops at a base north of Baghdad, the Pentagon said.

U.S. officials said multiple strikes by U.S. fighter jets on Thursday hit five locations and mainly targeted Kataib Hezbollah weapons facilities inside Iraq. A Defense Department statement said the strikes targeted five weapons storage facilities "to significantly degrade their ability to conduct future attacks."

The strikes marked a rapid escalation in tensions with Tehran and its proxy groups in Iraq, just two months after Iran carried out a massive ballistic missile attack against American troops at a base in Iraq. They came just hours after top U.S. defense leaders threatened retaliation for the Wednesday rocket attack, making clear that they knew who did it and that the attackers would be held accountable.

"The United States will not tolerate attacks against our people, our interests, or our allies," Defense Secretary Mark Esper said. "As we have demonstrated in recent months, we will take any action necessary to protect our forces in Iraq and the region."

The Pentagon statement said the facilities hit in the precision strikes were used to store weapons used to target the U.S. and coalition forces. It called the counterattack "defensive, proportional and in direct response to the threat" posed by the Iranian-backed Shiite militia groups.

U.S. officials said the locations of the strikes were largely around the Baghdad region. One U.S. official said there were two strikes at Jurf al-Sakher, one in Karbala, one at Al-Musayib, and one at Arab Nawar Ahmad. The official said the U.S. expected casualties would be lower than 50, and said the main effort was to hit the weapons.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because some details about the operations had not yet been made public.

An official with the paramilitary Popular Mobilization Units told The Associated Press that two Iraqi federal police personnel were killed in Jurf al-Sakher. An Iraqi military statement said the aerial "aggression" occurred at 1:15 a.m. in the areas of Jurf al-Sakher, Al-Musayib, Najaf and Alexandria on the headquarters of the Popular Mobilization Units, emergency regiments and commandos of the 9th division of the Iraqi army.

Esper told reporters at the Pentagon earlier Thursday that President Donald Trump had given him the authority to take whatever action he deemed necessary.

"We're going to take this one step at a time, but we've got to hold the perpetrators accountable," Esper said. "You don't get to shoot at our bases and kill and wound Americans and get away with it."

At the White House, Trump had also hinted that a U.S. counterpunch could be coming, telling reporters, "We'll see what the response is." And Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Pentagon reporters the U.S. knows "with a high degree of certainty" who launched the attack.

On Capitol Hill earlier in the day, Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the top U.S. commander for the Middle East, told senators the deaths of U.S. and coalition troops created a "red line" for the U.S., but said he didn't think Iran has "a good understanding of where our red line is."

Asked if any counterattack could include a strike inside Iran, Esper said, "We are focused on the group that we believe perpetrated this in Iraq."

Two U.S. troops and one British service member were killed and 14 other personnel were wounded when 18 rockets hit the base Wednesday. The U.S. military said the 107 mm Katyusha rockets were fired from a truck launcher that was found by Iraqi security forces near the base after the attack.

U.S. officials have not publicly said what group they believe launched the rocket attack, but Kataib Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed Shiite militia group, was the likely perpetrator. And the U.S. strikes, which came in the middle of the night in Iraq, targeted that group.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 36 of 75

Kataib Hezbollah was responsible for a late December rocket attack on a military base in Kirkuk that killed a U.S. contractor, prompting American military strikes in response.

That in turn led to protests at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. They were followed Jan. 3 by a U.S. airstrike that killed Iran's most powerful military officer, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a leader of the Iran-backed militias in Iraq, of which Kataib Hezbollah is a member. In response to the Soleimani killing, Iran launched a massive ballistic missile attack on Jan. 8, at al-Asad air base in Iraq, that resulted in traumatic brain injuries to more than 100 American troops.

McKenzie told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday morning that the killing of Soleimani and the increase in U.S. troops and assets in the region has made clear to Iran that the U.S. will defend its interests there. He said the U.S. has re-established a level of deterrence for state-on-state attacks by Iran.

However, he said: "What has not been changed is their continuing desire to operate through their proxies indirectly against us. That is a far more difficult area to deter."

On Thursday, Esper and Milley said they spoke with their British counterparts about the attack, but declined to provide details.

Asked why none of the rockets was intercepted, Milley said there are no systems on the base capable of defending against that type of attack.

He also said the 14 injured personnel were a mix of U.S. and allied troops as well as contractors, and they will also be monitored for possible traumatic brain injury in the wake of the blasts.

Associated Press writer Qassim Abdul-Zahra in Baghdad contributed to this report.

Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson taking diagnoses 'one day at a time'

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Tom Hanks said he and wife Rita Wilson were taking their new coronavirus infection "one day at a time" while Australian television hosts who had interviewed Wilson were awaiting test results Friday.

Australia has stepped up its response to COVID-19 by recommending people avoid organized, non-sentimental gatherings of 500 or more from Monday and to reconsider all international travel.

Hanks and Wilson have been isolated in stable conditions in a Gold Coast hospital following their diagnosis.

The couple used a social media post to thank "everyone here Down Under who are taking such good care of us."

"We have Covid-19 and are in isolation so we do not spread it to anyone else," Hanks said in a post.

"There are those for whom it could lead to a very serious illness," he said. "We are taking it one day at a time."

The virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, for most people but can be severe in some cases, especially older adults and people with existing health problems. 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.

Two television hosts who interviewed Wilson in their Nine Network Sydney studio on Monday, David Campbell and Belinda Russell, were in isolation at home on Friday waiting on test results.

"Nine today has taken action in line with our crisis response plan around a visit to our studio by Ms Rita Wilson," a Nine statement said.

"Our premises is currently being thoroughly cleaned in all areas she visited and we are encouraging our employees to monitor their health and practice good hygiene," Nine added.

Hanks had announced their diagnoses Thursday, prompting an outpouring of get-well wishes in Australia and Hollywood.

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

Where next for F1? Australia race canceled, Bahrain in doubt

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — The curtain-raiser has been canceled. The second and third events are in doubt and the fourth has already been postponed.

The Formula One series — the “big circus” as six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton calls it — doesn’t really have a starting line after the season-opening Australian Grand Prix was canceled Friday because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Where next? Some have suggested the season won’t get underway until June, at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in Baku.

There’s five GPs on the calendar between now and then, including Spain and Monaco.

The government has already banned fans from attending next week’s Bahrain Grand Prix. If it goes ahead, the will be at an empty circuit. Vietnam was due to host its debut F1 Grand Prix on a street circuit in Hanoi on April 5. The Chinese GP, initially scheduled for April, was last month postponed indefinitely.

Travel bans or restrictions amid the growing toll from the COVID-19 illness are making predictions difficult.

“Everybody wants an answer — you can’t force an answer to something we don’t have an answer to,” Formula One chairman Chase Carey said Friday. “We’re reaching out to every expert we can around the world — we’re a global sport. We’re not dealing with one country we’re dealing with an array of complexity.

“I don’t think at this point it’s productive to get into hypotheticals.”

Carey was in Vietnam earlier this week, and the outcome of negotiations with local officials are unclear. Carey arrived in Australia just in time for crisis meetings involving Australian organizers, the international governing body for motor sports and the principals of the nine F1 teams.

The other team, McLaren, had already withdrawn because a team member tested positive for the coronavirus and 14 others were placed in quarantine at a Melbourne hotel for 14 days. With such a depleted team, it’s unlikely McLaren could race in Bahrain anyway.

“At this point, our focus is dealing with the issues this weekend. I just came in from Vietnam, so we are in discussion with partners on the upcoming races,” Carey said Friday. “In the coming days, clearly we will be addressing the events yet to come. It’s a difficult situation to predict. Trying to look out and make those sorts of predictions, when it’s changing this quick, is challenging.”

It’s not the first major sport to suspend competition — the NBA, the NHL and leading golf and tennis tours have all done that already, and soccer is being played in empty stadiums in some countries.

But the global nature of F1, with 22 races scheduled from March to November and spread from Australia, to Asia, to the Middle-east, and Europe to the Americas, compounds the degree of difficulty in getting the timing right.

“We’re a sport traveling around the world that really started to move everything here last weekend,” Carey said, defending the decision to bring 10 F1 teams and hundreds of staff to Australia while the coronavirus was spreading. “There’s a lead-time to what we do.”

The decision to cancel the Australian race was the only option with the health and safety situation changing so rapidly.

“Obviously in hindsight it looks different,” he said. “But when things were changing as rapidly as they were, we were dealing with it in real time ... in a very difficult, challenging time. I think we all agreed, we made the right decision.

Australian organizers said it would be nice to stage the race later in the year, but that’s unlikely given the distance and the crowded calendar later in 2020.

There have been more than 128,000 cases and 4,700 deaths globally since the coronavirus outbreak started in China late last year.

Most people quickly recover from the virus after experiencing 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.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 38 of 75

According to the World Health Organization, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks.

McLaren is leaving staff in Australia to stay with the 15 team members in quarantine. Those who didn't test positive were packing down before heading back to Britain, but were barred from going to the team headquarters at Woking for two weeks.

Ferrari is based in northern Italy, where there are coronavirus hot spots. Some governments have imposed bans on travelers from Italy, causing other potential issues for F1.

"In many ways, this is an unprecedented situation, certainly I've never lived through anything like this," Carey said, reflecting on the process that resulted in the cancellation in Australia. "The magnitude, the unpredictability, the fluidity of this. In that sort of situation, it's important to get as much input as you can.

"Everybody came to the same place (and) made decisions that are right for our sports and for the places having our events."

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

In role reversal, Asia seeks to stop virus from coming in

By KEN MORITSUGU and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — From quarantining arriving travelers from overseas to nabbing those sneaking in with fevers, China and other parts of Asia are scrambling to prevent the new coronavirus from coming back to where it first broke out.

Just as the spread of the disease is stabilizing in much of Asia, following a major outbreak in China and sizable ones in South Korea and Japan, it is popping up in new hot spots around the world.

Those three countries announced expanded border controls this week that mimic many of the bans and restrictions placed on China in the early days of the outbreak. China, which didn't have enough protective equipment for its medical workers a few weeks ago, is now donating supplies to Italy, Iran, South Korea and other affected places.

The outbreak is far from over in Asia and could well explode again when restrictions put in place to stymie it are lifted. But the panic that seized the region has shifted to the Mideast, Europe and the Americas as those areas deal with the rapid spread of the virus for the first time.

China reported Friday just eight new cases of the virus in the previous 24 hours, and three were imported from Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom. The number has dropped sharply from a month ago, when the daily figure was in the thousands. Nearly 90 imported cases have been identified in recent weeks.

National Health Commission spokesman Mi Feng said this week that the peak of outbreak has passed in China, but that "the fast development of the epidemic overseas has introduced uncertainties."

Just a week ago, South Korea was complaining about a global scurry to block or restrict visitors coming from the country. Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha, in a rare moment of bluntness, called the moves an unsophisticated reaction by nations with inept quarantine abilities.

Now, as new infections have eased at home, South Korea is stepping up border controls to prevent the virus from being reintroduced by travelers from overseas.

Starting Sunday, the country will extend special screening measures to passengers from France, Germany, Spain, Britain and the Netherlands, as well as those who have stopped in Dubai and Moscow in the previous two weeks.

Besides having their temperature checked and filling out health questionnaires, they will download a smartphone app to report their health status daily to authorities. The screening already applied to visitors from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, Japan, Italy and Iran. South Korea also bans people coming from Hubei, the province in China with by far the most infections and deaths.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. Some, especially older adults and those with existing health problems, develop more severe illnesses such as pneumonia.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 39 of 75

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

Beijing, which has identified 18 imported cases in the past week, announced it would require anyone arriving from overseas to quarantine for 14 days. Previously, only those from places with serious outbreaks had to do so. Shanghai, with eight imported cases confirmed so far, said late Thursday that people coming from Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Iran, South Korea, Japan and the U.S. would have to do the same.

Police in Beijing say they are investigating a family of eight that returned home from Italy, four of whom had contracted the virus. They allegedly took cold medicine to lower their fevers and falsified their health declaration forms, police said.

The case is one of at least three in China under investigation. South of Shanghai in Zhejiang province, six people who worked in a restaurant in Italy and developed coughs, headaches and fevers before returning are under investigation for failing to report their health condition when entering China, according to Chinese media reports.

In the north, the Epidemic Prevention and Control Center in Zhengzhou city said a 30-year-old construction worker who had traveled to Milan via Abu Dhabi falsely reported his foreign travels. It didn't specify how he did so. He has been put in isolation with a fever and police are investigating.

China has begun evacuating its citizens from one virus-hit country, Iran, echoing earlier flights organized by other nations to bring back their nationals from Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, after China cut off commercial air and rail service in a lockdown of the region to restrict the spread of the virus.

A charter flight with 164 passengers arrived in the city of Chengdu this week, following two flights bringing back 311 Chinese citizens to the city of Lanzhou in Gansu province last week. The earlier flights led to a spike in new cases, with Gansu reporting 36 imported ones since they landed.

"We will ... take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and legitimate rights and interests of overseas Chinese citizens," Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said this week.

China has dispatched medical teams to Iran, Iraq and Italy and said it would contribute \$20 million to the World Health Organization in support of its efforts to combat the virus. The Chinese Embassy in Rome said this week that China had offered to send doctors and lung ventilators and other equipment to Italy.

China, which bristled at a blanket U.S. ban imposed on non-citizens arriving from China, has chosen to quarantine people rather than ban anyone. President Donald Trump has expanded that ban to several European countries, drawing sharp criticism from the European Union.

Japan's moves to control the epidemic struck a raw nerve in South Korea, where resentment persists over Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula in the first half of the 20th century.

After Japan imposed a 14-day quarantine on visitors from South Korea and China, South Korea responded by ending visa-free entry for Japanese citizens and putting them under special screening measures at points of entry.

South Korea has confirmed about 8,000 cases, the fourth highest in the world after China, Italy and Iran.

Kim reported from Seoul, South Korea. Associated Press writers Mari Yamaguchi and Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo and researcher Yu Bing in Beijing contributed to this story.

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.

Asian shares plunge after Wall Street's worst day since '87

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares plunged in Asia on Friday, with benchmarks in Japan, Thailand and India sinking as much as 10% after Wall Street suffered its biggest drop since the Black Monday crash of 1987.

Markets worldwide have retreated as fears of economic fallout from the coronavirus crisis deepen and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 40 of 75

the meltdown in the U.S., the world's biggest economy, batters confidence around the globe.

Trading was halted temporarily in Bangkok and in Mumbai after the main benchmarks in both markets hit the 10% downside limit. After trading resumed, Thailand's SET 100 was down 8.7% and the Sensex in Mumbai had swooned 9.4%.

Losses in mainland China, where communities are recovering from the worst of the virus, were less severe, with the Shanghai Composite index down 3%. Most other regional markets had lost between 4% to 6% by midday Friday in Asia.

Overnight, the sell-off on Wall Street helped to wipe out most of Wall Street's big gains since President Donald Trump took office.

The S&P 500 plummeted 9.5%, for a total drop of 26.7% from its all-time high, set just last month. That puts it way over the 20% threshold for a bear market, officially ending Wall Street's unprecedented bull-market run of nearly 11 years. The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 2,352 points, or 10%, its heaviest loss since its nearly 23% drop on Oct. 19, 1987.

European markets fell 12% in one of their worst days ever, even after the European Central Bank pledged to buy more bonds and offer more help for the economy.

"Between the lack of a strong U.S. fiscal response and the latest travel ban for arrivals from Europe to the U.S., global markets appear to have been tipped over into a sell-everything mode," Jingyi Pan of IG said in a commentary.

Overriding concerns about the actual impact on business and trade is pessimism over how the crisis is being handled, with the "sum of all fears are culminating with the view that policymakers remain well behind the curve," said Stephen Innes of AxiCorp.

Not all markets have suffered equally, but many are down by double-digits from just weeks earlier. Thailand's SET has lost nearly 40% and the Philippines' benchmark is down more than 30%.

Despite the huge Friday the 13th sell-offs in most markets, shares bounced back slightly from their lowest levels by late-mid morning. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 was down 7.8% to 17,099.46. The Kospi in South Korea sank 7.2% to 1,702.56, Sydney's S&P ASX lost 4.4% to 5,070.50 and the Shanghai Composite declined 3.3% to 2,826.37.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng lost 5.8% to 22,904.28.

The rout has come amid cascading cancellations and shutdowns across the globe — including Trump's suspension of most travel to the U.S. from Europe — and rising worries that the White House and other authorities around the world can't or won't counter the economic damage from the outbreak any time soon.

"We're starting to get a sense of how dire the impact on the economy is going to be. Each day the news doesn't get better, it gets worse. It's now hit Main Street to a more significant degree," said Liz Ann Sonders, chief investment strategist at Charles Schwab.

Stocks fell so fast on Wall Street at the opening bell that they triggered an automatic, 15-minute trading halt for the second time this week. The so-called circuit breakers were first adopted after the 1987 crash, and until this week hadn't been tripped since 1997.

The Dow briefly turned upward and halved its losses at one point in the afternoon after the Federal Reserve announced it would step in to ease "highly unusual disruptions" in the Treasury market and pump in at least \$1.5 trillion to help calm the market and facilitate trading.

But the burst of momentum quickly faded.

The coronavirus has infected around 128,000 people worldwide and killed over 4,700. The death toll in the U.S. climbed to 39, with over 1,300 infections. For most people, the virus 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 illnesses, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the virus in a matter of weeks.

The combined health crisis and retreat on Wall Street have heightened fears of a recession.

Just last month, the Dow was boasting a nearly 50% increase since Trump took the oath of office on Jan. 20, 2017. By Thursday's close, the Dow was clinging to a 6.9% gain, though it was still up nearly 16% since just before Trump's election in November 2016.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 41 of 75

The Dow officially went into a bear market on Wednesday, when it finished the day down more than 20% from its all-time high. For the S&P 500, this is the fastest drop since World War II from a record high to a bear market.

"This is bad. The worst and fastest stock market correction in our career," Chris Rupkey, chief financial economist at MUFG Union, said in a research note overnight. "The economy is doomed to recession if the country stops working and takes the next 30 days off. The stock market knows it."

After earlier thinking that the virus could remain mostly in China and that any dip in the economy would be followed by a quick rebound, investors are seeing the damage and disruptions mount.

The fallout mounted Thursday, as the NCAA canceled its men's and women's basketball tournaments, major league baseball postponed opening day, and Disneyland announced it is shutting down for the rest of the month. Even the Chinese side of Mount Everest closed. Closer to Wall Street, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Opera shut their doors, and Broadway theaters planned to go dark.

"Anyone who tells you they know how long this is going to last is wrong," said Adam Taback, chief investment officer for Wells Fargo Private Bank. "The uncertainty here is trying to figure out how you get this virus under control, and is that a matter of days, weeks or months."

In other trading, the oil market, which suffered huge shocks last week, is still on the decline.

U.S. benchmark crude lost 1.8%, or 60 cents to \$30.90 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent, the standard for international crude pricing, gave up 47 cents, or 1.4%, to \$32.75 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar rose to 105.22 Japanese yen from 104.63 yen late Thursday. The euro edged lower to \$1.1184 from \$1.1181.

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Impact of pandemic stretches from schools to world's leaders

By STAN CHOE, LORI HINNANT and TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Schools shut down across much of Europe. Gatherings were canceled or banned from California to Germany. And the coronavirus reached directly into the world's centers of power Thursday, with politicians in Canada, Brazil, Spain and elsewhere either testing positive for the new virus or putting themselves in quarantine as fallout from the pandemic further upended daily life.

The crisis has wreaked havoc on businesses and financial markets, sending U.S. stocks to their worst losses since the Black Monday crash of 1987. European markets closed with one of the worst days in history.

"We are in a global panic," said Estelle Brack, an economist in Paris. "We are in the deep unknown."

The European Union pushed back against President Donald Trump's sharp restrictions on travel from Europe to the United States, slamming Trump's "unilateral" decision and declaring the virus a "global crisis, not limited to any continent, and it requires cooperation."

Trump defended his decision to not notify all EU leaders ahead of the announcement. "When they raise taxes on us, they don't consult us," Trump said. "I think that's probably one in the same."

The vast majority of new cases of the COVID-19 illness are now linked to Europe. Deaths in Italy topped 1,000, with more than 15,000 testing positive.

The virus, first detected in December in China, has produced crippling outbreaks in Asia, Europe and the Middle East, ignited financial panic and in the last week has seen dizzying developments erupt by the hour. European soccer leagues, American basketball, hockey and baseball games, school terms for hundreds of millions of students, weddings, baptisms, funerals, nightlife, culture high and low — all fell by the wayside

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 42 of 75

with a swiftness and scope that was becoming increasingly difficult to grasp.

Amid the fear, it can be easy to forget that more than half those infected with the virus have already recovered from COVID-19, the disease it causes. Most patients have only mild or moderate symptoms such as a fever or cold, though severe symptoms including pneumonia can occur, especially in older adults and people with existing health problems.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was isolating himself after his wife tested positive. She said she was experiencing uncomfortable symptoms but "I will be back on my feet soon." Trudeau's office said he has no symptoms of COVID-19 but will stay in isolation for 14 days.

In Spain, a leading member of a far-right party tested positive for the virus. In the United States, several politicians were quarantining themselves as a protective measure.

Meanwhile, the Brazilian president's communications director tested positive just days after meeting with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago resort.

Despite that, Trump has no immediate plans to be tested or go into self-quarantine, the White House said.

Developments in the pandemic have spilled across continents and countries, from China's ongoing lockdown of the original epicenter of the illness, to the shuttering of the Los Angeles Zoo, to Belgium ordering schools, cafes, restaurants and night clubs to close.

Across Italy, restaurants, cafes and retail shops closed after the prime minister imposed a lockdown on personal movement. Grocery stores, pharmacies and outdoor markets were allowed to operate. In Italy's Lombardy region, the virus's European epicenter, hospitals were overwhelmed with both the sick and the dead.

In the U.S., even a Federal Reserve pledge to inject up to \$2 trillion into short-term lending markets did not halt the bleeding on Wall Street. The S&P 500 plummeted 9.5%, for a total drop of 26.7%. That puts it way past the 20% threshold for a bear market, snapping an unprecedented, nearly 11-year bull-market run. The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 10% for its worst day since a nearly 23% drop on Oct. 19, 1987.

European markets also closed one of their worst days in history, unswayed by European Central Bank stimulus measures to buy up 120 billion euros (\$132 billion) in bonds.

More than 128,000 people have been infected, the vast majority in just four countries: China and South Korea — where new cases are declining — and Iran and Italy, where they are not. The spread has slowed so much in China that the government sent a medical crew to Italy and offered surplus supplies to Iran.

More than 4,700 people have died worldwide.

In the United States, restrictions on gatherings were enacted from New York to California, and dozens of cultural hubs were closed. Disneyland and Disney World are both shutting down in the next few days. Broadway theaters went dark. The Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center, the New York Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, the Apollo Theater and the Kennedy Center in Washington all canceled events through March 31.

Congress closed the U.S. Capitol and House and Senate office buildings to the public until April 1, the White House canceled tours and the Supreme Court also will be closed to the public.

France, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Lithuania, Algeria and Slovakia joined countries shutting down their schools, and Europe's most successful soccer team, Real Madrid, put all its players into quarantine after one tested positive. The Czech government said it would reimpose border checks and bar entry to people from 13 countries, including Britain and several in the European Union. Slovakia closed its international airports and ground transport hubs.

Europeans were adjusting to the U.S. travel restrictions, which affected some of the world's most heavily traveled routes and threw plans into chaos.

"We were going to get married in Las Vegas, with Elvis. It was going to be epic," said Sandrine Reynaert of Paris who had to cancel the April 20 ceremony. Her future husband already has the date engraved on his ring.

Britain and Ireland were exempt from the U.S. policy, despite imposing far fewer restrictions than many EU countries, raising questions about the policy's coherence. Trump accused Europe of not acting quickly enough to address the "foreign virus."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 43 of 75

Across the U.S., where cases have topped 1,600, a sense of urgency was pervasive.

Schools emptied of students and workplace cubicles went vacant. A rite of spring, college basketball's NCAA tournament was canceled, while the NBA and NHL also decided their pros won't play for now. Major League Baseball canceled spring training and postponed opening day for at least two weeks.

Concerts were canceled around the world.

"The idea of listening to and experiencing music together is gone — for now," the Russian-German pianist Igor Levit wrote after giving a live concert on Twitter's Periscope platform. "It's necessary, yet so sad."

Hinnant reported from Paris and Sullivan from Minneapolis. Contributing were Associated Press writers Maria Cheng and Jill Lawless in London; Jamey Keaten in Geneva; Samuel Petrequin in Brussels; 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 David B. Caruso and Theo Wayt in New York.

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Coronavirus brings entertainment world to a standstill

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The entertainment industry prepared Thursday for an unprecedented shutdown to curb the spread of the coronavirus, canceling upcoming movies, suspending all Broadway performances and scuttling concert tours until it's safe to welcome crowds back.

To accommodate calls for social distancing, Hollywood moved to pause the normal hum of TV productions and the bustle of red-carpet movie premieres. After New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo banned gatherings of more than 500 people, Broadway theaters announced that they would close immediately and remain dark through April 12. The Tribeca Film Festival was called off too.

The closures amount to a nearly complete halting of the industry, from Lincoln Center to Disneyland, and the largest-scale shutdown of many of the country's major arteries of culture.

The Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center, the New York Philharmonic, Carnegie Hall, the Apollo Theater and the Kennedy Center in Washington all canceled events through March 31. Live Nation Entertainment and AEG Presents, the world's largest live-entertainment companies, suspended all current tours through March, including those of Billie Eilish, the Strokes and Post Malone.

The dawning awareness of the virus' reach had already forced the cancellation or postponement of all major imminent events on the calendar, including the sprawling South by Southwest conference and festival in Austin, Texas; Hollywood's annual movie expo CinemaCon, in Las Vegas; this month's Kids Choice Awards in Los Angeles; and the sunny California music festival Coachella, which was put off until October. TV networks saw the scuttling of most major sporting events, including the NBA season, March Madness and the NHL season.

Earlier Thursday, California urged bans of not just the largest events but also gatherings of more than 250 to help stymie the virus' spread. California Gov. Gavin Newsom recommended the cancellation or postponement of gatherings of 250 or more people through at least the end of the month. That put a new focus on Broadway, multiplexes and concert venues.

Disneyland plans to shut its gates Saturday for the rest of the month. After Sunday, Florida's Disney World will also close to guests through the end of March. And Disney is suspending any new cruise ship departures starting Saturday.

Beginning Saturday, the Universal Studios theme park in Los Angeles will close until at least March 28.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 44 of 75

Universal Studios in Orlando plans to shutter for the rest of the month starting Monday.

Hollywood still planned to usher several new movies into theaters beginning Thursday evening. North American's largest chains, AMC and Regal, did not respond to emails. Cinemas have already been closed in China, India, Italy, Poland, Greece and other countries.

But they will soon run out of movies to play. Postponements have erased much of the upcoming movie release calendar.

The Walt Disney Co. wiped out its upcoming slate, including "Mulan," "New Mutants" and "Antlers." Universal Pictures said the "Fast and Furious" movie titled "F9" would not open May 22 as planned but in April next year. John Krasinski, writer and director of "A Quiet Place 2," announced that his film from Paramount Pictures would not open next week as planned but be rescheduled to for another date.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is that people have said our movie is one you have to see together," Krasinski said in a message on social media. "Well due to the ever-changing circumstances of what's going on in the world around us, now is clearly not the right time to do that."

Across Hollywood, the usual machinations of show business, from auditions to rehearsals, ground to a halt. Apple's "The Morning Show" was among the many productions put on hiatus. Central Casting closed its offices. The TCM Classic Film festival, scheduled next month in Los Angeles was canceled. Leading talent agents closed their offices and sent agents home to work.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame postponed its annual induction ceremony, scheduled for May 2 in Cleveland. It was to have been televised live for the first time by HBO. Posthumous inductees Whitney Houston and the Notorious B.I.G. were to be honored, along with Depeche Mode, the Doobie Brothers, Nine Inch Nails and T. Rex. Canada's top music awards show, the June Awards, was also called off as a precaution.

The announcement Wednesday evening that Tom Hanks and his wife, Rita Wilson, had tested positive for coronavirus sent shudders through the industry. Hanks was easily the most famous person yet to publicly announce that he had the virus. He was in Australia to shoot an Elvis Presley biopic that Warner Bros. said would halt production.

Hanks posted an photo on Instagram late Thursday, saying he and Wilson remain in isolation and that they are taking it "one-day-at-a-time." In a nod to his manager role in "A League of Their Own," Hanks concluded his post: "Remember, despite all the current events, there is no crying in baseball."

On Thursday, "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and "The Late Show With James Corden" joined other late-night talk shows in announcing they will tape without audiences. That followed similar decisions by CBS' "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert," NBC's "Tonight Show" and "Late Night With Seth Meyers," Comedy Central's "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah," HBO's "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" and TBS' "Full Frontal with Samantha Bee."

CBS also said production on the next season of "Survivor" was being postponed. "Jeopardy!" and "Wheel of Fortune" have also halted tapings with audiences.

For most people, the 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 within a few weeks.

As of Thursday, 38 people had died in the U.S., while more than 1,300 people had tested positive for the virus. Tolls have been higher elsewhere. In Italy, where more than 15,000 people tested positive and more than 1,000 people have died, all stores except pharmacies and food markets were ordered closed.

Associated Press writers David Bauder in New York, Lindsey Bahr in Los Angeles and Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

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1 year later, New Zealand mosque attacks alter many lives

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — Fifty-one people were killed and dozens more injured when a lone gunman attacked two mosques in Christchurch last year. New Zealanders will commemorate those who died on the anniversary of the mass killing Sunday. Three people whose lives were forever altered that day say it has prompted changes in their career aspirations, living situations and in the way that others perceive them.

Aya Al-Umari

Aya's older brother Hussein, 35, was killed in the attack at the Al Noor mosque

When she first heard there had been a shooting at the mosque, Aya Al-Umari rushed to her brother's house and then to the Christchurch Hospital, hoping to find out something, anything, about him. She was confronted with an overwhelming scene. Children were crying. Adults were covered with blood. Nothing was comprehensible. She spotted a policewoman, who calmed her down, told her to go home and promised to update her hourly.

The kindness of that officer and other officers has inspired Al-Umari to consider a career change. Currently a credit analyst at a bank, she hopes to join the police force and work on financial crimes.

"I think, going through this, it really shifts your perspective in life. And by life, it's everything from A to Z," she says. "So from family time, going about your day, to career. All of these have shifted."

These days, she is learning self-defense techniques through martial arts courses and says no matter how busy she finds herself, she always makes sure to spend time with her parents. And she never stops thinking about Hussein, who was her only sibling.

She carries a photo of the two of them and takes selfies of it when she visits different places around the world, like when she completed the hajj pilgrimage in August. She was one of 200 survivors and relatives from the Christchurch attacks who traveled to Saudi Arabia as guests of King Salman.

"Every day I feel like Hussein is with me," she says. "Any decisions that I make, I just think about, OK, what would Hussein do in this situation?" Every time that I visit him in the cemetery, he's definitely there."

Al-Umari, 34, has also been reflecting on the casual racism she experienced in New Zealand growing up. She first noticed it after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the U.S.

"I remember at school I would feel like I was the one being blamed for what's happened," she says. "The Muslims were being tainted by one brush."

She was later teased by her friends, called names. Now she thinks that's how it all starts — a little joke, a comment that doesn't get challenged.

"I feel I was also responsible in that I did not stand up for myself," she says. "I would laugh it off, whereas the right thing to do would have been like, 'It's not funny. How would you feel if I said the same things to you?'"

Al-Umari is steeling herself for the June trial of the man accused of the shooting, 29-year-old Australian white supremacist Brenton Tarrant. He has been charged with terrorism, murder and attempted murder and faces life imprisonment if found guilty.

Al-Umari remembers the first time she saw him in court, where he appeared via video-link from his maximum-security jail cell.

"It felt like my organs had just dropped to the floor," she says.

She's been trying to heal her spirit and keep the memory of Hussein alive by writing about her experiences online, by overcoming prejudice with compassion.

"Words can be powerful. Words can be destructive," she says. "But they can also be very restorative as well."

Len Penaha

Len lived next door to the Al Noor mosque and helped some worshipers escape

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 46 of 75

On March 15 last year, Len Peneha had driven home to pick up his daughter Jasmine when he noticed a man maneuvering a car at the end of their long driveway and then carry something into the mosque.

"We started hearing these noises. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang," he says.

He wondered if it was construction scaffolding falling over. But then people began running everywhere, and Peneha figured out what was happening. He and his daughter ran inside. Jasmine called the police and Peneha came back out and helped people climb over the mosque's back fence and hide in his apartment as the shooter continued his massacre.

The images from that day will never leave Peneha, 54. He saw the gunman shoot a woman at point-blank range at the end of the driveway, and then drive over her body. After the gunman left, Peneha went to the mosque to help and saw bodies strewn in the foyer.

"I struggled sleeping for months after that. My brain was still on high alert," he says.

At night he would hear the slightest noise from down the street or the words from a conversation in another building. Every time he drove down his driveway he would see the image of the woman's body lying across it. He had frequent panic attacks and sought counseling.

"The sadness that it brought affected me quite a lot. And it still does today," he says.

After months of anxiety, Peneha decided he needed to move away from the area, and he found a new apartment. Shifting has helped calm his mind, he says, although he still has days when he feels down and moments when he struggles.

Three of the people he helped escape that day have since come back to say thanks. They credit Peneha with saving their lives.

"To be honest, in my mind, they saved themselves first, by actually getting out of there alive," Peneha says. "I helped them climb over the fence, and I sheltered them and stopped them from doing anything stupid to get themselves killed. And maybe, in that respect, I did help save their lives."

Peneha says the gunman seems to think he's superior to other people, and that's not the way the world should work. Peneha admires the sentiments from some the survivors of the Al Noor shooting, including Farid Ahmed, who has said he forgives the attacker.

"I can't forgive him, like Farid has and the Muslim community has," Peneha says. "I don't find I have any compassion for him at all. What he did was abhorrent. Callous."

Adib Khanafer

Adib, a vascular surgeon, helped save the life of a 4-year-old girl who was shot at the Al Noor mosque

Adib Khanafer didn't know anything about the mosque attacks when he was urgently called to the operating theater at the Christchurch Hospital to work on 4-year-old Alen Alsati.

"They said there's a major bleed, so I scrubbed in," he says. "It was very emotional at the beginning to see such horrific injuries. I did what I'm best at doing: repairing vessels."

The girl spent weeks at an Auckland children's hospital recovering. About seven months after the attacks, Khanafer was invited by the family to join them for an authentic Palestinian dinner. He says Alen was vibrant and was even teasing his own daughter.

"I don't have any concern about Alen. I think she's going to be a good, tough girl," he says. "I told her that you need to be a surgeon, and she said, 'No, I want to be a policewoman.' And I said 'OK, that's disappointing, but we'll work on it, we'll work on it.'"

He says Alen has started school and he's confident she'll fully recover.

Khanafer, 52, says he's noticed a change in how people treat him and his wife, who are both Muslim. Before the attacks, he says, many people in Christchurch didn't know much about Islam or the Muslim culture and were sometimes guarded around the couple. He says many people have since taken the time to read and inform themselves, and he's noticed some big changes.

"People now understand there's a different culture, there's a different religion, there's a different behavior," he says. "So definitely, we've seen more acceptance. Particularly to people like my wife, who wears the Islamic hijab."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 47 of 75

He says bullet wounds can do serious damage to soft tissue and nerves, and some of the dozens who were injured in the attacks will take a long time to heal. Some may never be able to play sports with their kids or return to the way they were. But he says there are also stories of remarkable recoveries.

"The human body is a pretty good machine," he says. "Only time will tell."

Scrubbed: March Madness leads long list of canceled sports

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

The world's sports schedule cratered at warp speed Thursday, with one of the biggest events on the U.S. calendar, the fun-filled and colorful college basketball tournament known as March Madness, becoming the first mega-event to be scrubbed due to fear of the spread of the coronavirus.

Leaders at all levels of sports, including the NCAA, NBA, NHL, Major League Baseball, golf, tennis and soccer, decided the risk of playing games with the threat of the virus hanging over them was too great despite the billions of dollars — to say nothing of the trophies, pride and once-in-a-lifetime experiences — hanging in the balance.

By late in the afternoon of an extraordinary, headline-a-minute day across a pandemic-rattled globe, the NCAA, which regulates March Madness and virtually all major U.S. college sports, basically had no choice. With conferences and individual teams calling off their basketball seasons at breakneck pace, the NCAA followed suit. They scrapped all college winter and spring championships, the highlight of which is the men's basketball tournament — a three-week extravaganza that stands as the biggest event this side of the Super Bowl on the U.S. sports calendar.

The cancellation leaves a massive hole in American sports — from campuses across the country, to a growing passel of sports-betting businesses that rely on college hoops money, to say nothing of the hearts of players who were poised to get their first, or last, or only chance to shine on the big stage.

All of it was to be covered by CBS and its partners; about 80 percent of the NCAA's \$1.05 billion annual budget is bankrolled by the money the networks pay to present the 68-team tournament over the air, on cable and online.

"This is bigger than a sport or championship," said Kansas University coach Bill Self, whose team would've been the likely favorite to win it all.

Hours earlier, Kansas and Duke had each taken matters into their own hands, announcing they wouldn't be sending any of their teams to games, no matter the stakes.

It wasn't even the most jaw-dropping moment of the morning. That came, fittingly, at one of the world's most renowned sports venues — Madison Square Garden — where at halftime of a Big East Conference tournament game, the PA announcer came on and said the tournament had been called.

By then, every major conference, and virtually all of the minor ones, had done the same thing. They were prompted in part by the NCAA's decision a day earlier to hold all its tournament games — which had been scheduled to start next week in nine cities and close April 6 at a 71,000-seat stadium in Atlanta — in front of friends and family and limited "essential" personnel.

Only 24 hours later, with the stock market tanking, mixed messages coming out of Washington and no promise of quick relief being offered by world health experts, it became even more clear that gatherings involving thousands of people were hard to justify. Also clear: The NCAA would have trouble assembling an equitable bracket for its tournament, given that most games designed to suss out the most-deserving teams and automatic qualifiers had already been scrubbed.

"I'm not a researcher in immunology or infectious disease, but those who are engaged at the NCAA level provided some stark information yesterday," said Greg Sankey, the commissioner of the Southeastern Conference.

The March Madness news meant it will be a world free of basketball for the foreseeable future.

A day after the NBA put its season on temporary hiatus, a second member of the Utah Jazz — Donovan Mitchell — tested positive for the coronavirus. The league said its suspension would last for at least 30 days — possibly a conservative guess, as teams undertake the task of identifying any player or referee

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 48 of 75

who has had recent contact with the Jazz, then putting them into isolation for the required two weeks. "What would kill the NBA season is if more players catch it," Mavericks owner Mark Cuban said in an interview on CNBC. He called the hiatus a matter of "us being vigilant, as all businesses should be. Businesses are going to have to be incredibly vigilant, and that's hard."

The NHL also suspended its season, though it did not report any positives for COVID-19.

Major League Baseball scrapped spring training and postponed the start of its season, currently scheduled for March 26, for at least two weeks.

The PGA Tour decided Thursday night to scrap the rest of The Players Championship and shut down its other tournaments for the next three weeks. Commissioner Jay Monahan had said earlier Thursday there would be no fans at the TPC Sawgrass for the final three rounds, or at the next three tournaments on the PGA Tour schedule. The tour changed its mind late Thursday, with no immediate word whether The Players Championship — the premier tournament run by the PGA Tour, offering a \$15 million purse — would be rescheduled.

The LPGA Tour postponed three tournaments, beginning next week, including its first major of the season.

Tennis will also be canceling events. The ATP called off men's tournaments for the next six weeks; the WTA said its tournament in South Carolina, set for April 6-12, would not be held as scheduled, with decisions about the rest of the season to come in the next week.

NASCAR announced it would race the next two weekends, in Atlanta and Miami, without fans, and IndyCar made the same decision for its race this weekend in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Horse races were going on in several states, though without fans in the stands — leaving the parimutuel wagers to be made online; organizers of the Kentucky Derby were moving forward with plans for the May 2 race.

The NFL, never off the radar even in the depths of the offseason, announced a number of changes and cancellations on its schedule of meetings, fan fest and scouting trips — all related to coronavirus.

The U.S.-based Major League Soccer said it would shut down for a target period of 30 days.

Earlier in the day, soccer leagues and teams scrambled to make changes:

—Belgium's soccer league backpedaled on an earlier decision, and decided to close stadiums to fans.

—A Champions League game involving Real Madrid was postponed after the Spanish team puts its players in quarantine.

—Dutch soccer authorities canceled all matches through the end of the month, including friendlies against the United States and Spain.

—Also, a second player from Italy's top soccer division tested positive. All sports in that hard-hit country have been suspended through April 3.

For once, there were no major announcements coming out of Tokyo, where conflicting messages about the status of this summer's Olympics have come out of the country, and the IOC, for weeks.

Instead, the IOC went ahead with its ceremonial lighting of the Olympic flame, an event held in front of the ruined Temple of Hera in Ancient Olympia.

"We are strengthened ... by the many authorities and sports organizations around the world which are taking so many significant measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus," IOC president Thomas Bach said.

MLB delays opening day at least 2 weeks because of virus

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Baltimore slugger Chris Davis was driving down Florida's west coast on Interstate 75 from Sarasota to Fort Myers for an exhibition game against the Minnesota Twins when he got the call. No game tonight. No games for a while.

"Pretty shocked," Davis said, "just how quickly things have escalated."

Major League Baseball delayed the start of its season by at least two weeks because of the coronavirus outbreak and suspended the rest of its spring training schedule.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 49 of 75

Opening day had been scheduled for March 26. The decision announced by Commissioner Rob Manfred on Thursday left open whether each team would still play 162 games.

"It's unfortunate but I think it's the proper measure we need to take now given the situation the country's in and the world's in," New York Yankees star Giancarlo Stanton said. "It's important to know that some things are bigger than baseball, bigger than sports at the moment. Once we're able to hopefully get a hold on some things and get some questions answered we can figure out when things can continue."

The announcement came while some spring training games in Florida were still in progress. MLB followed the NBA, NHL, MLS and college basketball tournaments in altering schedules because of the pandemic.

The minor league baseball season, which was to start April 9, also will be delayed along with qualifying in Arizona for this year's Olympic baseball tournament and for next year's World Baseball Classic.

"We're ultimately all people. We all love the game of baseball, but this is a far bigger issue for all of us right now, and we're trying to work our way through it together," Seattle Mariners owner John Stanton said at the team's camp in Peoria, Arizona.

"I believe that this is going to be something that will have a lot more twists and turns to it. I don't have a high degree of confidence that we will start on April 9," he said.

MLB had continued to play into Thursday, two weeks before the season had been set to start with a pair of simultaneous games: Detroit at Cleveland and World Series champion Washington at the New York Mets.

Texas had been looking forward to the opening of its retractable-roof ballpark, Globe Life Field, first with an exhibition against St. Louis on March 23 and then a formal opener against the Mike Trout and the Los Angeles Angels on March 31.

But baseball changed course after Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said at a morning news conference he had strongly recommended to local authorities and organizers that they limit all mass gatherings.

"MLB and the clubs have been preparing a variety of contingency plans regarding the 2020 regular season schedule," the commissioner's office said in a statement. "MLB will announce the effects on the schedule at an appropriate time and will remain flexible as events warrant, with the hope of resuming normal operations as soon as possible."

Players with big league contracts likely will be allowed to leave spring training and go home if they want to, but no decision on that was made public.

"There are so many questions that I have, and I know a bunch of guys have approached me with questions I just don't have answers to," Davis said. "It doesn't seem real."

Said Seattle pitcher Kendall Graveman: "This is a first for everyone. Man, it's invisible, too. So we're really trying to take precautions. But yeah, it's crazy."

MLB had not had a mass postponement of openers since 1995, when the season was shortened from 162 games to 144 following a 7 1/2-month players' strike that also wiped out the 1994 World Series. Opening day was pushed back from April 2 to April 26 and player salaries were reduced by 11.1% because the games were lost due to a strike.

After a 32-day spring training lockout in 1990 caused opening day to be delayed a week until April 9, the season was extended by three days to allow each team a full 162-game schedule.

Baseball's first strike lasted from April 1-13 in 1972, and the season started April 15. Teams played 153-156 games.

This year marked the earliest opening day other than for international games. As it stood, Game 7 of the World Series would've been Oct. 28.

If regular-season games are lost this year, MLB could attempt to reduce salaries by citing paragraph 11 of the Uniform Player's Contract, which covers national emergencies. The announcement Thursday said the decision was made "due to the national emergency created by the coronavirus pandemic."

"This contract is subject to federal or state legislation, regulations, executive or other official orders or other governmental action, now or hereafter in effect respecting military, naval, air or other governmental service, which may directly or indirectly affect the player, club or the league," every Uniform Player's Contract states.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 50 of 75

The provision also states the agreement is "subject also to the right of the commissioner to suspend the operation of this contract during any national emergency during which Major League Baseball is not played."

Players usually get paid only during the regular season, on the 15th and final day of each month, and the delay could become especially burdensome for minor leaguers who live paycheck to paycheck. Many rely on being fed at team complexes, and while some having on-complex housing, others are stretching to pay for apartments in Florida or Arizona during spring training.

"Every decision we make will be done with as much empathy and thought as possible for everyone's standing," Cubs president of baseball operations Theo Epstein said. "Everyone's affected by this differently and we want to make sure everyone has what they need to continue to stay healthy."

Spring training games were suspended as of 4 p.m. EDT Thursday, and games in progress were allowed to finish. Minnesota notified fans by leaving copies of MLB's press release on benches at Hammond Stadium in Fort Myers, where the game against the Orioles had been scheduled for 6:05 p.m.

"No, no signs, nothing," said Chuck Thompson of Ellsworth, Wisconsin, who was wearing a Twins cap and learned of the cancellation from a parking lot attendant.

"We were wondering why there was no line," added wife Sharon.

At the Chicago Cubs complex in Mesa, Arizona, Anthony Rizzo and Jason Kipnis expressed disbelief to visiting Kansas City Chiefs star Travis Kelce, and left-hander Jon Lester threw long toss on the backfields as if it was a normal work day.

Over 100 fans stood outside the locked gates at Sloan Park, soaking in the rain that had postponed a scheduled Cubs game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, as well as MLB's decision.

"Maybe next year," one disappointed fan said.

"We're Cubs fans," answered another. "We understand next year."

Sara Philpot, from near Dallas, had bought her son Jaxson tickets to Thursday's Cubs-Dodgers game as a Christmas present.

"It's an overreaction," she said. "It depends. I think if you're if you're elderly, yes, it's warranted, but for the younger crowd it's not anything really. But I get that it spreads really, really easily."

AP Sports Writer Jake Seiner and AP freelance writers Rich Dubroff, Mark Dittler, Maureen Mullen and Jose M. Romero contributed to this report.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Fleeing Maduro, Venezuelans find nightmare in Trump's jails

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and GISELA SALOMON Associated Press Writers

MIAMI (AP) — When Jose Ramon Zambrano and his pregnant wife crossed the Rio Grande to apply for asylum in the U.S., they were looking for a fresh start far away from a certain arrest in his native Venezuela, where his mother is a prominent government opponent.

Instead, he spent six months locked up in Texas, separated from a newborn son.

"Crossing the border in search of protection isn't a crime," Zambrano said from a detention center near Houston. "We do it because we need to."

Zambrano is one of hundreds of Venezuelans fleeing the socialist regime of Nicolás Maduro and showing up at the U.S.-Mexico border in larger numbers in recent months, only to encounter President Donald Trump's hard-line immigration policies.

But unlike even larger waves of migrants from Mexico and Central America, the Venezuelans at the border have put the Trump administration in a tight spot.

Most of them have been jailed for extended periods or sent back to Mexico to languish in dangerous border towns while awaiting their immigration cases in the U.S., despite proclamations from the Trump administration that it supports people escaping brutal conditions under Maduro.

While Trump has been leading the campaign to oust Maduro — praising opposition leader Juan Guaidó as a "very brave man who carries with him the hopes, dreams and aspirations of all Venezuelans" as his

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 51 of 75

guest at the State of the Union address — critics say he's done little to shield Venezuelans from his immigration policies.

Specifically, he's rejected calls by Democrats and even some Republican allies like Florida Sen. Marco Rubio to grant humanitarian protections to those escaping political and economic turmoil.

"Venezuelans come to the US seeking security, and although many find it, others encounter a new nightmare and are met with detention," said Julio Henriquez, a Boston-based immigration lawyer from Venezuela who handles asylum cases for his compatriots. "It's a very different narrative than the one about Trump's support for the victims of Maduro."

Nationwide some 850 Venezuelans remain behind bars, held in detention centers as the Trump administration has no way of handing them over to the heavily-sanctioned socialist government of Maduro, which it no longer recognizes. More than 2,000 were returned across the border as part of the Trump administration's "Remain in Mexico" program.

The number of Venezuelans entering the U.S. is rising as part of a mass wave that has seen almost 5 million leave the oil rich-nation, the bulk to neighboring Latin American countries. Although many are fleeing economic chaos, not political persecution, the United Nations has urged countries to grant them refugee status.

In the past year, Venezuelans have made up 30% of all 82,807 asylum claims lodged by people who were not in deportation proceedings. Arrests of Venezuelans for entering the country illegally on the Mexican border spiked to 2,202 during the 2019 fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, up from 62 during the previous 12-month period, according to Customs and Border Protection. Venezuelans are also among the nationalities with the highest number of people who overstay their visas.

The issue has become a political hot potato for Guaidó as well.

Critics say Guaidó, whom Trump recognizes as Venezuela's rightful leader, is covering for the U.S. president so as not to risk valuable political support in his sputtering, year-old campaign against Maduro. They point out that Guaidó didn't publicly raise the issue in his recent week-long trip to the U.S.

"The job of a government is to take care of its citizens, not make political favors," said Edinson Calderon, a LGBTQ immigrant activist in New York who fled Venezuela in 2015 after being tortured by security forces who brutally quashed anti-government protests.

Like most migrants, Calderon was at first an enthusiastic supporter of Guaidó, hoping the young lawmaker could pave the way for him to return home and be reunited with his mother, whom he hasn't seen in five years.

But he's since turned into a fierce critic, appearing on the talk show of Patricia Poleo, a journalist popular with hardliner exiles in Miami, to denounce what he considers Guaidó's neglect of detainees, some of whom have been held for 18 months.

Among the more than 208 detainees cases he's documented is that of a 65-year-old pizza parlor owner who received death threats after feeding pro-government vigilantes. He's also found five inmates who are HIV positive and complained of not receiving proper medical treatment.

Like Zambrano, all of them have deportation orders. But with all flights to Venezuela banned since May, they are unlikely to be removed any time soon. Meanwhile, they remain in jail, in a sort of legal limbo, suffering what they say is frequent verbal abuse by guards.

On Saturday, a group of some 50 exiles responding to a call by Poleo gathered at an arepa stand in the Miami suburb of Doral to write letters to Venezuelan prisoners. One by one, they pulled the names and federal inmate numbers of their compatriots out of a hat at random.

Guaidó's small team in Washington has argued it's doing all it can to assist detainees and block their eventual deportation without interfering in what are sovereign U.S. migration proceedings. They claim that as a result of their involvement, the number of detainees has declined from a peak of 1,300 last year.

This month, Carlos Vecchio, who is recognized by the U.S. as Venezuela's ambassador, began visiting detention centers around the country, hearing firsthand the dramatic tales of Venezuelan prisoners who had been forced to leave their homes.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 52 of 75

"At the end of the day we're all victims," said Vecchio, who fled Venezuela himself to escape what were widely seen as made-up charges of inciting violence during 2014 anti-government protests. "All that we Venezuelans are suffering has a cause: the dictatorship of Nicolas Maduro, which has forced millions of Venezuelans to leave their country."

Still, the outlook for some sort of protection is bleak.

Despite having urged Americans to avoid travel to Venezuela, and frequent criticism of Maduro's human rights record, the Trump administration deported 327 Venezuelans last year, according to ICE. With the flight ban in place, most are being carried out through third countries. Meanwhile, the length of detention for Venezuelans is growing longer, to an average 82 days from 56 in 2019.

Trump in 2019 also tried to end so-called temporary protected status past U.S. administrations have provided to 400,000 immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti fleeing catastrophic events like natural disasters.

Among those Vecchio met at a detention center near Houston was Zambrano.

His mother, Cioly Zambrano, a jurist, fled into exile after being appointed to the Supreme Court by the Guaidó-controlled legislature.

On April 30, 2018, police raided a hotel the family owns. In a split second, Zambrano bolted for the third floor and flung himself from the roof as a gunshot was fired. He survived the fall, landing on a neighbor's zinc roof, and that night was shuttled in the trunk of a car across the border into Colombia.

With his wife and a child on the way, he entered the U.S. illegally in August 2009 and applied for asylum. But when he appeared before a judge, without an attorney and struggling to understand the proceedings in English, his request was rejected.

He was detained for six months and was granted parole this week, allowing him to quickly travel to Orlando to meet his 4-month-old son, Matthew, for the first time.

Until his release Wednesday, his mother journeyed to see him every few weeks for a single hour. She credits Vecchio's pressure to securing her son's release, but his future remains uncertain because his deportation order hasn't been lifted.

"We Venezuelans have a moral debt to President Trump and all American families," said Cioly Zambrano, holding back tears as she recalls the long nights worrying about her son. "But we also need their help."

Associated Press writer Claudia Torrens in New York contributed to this report.

Analysis: With unease, Americans lurch into coronavirus era

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

So this is where we are:

Major League Baseball's opening day postponed. Broadway and Hollywood grinding to a halt, and March Madness canceled. Universities from Harvard to UCLA telling students to stay away. Most travelers from Europe banned. Tom Hanks, Hollywood's embodiment of everyday American-ness, in isolation in an Australian hospital with the virus. And the speaker of the House of Representatives taking this question Thursday morning: "How prepared is Congress to work from home?"

This, in mid-March 2020, is now the very abnormal normal in the new United States of Purell — a nation that watched for weeks as the coronavirus erupted in China, South Korea, Iran and Italy before starting down the path of figuring out how to encounter this threat itself.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, something tipped. Words and phrases used intermittently in recent days began coming at Americans in a dizzying fusillade: Canceled. Postponed. Scrapped. Stay home. Don't come in. Don't embrace. Don't shake hands. Social distancing. Unprecedented. Crisis.

"I think it's finally sinking in how serious this is, and how incredibly unprepared we are going into this. And people are scrambling," says Dr. Mical Raz, a medical historian and practicing physician who teaches at the University of Rochester.

Which raises the central, delicate question: Are Americans ready to meet this challenge — a challenge

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 53 of 75

distinct from any other that American society has faced in the last few generations?

"You find out who you are when a crisis hits, what the culture and the character is. It's the wizard behind the curtain," says Hilary Fussell Sisco, an associate professor at Quinnipiac University who studies how people communicate in troubled moments.

President Donald Trump, in his Oval Office address Wednesday night, called the unfolding coronavirus saga "just a temporary moment of time that we will overcome together as a nation and as a world." The coach of the Denver Nuggets, Michael Malone, after learning an NBA player had been affected, had this to say: "These are things you watch in movies."

Trouble is, though, this whole thing isn't really either a moment or remotely movie-like — which is precisely what makes it more challenging for a country accustomed to consuming, and reacting to, "moments."

When 9/11 happened, it came with most of the markers that a society raised on Hollywood and Madison Avenue storytelling would find familiar. It happened in a certain place, over a specific and compressed period of time. Its scope was obvious by looking at it. And there were immediate villains to rightfully blame.

Many modern American cataclysms — from Pearl Harbor to the assassinations of the 1960s, from school shootings to space shuttle explosions to severe weather — have unfolded thusly. We know what to fear, what to be angry at, what to mourn — and, generally, we know how to do it.

It's different this time. It has been diffuse, unfolding over continents and weeks, making it easier for Americans to tune out.

It's a crisis playing out in microdecisions. Do we go to the store? Keep the kids home? Wash our hands after this, after that, or both? Tiny decisions by the dozen begin with the rising sun and extend all the way to bedtime, producing disruption of routines, exhaustion and unease.

And on top of it all, the coronavirus in the United States is producing what is known in management circles as a "wicked problem" — one in which people disagree not only about solutions, but about whether the thing is even a problem in the first place.

"Everyone was sure that 9/11 was a crisis, that Superstorm Sandy was a crisis. Everyone isn't sure that this is a crisis yet," says Eric Martin, who teaches management at Bucknell University and studies disaster responses.

Overlay the almost unprecedented polarization of this moment in the republic, and you have circumstances unthinkable even three weeks ago: people of all political temperaments, facing the same revisions to daily life, the same risks, the same possibility of having to rely on each other to solve a global problem gone national and now fast going local.

Not that illness isn't divisive. "Epidemics have always been politicized. Ask any gay man who was alive in the '80s," says Raz. But in a context where you might be protecting yourself from your next-door neighbor, even if you live in a gated community, who to trust? Who to blame?

This is where the reaction of the past three days comes in. Whether reasons of risk management, compassion or common sense, institutions — universities, state governments, conference venues, sports leagues — are making decisions in anticipation rather than in reaction.

Because of that, the world we knew is inching toward being one that we don't. Trump's address and the measures he took suggested he was starting to see that, too.

There's something to all those cancellations and social distancing, something that's not entirely clear quite yet. It goes something like this: What's frightening — the strange, unsettling measures the country is starting to take — also can be reassuring.

The sense that American life is zipping itself up, going into hibernation, is terrifying, but it indicates action and engagement, too. The dwindling survivors of World War II-era America could tell you that: Sometimes the symptoms of resolve — the rationing of rubber and nylon and gas, the air-raid drills in the middle of the night — can masquerade as chaos. Sometimes, as with a vaccine, the prevention looks a little like the problem.

So this is where we are in mid-March 2020. But where will we be in mid-April, in mid-June, in mid-October? Will hand sanitizer be part of our life evermore? Will "gone viral" finally fade as an internet euphemism? Will we accept any restrictions on moment-to-moment freedom in order to free ourselves from the coronavirus?

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 54 of 75

"Who are we after this? Who are we after dealing with this situation that we've never dealt with before?" wonders Fussell Sisco, the crisis-communications expert.

In a way, that's part of the answer to whether American society can meet this moment and prevail. How we react now to events hurtling at us is staggeringly, unbelievably important. Who we become afterward? That page is blank, until we choose to fill it in.

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, has written about American culture since 1990. Follow him on Twitter at @anthonyted.

Virus testing is a 'failing,' leaving cases uncounted

By **MIKE STOBBE** and **MATTHEW PERRONE** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Seven weeks have passed since the first U.S. case of coronavirus was announced, and the government is failing to account for what could be thousands of additional infections because of ongoing problems with testing.

"The system is not really geared to what we need right now," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top infectious disease expert at the National Institutes of Health. "That is a failing. It is a failing, let's admit it."

The effort initially was hobbled by delays in getting testing kits out to public health labs, but the stumbles have continued, leading scientists to conclude that the virus has taken root in more places than government officials say.

U.S. health officials, for example, promised nearly a month ago to tap into a national network of labs that monitor for flu. That system is only just getting started.

Large-scale testing is a critical part of tracking the spread of infectious diseases and allocating resources for treatment. The lack of comprehensive figures means U.S. health providers could quickly be overwhelmed by undetected cases.

As of Thursday afternoon, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported about 1,260 U.S. illnesses — a number that trailed independent researchers, who are adding reports from individual states more quickly.

But some experts believe any number based on test results of individual patients is a dramatic undercount. Researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles this week estimated that the true count of infections was close to 9,000 — about two weeks ago.

"I expect there are more infected individuals now," said one of the researchers, Dr. Jonathan Braun. "This means that the level of disease in the U.S. is much greater than has been reported by actual testing."

The problem, these experts say: The U.S. simply isn't testing enough people.

There are no official numbers from the federal government on the country's overall testing capacity. One of the only comprehensive estimates comes from Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former FDA commissioner who is now a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank.

As of Thursday, his group estimated U.S. labs could process results for more than 20,000 patients per day. The figure is based on a combination of publicly reported information and historical estimates from government, private and academic labs. It reflects the total number of patient results that could be processed in a day, not the current number being run.

Whatever the actual number, the U.S. effort is trailing other nations.

South Korea, a country one-sixth the size of the U.S. in population, is reportedly testing 15,000 people per day. CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield noted that officials there are using automated, high-volume testing systems capable of processing thousands of samples at a time. In contrast, the equipment used by most U.S. state and local labs requires technicians to manually process each sample in small batches, sometimes 100 or fewer per day.

The testing process in the U.S. requires mixing various chemicals to setup chain reactions that extract genetic information from patients' swabs. Each lab must fine-tune the process on its own equipment, something experts have likened to perfecting a new recipe.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 55 of 75

Unlike countries with centralized, government-based health care systems, the U.S. response is fragmented between public labs and private efforts by hospitals, universities and diagnostic companies.

U.S. officials have boasted of shipping well over 1 million tests to labs across the country. But it's unclear how many have actually been used on patients, because tests have gone to some private labs and hospitals that don't report into the CDC, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told reporters earlier this week.

Azar said the government is working to set up a system to combine government testing figures with those of outside laboratories.

Government officials have pledged that large private testing companies like Quest Diagnostics will drastically expand U.S. capacity. A Quest spokeswoman on Wednesday said it could take up to six weeks to ramp up to testing tens of thousands of samples per week. The company expects to complete several thousand tests by the end of this week.

On Feb. 14, the CDC's Dr. Nancy Messonnier said the agency planned in the coming weeks to use labs in five cities to provide a good look at whether coronavirus might be appearing. The idea: When patients test negative for flu, their specimens would go through coronavirus testing to see if the new bug caused their symptoms.

"Results from this surveillance would be an early warning signal, to trigger a change in our response strategy" if cases started appearing, she said.

But earlier this week, nearly a month after the announcement, doctors and scientists were still awaiting word on whether that surveillance system was up and running.

On Thursday, the CDC revealed that some labs had begun the testing. But the list of test sites had changed, and the agency did not explain why.

In its initial announcement, the CDC said the work would begin in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, San Francisco and Seattle. On Thursday, it said it instead had begun in Chicago and four sites in California — Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and Santa Clara.

Five other locations are working to get surveillance testing going, a CDC spokeswoman said. They are New York City; Orange County and Solano in California; and the states of Hawaii and Washington.

The agency did not immediately detail what the so-called sentinel testing sites have found.

Perrone reported from Washington. Lauran Neergaard in Washington also contributed to this report.

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March Madness: NCAA Tournaments canceled due to coronavirus

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

March Madness came to a screeching halt before a bracket could even be filled out.

The NCAA canceled its men's and women's basketball tournaments Thursday because of the spread of coronavirus, putting an abrupt end to the season less than a month before champions were to be crowned.

The unprecedented move comes a day after the NCAA announced the games that were scheduled to start next week would go on, but played in mostly empty arenas. That plan was scrapped as every major American sports league from the NBA to MLB put the brakes on its season due to concerns about the pandemic.

"This decision is based on the evolving COVID-19 public health threat, our ability to ensure the events do not contribute to the spread of the pandemic and the impracticality of hosting such events at any time during the academic year given the ongoing decisions by other entities," the NCAA said in statement.

The NCAA canceled championships in every spring sport, which include hockey, baseball and lacrosse.

The stunning end to the major college basketball season came about four hours after a frantic morning when conference tournaments around the country came to a sudden stop. Moments away from tipoff at

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 56 of 75

some arenas, and minutes apart, each Power Five conference — the Atlantic Coast, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern conferences — canceled its remaining games.

At Madison Square Garden in New York, the Big East game between Creighton and St. John's did start, but at halftime the conference called off that game and all the rest. Turns out that was the last Division I basketball to be played this season.

"This has been the most extraordinary stretch of days I've ever had or ever seen in my 30-plus years of working in the sports business," Big East Commissioner Val Ackerman said.

Smaller conferences followed suit, shutting down their tournaments, and within a few hours 58 men's games scheduled in 16 conferences had been canceled.

Then the conferences began shutting down all athletic activities, for at least a few weeks like the SEC, or indefinitely like the ACC.

A few hours later, the NCAA put an end to it all.

"So you telling me I transferred to not play in the tournament," tweeted Gonzaga point guard Ryan Woolridge, a graduate transfer from North Texas. Gonzaga was expected to be a No. 1 NCAA Tournament seed and play a possible second-round game in its home city of Spokane, Washington.

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.

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.

The NCAA men's basketball tournament has been played every year since 1939 when Oregon won the championship in Evanston, Illinois. It has grown through the years, both in size and stature. The three-week tournament generates almost a billion dollars in revenue each year for the NCAA and its hundreds of member schools. Most of the money comes from a television contract with CBS and Turner that pays the NCAA almost \$800 million annually. Earlier this week, NCAA President Mark Emmert told The Associated Press that the NCAA had insurance to cover a business stoppage but gave no details.

The men's tournament is now one of the biggest events in American sports, a basketball marathon of buzzer-beaters, upsets and thrills involving 68 teams from schools big and small.

"While we are obviously disappointed that our season has ended abruptly, we also recognize that this decision was made for a greater good," said coach Casey Alexander, who led Belmont, a private university with 6,000 students in Nashville, Tennessee, to the Ohio Valley Conference championship and a spot in the NCAA Tournament earlier this week.

The field for the men's tournament was scheduled to be announced Sunday, creating the famous bracket sports fans obsess over in office pools and at sportsbooks.

"I respect the NCAA's decision to put everyone's safety first," Arizona State coach Bobby Hurley tweeted. "That said, every team deserves recognition for their season's success. Brackets should still be announced on Selection Sunday."

The 64-team women's field was to be revealed Monday. The NCAA women's tournament began in 1982 and it, too, has become a big event, raising the profile of the sport.

"I'm disappointed, but I totally understand. I really feel for the senior student-athletes; every student athlete, but particularly the seniors because this is their last chance for the fans," said Oregon women's coach Kelly Graves, whose team would have entered the tournament as one of the favorites to reach the Final Four in New Orleans. "There's something more important than the games going on. I've kind of come to grips with that a little more than a few hours ago."

Games would have started on the men's side on Tuesday in Dayton, Ohio, before spreading out to eight sites from coast-to-coast from next Thursday through Sunday. The women's tournament was scheduled to begin March 20, with first- and second-round games to be played at 16 sites on or near the campuses of the top teams.

For Baylor, the potential was there for two national championships. The Bears are ranked fifth in the latest men's AP Top 25 and the women's team is No. 2 and the defending NCAA champs.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 57 of 75

"We've got some great kids and they're handling it really well, but some of our seniors are really distraught," Baylor athletic director Mack Rhoades said. "This was their last shot."

The men's Final Four was to be played April 4 and 6 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. The semifinal and final games typically pack football stadiums, and after the champion is crowned the highlights of the year's tournament are wrapped up into the "One Shining Moment" montage that has become a staple of CBS' coverage.

Not this year.

March Madness has taken on a different meaning as sports have virtually shut down.

AP Sports Writer Teresa Walker in Nashville, Tennessee, and AP Basketball Writer Doug Feinberg in New York contributed to this report.

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

Brazilian who met Trump has virus; no plans to test Trump

By DAVID BILLER and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A senior Brazilian official who attended weekend events with President Donald Trump in Florida has tested positive for the coronavirus, marking the first time that someone known to have the virus was in close proximity to the president. Trump does not plan to be tested or go into self-quarantine, the White House said.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's communications director, Fábio Wajngarten, tested positive just days after traveling with Bolsonaro to a meeting with Trump and senior aides in Florida. White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said in a statement Thursday that "exposures from the case are being assessed, which will dictate next steps."

"Both the President and Vice President had almost no interactions with the individual who tested positive and do not require being tested at this time," Grisham said.

Wajngarten joined Bolsonaro on a three-day trip to the U.S. and on Saturday was at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club, where he posted a photo of himself posing beside Trump. A video from the event also showed him standing directly behind both presidents as they addressed a crowd. Bolsonaro and Wajngarten later attended a birthday party for Kimberly Guilfoyle, who is dating the president's son Donald Trump Jr.

While Trump was not taking any apparent action in response, two Republican lawmakers announced they will self-quarantine for two weeks after coming in contact with Bolsonaro's delegation. Republican Sen. Rick Scott of Florida, who met Bolsonaro in Miami, and South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, who was at Mar-a-Lago on Saturday, announced Thursday that they will isolate themselves.

Graham's office said he had been tested for the coronavirus and was awaiting the result.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, demurred when asked whether the president should be in self-isolation. Fauci has been the face of the administration's response to the public health emergency

"Questions like that I leave up to the physicians in charge of the president's health," he said.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Thursday that he was quarantining himself at home after his wife exhibited flu-like symptoms. He said they were awaiting coronavirus test results.

The Mar-a-Lago meeting also included Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump, son-in-law Jared Kushner, Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, Brazil's foreign minister Ernesto Araujo and Bolsonaro's son Eduardo, who is a federal lawmaker, among others. Vice President Mike Pence went to Mar-a-Lago that evening.

"We had dinner in Florida at Mar-a-Lago with the entire delegation," Trump told reporters Thursday in the Oval Office. "I don't know if the press aide was there. But we did nothing very unusual."

U.S. Southern Command, which Bolsonaro visited Sunday, said it has no cases of the virus. Southcom, which is in charge of U.S. forces in the southern hemisphere, is based in Miami and is led by Adm. Craig Faller. The statement issued Thursday said Faller has not experienced any symptoms of the virus and has

not been tested.

The confirmed exposure comes after Trump was in repeated contact with people who themselves had contact with people who tested positive for the virus. Trump's newly named chief of staff, Mark Meadows, emerged from self-quarantine Thursday. Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida traveled back to Washington with Trump on Air Force One on Monday but isolated himself on the flight after being informed that he had been in contact with a person who later was confirmed to have had the virus.

It was not immediately clear what precautions the White House was taking to protect the president from the virus. Trump on Wednesday canceled his political travel for the coming weeks, but he has disregarded the advice of medical and public health professionals to stop shaking hands.

Grisham said in a statement that "the White House Medical Unit and the United States Secret Service has been working closely with various agencies to ensure every precaution is taken to keep the First & Second Families, and all White House staff healthy."

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 127,000 people have been diagnosed and more than 68,000 have so far recovered.

Wajngarten initially denied a report on Wednesday that he had been tested for the virus, saying on his social media account that his health was fine. He is now in self-quarantine at home, according to the statement.

A statement from Bolsonaro's communications office on Thursday said that Wajngarten's test results had come back positive and that the presidency was adopting preventive measures to ensure Bolsonaro's health.

Bolsonaro's son confirmed in a Thursday tweet that his father had been tested for the coronavirus and said he isn't showing symptoms.

Bolsonaro's health has been a focus since a 2018 stabbing on the campaign trail. Since the assassination attempt, he has already undergone four surgeries with a fifth upcoming. In December, he was taken to the hospital after slipping in the bathroom of the presidential residence and banging his head.

Grisham said that under U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, "there is currently no indication to test patients without symptoms, and only people with prolonged close exposure to confirmed positive cases should self-quarantine."

Billier reported from Rio de Janeiro. Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report from Washington.

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.

Biden pivots focus to Trump amid coronavirus concerns

By BILL BARROW and RANDALL CHASE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joe Biden blasted President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus outbreak on Thursday and outlined how he would combat the threat differently by relying more heavily on global alliances and listening more closely to the recommendations of scientists.

"This administration has left us woefully unprepared for the exact crisis we now face," Biden said from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware.

The new coronavirus has upended the presidential campaign at a crucial moment. Just as Biden is beginning to pull away with the delegates needed to win the Democratic presidential nomination, in-person campaign activities are virtually ground to a halt. And many Americans who would otherwise be tuned into

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 59 of 75

politics are instead preparing for what might happen if they become infected or asked to remain home for weeks at a time.

As financial markets spiraled, Biden sought to look past the turbulent Democratic primary and portray himself as a soothing counter to the chaos of the Trump era. Standing before a bank of American flags, he mixed indictments of Trump with his own policy proposals and the kind of national cheerleading and encouragement that he sees as critical aspects of the presidency.

"No president can promise to prevent future outbreaks, but I can promise you this: When I'm president we will be better prepared, respond better and recover better," Biden declared. "We will lead with science, listen to the experts, will heed their advice. We'll build American leadership and rebuild it to rally the world to meet the global threats that we are likely to face again."

Biden touted "the ingenuity of our scientists and the resourcefulness of our people," and he hailed the nation's "decency" and "spirit." But he coldly exempted Trump from such praise: "I'll always tell you the truth," Biden said. "This is the responsibility of a president. That's what is owed the American people."

But Biden faces limits in presenting himself as Trump's alternative. The former vice president hasn't yet won the Democratic nomination. After Biden's plans were announced, his top Democratic rival, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, also scheduled remarks.

"If there ever was a time in the modern history of our country when we were all in this together, this is the moment," Sanders said in Burlington, Vermont, as he said the current White House was characterized by "incompetence and recklessness" that threatens "the lives of many, many people."

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.

Sanders led voting in the first three nominating contests, only to watch Biden score a blowout in South Carolina that has carried over to more than a dozen primaries in March.

Both Democratic candidates used their remarks to recommend specific policies. Sanders, nodding to his signature demand for universal health care, pressed the need for all Americans to have access to the care they need, and he called for Trump to declare a national emergency. Biden paired his speech with the release of a litany of proposals and promises, including a call for Congress to enact paid medical leave, that are a staple of labor law in other major Western economies.

Yet it was the former vice president who most conspicuously postured as an almost-shadow president, willingly assuming the unofficial mantle of Democratic Party leader as he not-so-subtly emphasized one of his fundamental arguments: that he'd be ready on Inauguration Day for whatever challenges make their way to the Oval Office.

Tim Miller, a Republican consultant who's part of a movement to defeat Trump, said that's exactly the tack Biden should take.

"He needs to be out there reinforcing his main message of stability and trust," said Miller, who worked for Trump rival Jeb Bush in 2016. "He's got to have a presence and use this as a leadership opportunity."

In some ways, the dynamics recall the financial crisis that mushroomed late in the summer of 2008. The meltdown further damaged outgoing President George W. Bush and his Republican Party, dealing GOP nominee John McCain a new setback and granting a wider opening for Democratic nominee Barack Obama and his running mate, Biden. But that unfolded weeks before the election — Biden must keep making his case for nearly eight months.

Separate from his coronavirus speech, Biden is making other tactical moves toward a general election. He and Sanders have canceled upcoming rallies amid the coronavirus outbreak, but Biden has launched plans for virtual town halls that could become a staple of his campaign going forward.

He announced on Thursday a leadership shuffle atop his campaign, hiring longtime Democratic operative Jen O'Malley Dillon as campaign manager. The former campaign aide to Obama and Hillary Clinton quietly joined the campaign as an adviser ahead of the critical Nevada caucuses, where Biden's second-place finish to Sanders, even though distant, was the first step of his resurgence.

O'Malley Dillon and other top brass at Biden's Philadelphia headquarters have been busy interviewing

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 60 of 75

former staffers to Biden's vanquished primary rivals as they build out a campaign staff befitting a would-be nominee – something they'd been unable to do because of Biden's lackluster fundraising throughout the first 10 months of his campaign. And on Thursday, Biden's campaign formally requested Secret Service protection, a decision rooted in security concerns but also a symbolic step for serious contenders.

Yet amid the clear pivot, Biden and his aides have signaled their awareness of a potential roadblock in a general election campaign: Sanders' supporters. The Vermont senator has said in many forums, and again after Biden's wins on Tuesday, that he'll back the nominee and work to defeat Trump regardless of his own fortunes. But four years ago, after another bitter primary fight against the Democratic establishment, many of Sanders' supporters did not willingly follow his lead in backing Clinton.

Biden, in his post-primary remarks on Tuesday, praised Sanders and promoted his own agenda as "progressive" and "bold" in a seeming plea to his party's left flank. On Thursday, with a broadened audience, he steered clear of those primary dynamics altogether.

The Republican president, meanwhile, after having spent a heady few weeks gearing up to face Sanders, appeared ready Thursday to accept a challenge from Biden. "One of the reasons I ran for president was because of Joe and the job they did," Trump said at the White House, referring to Biden's time as Obama's vice president. "It's maybe the way it should be."

Barrow reported from Atlanta. Associated Press writers Amer Madhani and Will Weissert in Washington contributed to this report.

Americans adjust to new life, hunker down amid coronavirus

By MICHELLE R. SMITH and GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

Workers lost their jobs, parents came up with impromptu home lesson plans for children kept home from shuttered schools. Families fretted over dwindling retirement accounts, the health of elderly parents, and every cough and sneeze in their midst.

Millions of people settled into new and disrupted routines Thursday as the coronavirus began to uproot almost every facet of American life.

The spate of event cancellations that drove home the gravity of the outbreak a day earlier only intensified Thursday, with Disney shutting down theme parks, the NCAA calling off March Madness and Broadway theaters closing their doors in Manhattan. All the major professional sports announced they are halting play, and officials ordered a shutdown of every school in the state of Ohio for three weeks.

And with the cascade of closures, a new reality set in for American households.

In the Pacific Northwest, parents scrambled to devise homeschooling using library books or apps. Others, desperate to get to work, jumped on social media boards to seek child care or exchange tips about available babysitters.

Parents rushed to college campuses and drove away with their children's belongings and bags of their clothing. College officials scrambled to pay for plane tickets home for others.

A mother in Seattle organized small outdoor play dates where the kids are told not to get too close to one another. The parents stood awkwardly, several feet apart.

Most big tech companies in San Francisco and Seattle have told employees to work from home, emptying out the downtown neighborhoods that are a hub for tech and venture capital firms. The restaurants, food trucks and other businesses that thrive off lunchtime crowds say that businesses has pretty much ground to a halt.

Keny and Nancy Pham own a pair of businesses outside of the Salesforce Tower in San Francisco — a nail salon and a Vietnamese Banh Mi restaurant — where they say sales have dropped more than 50 percent this week. The salon was empty Thursday at the usually busy lunch time.

Nobody wants to get manicures — because that involves hand touching. The salon typically gets about 100 clients a day and this week is down to about 10 a day, said Nancy Pham, co-owner of the Pampered Hands Nail Spa.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 61 of 75

Keny Pham says he is concerned about finances and paying their \$10,000 monthly rent, but he has other worries as well. They have a child and live with Keny's elderly parents, whose health he is most worried about. And it's hard not to look at customers as potential germ carriers. Pham has asked his half dozen employees to rotate shifts and work alternate days, for now.

"We don't want to lay anyone off," he said. "We have to come up with a way to survive."

In Las Vegas, where so much of the economy is wedded to big crowds from concerts, tournaments, conventions and tourists, many suddenly found themselves out of work.

Las Vegas bartender Rique Rose works part-time at three different locations on the Las Vegas Strip, tending bar in event centers at the MGM Grand, the Mandalay Bay and in the T-Mobile arena, where the Las Vegas Golden Knights play.

First, he lost Friday and Saturday shifts with the cancellation of the Pac-12 men's college basketball tournament. Then, he saw that the NHL was suspending the rest of its season. He's still waiting to see if the Post Malone concert he was scheduled to work Saturday night will be canceled.

Every cancellation means more than missing out on his \$8.25 minimum wage pay; he also loses approximately \$200 in tips. He wonders how he will pay his bills.

"I guess we're just going to have to endure it," he sighed.

More than 1,300 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the United States, and 40 people have died as of Thursday evening. About 128,000 people have been infected globally.

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.

In every state, officials were taking dramatic new measures each day to keep the virus from spreading deeper into the country. And with each shuttered school, canceled outing, lost shift and work-from-home directive, people's lives were being transformed in profound ways.

Mom Natasja Billiau came up with a quick homeschooling plan for 8-year-old Victor and 5-year-old Anna Laura after their public school in Seattle closed for the first full day Thursday. They kept as close to their regular school schedule as possible, she said, with recess times and lunch built in.

Billiau's husband has been working from home since last week, and the family is moving to a new house in two weeks.

"Everything's up in the air. I don't know how I'm going to get it done, we'll see," she said. "It's a day-by-day situation."

She went forward with play dates, but everyone kept apart at a safe distance.

"And of course, as soon as we get home everybody has to wash hands," she said.

Despite the scrambling and closures, for many people, life continued as usual. Hours after Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, announced it was sending students home and would complete the semester online, customers stood in a busy line and ate lunch elbow-to-elbow at a crowded taqueria not far from campus. Many were working to see the upside of hunkering down and "social distancing," swapping recommendations for Netflix shows or good books.

Students at the University of Maryland in College Park are heading off to spring break this week and classes are moving online. On Thursday, students were packing up their belongings on a campus that was noticeably emptier than usual.

Signs posted on the front doors of the University of Maryland's journalism school said, "If you are sick, please go home."

Mike Davis, 60, drove over from Annapolis, Maryland, to help his son Nick, a 22-year-old senior, pack up his stuff. Davis said the school's decision to keep students off campus for several weeks make sense.

Besides, he was looking forward to having his son around the house: "I've got three bags of mulch ready for him to spread."

Associated Press Writers Jocelyn Gecker in San Francisco, Michelle Price in Las Vegas and Mike Kunzelman in College Park, Maryland, contributed to this report.

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

As central banks intervene to calm markets, few see solution

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank moved Thursday to try to calm financial markets and restore some degree of confidence. It didn't quite work. The central banks are facing a crisis only partly responsive to the medicine they can provide.

The Fed sought to ensure that the U.S. Treasury bond market — the world's largest — can operate smoothly as demand for bonds spikes with investors desperately seek safe assets amid the carnage in stocks. The ECB sought to stimulate the European economy, which the coronavirus outbreak appears on the verge of sending into recession.

Decidedly unimpressed, traders sent the stock market into its worst plunge Thursday in more than three decades.

The primary tools of central banks — lower interest rates and easier access to credit — aren't well-suited to address a crisis caused by a pandemic that has frightened consumers away from traveling, shopping or gathering in group settings. Economists are increasingly calling for governments to take the lead, through targeted loans to businesses, greater help for cash-strapped workers — particularly Americans without access to sick leave — and support for virus testing and other health measures.

On Thursday, the Fed unveiled a massive short-term lending program to try to help smooth trading in U.S. Treasuries. Through the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, it will provide at least \$1.5 trillion on Thursday and Friday for banks that are willing to swap short-term Treasury securities for cash. An additional \$500 billion will be made available Monday.

The program will continue at about \$1 trillion per week after that. The lending won't all be cumulative. The loans will be paid back after one and three months.

And not all the money will necessarily be lent. It depends how much banks decide to borrow against the available funds.

The Fed also said it will broaden its \$60 billion Treasury purchase program, launched last fall, from just short-term bills to all maturities, including 30-year bonds.

Both moves were a response to signs that the bond market was buckling under the strain of skyrocketing demand for Treasuries, which are widely considered the safest assets in the world. The jump in demand appeared to be outpacing supply. That pressure boosted the yield on the 10-year Treasury to 0.79% by Thursday afternoon, up from 0.68% two days earlier. Normally when stock markets plunge, bond yields also fall as investors buy more of them. Yields move in the opposite direction of prices.

The market for the 10-year bond affects the broader economy because it influences borrowing rates for homes, credit cards, and other interest rates in the U.S. and overseas. Because investors are confident the U.S. government would never default on its debt, the bonds issued by the government are used to price every other asset. The U.S. government debt market is the largest single pool of investment assets in the world.

"When that has some disruptions, watch out, that's really worrisome," said Kathy Bostjancic, chief U.S. financial economist at Oxford Economics.

Given the scope of the Fed's action Thursday, many economists now expect the Fed to slash its benchmark interest rate by a full percentage point, to nearly zero, at its policy meeting next week. It may even launch a large bond-buying program intended to further lower interest rates. This would be similar to programs the Fed undertook during and after the financial crisis that were dubbed "quantitative easing."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 63 of 75

Still, the reaction in the markets suggested little faith that the Fed's moves would do much to restore the confidence of investors and consumers in the face of travel disruptions, event cancellations and business closures. Some analysts said that governments in the U.S. and Europe needed to do more through tax and spending policies.

"What the Fed did today is not enough — it needs a partner," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton. "The Fed cannot do this alone."

Earlier in the day, the ECB deployed targeted new stimulus measures to cushion the shock to the economy from the virus outbreak. But Christine Lagarde, the ECB's president, said that monetary policy couldn't do it alone and called for a "decisive and determined" response from governments. Lagarde said the economy was facing a "major shock" and that the central bank measures unveiled Thursday were "almost surgically" aimed only at areas where monetary policy might help.

More than a decade ago, central banks around the world slashed rates and began pumping trillions of dollars into banks to combat a global financial crisis. The coronavirus is presenting them with a very different challenge. The central banks in the U.S., the eurozone, Canada and Britain have all deployed stimulus. The Bank of Japan is signaling it is ready to act and monetary authorities in Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia have cut rates.

Authorities are putting major economies, businesses and travel on lock down around the world, dimming prospects for the global economy. Consumers are starting to cut back on their spending in the U.S. and around the world.

Europe's top monetary authority didn't cut rates as investors had hoped — evidence that monetary policy is running low on ammunition with rates already very low. The ECB's key policy rate on bank deposits is already at a record-low minus 0.6%.

AP Business Writers David McHugh in Frankfurt, Germany, and Ken Sweet in New York contributed to this report.

Iran asks for billions in loans as virus death toll climbs

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **AYA BATRAWY** Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran said Thursday it asked the International Monetary Fund for a \$5 billion loan to fight the coronavirus, the first time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that it has sought such assistance, in a staggering admission of how fragile its economy has become amid the epidemic and punishing U.S. sanctions.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that the Washington-based IMF should "stand on right side of history & act responsibly" by releasing the funds. He also said the fight against the virus, which has infected more than 10,000 people in Iran and killed hundreds, has been "stymied by vast shortages caused by restrictions," a reference to the U.S. sanctions.

Even before the virus struck, Iran's economy was being battered by plunging oil prices and the sanctions imposed by President Donald Trump since May 2018 after he unilaterally withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal that Tehran struck with world powers.

Iran's Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati said he asked for the \$5 billion loan last week in a letter to IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva. She had said the IMF was prepared to make rapid support available to low-income countries through a \$50 billion emergency fund that the group maintains to help nations facing an economic crisis.

IMF spokesman Gerry Rice confirmed it had received a loan request from Iran. He said the IMF is "proceeding expeditiously with all requests and in line with our policies."

The last time a loan for Iran was approved from the IMF was under its final shah in 1960, well before the revolution that established clerical rule.

Zarif also demanded that the U.S. immediately halt what he called a "campaign of economic terrorism" and lift sanctions, saying in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that Washington has made

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 64 of 75

it increasingly difficult for Iran to export oil and virtually impossible to import medicine and medical equipment to treat those with the illness.

He said it is "unconscionable" that the U.S. government has not only increased its "maximum pressure" campaign "just as the virus has spread and is killing our most vulnerable citizens, but that it additionally has the audacity to lecture us on containing the coronavirus as it itself is evidently incapable of containing its onslaught."

Iran says it needs more N95 face masks, ventilators, surgical gowns, testing kits, portable digital X-ray machines and other medical supplies. The World Health Organization recently sent Iran a shipment of medical gear via cargo plane, including 1,100 kits that can test more than 105,000 people for the virus.

Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said 75 people had died in Iran in the past 24 hours from the coronavirus, pushing the death toll to 429. The number of Iranians with the COVID-19 disease was 10,075.

There are concerns that the number of infections is much higher than the confirmed cases reported by the government, with some Iranian lawmakers even speaking out.

The outbreak has not spared Iran's top officials, with its senior vice president, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Revolutionary Guard members and Health Ministry officials among those infected.

Iran has suspended schools and banned spectators from stadiums, but religious shrines remain open and the markets and streets of the capital, Tehran, which has been hit hardest by the virus, are still crowded.

The head of Tehran's task force for combating the virus, Ali Reza Zali, said most people in the capital are not treating the crisis seriously enough and many are not taking any preventive measures.

For most people, the 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 and the COVID-19 illness it causes.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Thursday urged Gen. Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, chief of staff of the armed forces, to form a health and treatment task-force for the epidemic.

In the order, Khamenei said there was "some evidence suggest possibility of biological attack" through the virus, and he demanded that mobile hospitals and other facilities be set up by the armed forces. He did not elaborate on his reference to a biological attack.

The Revolutionary Guard also has trafficked in baseless conspiracy theories amid the outbreak, with its leader Gen. Hossein Salami falsely suggesting the U.S. created the virus amid the wider tensions with America.

President Hassan Rouhani's government has faced criticism for not being out front on the response to the virus. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has accused Iran and China, where the virus first appeared, of censorship and of trying to cover up the severity of its spread.

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, both bitter rivals of Iran, have accused the country of being directly responsible for the rising infections in the region. Most cases in the Middle East outside Iran are linked to travelers from there. Saudi Arabia said its citizens' passports were not stamped by Iran and so they evaded tougher screenings for the virus upon returning.

Countries have imposed varying levels of travel restrictions, from halting all commercial flights in Kuwait, to Saudi Arabia banning travel to 39 countries.

Regional stock markets were down at the close of the business week Thursday, reflecting investor concerns and nerves felt globally as oil prices plunge and tourism revenue is eroded by the virus.

Elsewhere in the region, confirmed cases in Israel rose to 100, alongside 31 cases in the West Bank and none reported in the Gaza Strip. Starting Thursday night, Israel will ban foreigners from entering the country unless they're able to prove they can self-quarantine for two weeks.

Israel's chief rabbi instructed synagogues not to gather more than 100 worshipers together at a time, following Health Ministry instructions. The Western Wall in Jerusalem's Old City remained open.

Jewish, Christian and Muslim authorities said religious services would continue to be held but announced new precautions after Israel's Health Ministry barred gatherings of more than 100 people.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 65 of 75

At the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the holiest site where Jews can pray, authorities will limit entrance to an enclosed area and set up tents that each accommodate up to 100 people. They said there would be no restrictions on worship in the main plaza as it constitutes a "wide, open space."

The Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem urged churches to enforce the Health Ministry's guidelines, including with Sunday services.

The Islamic endowment that oversees the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam, said Friday prayers would be held as normal but encouraged people to pray in the outer courtyards and refrain from crowding in the mosques. It advised the elderly and sick not to enter mosques with large gatherings.

Saudi Arabia, which has 45 cases of the virus, said groups of more than 50 could not gather in public, potentially impacting how communal Friday prayers are held. The kingdom has already suspended pilgrimage to Islam's holiest sites.

Kuwait closed all workplaces and nonessential business for two weeks, including restaurants, cafes and health clubs. Its stock market was closed for trading Thursday. Schools and universities have already been suspended. All commercial flights are being halted to Kuwait starting Friday. The country has over 70 confirmed cases of the virus.

Batrawy reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Zeina Karam in Beirut, Isabel DeBre in Cairo, Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations and Tia Goldenberg in Jerusalem contributed.

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.

Iran accuses US of 'economic terrorism,' urges sanctions end

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran's foreign minister demanded Thursday that the United States immediately halt what he called a "campaign of economic terrorism" and lift sanctions, saying they have made it increasingly difficult for the country to export oil and virtually impossible to import medicine and medical equipment, including to identify and treat coronavirus patients.

Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that U.S. sanctions have also left thousands of Iranians stranded abroad and severely disrupted air links with Europe. And he said they have led to what he called "Google's immoral censoring" of a new government app designed to help Iranians identify potential symptoms of the COVID-19 virus.

He said it is "imperative" that the government of the United States immediately halt its campaign of economic terrorism against the Iranian people and lift all sanctions it has illegally imposed on my country," in violation of the Security Council resolution that endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six major powers which the U.S. pulled out of in 2018.

"To this end," Zarif said, "It is imperative that the United Nations and its member states join the Iranian people in demanding that the government of the United States abandon its malign and fruitless approach against Iran."

The new coronavirus, COVID-19, has swept across Iran, with the Health Ministry announcing Thursday that in the past 24 hours 75 people had died and more than 1,000 new cases had been confirmed, bringing the death toll to 429 and confirmed cases to 10,075.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is "deeply concerned" about the coronavirus outbreak in Iran and the U.N. system is providing support.

But the U.N. chief is also very aware "of the shortage of medicine and medical equipment that makes it much more difficult to contain the outbreak in Iran, and he appeals to all member states to facilitate and support Iran's efforts in this critical moment," Dujarric said.

Zarif said it is "unconscionable" that the U.S. government has not only increased its "maximum pressure"

campaign “just as the virus has spread and is killing our most vulnerable citizens, but that it additionally has the audacity to lecture us on containing the coronavirus as it itself is evidently incapable of containing its onslaught.”

He sharply criticized the U.S. “bullying others to refrain from engaging in legitimate trade with Iran” and said “even if foreign suppliers are found and required items can be purchased with our assets abroad, myriad U.S. shipping, insurance, financial and banking sanctions make such trade nonviable” which is a violation of the 2015 Security Council resolution and international humanitarian law, “amounting to a crime against humanity.”

Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, Zarif said “inaction” by some countries led to a reduction in the value and quantity of imports from Europe of all pharmaceutical goods, from medical disinfectants to breathing appliances. And he said imports are now at a lower level than before the 2016 implementation of the Iran nuclear deal.

“While other nations debate how to control the spread of the virus — and while their economies suffer and fear takes hold among their populations — our people not only suffer from its effects without the full benefits of adequate medical equipment and supplies, but also the many other ways in which U.S. economic terrorism had devastated many households prior to the inception of COVID-19, and only made worse since its arrival in Iran,” Zarif said.

Talking to kids about virus? Experts say be calm and honest

By **CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press**

It was a routine game of schoolyard tag — except the children had dubbed this version “coronavirus.” The kids ran around and tagged one another, but instead of being “it,” they “caught” the virus.

Children like the ones a reporter saw playing recently at a school in Washington, D.C., are becoming more aware of the coronavirus — though they may not fully understand it or know how seriously to take it — as it begins to affect their daily lives with school closures and event cancellations, restrictions on travel, and the NBA nixing the rest of its season.

Many parents are now deciding how to talk to their children about the virus. Some said they are checking in daily, while others worry talking about it could make their kids more anxious or fearful.

“We talk about it a lot. I watch the news every morning, and they’re always watching it, too,” said Nicole Poponi, mother of Clara, 10, and Jane, 12, in the Philadelphia suburb of Audubon, New Jersey.

Both girls said they’ve talked a little about the virus at school, but Jane, who is a few grades ahead, said she has talked about it much more, including in science lessons.

“I’m not really as scared of it. It’s still not even that many people getting sick here. And it’s less dangerous than the flu,” Jane said. “One of my friends is really scared of it, but she’s honestly really scared of all diseases.”

Beth Young, who lives in Fort Mill, South Carolina, said she has decided to limit the conversation with her four kids, ages 8, 10, 12 and 15.

“I don’t want to doom and gloom them into being afraid of getting sick because, let’s face it, kids get sick pretty often,” she said. “And I don’t need a sniffle to turn into them worrying about dying.”

For most people — including children — the new coronavirus, which causes a disease called COVID-19, results in only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia.

The vast majority of people recover. According to the World Health Organization, which has declared the outbreak a pandemic, people with mild illness recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe illness may take three to six weeks to recover.

Child psychology experts’ advice is to be reassuring, focus on proactive steps and do research to truthfully answer children’s questions.

In Kathleen McEvoy’s house in Norton, Massachusetts, she and her husband, Thom Daly, decided they wanted to talk with their 8-year-old daughter, Kennedy, before something like a quarantine or school closure was announced.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 67 of 75

"We thought it would be confusing and scary for a kid if they were told that school has to be closed for two weeks," McEvoy said. "We felt like it was important ... to give her a lot of information about how this might impact her life even if we don't know exactly how yet."

McEvoy, 38, works as a paraprofessional at a different school district and said some second graders had talked about how they thought the virus was spread. Some thought they could catch it from eating Chinese food or from touching bats or pigs.

The teacher spent some time searching for an age-appropriate video to help them understand how the virus is actually spread, McEvoy said.

It's important to reassure children, to ask whether they have questions and to stress safety, said Dr. Jamie Howard, a clinical psychologist at the nonprofit Child Mind Institute. The institute and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention both offer tips on talking to children.

Some teachers and coaches are working to dispel any idea that the virus, which was first recorded in China, is tied to ethnicity or race.

Seattle Public Schools posted on its website that misinformation has led to fear and hostility, and it urged students to combat racism and bias.

"We are aware of reports that some of our Asian students have been targeted and discriminated against in connection to COVID-19. This is unacceptable and contrary to our values of racial equity and social justice," district leaders wrote.

Lacy Hilbrich's two daughters, ages 14 and 18, are part of an online school that has students from all over the world. They live near Houston, but some of her daughters' classmates are in countries where there are quarantines in place.

The virus, she said, has been part of her family's daily discussion.

"In our family we all talk about it, so it's pretty open and so they're not hiding anything from us," said daughter Ally, 14. "And I think that's helped a lot."

Parents should explain that measures like wearing face masks and closing schools are preventative and temporary, Howard said. She urged them to take a page from Mister Rogers, who taught kids to "focus on the helpers" — what doctors, teachers, parents and scientists are doing to keep them safe.

Whatever the conversation looks like, Howard said, parents should not collude in their child's anxiety by refusing to go outside or by buying masks.

"In doing those behaviors, you're saying this is really dangerous and we really are in danger right now," she said. "And that's not true, and it will make them more anxious."

Lauer reported from Philadelphia. Associated Press writers Jamie Stengle in Dallas and Colleen Long in Washington contributed. 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.

Foxx touts record as Smollett case engulfs Illinois primary

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago mom Rya Smith has no doubts about backing the top prosecutor in the nation's second-biggest county for another term, even while acknowledging the office fumbled a criminal case against "Empire" actor Jussie Smollett.

Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx's involvement in the Smollett case has dominated much of the attention in her reelection campaign, but Smith contends the focus instead should be on her record exonerating the innocent, tossing minor marijuana convictions and as the first black woman in the job.

"She's done a great many things, especially for minorities," Smith said. "The Jussie Smollett case was a pebble in the giant boulder of her career. That shouldn't discredit her for one little mistake. She isn't getting a fair shake."

Foxx is counting on more voters like Smith as she seeks a second term against three Democratic primary

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 68 of 75

challengers who've seized on the Smollett case and a fractured relationship with police. In what's likely the most expensive race of its kind, they've called it a bungled prosecution that benefited a politically-connected person and undermined public trust.

The controversial decision to dismiss charges against Smollett, who's accused of fabricating a racist, anti-gay attack, has haunted Foxx, something that's increasingly frustrated her. She declined an Associated Press interview but recently called the Smollett focus, "B.S."

Defeating Foxx will be tough with her establishment backing, union support and super PACs targeting her opponents. But challengers — including Navy veteran Bill Conway, whose first run for office is being fueled by his billionaire father — believe they've found an opening for Tuesday.

"She just kept not telling the truth to the public," said Conway, 41, a former assistant state's attorney.

He's aired television ads since November, with far more money combined than all candidates — including two Republicans. About \$10.5 million of the roughly \$11.5 million he's raised, comes from William Conway, co-founder of Carlyle Group, a Washington D.C.-based investment firm. Foxx, 47, has raised nearly \$3.5 million.

Foxx acknowledged missteps. She recused herself from the Smollett case, but questions linger about whether she acted improperly for speaking to a Smollett relative and aide to former first lady Michelle Obama before the charges were dismissed. A special prosecutor reinstated the charges last month, which Foxx blasted as political.

"That we are continuing to talk about this in a city that continues to deal with gun violence, in a city that is continuing to reckon with police accountability," Foxx told the Chicago Sun-Times. "That somehow this case has been elevated to one of the greatest criminal injustices in our time feels disingenuous."

There's wide agreement she's made reforms.

Foxx's office was the first to dismiss low-level marijuana convictions as part of Illinois' law legalizing recreational marijuana. She personally handed over roughly 1,000 petitions to a judge.

She ramped up a Conviction Integrity Unit with prosecutors vacating convictions of roughly 100 people linked to a former Chicago police sergeant's scheme to shake down poor and black public housing residents.

Josh Tepfer of the Exoneration Project at the University of Chicago Law School called Foxx's office "the most transparent" he's worked with, noting she apologized to victims even though they were convicted before her tenure.

"She speaks to the unfair treatment of people of color in ways that are very unique," he said.

That resonates with Tanya Watkins, who runs Soul in Action, a PAC that focuses on black candidates. Nearly one-quarter of Cook County's 5.1 million residents are black.

Watkins believes Foxx hasn't received fair treatment because of race. The other candidates are white.

"She has no margin for error," Watkins said. "The things I've heard said about this black woman have reminded me how much more difficult it is to be a black woman in the public arena."

Defense attorneys note the easing up on charges for lower-level crimes and alternative punishments. Some also praise her cash bail reforms. Her office has allowed the release of detainees held on nonviolent charges who can't afford bonds up to \$1,000.

But others aren't so complimentary.

Foxx has a rocky relationship with police, who dislike her reforms, including for nonviolent crimes like shoplifting. Things worsened when the Smollett charges were dropped. The tensions hit a peak in April with dueling protests outside her office involving the police union.

"There's this attitude among law enforcement that this is a 'catch and release' system," said Kulmeet Galhotra, who's retired as the head of the Cook County Public Defender's Homicide Task Force.

The sentiment is echoed by challenger former Chicago Alderman Bob Fioretti, 67. He and former federal prosecutor Donna More, 62, who's also running, say the office needs to be more independent.

Some defense attorneys are also critical of her office for inconsistencies, saying the policies aren't applied evenly.

Still, the Smollett case does resonate with some.

Chicagoan Demetrius Williams, 35, voted for Foxx before but thinks Smollett got off easy and will sup-

port Conway.

"I believe he has enough money to take on Kim Foxx," said Williams, 35. "I'm not going to say that I'm so Conway crazy. I'll take a chance. In four years, I can vote him out, too."

Follow Sophia Tareen on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>.

US Soccer apologizes for arguments in equal pay case

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

The U.S. Soccer Federation apologized after it contended in court documents that women on its national team had lesser responsibilities and physical abilities than their male counterparts, an assertion that drew widespread criticism and sparked a player protest.

The statement from USSF President Carlos Cordeiro on Wednesday night came after The Coca-Cola Co. denounced the federation for its stance. Cordeiro also announced a shake-up of the USSF legal team.

"On behalf of U.S. Soccer, I sincerely apologize for the offense and pain caused by language in this week's court filing, which did not reflect the values of our federation or our tremendous admiration of our women's national team," the statement said. "Our WNT players are incredibly talented and work tirelessly, as they have demonstrated time and again from their Olympic gold medals to their World Cup titles."

Anheuser-Busch Cos. Inc. also criticized the USSF and The Procter & Gamble Co. issued a statement supporting the women's quest for equal pay.

American players wore their warmup jerseys inside out for the national anthems and team photo before a 3-1 win over Japan in an Olympic prep match. Players hid the USSF crest on the jerseys but allowed the four stars — one for each World Cup title — to be visible.

"I think it just was a powerful message," said forward Carli Lloyd, a two-time FIFA Player of the Year.

Players later issued a group statement explaining their action.

"We wanted to stand together as a team and make a statement on behalf of all women and girls hat the federation's comments are unacceptable," she said in the statement issued by spokeswoman Molly Levinson. "We love this sport and this country, and we cannot stand for this misogynistic treatment."

Coca-Cola had called the federation's assertion in documents filed earlier this week "unacceptable and offensive."

"We have asked to meet with them immediately to express our concerns. The Coca-Cola Co. is firm in its commitment to gender equality, fairness and women's empowerment in the United States and around the world and we expect the same from our partners," Coca-Cola said in a statement.

Coca-Cola has been a long-term partner with the USSF as well as a global sponsor of the World Cup since 1974. Other sponsors followed, including Budweiser and Secret.

In court documents filed Monday in response to the players' motion for a summary judgment, the USSF said the women claimed their ability level is the same as the men "by ignoring the materially higher level of speed and strength required to perform the job of an MNT player."

"A reasonable juror could conclude that the job of MNT player requires materially different skill and more responsibility than plaintiffs' job does, while also taking place under materially different working conditions," USSF lawyers wrote.

Cordeiro announced the USSF had retained the law firm of Latham & Watkins, the firm where former USSF president Alan Rothenberg is a retired partner.

"I have made it clear to our legal team that even as we debate facts and figures in the course of this case, we must do so with the utmost respect not only for our women's national team players but for all female athletes around the world," Cordeiro said.

Cordeiro's statement was issued after USSF sponsors started to show their displeasure.

"The comments made by U.S. Soccer do not align with our values, nor our point of view on women's soccer," Monica Rustgi, Budweiser's vice president of marketing, said in a statement. "We champion and admire the athleticism of the women in this sport as we find them to be among the best athletes in the

world.” -

Procter & Gamble, which supports the USSF through its Secret deodorant brand, last year donated \$529,000 to help close the gender pay gap: \$23,000 for each of the 23 players on the U.S. World Cup roster.

“We know there are many things that make women sweat — but inequality should never be one of them,” P&G said in a statement to The Associated Press. “We believe that women are deserving of equal pay and equal opportunity and we’re supportive of all those who courageously fight for this.”

Players filed the gender discrimination lawsuit in federal court in Los Angeles last year, claiming they are paid less than their counterparts on the men’s national team. The women are seeking more than \$66 million in damages under the Equal Pay Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and a trial is scheduled for May 5.

The USSF says disparities in pay between the men and women are the result of separate collective bargaining agreements with different terms. The women’s team receives salaries and benefits the men don’t.

The federation also cites FIFA’s World Cup prize money — \$38 million awarded to the French Football Federation for the men’s title in 2018 and \$4 million to the USSF for last year’s women’s title — also contributes to the disparity. The USSF claims it bases bonuses for the women in the tournament on the prize money the federation receives.

AP Sports Writer Ronald Blum contributed to this report.

More AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/Soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Nervous consumers around world pull back amid viral outbreak

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Buffeted by fears of the fast-spreading coronavirus, consumers in the United States and overseas are showing increasing signs of cutting back on spending in what amounts to a severe threat to economic growth.

Consumer confidence has declined in most advanced economies in the past month, surveys show, amid a drumbeat of travel disruptions, event cancellations and business closures.

Large public gatherings have become suddenly rare. U.S. movie ticket sales are down, and travel and hotel bookings have plummeted. Because consumers are the primary driver of growth in most advanced nations, any sharp drop in spending could cause those economies to slip into recession.

Even before coronavirus cases surfaced in her state, Whitney Parks, a 29-year-old resident of Ypsilanti, Michigan, was staying home with her two children whenever possible. A server at a restaurant in nearby Ann Arbor, Parks noted that business there has noticeably declined.

“A lot of people don’t really want to be out in the public right now,” she said.

Economists point to confidence among consumers and businesses — “animal spirits,” as the legendary economist John Maynard Keynes called them — as a vital ingredient for growth. People and companies must feel optimistic enough to spend, hire, expand, travel and invest.

“The line between an expanding economy and recession is crossed when investors, businesses and — most important — consumers lose faith,” Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody’s Analytics, said. The coronavirus “is especially corrosive on that faith and is thus a serious threat to the record-long economic expansion.”

The viral outbreak is proceeding so fast that there isn’t yet any U.S. government data that would reflect its broad impact on the economy. But there are growing signs that consumers are pulling back. Jesse Edgerton, an economist at JPMorgan Chase, said in a research note that U.S. weekly movie ticket sales and Broadway theater ticket sales have sunk about 20% since Feb. 16.

While those sectors constitute a relatively small part of the U.S. economy, Edgerton said, “we do think they may prove illustrative.”

Revenue at hotels fell 16% in the first week of March compared with earlier this year, Edgerton added, citing data from Smith Travel Research.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 71 of 75

Naomi Goldberg, 37, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, canceled a March weekend trip to Aspen, Colorado, after she heard that some people in the ski town had been tested for the coronavirus. And to avoid crowds, she also decided not to visit a nearby museum with her wife and 6-year-old, a trip that would have cost them about \$30 each.

She's not putting all purchases on hold. A bathroom renovation will go forward. A trip to Yosemite in May is still in the works — for now. And she sees the recent stock market plunge as an opportunity to put more money away.

Even so, stock market drops typically drag down consumer confidence and can limit spending. The Dow Jones plunged an additional 2,000 points Thursday in mid-day trading after having entered a bear market the day before, with stock prices 20% below a record high reached just a few weeks ago.

Consumers have already turned decidedly less optimistic since mid-February, according to daily tracking surveys by Morning Consult. Its polls show that U.S. consumer sentiment has fallen more than 3% since then.

John Leer, an economist at Morning Consult, said the size of the drop was comparable to other recent declines, as in August 2019, when fears over the impact of the U.S.-China trade war intensified. But that downturn reversed itself once the trade fight cooled and a preliminary agreement was reached. It's far less clear in this case what governments can do to offset the cascading fears and diminished spending that have been triggered by the viral outbreak.

"Here we have a really strong fall, and it's unclear exactly what sort of policy response would get consumer confidence to return to its prior level," Leer said.

An increasingly gloomy outlook among consumers in the U.S. and around the world will likely also depress sales of such high-cost purchases as cars, furniture and appliances, which rise and fall more dramatically than services in response to changes in confidence.

LMC Automotive, a consulting firm, now forecasts that global auto sales will fall 4.4% in 2020 to a seven-year low. IHS Markit predicts computer and electronics sales will fall 1.9% this year.

Nearly two-thirds of U.S. consumer spending goes to services, such as health care, banking and mobile phone connections. Tim Quinlan, an economist at Wells Fargo, said in a research note that most services spending will continue even if the economy falters. Americans will continue to pay utilities and rent, for example, and, if anything, they will probably increase their spending on health care, cleaning supplies and food to eat at home.

But other spending on services, such as restaurant meals, public transportation, and hotels, are sure to suffer from the outbreak, he said. Together, they account for 10% of all consumer spending.

Quinlan expects some offsetting benefits in the United States. This week's plunge in oil prices should translate into lower gas prices. And mortgage rates have reached record lows, causing a spike in the number of homeowners who are refinancing their mortgages. Doing so will lower their monthly payments and free up money to spend elsewhere.

Even so, Quinlan forecasts that spending growth in 2020 will fall to just 1.8%, the lowest in seven years.

Past disruptions have depressed consumer spending, particularly the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the 2008-2009 financial crisis. Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, calculated that discretionary spending, which excludes housing, food, fuel and health care, plummeted about 5.5% from peak to trough after both crises. In 2008, the fall occurred over 18 months.

Such a drop would send the economy into recession, although Shepherdson isn't forecasting anything that dramatic.

"But it seems prudent to expect a healthy drop in March and April, and perhaps May, too," he said.

Many economists still think the United States may avoid a recession, particularly if the disease has been brought under control by the early summer. Spending would presumably rebound sharply. But most also think the likelihood of a recession has surged in recent weeks.

In Europe, forecasters widely expect a recession to result from tumbling consumer spending. Mass cancellations of flights, vacations and business events are inflicting damage on hotels, restaurants, and shops.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 72 of 75

About 187 million fewer people are expected through Europe's airports this year — a figure likely to grow sharply with President Donald Trump's decision to suspend travel from Europe to the United States for 30 days. That includes American and Asian tourists. Chinese shoppers are by far the biggest spenders on big-ticket luxury goods and are nowhere to be seen. Hotel room occupancy rates in Venice have dropped 1% to 2%.

In Rome, Umberto Tucci said the damage to his restaurant business was magnified by limits that the Italian government has imposed on business hours. A decree Monday night said restaurants and bars must close at 6 pm.

"This mandatory closure is worsening the situation," he said.

Across Asia, people are staying at home as well. Consumer sentiment in Japan has plummeted 11% this year to a 52-week low, according to Morning Consult.

And in Singapore, Nurul Fahin, 19, has cut back on spending as her income from her part-time retail job has fallen. Previously, she spent about \$100 a month on clothes and make-up. Now, she rarely buys new clothes.

"I will only buy items I really need like foundation when it's running out," she said.

She used to earn about \$500 a month working four to five shifts a week. She has now been told to come into the shop for just one or two shifts and earns only about \$100.

In New York City, at the Brookfield Place mall, which features upscale food courts and high-end stores like Ferragamo and Gucci, the crowds are much thinner from even a week ago, with more people working from home.

Chloe Whipple, 18, from Kilgore, Texas, was visiting the mall as part of a high school senior trip. She was with her aunt, Shelly Wood, 50 from Shreveport, Louisiana.

"It's scary when you see people with masks," she said. "Are they affected? You don't want to touch anything."

Whipple said she is spending less time at the local mall. She just learned that the first case of coronavirus in East Texas was confirmed in her town.

Wood said she hasn't cut back her spending. But she said she's being "cautious and conscious about what we do and where we go."

AP Writers Carlo Piovano in London, Paolo Sanalucia in Rome, Tom Krisher in Detroit, Anne D'Innocenzio and Joseph Pisani in New York, and AP stringer Toh Ee Ming in Singapore contributed to this report.

Big city, big worry: New Yorkers fret as bustling city slows

By **MICHAEL HILL, JENNIFER PELTZ and JIM MUSTIAN** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New Yorkers awoke Friday to find the coronavirus had left their famously bustling city with no Broadway, no basketball games, no big gatherings, and a populace unnerved by an ever-worsening crisis.

A dizzying series of temporary coronavirus-related closures announced Thursday included some of the city's cultural jewels: The Metropolitan Opera, Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History and Carnegie Hall.

It wasn't just high culture. The St. Patrick's Day parade will not step off next week. Concerts were canceled. NBA games were scuttled. CBS News, which temporarily shut down its city headquarters Wednesday after two employees tested positive, continued to air its local Thursday night broadcast — from Los Angeles.

Restaurants, subway cars and sidewalks were noticeably emptier. Without a flake of snow, the city began to take on the thinned-out look it gets after winter blizzards, with people telecommuting to work or avoiding public places. Colleges across the city were closed or having students attend class online.

"People are scared to come outside," said Justin Rahim, a tour guide at Manhattan's Central Park, who said several of his pedicab drivers — reliant on tourists for their living — quit Thursday to drive for Uber's food delivery service. "It's crazy. How am I going to survive this?"

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 73 of 75

The virus, as of Thursday afternoon, had been confirmed in more than 320 people in New York state, including 95 in the city, and had caused one death in the metropolitan area.

But after weeks of assuring residents that fear of the virus had outstripped the actual danger, New York's governor and mayor abruptly shifted course.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Thursday that in an attempt to stop the virus from spreading, gatherings with more than 500 people would temporarily be banned in the state, starting in most places at 5 p.m. Friday, though evening shows on Broadway were called off a day sooner.

Many gatherings in smaller event spaces would have to cut capacity in half.

The restrictions, imposed by an emergency order, don't apply to schools, hospitals, nursing homes, shopping malls and mass transit, and there were exceptions for other types of businesses, like casino floors.

People are also still free to go to work. Mayor Bill de Blasio, while pointing out the outbreak could last six months or longer, counseled against giving up.

"The city has to keep going," de Blasio said on Fox 5 news Friday morning. "We need people to have their livelihoods. We need folks to show up at work. We need our public servants to be where we need them to be to take care of folks -- hospitals schools, first responders."

Yet it was clear the slowdown would be painful for a city that relies on the economic engines of tourism, entertainment and Wall Street.

Restaurants and nightspots around the city are reporting drop-offs of 20-80% over the last week, particularly in the tourist-friendly area around Times Square, said Andrew Rigie, the executive director of the NYC Hospitality Alliance.

David Turk, who owns a Manhattan catering business, said the fallout for him started a week ago. First, one big event was nixed. Within a week, everything booked through May was either canceled or postponed.

Turk remembers the dark days after 9/11, but "that had a beginning and an end to it. This has no foreseeable end to it," he said. "It's the uncertainty that's really driving the fear for a lot of us running small business."

Throughout the day Thursday, New Yorkers' sense of unease was compounded by false rumors, spread on social media, that an even larger clampdown was in the works, involving mass quarantines, bans on private vehicles and a cancellation of train service.

"It's just not true," Cuomo said on 1010 WINS radio in the early evening. "This is all crazy rumors now. Anxiety is high, I understand it. People are nervous about the coronavirus. But no, subways are not closing down. Roads are not closing. New York City is not closing down."

Lines stretched around the block at supermarkets on Thursday as New Yorkers prepared to hunker down and wait out the virus. Empty shelves greeted shoppers seeking toilet paper and other staples.

Parents citywide fretted about whether New York City's public school system, with its 1.2 million pupils, might be shut down, as happened in nearby New Rochelle, a suburb that has been an epicenter of the outbreak in the U.S.

De Blasio said he hopes to avoid a closure of either the schools or mass transit. He said health care workers and first responders on the front lines of the crisis would face hurdles in getting to work without the transit system and with children home from school.

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.

Still, the total number of people with the illness in the city is unknown due to the relative scarcity of tests. And for some, the danger is all too real.

On Tuesday, John Brennan, a New Jersey resident and a horse trainer at Yonkers Raceway, just north of the city, was killed by the virus.

Two days later, a close colleague at the track, Standardbred Owners Association President Joseph Faraldo, said he was quarantined in his New York City home waiting for his own test results.

"He could have infected the entire paddock, because he had contact with everybody," said Faraldo, who

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 74 of 75

fell ill himself a week ago. He said he was tested Wednesday at a medical facility in Queens and expected to get the results back by Friday.

"I think I was pretty lucky," he said. "I wasn't there more than 40 minutes. They asked a whole series of questions and I told them I was in the company of a person who had died from this. They were very nice."

The institutional closings come amid signs that New Yorkers are acting on their own to avoid crowds. Ridership on the subway and commuter rail lines has plunged, state officials said.

At the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, security officers reported some of the sparsest crowds they've seen as they prepared to shutter the popular museum Friday.

The coronavirus dominated conversation, even out on city parks where joggers were intent on maintaining some semblance of normalcy.

Danielle Xuereb, 38, of Manhattan, had been preparing to run a half-marathon but learned it was cancelled.

"I've been working from home and will probably continue to and probably lay low for a week or two," she said. "Maybe not go to my normal yoga classes. I guess my main concern is how long this will all last."

Associated Press writers Deepti Hajela, Marina Villeneuve, David Porter and Michael R. Sisak contributed to this report. Villeneuve and Hill reported from Albany, New York, and Porter reported from Newark, New Jersey.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, March 13, the 73rd day of 2020. There are 293 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 13, 2013, Jorge Bergoglio (HOHR'-hay behr-GOHG'-lee-oh) of Argentina was elected pope, choosing the name Francis; he was the first pontiff from the Americas and the first from outside Europe in more than a millennium.

On this date:

In 1639, New College was renamed Harvard College for clergyman John Harvard.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed a measure prohibiting Union military officers from returning fugitive slaves to their owners.

In 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis signed a measure allowing black slaves to enlist in the Confederate States Army with the promise they would be set free.

In 1901, the 23rd President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison, died in Indianapolis at age 67.

In 1925, the Tennessee General Assembly approved a bill prohibiting the teaching of the theory of evolution. (Gov. Austin Peay (pee) signed the measure on March 21.)

In 1933, banks in the U.S. began to reopen after a "holiday" declared by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1934, a gang that included John Dillinger and "Baby Face" Nelson robbed the First National Bank in Mason City, Iowa, making off with \$52,344.

In 1954, the Battle of Dien Bien Phu began during the First Indochina War as Viet Minh forces attacked French troops, who were defeated nearly two months later.

In 1969, the Apollo 9 astronauts splashed down, ending a mission that included the successful testing of the Lunar Module.

In 1975, the first Chili's restaurant was opened in Dallas by entrepreneur Larry Lavine.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, March 13, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 255 ~ 75 of 75

In 1980, Ford Motor Co. Chairman Henry Ford II announced he was stepping down, the same day a jury in Winamac, Indiana, found the company not guilty of reckless homicide in the fiery deaths of three young women in a Ford Pinto.

In 1996, a gunman burst into an elementary school in Dunblane, Scotland, and opened fire, killing 16 children and one teacher before killing himself.

Ten years ago: At least 30 people were killed in a series of Taliban suicide bombings in Afghanistan in what appeared to be a failed attempt to free inmates from a Kandahar prison. The Vatican denounced what it called aggressive attempts to drag Pope Benedict XVI into the spreading scandal of pedophile priests in his German homeland. With the biggest fight crowd in the U.S. in 17 years cheering him on at Cowboys Stadium, Manny Pacquiao dominated Joshua Clottey from the opening bell to retain his welterweight title.

Five years ago: In his first visit to the Phoenix Veterans Affairs hospital whose practices sparked a health care scandal, President Barack Obama acknowledged lingering weaknesses in the federal government's response to the chronic delays and false waiting lists in the VA health system. Al Rosen, the muscular third baseman who won the 1953 AL MVP and played on the last Cleveland Indians team to win the World Series, died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 91.

One year ago: A late winter storm brought blizzards, floods and a tornado across more than 25 states from the northern Rocky Mountains to Texas and beyond. A federal judge in Washington increased to a total of seven and a-half years the prison sentence for former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort for misleading the government about his foreign lobbying work; Manafort was also hit with fresh state charges in New York accusing him of giving false information on mortgage loan applications. (A state judge later threw out those charges.) Cardinal George Pell, the most senior Catholic to be convicted of child sex abuse, was sentenced in Australia to six years in prison for molesting two choirboys in an Australian cathedral. California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order granting reprieves to all 737 condemned inmates on the nation's largest death row, putting a moratorium on executions during his term as governor.

Today's Birthdays: Jazz musician Roy Haynes is 95. Country singer Jan Howard is 90. Songwriter Mike Stoller (STOH'-ler) is 87. Singer-songwriter Neil Sedaka is 81. R&B/gospel singer Candi Staton is 80. Opera singer Julia Migenes is 71. Actor William H. Macy is 70. Comedian Robin Duke is 66. Actress Dana Delany is 64. Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., is 63. Rock musician Adam Clayton (U2) is 60. Jazz musician Terence Blanchard is 58. Actor Christopher Collet is 52. Rock musician Matt McDonough (Mudvayne) is 51. Actress Annabeth Gish is 49. Actress Tracy Wells is 49. Rapper-actor Common is 48. Rapper Khujo (Goodie Mob, The Lumberjacks) is 48. Singer Glenn Lewis is 45. Actor Danny Masterson is 44. Bluegrass musician Clayton Campbell (The Gibson Brothers) is 39. Actor Noel Fisher is 36. Singers Natalie and Nicole Albino (Nina Sky) are 36. Actor Emile Hirsch is 35. Olympic gold medal skier Mikaela Shiffrin is 25. Tennis star Coco Gauff is 16.

Thought for Today: "History repeats itself. That's one of the things wrong with history." — Clarence Darrow, American lawyer (born 1857, died this date in 1938).

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