

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 1 of 73

- [1- State COVID-19 Update](#)
- [2- Sunday Extras](#)
- [6- Silver Skaes Meeting Postponed](#)
- [15- Rep. Johnson's Weekly Column](#)
- [16- Sen. Rounds' Weekly Column](#)
- [17- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column](#)
- [18- Weekly Message: Do no Fear - by Paul Kosel](#)
- [23- Rev. Snyder's Column](#)
- [25- SD News Watch: Matt McCaulley: Sioux Falls lawyer has become a behind-the-scenes power broker in Pierre](#)
- [29- Covid-19 Update - by Marie Miller](#)
- [30- From Ben Doherty at the Guardian:](#)
- [31- Symptoms comparisons](#)
- [32- Obit: Sandra Clocksene](#)
- [32- Death Notice: Madelin Daly](#)
- [33- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [34- Weather Pages](#)
- [37- Daily Devotional](#)
- [38- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [39- News from the Associated Press](#)



State COVID-19 Update

On March 4, 2020, CDC updated the clinical criteria for testing a symptomatic individual after evaluation by their healthcare provider. As a result, the South Dakota Department of Health (SD-DOH) expects the number of persons under investigation (PUI) being tested for COVID-19 to increase.

The number of PUI being tested does not reflect the level of risk to the public in the state. For more information about the outbreak, potential risks, and protective recommendations, visit the SD-DOH website or CDC website.

This table shows the total number of positive COVID-19 cases in South Dakota residents, the total number of persons that tested negative, and the total number of PUIs that are pending results.

As of March 14, 2020

Positive*	9
Negative	182
Pending	3

South Dakota Counties with COVID-19 Cases

Beadle	1
Bon Homme	1
Charles Mix	1
Davison	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	3
Pennington	1

Note: All cases had travel history outside South Dakota prior to illness onset. There is no community transmission at this time.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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


Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 2 of 73

Sunday Extras



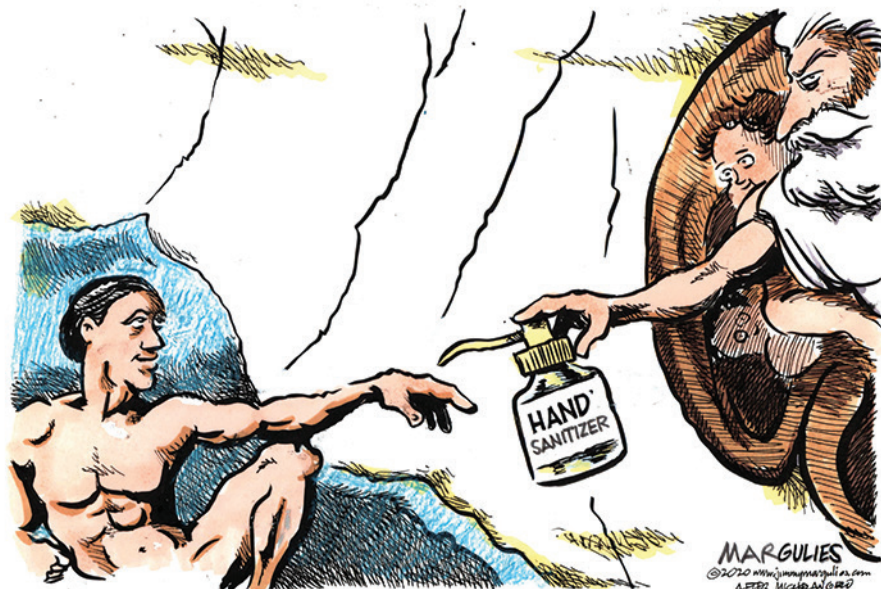
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. ACTS 17:29 



Detail of sculpture of Aztec god 'Quetzalcoatl'

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BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Zechariah in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Which prophet said God is like a green tree giving shelter to those who trust Him? *Joel, Hosea, Joshua, Solomon*

3. What man had seven sons who always celebrated their birthdays with a feast? *Solomon, Job, Hanun, Jonah*

4. From Exodus 2, who became a fugitive after killing an Egyptian? *Moses, Cain, Joseph, Jeremiah*

5. In Acts 9, what woman had Tabitha as a pet name? *Priscilla, Naomi, Dorcas, Delilah*

6. Which church was neither hot nor cold? *Antioch, Laodicea, Trinity, Philadelphia*

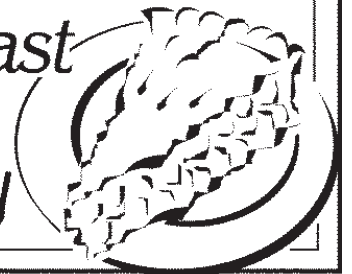
ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Hosea; 3) Job; 4) Moses; 5) Dorcas; 6) Laodicea

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

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Comfort foods

Made fast
and
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

S'More Gorp

Reach for this crunchy snack the next time you have an attack of the munchies.

- 3 full cups honey graham cereal
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 cup dry-roasted peanuts
- 1 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips

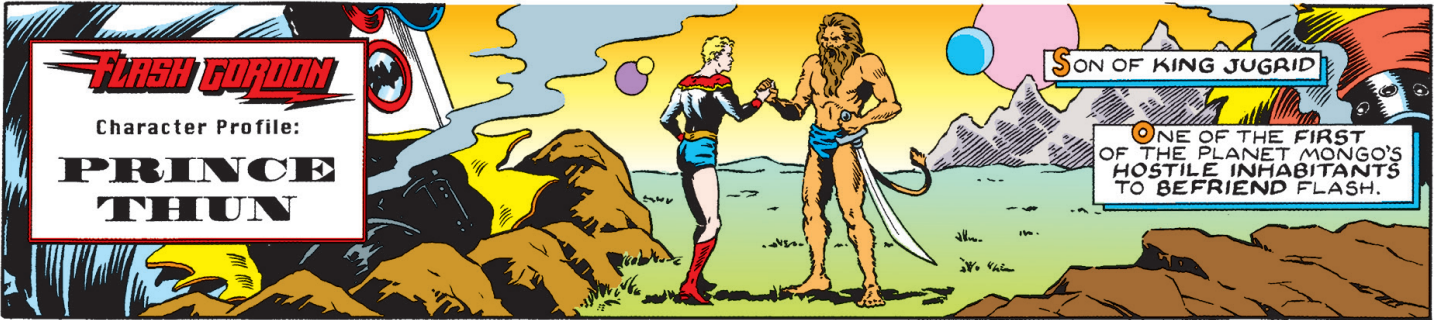
In a large zip-lock storage bag, combine cereal, marshmallows, peanuts, raisins and chocolate chips. Seal bag and shake well to combine. Store mixture in an airtight container. Mix well before serving. Makes 8 (3/4 cup) servings.

• Each serving equals: 201 calories, 5g fat, 3g protein, 36g carb., 150mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch/Carb., 1 Fruit, 1 Fat.

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Groton Daily Independent

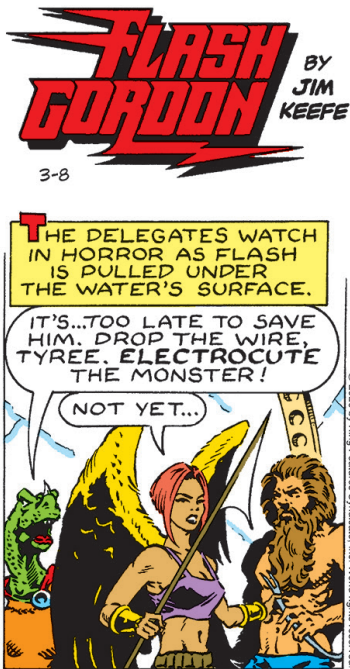
Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 4 of 73



FLASH GORDON
Character Profile:
PRINCE THUN

SON OF KING JUGRID

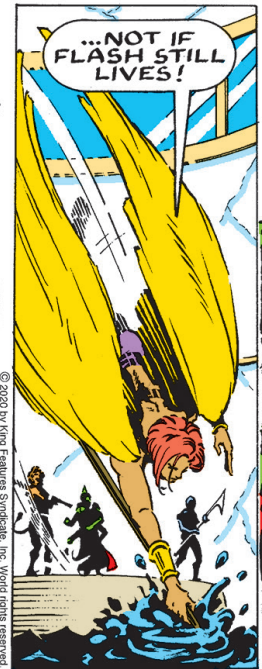
ONE OF THE FIRST OF THE PLANET MONGO'S HOSTILE INHABITANTS TO BEFRIEND FLASH.



THE DELEGATES WATCH IN HORROR AS FLASH IS PULLED UNDER THE WATER'S SURFACE.

IT'S...TOO LATE TO SAVE HIM. DROP THE WIRE, TYREE. ELECTROCUTE THE MONSTER!

NOT YET...



...NOT IF FLASH STILL LIVES!



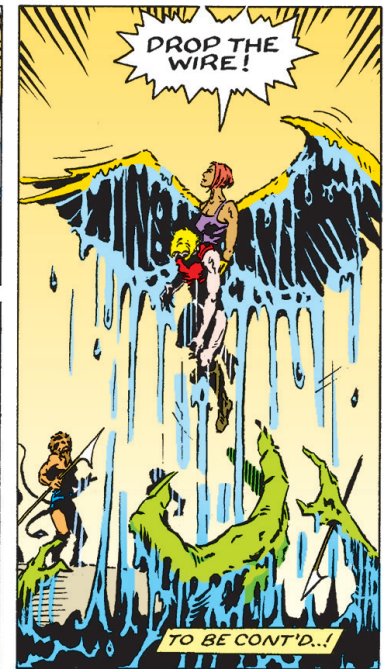
SHE'S DONE FOR, THUN.

QUICKLY, BEFORE THE CREATURE CAN STRIKE AGAIN...

NO...



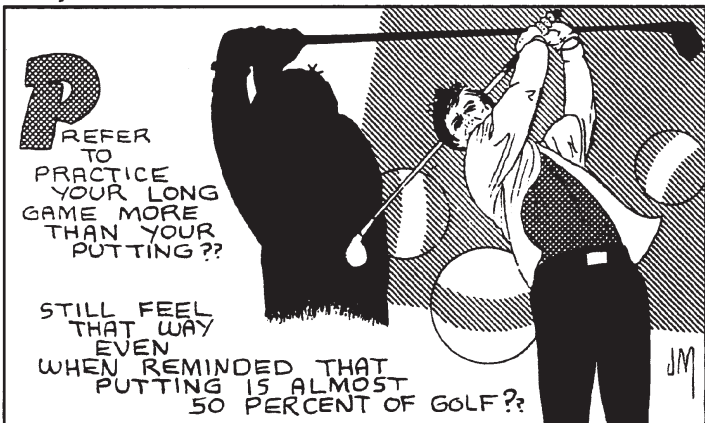
...WE WAIT.



DROP THE WIRE!

TO BE CONT'D..!

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



PREFER TO PRACTICE YOUR LONG GAME MORE THAN YOUR PUTTING??

STILL FEEL THAT WAY EVEN WHEN REMINDED THAT PUTTING IS ALMOST 50 PERCENT OF GOLF??



IN THAT CASE, AT LEAST CONSIDER SPENDING SOME TIME ON PUTTING PRACTICE AFTER THE SUN GOES DOWN. THAT WOULD GIVE YOU SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH THE MANY TOUR PROS WHO USE THE LIVING ROOM OR MOTEL RUG FOR A SPELL WITH THE SHORT STICK MOST EVENINGS.

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Does Ulcerative Colitis Preclude Pregnancy?

DEAR DR. ROACH: I need some hope. My 24-year-old granddaughter, recently married, came down with ulcerative colitis. Right now, she is getting two Humira injections a month. She has lost so much weight and her diet is so limited. Do things normally get better? Will she ever be able to become pregnant? It has been about four months. She is presently seeing a GI doctor. Should she be under the care of a specialist? — *L.M.O.S.*

ANSWER: Ulcerative colitis is one of the inflammatory bowel diseases. The underlying cause is not known, but there is a familial predisposition. Women are more often diagnosed, and the leading time of diagnosis is in the 20s.

There is a wide range of severity, with some people doing well with topical treatments (suppositories or enemas), some needing oral medication, and people with more severe disease needing much more powerful agents, such as the adalimumab (Humira) your granddaughter needs. Fortunately, those kinds of drugs have approximately a 60% to 70% success rate.

Diet is important for people with UC of any severity; however, as the disease becomes better controlled it is likely that she will have a less restricted diet.

A GI doctor is a gastroenterologist, the specialist for inflammatory bowel diseases. There are some gastroenterologists who specialize even further, making IBD their area of particular expertise.

Pregnancy is certainly possible in women with IBD. However, they should be in remission before attempting pregnancy, and her medications may need to be adjusted for maximum safety.

There are many places to get additional information, but I recommend the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation website as an excellent starting point. It can be found at www.crohnscolitis-foundation.org.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Last year, I started getting Raynaud's. I can remember from my youth that my father had it, so it didn't seem too terrible. It's not just the fingertips that turn white, but also some of my toes are affected.

I asked people who know of it or have it how one gets this. What is the cause? No one knows. So I asked my doctor. Even he said he did not know.

How do I get these episodes, and what can I do to prevent them? — *R.S.*

ANSWER: Raynaud phenomenon is an exaggerated response to cold or stress, causing color changes in the skin of the fingers and toes. There is a long list of causes of Raynaud phenomenon. Often, no cause is ever found (in which case it is called primary Raynaud, which just means we don't know what's causing it). The most common known causes are the autoimmune rheumatic diseases, especially scleroderma, lupus and Sjogren's syndrome. Hypothyroidism is an unusual cause, and some drugs can cause it as well.

The current thinking is that primary RP is caused by abnormalities in the alpha receptors in blood vessels (alpha receptors respond to adrenaline and similar molecules).

Keeping the whole body — and especially the hands — warm is the first step. Sudden temperature changes can trigger the effect. Warming the hands in warm water at the onset of an attack can stop it. Anxiety makes it worse, so a positive attitude can really affect this condition. Medications, such as amlodipine, may be necessary for prevention in more severe cases.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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1. What music group appeared on the final episode of "The Ed Sullivan Show"?

2. Who sang the other half of the duet with Jennifer Warnes in the film "An Officer and a Gentleman"?

3. Name the group that got their start with the non-memorable name Atomic Mass. (Hint: The drummer only has one arm.)

4. "Hurts So Good" appeared on which John Cougar Mellencamp album?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Since you've gone I been lost without a trace, I dream at night I can only see your face."

Answers

1. Gladys Knight and the Pips, in 1971. The variety show had been on the air for 23 years.

2. Joe Cocker. The song was "Up Where We Belong."

3. Def Leppard, although they did first consider Deaf Leopard. Drummer Rick Allen lost his left arm in a car accident in 1984, but with a customized drum kit he kept on playing.

4. "American Fool," in 1982.

5. "Every Breath You Take," by the Police, in 1983. Recently it was determined to be the most played radio song in history. Rather than being a gentle love song, Sting has said that it's a rather sinister song about jealousy.

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- Turn on the hot water for three or four minutes to loosen debris on shower walls. It's much easier to clean when the tile is warm and steamy.

- Here's a great storage solution: screw a metal magazine holder to the inside of a cabinet door. Do this in the bathroom to store a hair dryer or other hair tools. In the kitchen, it makes a wonderful holder for smaller pot lids or foil, wax paper, parchment, etc.

- Manners check: "If you are getting into line at a shop, it's time to end your call. When you try to continue your phone conversation, it means the cashier can't effectively communicate with you and you risk holding up the line. If the call is that important, just wait until you end it to get in line. Thank you!" — *M.R. in Virginia*

- When arranging your fridge, keep

the better choices at eye level and easy to grab.

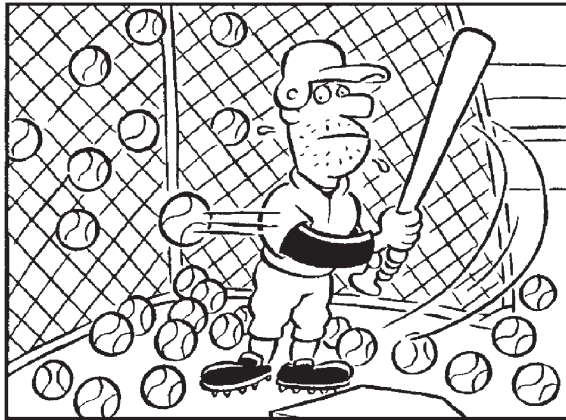
- Get rid of smelly stains on your cutting board with a lemon. Use the cut side of a lemon to scrub your plastic or wood board. For a little extra scrub, sprinkle the lemon with salt. Rinse and air dry.

- "To reach the highest cobweb or the lowest dust bunnies, get a yardstick and cover one end with an old tube sock. Use a rubber band to secure it to the stick and you can use it to swipe at the high corners of your rooms or slide it under the furniture. Works like a charm." — *E.T. in Michigan*

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 8 of 73



NO HIT HARRIGAN hasn't hit a ball out of the batting cage in spring training. See if you can count the number of balls he's missed so far.

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Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

BELL
BOLL
ROLL
ROLE
ROPE



Illustrated by David Coulson

RING A DING DING!

IN THIS PUZZLE you are given a word that must be changed into another word in a series of moves. During each move you must change one letter in the previous word so as to form a new word. In our example, we changed BELL to ROPE in four moves. See if you can change the following five words in four moves.

1. WIND to GALE
2. POST to MARK
3. MOON to ROCK
4. DATE to FIGS
5. LADY to BUGS

1. WIND, WINE, WANE, WALE, GALE
2. POST, PORT, PORK, PARK, MARK
3. MOON, LOON, LOOK, LOCK, ROCK
4. DATE, FATE, FATS, FITS, FIGS
5. LADY, LADS, LAGS, BAGS, BUGS

A CLOSE SHAVE...I DON'T THINK! How is it possible for a man to shave more than three times a day and still grow a beard?

Answer: If the man is a barber he can shave more than three other men each day and still grow a beard.



DON'T GET STUCK ON THIS ONE! In this puzzle, all of the words get progressively longer, and they all start with TAR. Use the following definitions:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. TAR (in place). | 2. Keeps out rain. |
| 3. Fortunetelling device. | 4. Airport runway. |
| 5. Game fish. | 6. Good seasoning. |

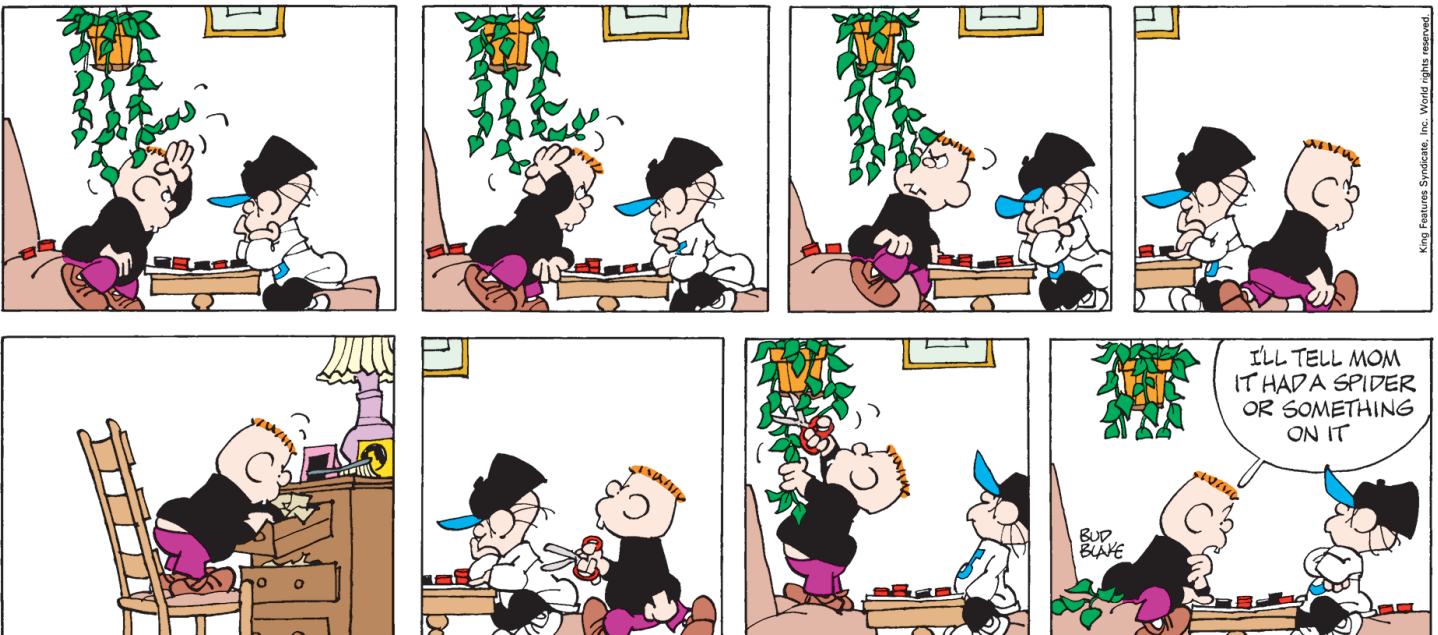
Answer: 1. Tar 2. Tarp 3. Tarp 4. Tarmac 5. Tarpon 6. Tarragon

1. TAR
2. TAR _
3. TAR _ _
4. TAR _ _ _
5. TAR _ _ _ _
6. TAR _ _ _ _ _



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 9 of 73

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Do arithmetic
- 4 Long tales
- 9 Stitch
- 12 Take to court
- 13 Treasure cache
- 14 Work with
- 15 Newlyweds' trip
- 17 Siesta
- 18 Chicken-king link
- 19 Waldorf salad ingredient
- 21 Floated on air
- 24 Remain
- 25 Ostrich's cousin
- 26 Blue
- 28 Ruhr Valley city
- 31 Tear
- 33 Cry loudly
- 35 Apiary structure
- 36 Boredom
- 38 Solidify
- 40 Morning moisture
- 41 Village People hit
- 43 Express sorrow for
- 45 Like a duck's feet
- 47 — Jima
- 48 Past
- 49 Wealthy one
- 54 Beer container

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

- 31 Tear
- 35 Over
- 8 Washington group
- 32 Foolish
- 33 Cry loudly
- 36 Life story, for short
- 9 Optimist's part of the street?
- 34 Accept as true
- 35 Apiary structure
- 37 Praise in verse
- 10 Jacob's brother
- 37 "The — Cometh"
- 36 Boredom
- 38 "When pigs fly!"
- 11 Cried
- 39 Attorney
- 38 Solidify
- 39 Conclusion
- 16 Dine
- 42 Pueblo brick
- 40 Morning moisture
- 44 Unruly bunch
- 41 Village People hit
- 45 Texas city
- 44 Unruly bunch
- 43 Express sorrow for
- 46 "Zounds!"
- 45 Like a duck's feet
- 50 Autumn mo.
- 47 — Jima
- 51 Honest politician
- 48 Past
- 52 Martini ingredient
- 49 Wealthy one
- 53 Turf
- 54 Beer container

DOWN

- 1 Fire residue
- 2 Pair
- 3 Lair
- 4 Fashions
- 5 Fleets
- 6 Sticky stuff
- 7 Acknowledges
- 21 "The Way We —"
- 22 "So be it"
- 23 Sense of humor
- 27 Pooch
- 29 Tied
- 30 Mr. Gingrich

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 10 of 73

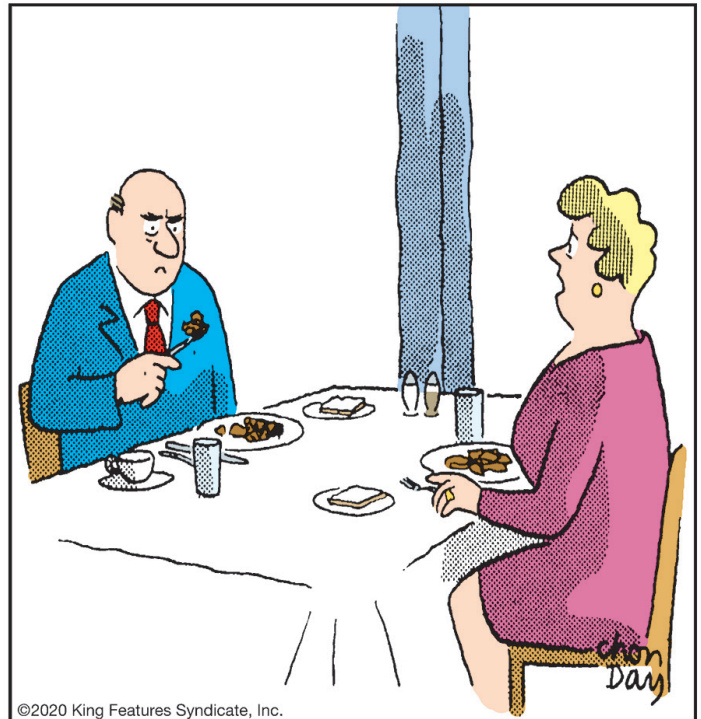
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY



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 "I was following this recipe on TV when suddenly the cable went out."

Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas

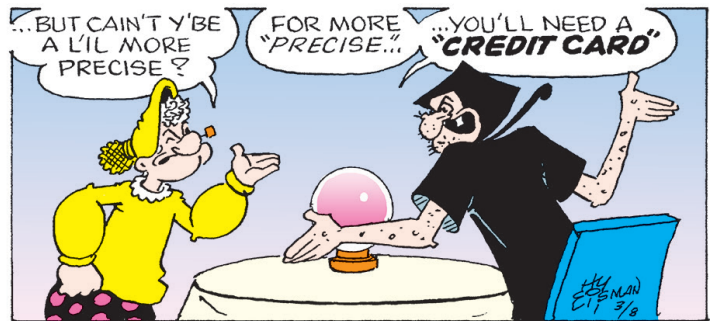
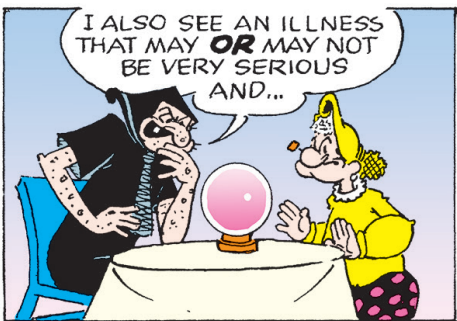
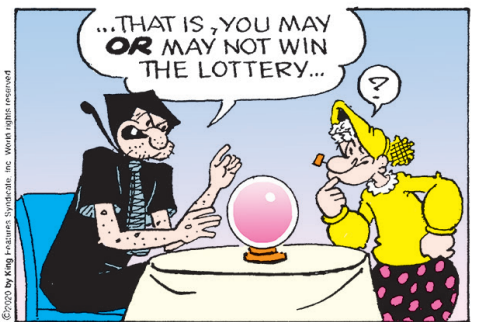
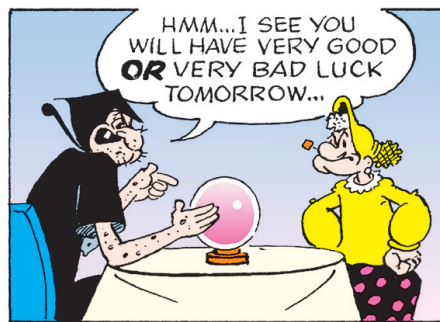
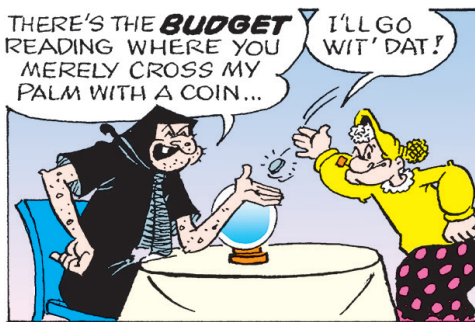
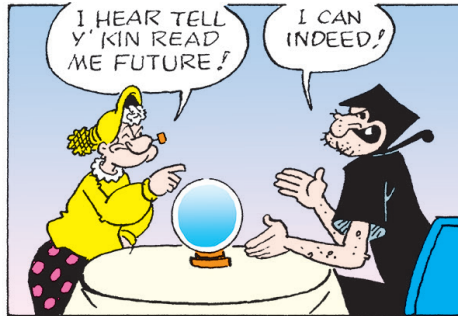
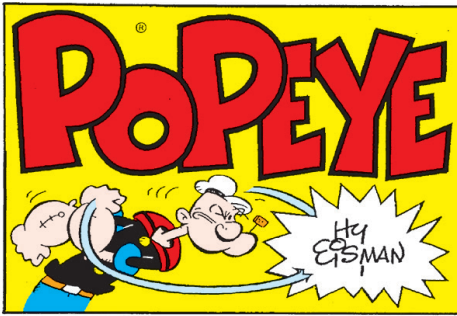


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KOPERVAS

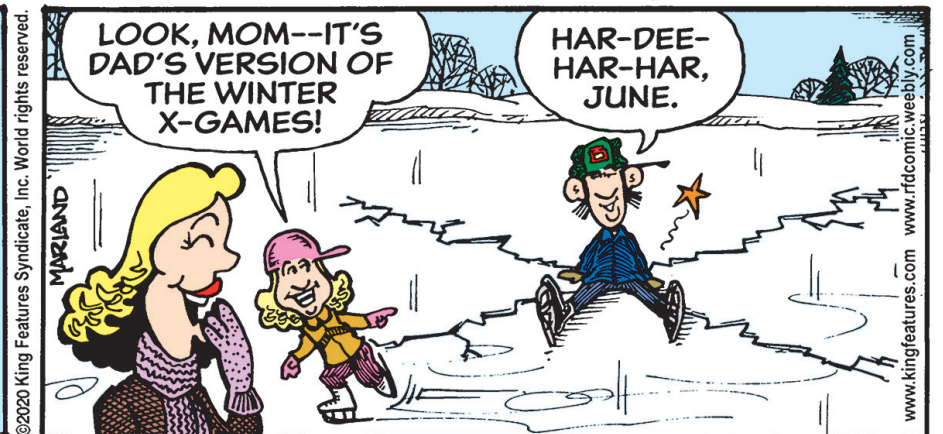
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 11 of 73



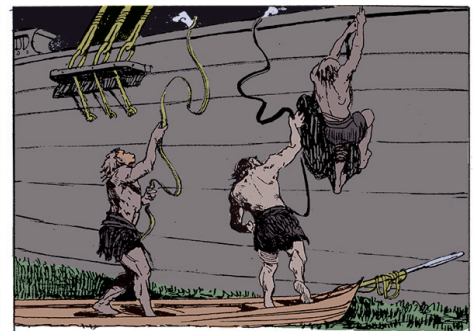
R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 12 of 73

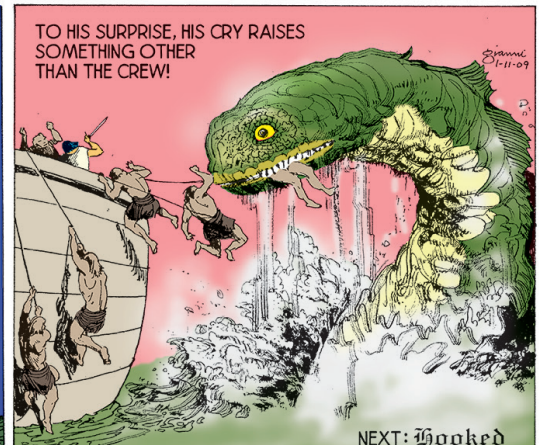


BELOW, GRU-ZOR'S HORDE FLINGS LINES OF WOVEN WEED TIED TO BONE, AS A MEANS TO SCALE THE SIDE OF THE WOODEN STRUCTURE HIDING THEIR ENEMIES.



THE CLATTER OF THE CAST BONE ON WOOD DRAGS THE SHIP'S CREW TO WAKEFULNESS, BUT IT IS VAL'S CAT-LIKE REFLEXES THAT BRING HIM FIRST TO THE DEFENSE.

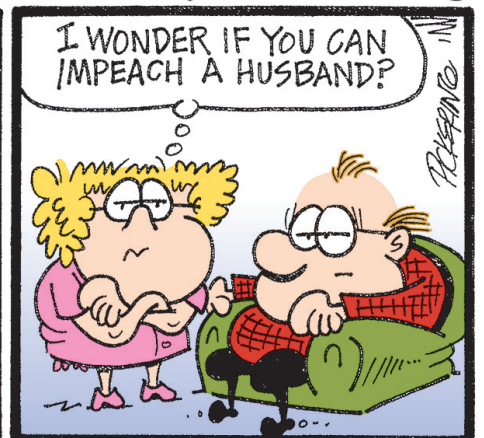
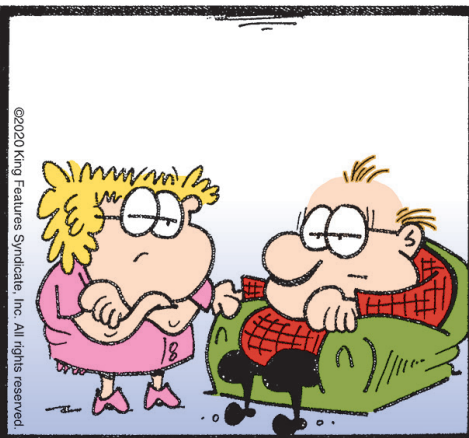
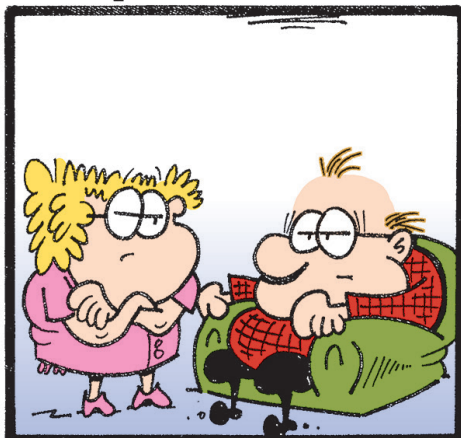
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NEXT: Hooked

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

IRS Tax Form Designed With Seniors in Mind

Thanks to The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, the Internal Revenue Service has come up with a tax filing form just for us: Form 1040-SR, the tax return for seniors.

This is an alternative form for those of us who are age 65 or older and replaces the 1040-EZ form. If you have a straightforward, uncomplicated tax situation, this could be the form for you.

Compared to the 1040EZ form, however, this one allows reporting of more types of income, and there is no limit to interest income. You can list your Social Security income as well as interest, dividends, pensions and more.

You don't need to be retired to use this form, but you need to have turned 65 by the end of 2019 (born before Jan. 2, 1955). If you've already retired and receive Social Security, but are under

age 65, you cannot use this form. But you can use it if you file jointly with a spouse, even if only one of you is age 65 or older.

It looks generally like the standard Form 1040, but the print is bigger, the text boxes are bigger and there is more space between the lines of print. The instructions are the same as for Form 1040.

You can take the standard deduction or itemize your deduction, and it uses the standard 1040 forms. If you have extra income, such as prize money, you need to add Schedule 1. If you're going to owe other taxes, such as household employment or self-employment tax, you'll need Schedule 2. Schedule 3 is new, for additional credits and payments.

Remember that our standard deduction is larger this year.

If you usually take advantage of free tax preparation by AARP volunteers, they're sure to have these new forms already.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 14 of 73



1. This winner of five career Grand Slam titles recently announced her retirement from tennis at the age of 32. Who is she?

2. Actor/wrestler Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson played on the defensive line for what college football team?

3. What player hit two home runs in his debut with the New York Yankees on Opening Day 2018?

4. Who is the only NCAA Division I basketball player — male or female — to record 2,000 points, 1,000 assists and 1,000 rebounds in a career?

5. What sport of ancient Gaelic origin uses a ball called a sliotar?

6. What Division I men’s basketball team has the most appearances in the NCAA Tournament Sweet 16?

7. What NBA team broke the league record (previously held by the 2016-17 Golden State Warriors) for earliest playoff clinch?

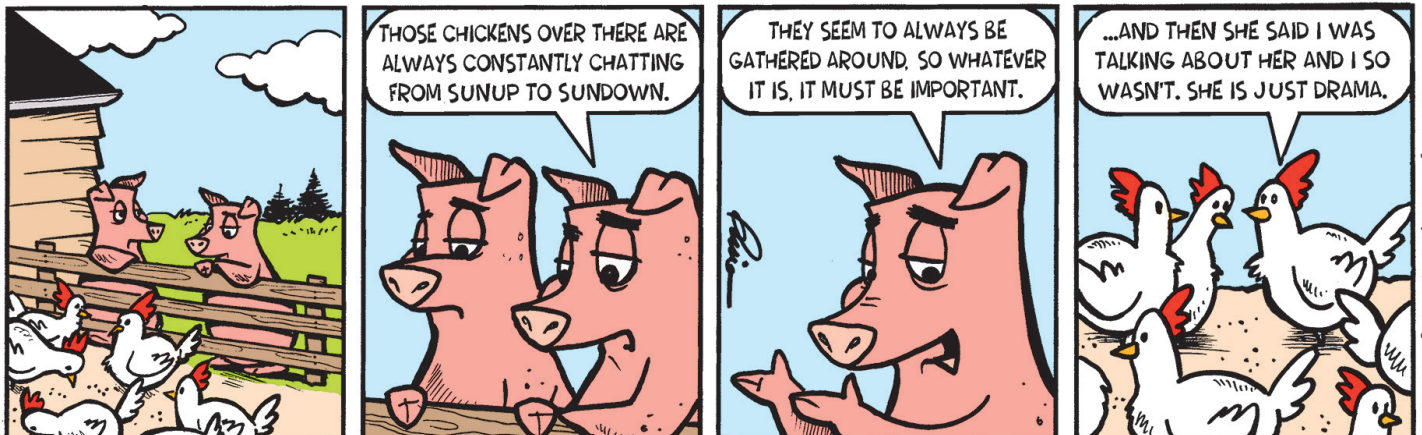
1. Maria Sharapova.
2. The University of Miami Hurricanes.
3. Giancarlo Stanton.
4. Sabrina Ionescu of the University of Oregon Ducks.
5. Hurling.
6. The University of Kentucky Wildcats, with 44 as of 2019.
7. The 2019-20 Milwaukee Bucks, who recently clinched a playoff berth after 56 games.

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Answers

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



Protecting Our Seniors During a Pandemic

Over the last few days, South Dakota has confirmed several cases of COVID-19, known as the coronavirus. While I am confident that our state and local governments will work together to protect the health of our communities, it is important that we all take extra precautions to support vulnerable populations during this time.

The information we have on the coronavirus thus far shows that older adults and people with serious medical conditions are at higher risk of getting seriously sick from this illness. If you or a loved one is at higher risk, please note the following CDC recommendations:

Take precautions to limit close contact with others, especially with those who are sick.

Avoid large crowds, cruise travel, and non-essential air travel.

Reasonably stock up on supplies such as necessary medications, medical supplies, and groceries.
Stay home as much as possible.

While these practices will work best to halt the spread of the coronavirus and protect high-risk individuals, Congress has been working overtime to provide extra protections for older Americans. On Wednesday, Congress passed the Supporting Older Americans Act of 2020, which reauthorizes and expands several critical social and nutrition services for older Americans. I am an original cosponsor of the bill and am encouraged to see it heading to the president's desk at a time when seniors need support the most.

This bill can help combat the coronavirus in a few ways. First, it directs states to minimize burdensome administrative processes to more easily transfer funds between nutrition programs for home-delivered meals. This will help maximize the delivery of meals and minimize groups of elderly folks from coming into contact with COVID-19 at places like the grocery store. This bill also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to assist states with delivering senior aid to rural areas and local communities, so all seniors have access to these services.

Along with this funding, last week we passed the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act into law. The bill provided \$7.8 billion in additional funding for federal, state, and local government responses to the coronavirus, which included funding for additional diagnostic tests, treatments, and vaccine development.

While outbreaks like these can certainly be overwhelming, it is important to not panic, and rather take the necessary precautions to keep you and your loved ones safe. This is a rapidly evolving situation, and I will be sure to continue to update South Dakotans with new information as it becomes available.



Ten Years of Obamacare

This month marks the ten-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act—or Obamacare—being signed into law. Obamacare dramatically changed the healthcare landscape across the United States, and not in a good way. Over the past decade, Obamacare has led to higher premiums, fewer healthcare choices and millions of Americans losing the health insurance they enjoyed.

We believe in giving all Americans access to affordable, reliable health care coverage that put patients in control of their healthcare decisions. Obamacare fails to achieve these goals while increasing healthcare costs, depleting Medicare and raising taxes.

Fortunately, we have made progress in dismantling some of the most problematic portions of the law. Last year, legislation I introduced to repeal the “Cadillac Tax” provision of Obamacare was signed into law with strong bipartisan support. Now that it is repealed, it no longer threatens to raise the premiums of over 400,000 South Dakotans who get their health insurance through their work.

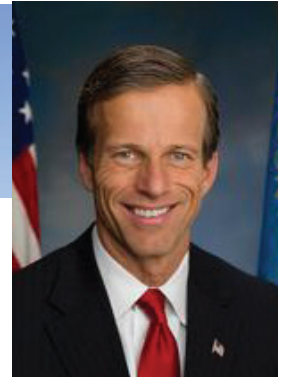
We were also able to get rid of the Obamacare individual mandate when we passed and President Trump signed into law historic tax reform in 2017. The individual mandate required that nearly all Americans purchase health insurance, and if they chose not to, they would have to pay a fine to the government. The Independent Payment Advisory Board, which many called a “death panel” at the time was also dismantled in our tax reform law.

After our experience with Obamacare, it’s clear that the government should not be responsible for the healthcare of all Americans, as some have proposed. We continue to see how government-run healthcare fails patients at the Indian Health Service and the VA. Americans deserve better than a one-size-fits-all plan that lets the government make important decisions about your healthcare needs.

South Dakotans should have access to appropriate care and the doctor they choose. We continue working on healthcare policies that include: guaranteed renewal of coverage, portability of coverage for those who change jobs or leave the workforce through retirement, coverage for those with pre-existing conditions if they maintain insurance from policy to policy without lapses, and provisions allowing children up to age 26 to stay on their parents’ plans.

These are the principles that, when working with a free market, will allow all Americans the opportunity to have affordable, comprehensive care that puts patients first. In the Senate, I continue to work toward these principles. When it comes to the health of our families, South Dakotans deserve nothing less.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Working Together, We'll Beat the Coronavirus

The coronavirus is obviously a front-and-center issue for Americans in every corner of the country, and effectively fighting this outbreak will require an all-of-the-above approach. U.S. health officials are working around the clock to continue learning as much as possible about the virus, how to mitigate the spread, and how to protect our loved ones. The highest levels of the federal government are focused on keeping the American people safe by ensuring health care professionals in communities around the country are well-equipped in this fight.

This is a serious situation, but you don't need a medical degree to help work toward our collective goal of ending this outbreak as soon as possible. There are things that every South Dakotan can be doing today to help lower the risk of spreading this disease, and I would encourage anyone who is looking for comprehensive information about coronavirus "dos" and "don'ts" to visit www.coronavirus.gov or www.covid.sd.gov.

Since the coronavirus appears to be easily transmissible and may live on surfaces for several hours, it's imperative to simply return to the basics: wash your hands, and wash them regularly; if you are sick, stay home; and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. There are also several common-sense things you can do like avoiding large crowds and delaying any unnecessary travel, particularly to highly affected areas. It goes without saying, but if you have any specific health-related questions or concerns, you should contact your health care provider for guidance.

In early March, Congress overwhelmingly approved, and the president signed, bipartisan legislation to invest in the fight against the coronavirus. We provided new federal funds to help slow the spread of the disease and accelerate the research and development of a vaccine, among other things. Congress will continue to ensure that the federal government has the necessary resources to meet the evolving needs of this outbreak.

We recently learned that several South Dakotans have tested positive for the coronavirus. While I wish we could have remained at zero cases, this development didn't come as a surprise. State leaders had been preparing for this possibility for weeks, and I'm confident they are implementing a plan to keep South Dakotans safe. I'm committed to continue doing everything I can at the federal level to help ensure the governor and her team have the tools and support they need.

America has faced difficult times before, but we always rise to the occasion. This is one of those times, and it will require all of us to confront this challenge with a unified voice. I am confident that if we pull together, America will emerge stronger.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 18 of 73

Weekly Message: Do no Fear

by Paul Kosel

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden

Heaven Bound Ministries, Pierpont

The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear. He is the defender of my life of whom shall I be afraid - Psalm 27:1

Let us pray:

Dear God:

Remove our anxiety over the Coronavirus. Help us to live in Your calm and peace. Remind us to care for ourselves so that we are not placing others at risk and then do what we can to help others. Give our health care providers the knowledge and the strength they need to provide help for those who need it. Blanket us with Your love and grace.

In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.

Life has changed in the past week. Where ever you look, at virtually every conversation, you hear about the Coronavirus. Fear has been planted into the minds of human beings all over the planet.

Coronavirus has the world on edge.

The outbreak is now a global pandemic, and seven weeks after the first U.S. case was announced outside Seattle, the number of people in the U.S. now known to be infected with the new strain has surpassed 1,400, with 41 dead. And the numbers keep climbing.

Coast to coast, large public gatherings and major events have been canceled. Employees have been told to work from home, universities have moved all classes online and elementary schools have closed for sanitizing. The stock market has seen huge swings. Declarations of emergency are being proclaimed.

As the number of confirmed cases of illness grows, so too does the nation's collective uncertainty. Psychologists and public health experts say public anxiety is high, and it's largely fueled by a feeling of powerlessness.

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Friday, March 13, confirmed the state has uncovered another case of coronavirus, raising the state's total to nine, and instituted sweeping measures meant to limit the spread of the outbreak in the state.

Noem said she had declared a state of emergency, is asking public K-12 schools to close statewide this week and said state high school basketball tournaments and other school activities will be postponed.

Noem said she will issue an executive order directing all nonessential staff to work remotely, is asking nursing homes to restrict visitors, and said talks have begun about contingency plans for the state's upcoming primary election, set for June 2.

People are reacting out of fear. Franklin Graham said, "In Christ, you can have victory over fear. Fear cannot hold unless it is fed."

But fear is being fed by the evil one who is using all kinds of communication devices to convey that fear to the residents of the planet.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 19 of 73

Try to find a roll of toilet paper on a shelf - you won't find any. Try to find hand sanitizer on the shelf - you won't find any. Try to find wipes - good luck on that.

I made my own hand sanitizer. I found the last bottle of aloe vera left in Groton yesterday morning. I found a couple of bottles of rubbing alcohol left - there were two left on the shelves in Groton after I bought my two.

Fear. One of the enemy's most popular weapons that he uses against us. Worry, anxiety, fear...can overwhelm us with a thick shadow of darkness, controlling our every move and decision. So out of fear of running out of toilet paper, everyone is running out to buy shopping carts full of it. Out of fear they are buying up hand sanitizers.

Isaiah 41:10

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Sometimes, we can read certain verses from Scripture a hundred times and fail to take them to heart the way the Lord wants us to. Other times, we can linger on a verse or two, and let them minister life, healing and comfort to us. Isaiah 41:10 is so rich with the promises of God that it warrants some special attention from us. Ultimately, the Lord wants to impart to us through this verse that we shouldn't be afraid. "Fear not [there is nothing to fear]." One reason why God warns us against fear is that it can short-circuit the answered prayers and blessings that He has in store for us.

According to Paul Marsden, a consumer psychologist at the University of the Arts London, the short answer can be found in the psychology of "retail therapy" — where we buy to manage our emotional state. "It's about 'taking back control' in a world where you feel out of control," he said.

Jesus comforted his disciples saying in John 14:27: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The problem we have is that we're trying to control the situation instead of allowing God to be in control.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Another big word floating around is social distancing! Have at least six feet of space between you and your neighbor.

Despite what the world is throwing at us - despite the bugs that the devil is throwing our way, it seems like God is distancing Himself from us. You're not alone in that thought.

David felt like God was distant to him and that He had forgotten him and like God was hiding His face from him.

Psalm 13:1-2 "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me. How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?"

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 20 of 73

But was this true? No, because later in this same psalm, David wrote that "I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation" (Psalm 13:5) and because of that, he wrote "I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me" (Psalm 13:6). David's point was that even though God felt distant from him, the reality is God is closer to us when we're crushed than when things are going well.

The Coronavirus is not the only major event on the world stage.

Swarming locusts are advancing across East Africa, Asia and the Middle East, threatening food supply and livelihoods. At least 20 million people are at risk as governments and scientists race to control the insects.

In Kenya, one unusually large swarm occupied an area of 2,400 square kilometres, more than three times the size of New York City. Swarms typically can occupy 100 square kilometres. Even at this size, they can contain between 4 billion and 8 billion locusts, with the ability to consume the equivalent of what at least 3.5 million people would eat in a day.

Glaciers are melting, the temperature is on the rise, sea levels are rising at a rate of 1/8 of an inch every year, rain forests are dying, and wildlife is scrambling to keep pace. It has become clear that humans have caused most of the past century's warming by releasing heat-trapping gases as we power our modern lives. Called greenhouse gases, their levels are higher now than at any time in the last 800,000 years.

And maybe this is all sounding like the apocalypse. Viruses, locusts and global warming, oh my!

Will all of this doom and gloom, one still wonders why all of this is happening. Then look at the churches - the basic foundation of the Christian life. Churches are closing. Attendance is dropping. People's belief in God seems to be dwindling. People's beliefs are mixed, at best.

Where are the days when you knew people fully loved God? We are in the days of a Luke warm relationship with our Maker and that does not set well with God. Read in Revelation 3:15-17 New International Version (NIV)

15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

I seen an article of someone having 17,000 bottles of hand sanitizer and no where to go with it - because of price gouging, Ebay and Amazon have stopped the sales of such items. Now he's stuck with all of this hand sanitizer that he can't get rid of and that people actually need. They drove over 1,000 miles clearing off shelves to build up their inventory.

Now I realize that this is not talking about price gouging, bit it is talking doing business fairly way back in Deuteronomy 25:13-15:

You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and just measure, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

So, there are a lot of issues that we have to deal with today. But don't give into fear. The only thing to fear is fear itself.

The darkest days of the depression hit in 1933. Roosevelt's first inaugural address outlined in broad terms how he hoped to govern and reminded Americans that the nation's "common difficulties" concerned

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 21 of 73

"only material things."

Roosevelt went on to say, "This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory."

When Israel was back on the rise, Isaiah had comforting words for Israel as recorded in 41:10: So do not fear, for I am with you;

do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you;

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

With all of this going on - from the Corona Virus to the Swam of Locusts to Global Warming - the biggest event of all time is yet to come and that is the coming of Jesus Christ. The media tells you the Corona Virus is coming and you panic. the Bible tells you Jesus is coming and you do nothing.

When He comes, YOU WILL KNOW IT! As recorded in Matthew 24:44: So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

When Jesus comes, there will be no time to get ready for his arrival. It will come like a thief in the night. When Jesus comes, it will come like a flash lightning. As John recorded what he saw in Revelation 19: 11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

king of kings and lord of lords.

Therefore, we have hope in God. During these difficult times, it more than ever we should put our belief in God for deliverance from the evil seed planted by the devil in the form of the COVID-19 virus. Fear and anxiety is taking precedence over the God fearing people. How quickly we fall into this trap.

Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Even though we cannot see the virus, it is still visible under the microscope. God's salvation can only be seen through the eyes of His children.

Romans 1:20 New International Version (NIV)

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

When David faced Goliath, he didn't talk about how dangerous Goliath was - he talked about how great God is. Don't talk fear. Talk faith.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 22 of 73

Recorded in Joel 2:25: God can restore what is broken and change it into something amazing. All you need is faith.

So why worry. If you already had a couple of packages of toilet paper in your storage, what are you going to do with another dozen packages?

Stop trying to take control.

Luke 12:22-26

"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

Life is more than food and clothing. God has reminded us of that throughout the Scriptures. Jesus reminded us of it when He faced temptation from Satan. So we shouldn't worry because God will take care of the big stuff and the little stuff. Worrying doesn't change things, big or small, except to make those problems appear worse than they really are. So why let ourselves get so worked up into a frenzy over "big things"? Cast your cares on God and then trust in His wisdom.

President Trump declared today as a National Day of Prayer. He said, "It is my great honor to declare Sunday, March 15th as a National Day of Prayer. We are a Country that, throughout our history, has looked to God for protection and strength in times like these...."

We pray,

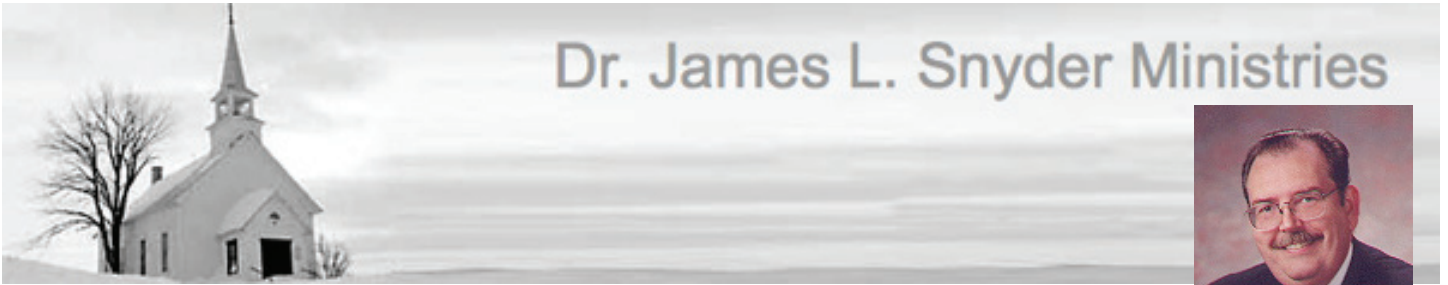
Dear Lord, please watch over our families. We put them in your hands. Take away all our worries and protect us from COVID-19 and any form of disease. Give us the strength and comfort in this trying time. Whenever we are afraid, we put our trust in you. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 23 of 73



Have Nose, Will Sneeze



Many things about me could be called into question, and a lot has. I get that. However, the most attractive thing about me is my nose. I am not sure of the reason why, it looks like anybody else's nose.

My nose, however, attracts everything around it, from dust to pollen and other unmentionables. If there is something not attracted to my nose I haven't found it yet.

This past week has been no exception. If it was in the air, it was in my nose. I do not know why my nose is so attractive to things, but there it is. I am the one that suffers the consequences of that attractive nose of mine. To be very certain, I did not pick my nose, it came with my face.

It seems the older I get, the more attractive my nose gets. I do not know if that is old age or if I am just beginning to notice it. When I was younger, of course, I was busy with other things, although I cannot remember what they were. Now that I am older, I have more time to pay attention to stupid things like my nose.

I can sneeze at the drop of a hat, which is one reason I do not wear hats anymore.

One mystery surrounds my sneezing. When I start sneezing, it has to be at least three sneezes. Why three? You'll have to ask my nose about that. It never fails; my sneeze is a consistent triplet activity

Coming into the house the other day, I stopped and started one of those sneezing fits. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "Why didn't you sneeze outside before you came into the house?"

I know she can control everything around her, including me, which is the difference between her and me. The one thing I can never control is my nose. If I could control my nose, I probably could be a happier person.

My nose will sneeze whenever it wants to sneeze, and I have no authority over that decision. It never asks my permission!

I only know three seconds after I sneeze that I am going to sneeze. That creates many problems with me during this time of the year.

My wife once instructed me that when I sneeze, I need to sneeze into the elbow of my shirtsleeve. This has caused me to change shirts at least three times a day, which has made the laundry basket a problem.

One time my wife asked, "Why are there so many of your shirts in the laundry basket?"

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 24 of 73

"Just look at the right sleeve," I instructed her.

When she did, an awful Yuk sound came from her direction.

This week my sneezing has been the worst I have ever known it. I do not have a cold, the flu, or any sinus infection, just a nose that sneezes all the time. I do not have a headache or sore throat, or clogged lungs. I am just sneezing for no reason at all, which is a source of frustration for me.

I hate it when I am about to take a sip of coffee, and I sneeze. After I jump up and do a happy dance, I change my trousers for clean ones. Coffee can really be hot, especially when you sneeze.

Is there such a thing as a sneezeologist? I sure would like to get some counsel on how to control my sneezing. Somebody needs to be an expert on sneezing. Sure, I am an expert on sneezing, but not on how to quit sneezing. That is my biggest problem.

Every Sunday, I am so frightened that in the middle of my sermon I am going to have a sneezing fit. Nothing could clear the church quicker than one of my sneezing fits to be sure.

After one of my sneezing fits, I wondered if there is such a thing as a sneezing contest. If there is, I am sure I could come very close to taking home the trophy.

I once asked my wife, "Do you think that sneezing is an exercise?"

Looking at me, she said rather soberly, "Well, it's an exercise on my patience."

I am not sure if that was a positive answer or not. Although I am skeptical, I did not want to ask and find out for certain. I exercised my right to keep my mouth shut.

My wife and I went out to eat dinner the other night, and the restaurant was rather crowded. Everything was going quite excellent, we ordered and the waitress went to process our order, and we enjoyed our time together.

Then it happened. I did a very loud triple sneeze heard all through the restaurant.

"Thanks," my wife said very quietly, "for all the attention our way."

I looked around, the people were looking at me, and I could not see anyone smiling. I was afraid to smile back at anybody. I was tempted to explain what happened, but I thought otherwise.

I then thought of what Solomon once said. "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding" (Proverbs 17:28).

I may not be able to control my sneezes, but I think with a great deal of work and concentration, I can keep my mouth shut when necessary.



Matt McCaulley: Sioux Falls lawyer has become a behind-the-scenes power broker in Pierre

By: Nick Lowrey

For someone who doesn't hold elected office, attorney Matt McCaulley of Sioux Falls has amassed a significant amount of political clout, and he is among the most influential people in Pierre during South Dakota's annual legislative sessions.

Throughout his more than 14 years of lobbying, McCaulley, 47, has developed a reputation for quiet competence, effective problem-solving and honest negotiation — and, recently, for serving as a top adviser to Gov. Kristi Noem. McCaulley's talent for navigating complex legal and political issues has made him a go-to lobbyist for clients ranging from Noem to Sanford Health, and from South Dakota agricultural interests to national cell service provider T-Mobile.

In addition to maintaining one of the deepest client lists of any lobbyist in South Dakota, McCaulley is also the managing partner of Redstone Law Firm in Sioux Falls, which has been hired to provide outside legal counsel to the Noem administration. So far, Redstone's work for Noem has cost taxpayers more than \$123,000 over the course of about 15 months, according to state records.

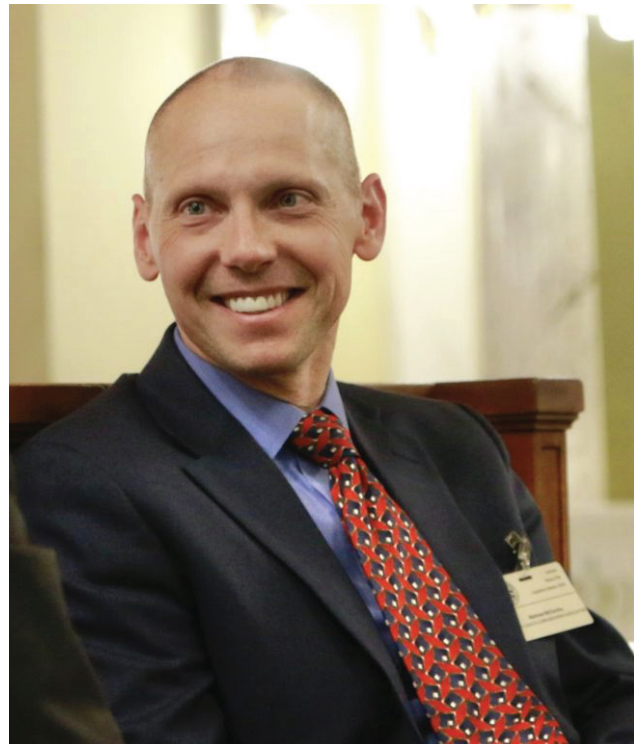
McCaulley shuns publicity and operates mostly behind-the-scenes of the legislative process. But his work for Noem over the past 15 months, while continuing to lobby for 16 private clients, has raised some eyebrows in Pierre. The dual role — well known by decision-makers in Pierre — could give McCaulley unfair and undue influence to affect policy and legislation, according to one legislative leader.

"I do think it's problematic," said Senate Minority Leader Troy Heinert, D-Mission. "If you're going to lobby for the governor's office, or any government department, you shouldn't be able to lobby for the private sector."

In an interview with South Dakota News Watch, McCaulley said he would not comment on his relationships with current clients, including the governor. Instead, he said he thrives on public service and always tries to do what he thinks is best for South Dakota and for his clients, whether they are in private industry or in the Governor's Office.

"I'm never looking for the attention or the credit. I want to help move the state forward, figure out what's good, sound public policy, fix problems and just keep us moving forward," McCaulley said.

McCaulley's pattern of success has positioned him to play key roles in some of South Dakota's most



"Once you get out [to Pierre] and you meet the great people and you see the difference that just one person can make as an elected official, public service kind of gets in your blood. I think It's hard to walk away from that." -- Matt McCaulley, lawyer, lobbyist and legal counsel to Gov. Kristi Noem, on why he transitioned to lobbying after serving in the state Legislature

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 26 of 73

complex, controversial issues.

"This is a guy who legitimately wants to get deals done. He wants to solve problems, he wants to make South Dakota better," said Nathan Sanderson, a senior policy adviser to former South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Sanderson worked closely with McCaulley, in 2017, to draft and successfully lobby for a controversial piece of legislation to address the state's handling of legally unrecognized lakes that had formed over private property. The meandered waters bill was passed into law during a special legislative session.

In 2018, McCaulley was listed as the attorney of record for a pharmaceutical industry-backed group called South Dakotans Against the Deceptive Rx Ballot Measure. The group filed a legal challenge that ultimately got an initiated measure aimed at controlling the price of prescription drugs thrown off the 2018 general election ballot.

McCaulley helped draft and successfully lobbied for then-newly elected Gov. Kristi Noem's so-called riot-boosting legislation in 2019. The riot-boosting laws caused outrage among the state's Native American communities and ultimately were negated by a settlement in federal court.

During the 2020 legislative session, McCaulley worked as a lobbyist for Heartland Consumers Power District, which sells electricity to city-owned utilities. That relationship put him on the front lines of a fight between rural electricity cooperatives and municipal utility departments.

As part of Redstone law's contract with Noem, McCaulley also registered as a lobbyist for the governor's office. Redstone's connections to the Governor's Office have been further strengthened of late as Tony Venhuizen, recently a partner in the firm, has taken over as Noem's chief of staff.



Sioux Falls lawyer and lobbyist Matt McCaulley (center), spoke with House Majority Whip Rep. Mike Diedrich, R-Rapid City, (left) and Tim Rave, CEO of the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations (right) before the House of Representatives began its session on Monday, March 9, 2020. Over nearly 15 years as a lobbyist, McCaulley has built one of the largest client lists of any lobbyist in the state with 16 private clients and one public client — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem. Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

Close ties to Gov. Noem

Beyond sharing a similar set of political values, McCaulley has professional ties to Noem going back a decade. He served as Noem's campaign attorney when she successfully ran for South Dakota's lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010. He continued to serve as Noem's campaign attorney each time she defended her seat and throughout her 2018 campaign for governor.

After Noem defeated her 2018 Democratic opponent, state Sen. Billie Sutton, she brought McCaulley in to lead her transition team. McCaulley was one of two transition team members not brought into the governor's administration full time, however. The other transition member not brought in full-time was Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden, whose elected position is part-time.

In early 2020, McCaulley and Redstone's ties to the Noem administration got even stronger. Tony Venhuizen, former Gov. Dennis Daugaard's long-time chief of staff who had gone to work for Redstone law

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 27 of 73

after leaving government, was named as Noem's interim chief of staff.

The announcement was made in late December, 2019, after the departure of Noem's second chief of staff, Joshua Shields. Venhuizen took over the role in his capacity as a lawyer providing legal services to the governor's office through the Redstone contract. Venhuizen was slated to fill the post through the 2020 legislative session. But on March 2, well before the end of the 2020 session, Noem announced that Venhuizen would officially rejoin state government as her third full-time chief of staff.

While McCaulley didn't take a full-time job with Noem, he did pick up a potentially lucrative set of contracts for his firm. On Jan. 5, 2019, former Noem chief of staff Herb Jones and McCaulley signed the first of what would become three contracts — two for legal services and one for legislative consulting services — worth a combined total of up to \$259,375.

"The governor has a long-standing professional relationship with Matt," Noem spokeswoman Kristin Wileman said in an email to South Dakota News Watch. "He brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the table, so when it came time to decide who the outside legal counsel would be for the governor's office, Matt was undoubtedly the top pick."

Redstone's first contract to provide legal services for the Governor's Office was for up to \$129,200 and expired on June 30, 2019. The second legal services contract, worth up to \$71,400, is set to expire on June 30, 2020. The legislative consulting services contract worth up to \$58,775 also is set to expire on June 30, 2020. To date, according to state records on the website open.sd.gov, South Dakota taxpayers have paid Redstone Law Firm a total of \$123,592.76 for the firm's work with the Governor's Office.

A Sioux Falls native, USD law grad

McCaulley who grew up in and around Sioux Falls, actually got his start in South Dakota politics more than 20 years ago. Not long after earning his law degree from the University of South Dakota Law School in 1997, a chance meeting with long-time legislator and lawyer Roger Hunt provided the spark.

"Had I not had coffee with Roger Hunt, and had he not urged me, I certainly wouldn't be here today," McCaulley said.

Hunt's prodding led McCaulley to run for and win a seat in the state House of Representatives as a Republican in 2000. He represented District 10, in the eastern part of Sioux Falls, from 2001 to 2004.

By 2004, McCaulley had learned that being a lawyer and a legislator isn't easy and only gets tougher with a pregnant wife at home. He resigned from the legislature on May 10, 2004 and became a father that September.

McCaulley joined what would become Redstone Law Firm in 2004. At the time, the firm was known as Murphy, Goldammer and Prendergast after its founding partners. One partner, Jeremiah D. Murphy, had decades of experience as a lobbyist in Pierre and had helped then-Gov. Bill Janklow in his effort to convince Citibank to relocate to Sioux Falls. Murphy became McCaulley's mentor and, in 2006, McCaulley was back in the Capitol learning the ropes of lobbying under Murphy's tutelage.

"Once you get out (to Pierre) and you meet the great people and you see the difference that just one person can make as an elected official, public service kind of gets in your blood," McCaulley said. "I think it's hard to walk away from that."

One of McCaulley's earliest clients was the South Dakota Corn Growers Association. In 2008, the organization's legislative director, Teddi Mueller, needed help for what would turn out to be a years-long fight over how to fairly assess property taxes on agricultural lands. She said she had heard of McCaulley and that he was a quick study. Their first conversation took place over the phone as McCaulley was headed to Pierre; he took the job and has been working for the corn growers ever since, Mueller said.

"He never tries to trump our decisions ... and that to me is probably one of the biggest pieces. It's not about him, it's about making sure that the organization and the farmers of South Dakota are taken care of or benefited in the right way," Mueller said.

McCaulley's work with South Dakota corn directly led to his key role in one the most high-profile legislative debates he's participated in to date — the 2017 legislative clash over non-meandered lakes.

The fight was touched off when the South Dakota Supreme Court, in March 2017, ruled for the second time that neither the public nor landowners had a right to use non-meandered lakes for recreation. In

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 28 of 73

response, the state Game, Fish & Parks Department shut down boat ramps on several lakes and stopped helping anglers access others. The GFP move sparked a panic in communities that had come to rely on the money spent by visiting anglers.

McCaulley, who had been hired by a group of farmers whose land was flooded by non-meandered lakes, worked hand-in-hand with Sanderson, an advisor to then-Gov. Daugaard, to craft legislation aimed at solving the dispute. Ultimately, the legislation was passed during a June 2017 special legislative session.

While neither side was completely happy with the result, the new law did provide some clarity on how non-meandered lakes can be used for fishing or hunting, Sanderson said.

"I always felt like when he and I were having conversations, we could be honest and open with each other and we knew where each other stood and where the governor stood. And I certainly got the impression that we trusted each other completely and that we were going to hold each other to our word," Sanderson said of McCaulley.

Sanderson wasn't alone in coming away from the non-meandered waters debate with a positive impression of McCaulley. Rep. Steven McCleery, D-Sisseton, said he was impressed by how well McCaulley represented landowners' viewpoints and interests during the debate.


"He definitely helped make a path for that legislation to pass," McCleery said.

Still, McCaulley's work for the governor while lobbying for private clients is troubling, McCleery said. Whether real or imagined, the idea that McCaulley might have extra pull or support from the Governor's Office can affect legislators' decisions on bills he lobbies on, he said.

"I would say it does have an impact depending on the issue," McCleery said. "I think some would say it has a big impact."

McCaulley, for his part, said he was happy to have helped resolve the meandered-waters impasse that had threatened so many livelihoods. The toughest issues can be some of the most rewarding to work on, if you're in it for the right reasons, he said.

"If you're serving for the right reason, and it's not just to advance yourself, then it makes politics and public policy a lot of fun," McCaulley said.



**ABOUT
NICK LOWREY**

Nick Lowrey, based in Pierre, S.D., is an investigative staff reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A South Dakotan for more than 20 years, he is a former editor of the Pierre Capital Journal.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 29 of 73

Covid-19 Update - by Marie Miller

New record: We added over 500 cases today--first time for that. The percentage increase was fairly steady, but when you have this many cases, the same percentage is more cases. We're now at 2759 cases in 49 states, DC, and Puerto Rico. For reference, a week ago, we had 340 cases, so we've added over 2400 cases in one week. Growth is still exponential. The top states all have large numbers of cases with WA at 607, NY at 524, CA at 377, MA at 123, and CO at 102. Then we have 6 states with 50-100 cases, 21 with 10-50, and 18 still in single digits. It is particularly notable that LA had 0 cases at the beginning of the week and now reports 77. I'm not sure what's operating there, but this is significant. WV stands alone as the only state still not reporting any cases.

It should be noted that these counts are expected to increase very rapidly as more testing becomes available. All are aware that we have myriad undetected cases in the population.

This seems like a good time to note that the US did not report its first case until January 22, well under two months ago. Things have progressed quickly, which is what you expect when you introduce a novel virus into a naïve (unprotected) population. I read today that some estimate we're about two weeks behind Italy in progression of the epidemic. Hope that we don't go the same way they did; that's nowhere we wish to end up.

There have been 59 deaths. 40 of these were in WA, 30 of which are in King County and 27 of those associated with a single nursing home. Another 10 states account for the other 18 deaths.

We are seeing broadening of the social distancing strategies across the country, especially in school closings and other cancellations. On the other hand, we're also seeing people, especially young ones who feel invincible, hitting the bars for St. Patrick's Day celebrations across the country. That's undoubtedly not so smart. I encourage folks to remember that, even if you come through this in fine shape, the person to whom you transmit it may not; you could cost someone a life.

I listened today to a 90-minute interview with Michael Osterholm, a biosecurity and infectious disease specialist who is Director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. He had a lot to say about pandemic disease in general and this episode in particular. Some notes from that interview:

He feels this is likely primarily an airborne infection. He thinks breathing is the best way to transmit it and that other forms of contact are likely minimal by comparison. He's a big fan of at-risk populations staying out of public spaces insofar as possible, and he indicates the age for at-risk probably begins at 55 rather than 60 or 65. He also adds obesity to the list of predisposing conditions for severe disease--not a good thing for our population which includes a fair contingent of folks who classify as obese. He is predicting, based on extensive experience and deep knowledge of coronaviruses, that this will wind up looking about 10-15 times worse than a very severe flu season and that we're going to be dealing with this for 3-6 months. He sees no way this will turn out to be seasonal, so you can kiss that hope good-bye.

And he talked about vaccine development. He mentioned that a complicating factor in producing a safe vaccine is going to be the predisposition of this virus's close relative SARS-CoV (that causes SARS) to a phenomenon called antibody-dependent enhancement (ADE), a good indication that this one's going to give us trouble too. I will note that we still don't have a SARS vaccine some 15 years down the road, although part of this is probably that the virus sort of burned itself out in the population, making a vaccine a less urgent priority. ADE is pretty complicated, but the short version is that it is possible for the antibodies the patient produces in response to the vaccine (which are supposed to neutralize viruses so they can't cause trouble) to instead make it easier for the virus to invade your cells. This is precisely the opposite of what we're looking for, and if that develops, we'll be back to the drawing board for a new vaccine formulation.

When asked why we can't speed vaccine production up, he said, essentially, that you can mix up a vaccine over the weekend, but the testing--for safety and effectiveness--proceeds stepwise from animal trials to small clinical safety studies to larger and then larger trials and that each of these steps has a built-in timeline you can't rush. He analogized the development process to growing corn: He pointed out that, if you want to harvest your corn sooner in the season, it won't help to plant twice as many seeds; the corn's

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 30 of 73

still going to take just as long to grow. And likewise, putting more resources into vaccine testing isn't going to get you a vaccine sooner; it's still going to take just as long to put through trials. He thinks we're closer to two or more years away from that than the year we'd been hoping for.

I did go back today to my Update #15, posted on March 12, and add a newspaper to my list of those offering coverage of this pandemic outside the paywall, so you can check that out if you're looking for news you don't have to pay for. News organizations have been doing stellar work reporting and explaining, so you can learn a lot from hitting up one of these resources.

And I encourage you to keep working on control measures in your own life. But please stay out of the bars for a while. We're a long way from out of the woods on this one. Stay well.

From Ben Doherty at the Guardian:

"In Australia, Dr Adam Visser, the director of critical care at Toowoomba hospital in regional Queensland, has posted an impassioned plea for the Australian community to take individual action to help 'flatten the curve' and keep intensive care units from being overwhelmed by Covid-19 cases.

"I'm an intensive care specialist in a small city.

Coronavirus isn't just like the flu, but it's only really very dangerous to the elderly or the already unwell. Quite a lot of people in their 80s will die, but most of the rest of us will probably be OK.

"If you're in your 70s and you get Coronavirus, you've got a really good chance of survival. If I've got a bed for you.

"If you're in your 60s and you have a heart attack, you've got a really good chance of survival. If I've got a bed for you.

"If you're in your 50s and need bowel cancer surgery, you've got a really good chance of survival. If I've got a bed for you.

"If you're in your 40s and have a bad car accident, you've got a really good chance of survival. If I've got a bed for you.

"If you're in your 30s and have terrible pre-eclampsia as a complication of pregnancy, you've got a really good chance of survival. If I've got a bed for you.

"If you're in your 20s and have a bad reaction to a party drug, you've got a really good chance of survival. If I've got a bed for you.

"I have 7 beds equipped with life support machines. We have a plan to increase to about 25. Getting more isn't a matter of more equipment or more money, that bit is easy. There are not enough skilled staff, even if we all work double shifts every day for six months (and we probably will).











"If 50% of my city gets infected, that's 75,000 people. If 5% of them need life support (which is the estimate), that's 3750 people. For 25 beds.

"And then I might not have a bed for you.

"So it's up to you to flatten the curve. Wash your hands. Stay home."

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 31 of 73

Symptoms	Coronavirus Symptoms range from mild to severe	Cold Gradual onset of symptoms	Flu Abrupt onset of symptoms
 Fever	Common	Rare	Common
 Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
 Cough	Common* (usually dry)	Mild	Common* (usually dry)
 Sneezing	No	Common	No
 Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 Diarrhea	Rare	No	Sometimes for children
 Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No

Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Life of Sandra June Clocksene



The funeral service for Sandra 'Sandy' June Clocksene, 76, of Aberdeen, SD, will be 11:00am, Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ferney, with Pastor Lloyd Redhage officiating. Burial at Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen. Sandra died Friday, March 13, at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, Aberdeen.

Visitation will be 3:00-7:00pm, Monday, with family present from 5:00-7:00pm, followed by a prayer service at 7:00pm, at Spitzer-Miller Funeral Home, 1111 South Main Street.

Sandra June Olson was born June 8, 1943, to Engval 'Inky' and Agnes (Zimmerman) Olson in Aberdeen. Her family lived in Houghton, Columbia and Westport when she was growing up. In 1949, they moved to Aberdeen. In high school Sandra was active in a musical group. She graduated from Central High School in 1961. After high school she worked at Foster Adjustment.

On September 5, 1965, Sandra was united in marriage to Carroll Clocksene at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Aberdeen. Together they made their home on a farm near Groton, SD. Sandra and Carroll worked together on the farm for many years. Sandra was a substitute teacher at the Groton

High School for many years. After Carroll died on March 2, 2011, Sandra moved to Aberdeen and has lived there since with her sister, Rita, in the house that they were raised in.

Sandra was an active member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Ferney. She was a past member of the American Legion Auxiliary in Groton. She enjoyed the outdoors, keeping up her yard, gardening, and always decorated her house for holidays. Sandra was known for her baking and taught her granddaughters to bake. When they were younger, Sandra and Carroll played on bowling leagues. They liked to camp and travel. Some of Sandra's favorite trips were to Disney World and taking cruises. She was an avid Northern State University basketball fan. Having coffee with her friends and classmates was a favorite pastime of hers. Sandra was totally devoted to her family. There is nothing that she would not do for her daughters and grandchildren.

Grateful for having shared Sandra's life are her daughters: Michelle (Roger) Clemensen, Conde, SD, and Tricia (Todd) Vander Linden, Webster, SD; her grandchildren: Logan (Megan) Clemensen, Shay Clemensen, Abby Vander Linden, and Kelsey Vander Linden; one great-grandchild: Adalynn Clemensen and her sibling who is expected in May; her sister: Rita Olson, Aberdeen; sister-in-law: Marilyn Clocksene, Groton; and her cousins: Tom (Jill) Olson and Bob (Cheri) Olson.

Preceding Sandra in death are her husband: Carroll Clocksene; her parents: Engval 'Inky' and Agnes Olson; her brother: Bruce Olson; a nephew: Roger Olson; and her father-in-law Lyle Clocksene and special mother-in-law: Louise Clocksene.

www.spitzerfuneralhome.com

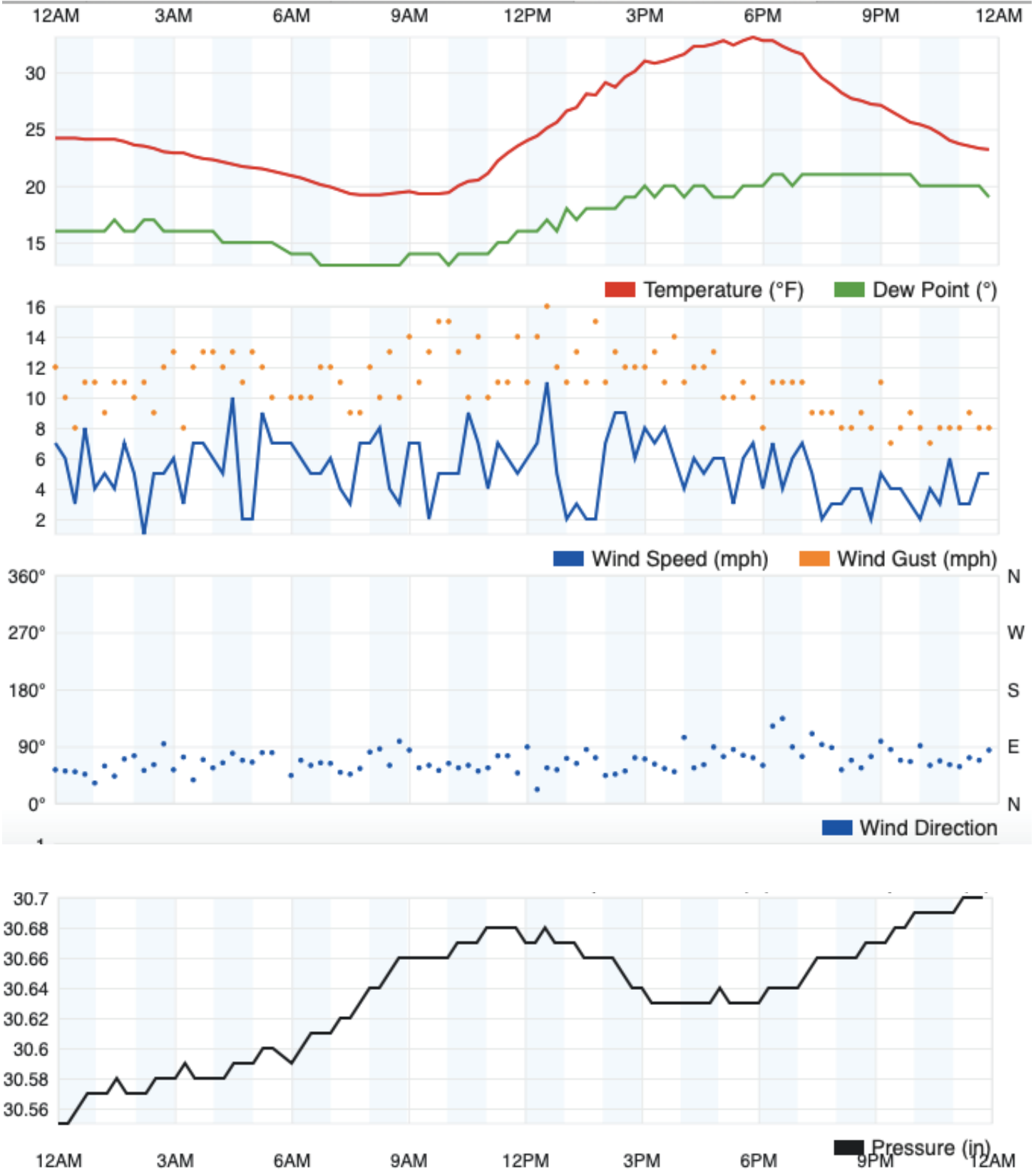
Death Notice: Madelin Daly

Madelin Daly, 95 of Jamestown and formerly of Groton passed away March 14, 2020 at Eventide in Jamestown, ND, Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 33 of 73

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 34 of 73

Today



Cloudy

High: 37 °F

Tonight



Cloudy

Low: 30 °F

Monday



Decreasing
Clouds

High: 36 °F

Monday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 22 °F

Tuesday



Sunny

High: 38 °F

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

Today	Tonight	Monday
33 to 40° Wintry Mix North Central	25 to 31° Light Snow East of the James Valley	35-40° AM Light Snow East of the James Valley

Created 3/15/2020 4:43 AM

Low pressure will nose up into the Dakotas today. Most of the region will only see clouds, but north central may see a light wintry mix this morning. Light snow will move over the Prairie Coteau tonight and Monday morning. Little to no accumulation is expected.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 35 of 73

Today in Weather History

March 15, 1941: Beware the Ides of March. The most severe blizzard in modern history strikes North Dakota and Minnesota. The blizzard began on a Saturday night while many are traveling, and thus claims 71 lives. Winds gust to 75 mph at Duluth, Minnesota, and reach 85 mph at Grand Forks, North Dakota. Snow drifts twelve feet high were reported in north-central Minnesota. A cold front traveling 30 mph crosses Minnesota in just seven hours.

March 15, 2010: Snowmelt runoff from an extensive snow cover flooded many creeks, roads, along with thousands of acres of pasture and cropland throughout northeast South Dakota. There were numerous road closures. The flooding lasted through the end of the month and for many locations in April. The counties mainly affected were Brown, Marshall, Day, Spink, and Roberts. Numerous communities were affected, including Aberdeen, Claremont, Waubay, Amherst, Kidder, and the Richmond Lake area. The Claremont, Amherst, and Britton areas were the hardest hit with flooded land and roads. Several farms were surrounded by water, with some people stranded. Between Aberdeen and Britton, sixty percent of the area was underwater. Thousands of acres of cropland will not be planted due to too much water, with estimates that 20 to 25 percent of Brown county cropland would not be planted. Many people in northeast South Dakota have had too much water for many years. The road damage was extensive, and repairs will be in the millions of dollars. Many roads across the area will also have to be raised. Many people had extra-long commutes due to flooded streets, with some people having to move out of their homes. Across Day and Marshall Counties, rising lakes threatened many homes and cabins with sandbagging taking place. Most lakes and rivers across northeast South Dakota were at or near record levels.

1938: A tornado hit McPaul, Iowa, while moving from southeast to northwest. Another tornado raced through Batesville, Illinois, at 60 to 65 mph. Another tornado causing F4 damage killed 10 and injured 12 in St. Clair County, Missouri. This tornado was part of an outbreak that produced four different tornadoes and was responsible for 11 deaths and 42 injuries.

1952: On Reunion Island, some 400 miles east of Madagascar 127.56 inches of rain fell in three days in the spring of 1952. This set a world record for the most rainfall in 72 hours. Also, from the 15th to the 16th, 73.62 inches of rain fell in the 24 hours at Cilaos, La Reunion Island in the South Indian Ocean to set a world record.

2004: Brownsville, Texas, breaks a century-old record for the most significant daily rainfall accumulation for March with 3.23 inches.

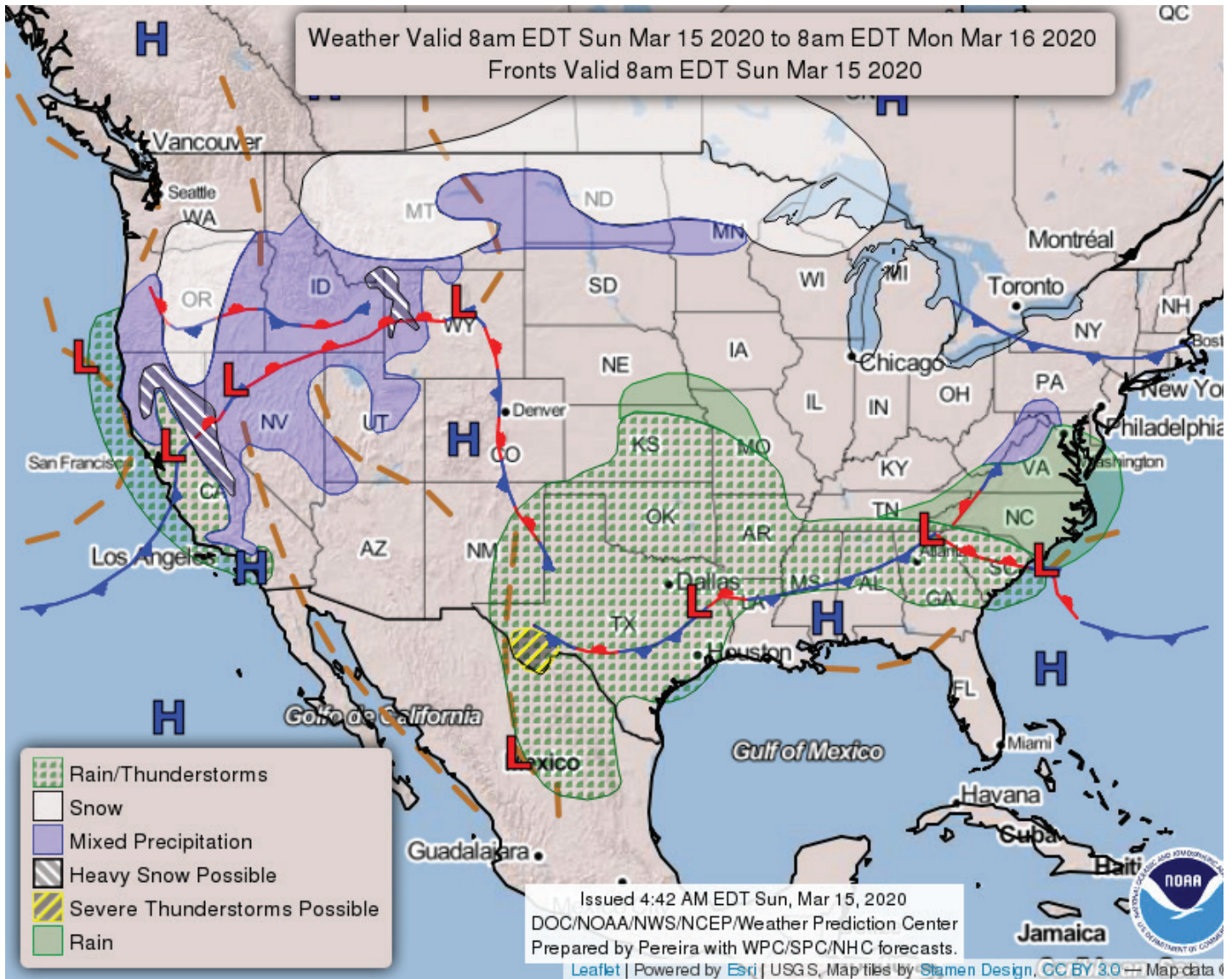
Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 36 of 73

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 33 °F at 5:49 PM
Low Temp: 19 °F at 9:50 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 12:25 PM
Snow

Record High: 79° in 2015
Record Low: -29° in 1897
Average High: 39°F
Average Low: 20°F
Average Precip in March.: 0.44
Precip to date in March.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.46
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 7:40 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:43 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 37 of 73



KEEP AT IT!

Little Leslie looked out the window at a large snowbank that blocked the sidewalk to the front door. He decided to do something about it. Bundling up in his warmest clothes, he got a snow shovel, went outside, and began to remove the snow.

His neighbor was walking by and said to him, "How can such a small child like you expect to remove so much snow?"

Looking at the man in the eye he said, "My Dad told me that if I don't give up and keep at something, I can always get through it!"

The committed person is not the one who sees through something. The committed person is the one who sees something through!

Paul said that Christians are to "stay true to the Lord." This is often difficult to do. We need to constantly and continually remind ourselves to keep our eyes on Jesus and never forget that this world is not our home. We need to "see through" until we "see what is": heaven.

George Whitfield constantly prayed, "Lord keep a thorn in my nest so I won't get too comfortable and forget that I am here on this earth to work for You every day of my life."

Prayer: Lord, give us the courage to stay with You, see life through You, and remain steadfast in You, show those around us that we love You and look forward to being with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 38 of 73

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 03/14/2020 Youth Girls/Boys Basketball Tourney Grades 4th-6th (Baseball/Softball Foundation Fundraiser)
 - 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - 04/04/2020 Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - 04/25/2020 Fireman's 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

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 39 of 73

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:

Dakota Cash

01-14-22-27-30

(one, fourteen, twenty-two, twenty-seven, thirty)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

10-17-29-46-51, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 2

(ten, seventeen, twenty-nine, forty-six, fifty-one; Star Ball: ten; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$8.65 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$90 million

Powerball

09-23-26-30-32, Powerball: 8, Power Play: 3

(nine, twenty-three, twenty-six, thirty, thirty-two; Powerball: eight; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$120 million

Rapid City High School gets rid of bells, empowers students

By MORGAN MATZEN Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City High School has made some significant changes in the last three years to give students more independence with their schedules and the pace at which they learn course material.

It started three years ago when the school added advising and mentoring for each of their 325 students. Then in the fall, the school switched to a personalized learning system. Now, the school has decommissioned its bells.

Principal Shane Heilman said all these different methods prevent students from “falling through the cracks.” Data from the school suggests that RCHS is on pace for a 45 percent reduction in the dropout rate this school year.

“Every student has an adult mentor in the school. That’s the huge point that has helped kids connect to the school,” he told the Rapid City Journal. “It makes it harder for them to fail, because they’ve got someone watching them, meeting them every day.”

No bells

RCHS has done away with school bells and class periods. The school implemented the “no bell” system in November on Fridays to test out the idea and see how students adjust. Now, the bells are gone for good, and a new individualized “flex schedule” takes their place.

Heilman said the change allows students to have more ownership of their day, as they can make their own schedule to fit their needs.

It allows students to “take the reins a little more,” Heilman said. “It increases motivation and ownership.”

Students who might struggle with time management can make their own schedule as well as sign up to see guest speakers and go to mental health counseling and social worker appointments among other daily needs, Heilman said. The school also provides a food pantry, laundry service and tutoring zones for students.

Jeff Nelsen, a geometry in construction teacher, said the “no bell” flex schedule gives students the freedom to choose the courses they need on a daily basis.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 40 of 73

"It frees the students up to work on other courses where they may be struggling," Nelsen said.

Nelsen said the change not only helps the students, but helps him to more effectively teach his hands-on building course. Nelsen is able to teach his course in two- or three-hour blocks, instead of hour-long classes spread throughout the school week.

He's also been able to take students to work on the historic McGillicuddy House for a few afternoons every week for two to three hours.

"Under a traditional bell schedule, it's difficult to schedule a three-hour class because I'm interfering with two other classes," Nelsen said. "It helps the students get engaged in the work. They can work continuously for two to three hours."

Mazie Croyle, a student representative on the school board, said at a board meeting Monday night that the school is seeing lower dropout numbers because of the flex schedule.

"It's certainly changing the environment and reducing many of our issues in dropouts," Croyle said. She said the school is collecting data this semester to see how it will continue to help students.

Personalized learning

This fall, the school introduced a personalized learning system, which means students are held accountable for mastering course material regardless of the time it takes to do so.

"In traditional schooling, time is a constant and learning is the variable," Heilman said. "In traditional schools, we know how long a student will be in a course. But how much each student learns is going to vary greatly."

Students and their advisors can customize the amount of time they need to spend on each subject. A student who may excel in math might be behind in reading, for example, and could customize their schedule and education path to accommodate their needs.

Traditional schooling is "why a lot of kids develop academic gaps," Heilman said. "That's why at our school, we get kids who are reading and doing math at an elementary level. We know exactly what each kid is going to learn, we just don't know how long it will take."

Sean Binder, who teaches a youth internship course at RCHS, said students who have a choice about their pace in school have more success after high school entering the workforce or getting into college.

"It's exciting to see (our students) become autonomous learners," Binder said. "It flips the script. Before, learners had to be ready for the teachers. Now, teachers have to be ready for the learners. It's an exciting challenge."

Blended learning

The school has also implemented blended learning, which is a combination of online and face-to-face teaching.

Sabrina Henriksen, a chemistry teacher, said she uses a website called Canvas to upload videos that students can follow if they miss a day of class, or simply need to review a topic.

"It makes everything accessible," she said. "They don't have to feel like they're behind, and they don't come back (to class) behind."

Advising and mentoring

Heilman said that every teacher is a mentor or a career and college planning advisor, and they help the students with self-regulation, organization and self-efficacy.

"(We) teach kids how to take ownership of their lives and improve their habits, thinking patterns and strategies for how to successfully navigate their lives and their challenges" Heilman said. "A lot of places assume kids should have these skills. Most schools don't teach these skills."

Henriksen said she's had a successful relationship with one of the students she advises each week.

"He calls me his school mom," she said of the student. "He can come to me if he has a rough day, and his parents know he has someone at school (to support him). If kids know there's one caring adult in their corner, they have a better chance of success."

Iran says worsening outbreak could strain health facilities

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **JOSEPH KRAUSS** Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's official leading the country's response to the worst coronavirus outbreak in the Middle East on Sunday acknowledged that the pandemic could overwhelm health facilities in Iran, which is under severe U.S. sanctions.

Muslim authorities, meanwhile, announced that the Al-Aqsa mosque in east Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam, would be closed indefinitely due to concerns about the outbreak, with prayers continuing to be held on the sprawling esplanade outside.

Similar measures have been taken at the nearby Western Wall, the holiest place where Jews can pray, where outdoor prayers continue but only 10 people at a time are permitted in enclosed areas, in keeping with measures taken by the Israeli government.

Iran is battling one of the worst outbreaks outside China, with nearly 13,000 confirmed cases and more than 600 fatalities. The real number of infections could be even higher, as questions have been raised about the government's transparency.

"If the trend continues, there will not be enough capacity," Ali Reza Zali, who is leading the campaign against the outbreak, was quoted as saying by the state-run IRNA news agency.

Iran is believed to have around 110,000 hospital beds, including 30,000 in the capital, Tehran. Authorities have pledged to set up mobile clinics as needed.

Zali also acknowledged that "many" of those who have died from the COVID-19 illness caused by the virus were otherwise healthy, a rare admission by local authorities that the virus does not only prey on the sick and elderly.

Health Ministry figures show that while 55% of fatalities were in their 60s, some 15% were younger than 40.

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 illness, including pneumonia. Most people recover in a matter of weeks.

The virus has infected more than 150,000 people worldwide and killed more than 5,800. More than 70,000 people worldwide have recovered after being infected.

In Iran, the virus has infected a number of senior officials, including the senior vice president, Cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Revolutionary Guard members and Health Ministry officials.

Authorities have nevertheless been slow to adopt measures taken by other hard-hit countries. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday ruled out a general quarantine and said the government was working to keep the borders open.

Dalia Samhouri, a senior regional official with the World Health Organization, said both Iran and Egypt, two of the most populous countries in the Middle East, were likely underreporting cases because of the nature of the virus, which can be spread by individuals who show no visible symptoms.

"We can easily say that the current figures are an underestimation of the actual figures," she said.

Iran has struggled to respond in part because of crippling sanctions imposed by the Trump administration after the U.S. withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal. The U.S. says it has offered humanitarian aid but that Iran has rejected it.

Countries across the Middle East have imposed sweeping travel restrictions, cancelled public events and in some cases called on non-essential businesses to close for the coming weeks.

In the skyscraper-studded city of Dubai, a global business and travel hub in the United Arab Emirates, authorities announced on Sunday that all movie theaters, arcades and gyms would be closed through the end of the month.

Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, also shut down its amusement parks and museums through the end of the month, including Louvre Abu Dhabi.

The UAE's central bank meanwhile announced a \$27 billion stimulus package directed at supporting banks and said regulatory limits on loans will be eased. Saudi Arabia announced its own \$13 billion stimulus plan.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 42 of 73

Al-Aqsa is the latest in a series of religious sites where access has been halted or strictly limited. Saudi Arabia has halted the umrah pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and could be forced to limit or cancel the much larger haj later this year. On Sunday, it announced the temporary closure of all mosques and called off Friday prayers.

Sheikh Omar Kiswani, the director of the Al-Aqsa mosque, said Sunday that the closure of the mosque and other buildings on the compound, including the iconic golden Dome of the Rock, would continue indefinitely.

The religious site is also the holiest in Judaism because it was the location of the two Jewish temples in antiquity. Israel occupied and annexed east Jerusalem in the 1967 war in a move not recognized internationally. The Palestinians want east Jerusalem to be the capital of their future state, and the religious site has often been a flashpoint in the decades-long conflict.

Israel imposed sweeping travel and quarantine measures more than a week ago but has seen its number of confirmed cases double in recent days, to around 200. On Saturday, the government said restaurants, malls, movies, gyms and daycare centers would close. Schools and universities have already been shut down until next month.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trial on serious corruption charges, which was supposed to begin this week, was postponed for two months due to restrictions on public gatherings.

Netanyahu has meanwhile been pressing for an emergency unity government with his main rival, former military chief Benny Gantz, following three inconclusive elections and more than a year of political deadlock. Gantz has appeared open to the idea.

Jordan, which had previously reported just one infection in a man who later recovered, confirmed six new cases. Four are French tourists while the other two are Jordanians, Health Minister Saad Jaber said Sunday.

Jordan has suspended all flights into and out of the kingdom except for aid workers and diplomats, and has closed schools for two weeks. It has also banned the smoking of hookahs, or water pipes, in cafes.

Krauss reported from Jerusalem. Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Jerusalem, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Omar Akour in Amman, Jordan, and Maggie Michael in Cairo contributed to this report.

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

Americans return to long waits for screenings at US airports

Associated Press undefined

As weary travelers returned to the U.S. amid coronavirus-related travel restrictions, they were greeted with packed, hourslong waits for required medical screenings at airports.

Posts on social media indicated passengers at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport waited upward of four hours in winding lines, eliciting criticism from elected Illinois officials.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker tweeted at President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, noting that the customs process is under federal jurisdiction and demanding they take action to address the crowds. His concerns were echoed on Twitter by his fellow Democrats, Illinois Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth.

"This is unacceptable, counterproductive and exactly the opposite of what we need to do to prevent #COVID19," Duckworth tweeted. "The Trump Administration must send more support to O'Hare immediately."

While U.S. citizens, green card holders and some others are allowed to return home, travelers from Europe are being funneled to one of 13 U.S. airports where they're subject to health screenings and quarantine orders.

Acknowledging the long lines at those airports in tweets posted just after midnight, the Department of Homeland Security's acting secretary said the screenings take about a minute per passenger.

"Right now we are working to add additional screening capacity and working with the airlines to expedite

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 43 of 73

the process," Chad Wolf tweeted. "I understand this is very stressful. In these unprecedented times, we ask for your patience."

The dense crowds at the selected airports — among the busiest across the country — formed even as public health officials call for "social distancing" to stem the spread of the virus.

"I'm less concerned about having to stand here for the amount of time that I am, and more concerned about where the people are traveling from that are around me and what they may or may not have been exposed to," Dorothy Lowe told WFAA-TV at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, where some waits stretched to three hours.

The Texas airport's Twitter account responded to passengers who raised concerns about the cramped conditions, saying its customer experience team was taking "extra precautions" and that hand sanitizer was available in all terminals. Meanwhile, O'Hare and Chicago police offered queuers bottled water and snacks, according to the airport's Twitter account.

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.

Travelers from restricted countries in Europe, China and Iran are being advised to self-quarantine for 14 days after reaching their final destination in the U.S.

"If you don't have to travel, I wouldn't do it," Trump said.

The worldwide outbreak has sickened more than 156,000 people and left more than 5,800 dead, with thousands of new cases confirmed each day. The death toll in the United States climbed to 57, while infections neared 3,000.

Hospitals across the U.S. are working to expand bed capacity and staffing to keep from becoming overwhelmed as the caseload continues to mount.

"We have not reached our peak," said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health. "We will see more cases, and we will see more suffering and death."

Millions of Americans braced for the week ahead with no school for their children for many days to come, no clue how to effectively do their jobs without child care, and a growing sense of dread about how to stay safe and sane amid the relentless spread of the coronavirus.

Tens of millions of students nationwide have been sent home from school amid a wave of closings that include all of Ohio, Maryland, Oregon, Washington state, Florida and Illinois along with big-city districts like Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Some schools announced they will close for three weeks, others for up to six.

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

Countries around the world announce more virus restrictions

By **JOSEPH WILSON** and **GEIR MOULSON** Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Authorities around the world turned to increasingly drastic measures Sunday to try to slow the spread of the new coronavirus, with lockdowns, curfews and travel restrictions spreading.

Soldiers and police sealed the densely populated Philippine capital from most domestic travelers in one of Southeast Asia's most drastic containment measures. The move mirrored a lockdown Spain announced just hours earlier for its 46 million citizens.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 44 of 73

France ordered the closing of just about everything the rest of the world loves about it — the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the cafes and restaurants — as governments took increasingly desperate measures to put more space between people and contain the virus.

At U.S. airports, travelers returning from Europe were greeted with hourslong waits for required medical screenings. While American citizens, green card holders and some others are allowed to return to the U.S. amid new European travel restrictions, they're being funneled to 13 U.S. airports where they're subject to health screenings and quarantine orders.

Videos and photos posted on social media showed packed, winding lines of returning travelers. On Twitter, airports like Dallas/Fort Worth and Chicago O'Hare acknowledged the delays and asked for patience.

President Donald Trump announced that the U.S., which days ago barred travelers from most of Europe, will extend the ban to Britain and Ireland. And more cities in the U.S. put in place curbs on gatherings of more than a few hundred people, with one New Jersey city even announcing an overnight curfew.

In China, where the virus was first detected in December, those arriving on overseas flights were routed to a converted exhibition center for initial checks before being shuttled off to their homes or other quarantine locations.

It was clear, however, that the center of gravity in the crisis had shifted westward toward Europe and North America. The virus has infected more than 150,000 people worldwide and killed over 5,600.

In a nationally televised address Saturday, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez detailed the battery of exceptional measures put in place as part of a two-week state of emergency to fight the sharp rise in infections.

Later Saturday, Spain's government said Sánchez's wife had tested positive for the coronavirus. Begoña Gómez and the prime minister are in good health, the government said.

In a lockdown similar to the one already imposed in Italy, people will be allowed to leave their homes only to buy food and medicine, commute to work, go to hospitals and banks, or take trips related to the care of the young and the elderly. All schools and universities were closed, along with restaurants, bars, hotels and other nonessential retail businesses.

"From now we enter into a new phase," Sánchez said after a Cabinet meeting that lasted over seven hours. "We won't hesitate in doing what we must to beat the virus. We are putting health first."

Spanish authorities said the number of infections climbed past 5,700, half of them in the capital, Madrid. That represents a national increase of over 1,500 in 24 hours. The country had 136 deaths, up from 120. Spain has the fifth-highest number of cases, behind China, Italy, Iran and South Korea.

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 in a matter of weeks.

Despite pleas for calm from authorities, shoppers packed supermarkets in Spain in the morning. But overall, the normally bustling streets of the country's two biggest cities were noticeably quieter as the message sank in that social distancing is the only way to stop the pandemic.

"We had to close and remain shut for 15 days," restaurant owner Rachel Paparardo said in Barcelona, which was already under regional restrictions. "But this is nothing. It is just so more people don't get infected and we can recover from this."

In the Philippines, new restrictions for metropolitan Manila — home to more than 12 million people — that went into effect Sunday mean the suspension of domestic travel by land, air and sea to and from the capital region, as well as an overnight curfew.

Large gatherings are prohibited and most government work in executive department offices will be suspended in the metropolis for a month. School closures at all levels were extended in the Philippines, which has confirmed 140 cases of the virus, including 11 deaths.

In the Middle East, Muslim authorities announced that Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque, Islam's third-holiest site, would be closed indefinitely due to concerns about the outbreak, with prayers continuing to be held on the sprawling esplanade outside.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trial on serious corruption charges, which was supposed to

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 45 of 73

begin this week, was postponed for two months due to restrictions on public gatherings.

Paris followed other cities in shuttering major tourist attractions, and France announced the closing of all restaurants, cafes, theaters and nonessential shops starting Sunday. France has recorded at least 3,600 infections. It has banned all gatherings of more than 100 people, ordered all schools closed and asked companies to allow workers to stay home.

France pressed ahead with nationwide municipal elections on Sunday but ordered special measures to keep people at a safe distance and to sanitize surfaces.

In Italy, the worst-hit European country, the number of deaths climbed past 1,400 and infections surged roughly 20% overnight to more than 21,000 because of what authorities characterized as irresponsible behavior by people still socializing despite the nationwide lockdown. Many Italian cities, including Rome and Milan, decided to close playgrounds and parks, too.

In Britain, the death toll nearly doubled from the day before to 21, and the number of people infected rose to over 1,100. Ireland had 90 confirmed cases and one death as of Friday. Greece's infection total approached 230 with three deaths, and police there arrested 45 shopkeepers Saturday for violating a ban on operations.

The U.S. has seen 60 deaths and more than 2,100 cases. In hard-hit Washington state, where 40 have died and more than 550 have been infected, officials said the disease is straining the supply of protective gear available to medical providers despite shipments from the federal government.

Trump tested negative for the new coronavirus, the president's personal physician said Saturday.

European countries took steps to isolate themselves from their neighbors.

Denmark closed its borders and halted passenger traffic to and from the country. Poland planned to close its borders at midnight and deny all foreigners entry unless they lived in Poland or had personal ties there. The Czech Republic and Slovakia took similar action.

Russia said its borders with Norway and Poland will be closed to most foreigners beginning Sunday.

In the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand announced that incoming travelers will be required to isolate themselves for 14 days, with few exceptions.

In New Zealand, passengers aboard a cruise ship in the South Island tourist town of Akaroa were not being allowed off the vessel Sunday while three passengers are tested for the new coronavirus.

Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield said that one of the passengers on the Golden Princess is being treated as a suspected case because that person has developed symptoms of the disease and is a close contact of another person who has been confirmed as having contracted COVID-19.

Bloomfield said they should get the test results on Monday, and that officials are considering their response should the case be confirmed.

He says one lesson from observing problems with the virus spreading on other cruise ships is to avoid leaving everybody on board. Bloomfield didn't elaborate on what form any response might take.

Moulson reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Aritz Parra in Madrid, Sylvie Corbet in Paris, Yanan Wang in Beijing, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Joseph Wilson in Barcelona, Spain, Andrew Taylor in Washington, Karel Janicek in Prague, Nick Perry in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Jim Gomez in Manila contributed to this report.

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Oil giant Saudi Aramco sees 2019 profits drop 20% to \$88.2B

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Oil giant Saudi Aramco said Sunday its profits dropped 20% in 2019 to \$88.2 billion, a sharp decline coming as the kingdom stands ready to flood an already-weakened global energy market amid the new coronavirus pandemic.

The announcement by the firm formally known as the Saudi Arabian Oil Co. did not address the kingdom's plans to crank up production to record levels after a meeting earlier this month between OPEC and Russia failed to see nations agree to a production cut. That led to a 25% plunge in the price of crude, the sharpest decline seen since the 1991 Gulf War, and fears of a price war furthering dragging down the market.

International benchmark Brent crude traded over \$33 a barrel Sunday, with analysts worried the price could further drop. While that makes gasoline cheaper for consumers and airlines, it also affects U.S.-based oil companies and others now struggling with lower economic growth amid the virus pandemic.

In its results, Aramco blamed lower crude oil prices and declining margins for its chemical sales for lowering profits.

It also noted the chaos caused by a September attack on the heart of its oil production that temporarily halved production in the kingdom. Saudi Arabia and the West blame Iran for the attack, something Tehran denies though the missiles launched could not reach the targets if fired by the Yemen rebels who initially claimed the assault.

Saudi Aramco reported a profit of \$88.2 in 2019, down from \$111.1 billion in 2018.

Capital expenditure was down in 2019 to \$32.8 billion compared to \$35.1 billion the year before. Aramco expects to spend between \$25 billion to \$30 billion this year, down some \$10 billion than previous estimates.

It "was an exceptional year for Saudi Aramco," President and CEO Amin H. Nasser said in a statement. "Through a variety of circumstances – some planned and some not – the world was offered unprecedented insight into Saudi Aramco's agility and resilience."

The publicly released figures mark a new turn for the firm, which previously was a private company owned directly by the Al Saud ruling family that didn't need to announce results. It now must release figures after listing a sliver of its worth on Riyadh's Tadawul stock exchange.

Aramco initially listed on the Tadawul in December at 32 riyals (\$8.53) a share, giving the company a valuation of \$1.7 trillion. Initial days of trading saw shares rapidly rise, briefly giving the company the \$2 trillion valuation long sought by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who hoped listing the firm would give the kingdom cash for his economic development plans.

In the time since, however, the stock has plunged. It traded Sunday around 29 riyals (\$7.73) a share, giving it a valuation of \$1.54 trillion.

Stark challenges, however, loom ahead. The collapse of the so-called OPEC-Plus deal this month ended a three-year agreement that propped up oil prices. Now, Saudi Arabia appears poised to flood traders with its oil to claw back market share.

The Saudis have slashed oil prices and said they'd ramp up production to 12.3 million barrels a day in April, a record. The Saudi government also directed Aramco to increase output capacity to 13 million barrels a day. While it costs Saudi Arabia under \$10 a barrel to produce its oil, the kingdom's government budgets for this year had projected oil at \$55 a barrel, signaling that cuts are likely.

The UAE, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, meanwhile said it would stand ready to increase production to 4 million barrels of crude a day, up from the 3 million it now pumps.

"The onslaught of crude to hit markets in a few weeks will be enormous, swelling inventories to unprecedented levels," warned Emirates NBD, a Dubai-based bank majority owned by the sheikhdom's government.

The Aramco results did not address the current turmoil in the market. However, Nasser did comment on the new coronavirus and the COVID-19 illness, which already has depressed demand for jet fuel and slowed the Chinese economy.

"The recent COVID-19 outbreak and its rapid spread illustrate the importance of agility and adaptability in an ever-changing global landscape," Nasser said.

Also expected in 2020 is Saudi Aramco closing its \$69.1 billion purchase of a 70% stake of the petro-

chemical company SABIC from the kingdom's Public Investment Fund.

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP.

Syrian war, rumbling into 10th year, still has global impact

By ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — In a world gripped by a pandemic, global unrest and a fast-moving news cycle, it can be difficult to remember that the war in Syria is still happening.

Even before the coronavirus outbreak took over daily lives around the globe, the conflict, which began in early 2011, had largely fallen off the world's collective radars — reduced to a never-ending fight involving an ever-more complex web of players and refugees that few remember once lived in a country they called home.

But as it enters its tenth year, the war — which gave rise to the Islamic State group and triggered the worst humanitarian catastrophe of the 21st century — has shown it is still creating new tragedies that can have an outsized impact on global politics.

Earlier this month, Turkish and Syrian troops were clashing in Syria's northwest. That brought NATO-member Turkey and Russia, which back opposing sides of the war, to the brink of direct confrontation, and produced an unprecedented wave of displaced people. Arguing that it faces a potential new influx of refugees from Syria, Turkey announced it would no longer stop its vast migrant and refugee population from illegally entering Greece, touching off a new crisis for the European Union.

More than half of Syria's pre-war population of 23 million people have been driven from their homes, and a staggering 80% of the population live beneath the poverty line, according to the United Nations. Half the country lies in ruins. A political process does not exist. Contrary to what some may hope, the Syrian war is nowhere near its end-game.

CHAOS IN THE NORTH

A cease-fire brokered by the Turkish and Russian presidents in Moscow last week may have put the brakes on the Syrian government's devastating military campaign to retake the northwestern Idlib province. But the halt is not a long-term solution, and the war's final and most devastating chapter is yet to come.

In the three months before it was paused, the Syrian offensive triggered the largest single wave of displacement of the entire war. That may be dwarfed by the flight of humanity toward Turkey if Syrian President Bashar Assad resumes the assault to retake Idlib, home to some 3 million people. The area is the last remaining rebel-controlled area in Syria, and from Assad's perspective, the only place standing in the way of complete military victory.

"Even if Idlib is somehow retaken and an estimated 3 million people are accommodated in Turkey or elsewhere, it is unlikely that Damascus has the capacity or even the tools to rule over formerly opposition-controlled areas for long periods of time without trouble," said Danny Makki, a London-based Syrian journalist.

Similarly, a Turkey-Russia deal brokered in October ended a Turkish military campaign against U.S.-allied Syrian Kurdish fighters in the country's northeast. But the oil-rich region is still contested. There are hundreds American troops there, ostensibly on a mission to protect Kurdish-controlled oil fields from remnants of the Islamic State group.

Both U.S. and Russian troops patrol the tense area separately, and thousands of Iranian-backed militias are stationed nearby.

'A PERFECT STORM OF DEVASTATION'

Nearly a decade of fighting has transformed the Mideast country into a failed state providing free-for-all proxy battlefield where world powers can settle their scores.

Russia, Iran, Turkey and the U.S. all have boots on the ground in Syria. The Lebanese Hezbollah group and a slew of other Iranian-backed militias are fighting there. Israel bombs inside Syria frequently and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 48 of 73

at will. The war has pulled in so many international players that one Syrian joke says perhaps the Syrian people are the ones who need to leave the country, so as not to disturb those foreign powers fighting on their soil.

Assad, who has been able to keep his grip on the central government from Damascus throughout the war, continues to chip away at rebel-held territory with Russian help. The rebel hold has shrunk in size from more than half of the country at one point to a tiny strip in Idlib province by the Turkish border now.

But many areas recovered by the government are a wasteland of wrecked buildings. Few refugees have dared to return, and reconstruction efforts are on hold, pending a political resolution.

Meanwhile, the economic situation is deteriorating so fast that ordinary Syrians struggle keep up with prices that rise even over the course of a day. The currency is collapsing: it now takes 500 Syrian pounds to get a dollar, 20 times the pre-2011 amount. The economic squeeze has been worsened by neighboring Lebanon's acute financial crisis.

"It is a devastating dynamic, almost a perfect storm," David Beasley, head of the World Food Program, told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "You've got the war, the devastation of the war on the economy for the last eight, nine, 10 years. But now you compound the Lebanese economic collapse because the Syria and Lebanon economy are tied together, and this is really becoming a perfect storm of devastation," he said.

FULL CIRCLE?

Even if Assad were to recapture remaining rebel-controlled territory, ruling it is another issue. His government's policy of "reconciliation" in areas it already seized — effectively forced surrender of all opposition — has proven futile.

In Damascus, there has been a series of mysterious blasts targeting civilians and military personnel using explosive devices in the past three weeks.

In the southern province of Daraa, where the uprising against Assad began in March 2011, a reconciliation between the government and insurgents reached two years ago has crumbled with acts of violence reported almost on daily basis.

Ambushes, explosions and shootings left scores of fighters dead on both sides, and anti-government protests have re-erupted in some areas. Government forces responded with brute force earlier this year when tensions with insurgents turning into uprisings in several parts of Daraa, including the village of Sanamein.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group, said 217 people have been killed in violence in Daraa over the past months, including 45 civilians, 113 soldiers and pro-government gunmen, and 37 rebels who signed deals with the state in 2018.

"The growing insurgency in Daraa and the poor economic situation in Damascus is evidence that the war will not abruptly end, and in fact the socio-political and military circumstances are present to indicate that this will rumble on for many years to come," Makki said.

Associated Press writer Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

Christchurch marks anniversary of mosque shootings

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — People in the New Zealand city of Christchurch honored the 51 worshipers who were killed in a mass shooting a year ago in small but poignant ways Sunday, after a planned national memorial event was canceled due to fears it might spread the new coronavirus.

Outside the Al Noor mosque, dozens of leather-clad bikers from the Tu Tangata club performed a traditional Maori haka. They were welcomed by mosque imam Gamal Fouda, who said people of all beliefs and cultures were stopping to pay their respects, and they were all united as New Zealanders.

One of those who survived the shooting at the Linwood mosque was Mazharuddin Syed Ahmed, who said that marking anniversaries was not typically a Muslim tradition but they were doing it so the wider community could grieve and remember. He said the shootings had provoked an outpouring of love and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 49 of 73

compassion.

"Of course, we lost our loved friends, family, people and community," he said. "But we are also seeing so much good has come out of it. So looking at the positive part of that. Today, it is such a privilege to be in this country."

Temel Atacocugu, who survived after being shot nine times at the Al Noor mosque, said the anniversary had provoked strong feelings.

"We are sad more than we are angry," he said. "It's very emotional. When I woke up this morning, I'm speechless. I can't explain what I feel."

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Saturday the decision to cancel the memorial event planned for Horncastle Arena was pragmatic and precautionary.

New Zealand has had eight confirmed cases of COVID-19. All of those cases have been connected to people returning from abroad and so far there haven't been signs of a local outbreak. Ardern has enacted strict border rules in an attempt to prevent the disease from taking hold in New Zealand.

Biden, Sanders to debate against backdrop of global pandemic

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the two remaining Democratic presidential candidates return to the debate stage, their party, the stakes, and the world look much different than in their last meeting less than three weeks ago.

The fast-moving coronavirus was something of an afterthought in that debate; now the escalating crisis is likely to dominate Sunday's contest. Rising infections in the United States and around the world have prompted a dramatic slowdown of global travel, upended financial markets, and raised questions about President Donald Trump's ability to lead the nation through a prolonged period of uncertainty.

Just two Democrats — former Vice President Joe Biden and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders — remain to make the case that they are best-positioned to challenge Trump in November. Five other candidates who joined them on stage in the Feb. 25 debate in South Carolina have dropped out, with many rallying behind Biden's surging candidacy.

For both Biden and Sanders, the debate is a moment to display their leadership skills in front of what could be one of the largest audiences of the primary. They'll aim to draw a contrast with Trump, but also with each other, arguing that they have the right experience, temperament and policy prescriptions to lead the nation through a crisis.

"Moments like these don't come around often in campaigns and this is a perfect opportunity to show millions that you have what it takes," said Robert Gibbs, former White House press secretary and campaign adviser to President Barack Obama. "They must show voters they are the answer to what is missing right now by being calm, honest, ready to lead and empathetic."

The coronavirus crisis rapidly upended plans for Sunday's debate. First, the Democratic National Committee announced that it would hold the contest without a live audience. Then the debate was moved from a large venue in Arizona, one of the states holding a primary Tuesday, to a television studio in Washington because of concerns about cross-country travel. One of the moderators had to withdraw because of potential exposure to a person who tested positive for coronavirus.

It is Biden who will step on stage as the front-runner, a distinction that seemed unlikely just a few weeks ago. After disappointing showings in the early contests, Biden roared back with a commanding victory in South Carolina and has continued to rack up wins across the country, winning broad and diverse coalitions of voters. Moderate Democratic leaders, including former rivals Amy Klobuchar and Pete Buttigieg, have rallied behind his candidacy and voters have done the same.

Advisers say Biden will aim in Sunday's debate to show voters who backed Sanders or other liberal candidates that they have a home in his campaign. In one overture to liberals, Biden announced his support for a bankruptcy plan championed by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who ended her campaign earlier this month and has yet to endorse.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 50 of 73

In a virtual town hall on Friday, Biden said his support for Warren's proposal, which aims to simplify the bankruptcy process, is "one of the things that I think Bernie and I will agree on."

Biden holds a solid lead over Sanders in the all-important delegate race, and a strong showing in Tuesday's primary contests could effectively guarantee his nomination. Four big states will be up for grabs: Illinois, Ohio, Arizona and Florida, a perennial general election battleground where Biden appears to have an edge over Sanders.

After a strong start, the race has moved rapidly away from Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist with a loyal following among young voters and liberals. But he's failed to expand his appeal, particularly among black voters, and his calls for a sweeping political and economic revolution have also fallen flat with suburban voters.

Sanders is facing some pressure from within the Democratic Party to step aside and allow Biden take Trump on one-on-one. Several Democratic groups that were waiting to endorse until after the primary have consolidated around Biden, including super PAC Priorities USA.

Sanders' advisers say he is a realist about his current standing and the difficulty of the path ahead. Yet the senator is pledging to grill Biden in Sunday's debate on his plans for tackling college debt, for his past support of the Iraq war and for his backing of multilateral trade agreements.

"I'm going to ask Joe Biden, I mean Joe is part of the establishment for a very long time, 'Joe, what role have you played in trying to make sure that we end this massive level of income and wealth inequality where three people own more wealth than the bottom half of America?" Sanders said Saturday during an online "fireside chat" with supporters.

Yet it's unclear if the issues Sanders is aiming to highlight will resonate with voters at a time when much of the nation's focus has shifted to the growing toll of the coronavirus and put a spotlight on the need for presidential leadership. Schools and businesses across the country are closed, and many hospitals and clinics are struggling to obtain tests for the coronavirus.

For Biden, the outbreak of a global pandemic has been a moment to bolster the central argument of his candidacy: that his eight years as vice president give him the experience, as well as the relationships in Washington and around the world, that are needed in the Oval Office during turbulent times.

With campaign rallies halted because of warnings against large gatherings, Biden delivered a speech in front of reporters and advisers on his proposal for combating coronavirus, including guaranteeing free testing. Sanders' later announced his own speech, which focused largely on advocating for his call to overhaul the nation's health insurance system and replace it with a Medicare for All program.

After Sunday's debate, it's unclear where the candidates and the campaign go from here. Neither Biden or Sanders has announced any public rallies for next week or given any indication of when they may be able to appear in person for voters again.

Associated Press writer Will Weissert contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Georgia 2nd state to postpone pres. primaries over virus

By BEN NADLER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's March 24 presidential primaries have been postponed until May because of fears over the new coronavirus, state election officials announced Saturday, a day after Louisiana also pushed back its primaries.

In-person early voting, which began statewide March 2, will be halted and the election will be moved to May 19, when Georgia's other 2020 primary elections are being held, Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger said in a statement.

In addition to public safety, one big consideration was the risk the virus posed to poll workers, who are often older, election officials said.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 51 of 73

"Events are moving rapidly and my highest priority is protecting the health of our poll workers, and the community at large," Raffensperger said.

The action followed Republican Gov. Brian Kemp's signature of an emergency declaration that unlocked sweeping powers to fight COVID-19. In a speech Saturday, the governor renewed a call for places of worship, schools and others to consider canceling large gatherings as cases in the state rise.

On Friday, Louisiana became the first state to postpone its presidential primaries due to the virus.

As of Saturday, the virus had infected more than 150,000 people worldwide and killed over 5,800. The U.S. counted more than 2,100 infections and 60 dead, as President Donald Trump expanded a ban on travel from Europe by adding Britain and Ireland to the list.

Georgia is reporting 66 confirmed cases, with most concentrated around metro Atlanta. One death in the state has been attributed to the virus.

Cobb County Elections Director Janine Eveler said in an interview Saturday evening that her heavily populated metro Atlanta county had seen "a little over 100" poll workers quit in recent days because of fears over the virus. "Each day we had more and more poll workers wanting to bow out due to concern over their health," Eveler said, adding that she believed the decision to postpone the election was the right one.

Trump is the only candidate on Georgia's Republican presidential primary ballot.

The Democratic race has been narrowed to a two-man matchup between former Vice President Joe Biden and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, with Biden leading in the delegate count nationally. In states that have already held their primaries, Biden has been beating Sanders among key demographics at play in Georgia Democratic politics, including African Americans and suburban voters, and has been endorsed by a slew of state and local officials.

Raffensperger's office said that the decision to postpone the election was made in consultation with the state Democratic and Republican Parties.

"Our priority is to protect the health and safety of all Georgians and to ensure that as many people as possible have an opportunity to vote," state Sen. Nikema Williams, chair of the Democratic Party of Georgia said, according to the statement. "Continued in-person voting could compromise both goals."

All votes already cast, including in-person and absentee ballots, will be counted, the statement says.

As of Thursday, 224,000 voters had already cast ballots in the primary, according to Associated Press Elections Research.

The delayed election is the latest in a long list of disruptions to ordinary life the virus has caused.

School districts covering the majority of Georgia's 1.8 million public school students have announced closures. Among many events postponed or canceled are the NCAA Final Four basketball tournament in Atlanta, Savannah's St. Patrick's Day parade and the Masters golf tournament in Augusta.

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Biden wins endorsement from NEA, nation's largest union

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

The nation's largest labor union has lined up behind Joe Biden's presidential campaign, with the National Education Association on Saturday endorsing the former vice president for the Democratic nomination over his last remaining primary rival Bernie Sanders.

The NEA's board of directors chose Biden following a recommendation from the organization's political action committee board, following months of surveying the organization's 3 million members and multiple presidential candidate forums held around the country.

NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia, whose union tops 3 million members, called Biden a "tireless advo-

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 52 of 73

cate for public education" and "the partner that students and educators need now in the White House."

The union's decision came with Biden on the cusp of stretching out an insurmountable delegate lead over Sanders. The two candidates meet Sunday for their first one-on-one debate, two days before four populous states – Arizona, Florida, Illinois and Ohio – hold primaries with a combined 577 delegates up for grabs. Biden currently leads Sanders, a Vermont senator, by more than 150 delegates with more than half of the national total already awarded, a gap that means Sanders must win 57% of the remaining delegates to wrest the nomination from Biden. There is no precedent for such a comeback.

In the four states that vote Tuesday, almost 760,000 voters live in households with at least one NEA member, according to the union. NEA officials said the union's PAC would immediately push digital advertising into the four states on Biden's behalf, while also communicating with NEA households.

Democratic presidential candidates in 2020 were mostly in-step with education unions, with Biden and the rest vowing to replace President Donald Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, with someone who's had classroom experience, while vastly increasing federal spending on early childhood, primary and secondary education.

Biden's proposals come with an estimated \$850 billion price tag over 10 years. Among other ideas, he calls for universal access to pre-kindergarten programs for 3- and 4-year olds; tripling Title I spending for schools with higher concentration of students from low-income households; federal infrastructure spending for public school buildings; and covering the cost of schools' compliance with federal requirements for teaching students with disabilities. Biden also opposes taxpayer money being routed to for-profit charter school enterprises.

Eskelsen Garcia singled out proposals to support "low-income communities where the need is the highest."

The NEA notably waited for an endorsement until Democrats' field had narrowed. Another educators' union, the American Federation of Teachers, opted earlier in the process for a triple endorsement, recommending Biden, Sanders and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren. AFT's president, Randi Weingarten, a high-profile labor leader and prominent member of the Democratic National Committee, added her own individual endorsement for Warren ahead of the March 3 Super Tuesday contests. Warren's began her career as a special education teacher before going to law school.

Biden and Sanders have aggressively sought votes and endorsements among organized labor, though with different styles. Biden openly acknowledges his longstanding relationships with union leaders around the country. Sanders, meanwhile, touts his appeal among rank-and-file workers. Their competing approaches have carried mixed results.

Biden won the national firefighters union endorsement as soon as he announced his bid last April, and the union put volunteers on the ground in Iowa to help Biden organize, only for the former vice president to finish a disappointing fourth place.

In Nevada, Sanders' approach carried the day. Ahead of the first caucuses in the West, the most powerful union in Las Vegas, the Culinary Union, didn't explicitly endorse Biden but notably criticized Sanders' single-payer "Medicare for All" health insurance proposal as a threat to workers' union-negotiated health plans. Sanders won casino-based precincts up and down the Las Vegas strip anyway.

In Michigan, the United Auto Workers also opted not to make a formal endorsement, with Sanders expressing confidence that he'd carry the rank-and-file again in the March 10 contest, as he did in Nevada weeks before. But it was Biden who walked away with a comfortable win, claiming every county in a state Sanders had won four years before.

Spain locks down its citizens, while France shuts nightlife

By JOSEPH WILSON and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Spain locked down its 46 million citizens and France ordered the closing of just about everything the rest of the world loves about it — the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the cafes and restaurants — as governments took increasingly desperate measures to put more space between people and contain the coronavirus.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 53 of 73

More borders snapped shut around the globe on Saturday and Sunday: President Donald Trump announced that the U.S., which days ago barred travelers from most of Europe, will extend the ban to Britain and Ireland. In the Philippines, thousands of police and soldiers started sealing the densely populated capital from most domestic travelers in one of Southeast Asia's most drastic containment moves.

Meanwhile, China, where the virus first appeared late last year, continued to relax its drastic restrictions, illustrating the way the center of gravity in the crisis has shifted westward toward Europe. The virus has infected more than 150,000 people worldwide and killed over 5,600.

In a nationally televised address Saturday, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez detailed the battery of exceptional measures put in place as part of a two-week state of emergency to fight the sharp rise in infections.

Later Saturday, Spain's government said Sánchez's wife has tested positive for coronavirus. Begoña Gómez and the prime minister are in good health, the government said.

Two ministers of Sánchez's Cabinet, the minister of equality and the minister of regional affairs, had already tested positive earlier this week. The others member of the Cabinet have tested negative.

In a lockdown similar to the one already imposed in Italy, people will be allowed to leave their homes only to buy food and medicine, commute to work, go to hospitals and banks, or take trips related to the care of the young and the elderly. All schools and universities were closed, along with restaurants, bars, hotels and other non-essential retail businesses.

"From now we enter into a new phase," Sánchez said after a Cabinet meeting that lasted over seven hours. "We won't hesitate in doing what we must to beat the virus. We are putting health first."

Spanish authorities said the number of infections climbed past 5,700, half of them in the capital, Madrid. That represents a national increase of over 1,500 in 24 hours. The country had 136 deaths, up from 120. Spain has the fifth-highest number of cases, behind China, Italy, Iran and South Korea.

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 in a matter of weeks.

Despite please for calm from authorities, shoppers packed supermarkets in Spain in the morning. But overall, the normally bustling streets of the country's two biggest cities were noticeably quieter as the message sank in that social distancing is the only way to stop the pandemic.

"We had to close and remain shut for 15 days," restaurant owner Rachel Paparardo said in Barcelona, which was already under regional restrictions. "But this is nothing. It is just so more people don't get infected and we can recover from this."

Some flights bound for Spain turned around as word spread of the lockdown.

In the Philippines, new restrictions for metropolitan Manila — home to more than 12 million people — that went into effect Sunday mean the suspension of domestic travel by land, air and sea to and from the capital region.

Large gatherings like concerts, movies and cockfighting are prohibited and most government work in executive department offices will be suspended in the metropolis for a month. School closures at all levels were extended and curfew was in the works.

"If you'll go to work, go. If you need to go out for medical treatment, go. If you'll buy food, go, but other than that, stay home," Philippine Interior Secretary Eduardo Ano told a news conference.

Countries around the world have been moving to prevent their health systems from collapsing under the load of all the virus cases.

Paris followed other cities in shuttering major tourist attractions, and France announced the closing of all restaurants, cafes, theaters and nonessential shops starting Sunday. France has recorded at least 3,600 infections. It has banned all gatherings of more than 100 people, ordered all schools closed and asked companies to allow workers to stay home.

France pressed ahead with plans for nationwide municipal elections on Sunday but ordered special measures to keep people at a safe distance and to sanitize surfaces.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 54 of 73

In Italy, the worst-hit European country, the number of deaths climbed past 1,400 and infections surged roughly 20 percent overnight to more than 21,000 because of what authorities characterized as irresponsible behavior by people still socializing despite the nationwide lockdown. Many Italian cities, including Rome and Milan, decided to close playgrounds and parks, too.

Premier Giuseppe Conte has said production — particularly of food and health supplies — must not stop. On Saturday, union and industrial leaders reached an agreement to keep factories running.

At noon, people around Italy came out on their balconies, terraces or gardens or leaned out their windows to clap for several minutes in a gesture of thanks to medical workers.

In Britain, the death toll nearly doubled from the day before to 21, and the number of people infected rose to over 1,100. Ireland had 90 confirmed cases and one death as of Friday. Greece's infection total approached 230 with three deaths, and police there arrested 45 shopkeepers Saturday for violating a ban on operations.

The U.S. has seen 59 deaths — including the first in New York, Louisiana and Virginia — and more than 2,100 cases. In hard-hit Washington state, where 40 have died and more than 550 have been infected, officials said the disease is straining the supply of protective gear available to medical providers despite shipments from the federal government.

Trump has tested negative for the new coronavirus, the president's personal physician said Saturday.

European countries took steps to isolate themselves from their neighbors.

Denmark closed its borders and halted passenger traffic to and from the country. Travelers will be turned away at the border if they are unable to show that they have "a legitimate reason" to enter — for example, if they are Danish citizens or residents.

Poland planned to close its borders at midnight and deny all foreigners entry unless they lived in Poland or had personal ties there. The Czech Republic and Slovakia took similar action. Lithuania said it was introducing border checks at the frontiers with Poland and Latvia.

Russia said its borders with Norway and Poland will be closed to most foreigners beginning Sunday.

In the Middle East, Iran's death toll reached 611, with nearly 13,000 infections, including senior government officials.

In the Pacific, New Zealand announced that incoming passengers, including citizens, will be required to isolate themselves for 14 days, with few exceptions.

The measures increasingly mirror those taken by China, which in January quarantined more than 60 million people, starting with the epicenter, Wuhan, in the province of Hubei.

The spread of COVID-19 in China has slowed dramatically, according to the National Health Commission. After reporting thousands of new cases per day only a month ago, the commission said Saturday that there were 13 new deaths and just 11 new cases, including people who recently arrived in China from other affected countries like Italy.

Wuhan is now the only city in Hubei still designated "high-risk." Several Hubei municipalities are gradually resuming public transportation and reopening businesses. Parks, museums and art galleries have reopened in Shanghai.

Moulson reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Aritz Parra in Madrid, Sylvie Corbet in Paris, Yanan Wang in Beijing, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, Joseph Wilson in Barcelona, Spain, Andrew Taylor in Washington, Karel Janicek in Prague, Nick Perry in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Jim Gomez in Manila contributed to this report.

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Trump tests negative for virus; White House begins screening

By JILL COLVIN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After days of resisting screening for the coronavirus, President Donald Trump tested negative for the virus, officials said Saturday night. Meanwhile, the White House began checking the temperature of anyone coming into close contact with the president and other officials.

Prior to his testing, Trump said his personal physician told him he didn't show symptoms and didn't need to take the test. But Trump decided to do it anyway after repeated questions from reporters about why he was hesitating to undergo screening when he had been exposed to at least three people who have tested positive for the virus.

The White House released the test results just hours after Trump told reporters that he had been tested and that his temperature was "totally normal." He was recently in contact with three people at his Florida resort who have tested positive for the virus, including two aides to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

"One week after having dinner with the Brazilian delegation in Mar-a-Lago, the President remains symptom-free," Sean Conley, the president's physician, said in a memo.

Multiple lawmakers and countless citizens across the country who have had the same degree of exposure have not only tried to get tested, but also chosen to quarantine themselves as a precaution and to avoid potentially infecting others.

The pandemic has now infected more than 2,200 people in the U.S. and caused at least 50 deaths.

The president, according to two people close to the White House, had been reluctant to take the test for fear it would project weakness or worry. Trump wanted to appear in full control during the crisis, and had expressed concerns that taking personal steps could undermine that appearance.

But as the White House grappled with repeated exposures by Trump and multiple senior aides, it tightened precautions. On Saturday, the White House announced that it was conducting temperature checks on anyone who was in close contact with Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, including reporters who attended the White House briefing Saturday and anyone entering the Oval Office.

To that end, a representative from the White House physician's office took the temperature of members of the media at the briefing, going around and putting a device to their heads. One reporter with a suspected elevated temperature was not allowed in.

Pence wrote a memo to White House staff Saturday reminding them to take precautions such as avoiding physical contact, washing hands frequently and staying home when sick to help the administration keep the virus at bay.

"It's imperative each one of us do our part to take the proper precautions to keep ourselves and our colleagues safe," Pence wrote. "As an employee aboard the White House Complex, we have an additional duty to protect the health of our Executive Branch and those working with us."

Trump, 73, is considered to be at higher risk of complications from the disease because of his age. He has long tried to minimize the threat posed by the virus and continued to engage in behaviors that health officials are warning the public against.

On Friday, Trump shook the hands of multiple officials at his Rose Garden news conference and he has continued to appear at large gatherings despite tweeting Saturday morning that Americans should be practicing "SOCIAL DISTANCING!"

"It almost becomes a habit," Trump said when asked why he continues to shake hands contrary to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

"People come up to me, they shake hands, they put their hand out, it's sort of a natural reflex," he said. "We're all getting out of it. All of us have that problem." He added: "Shaking hands is not a great thing to be doing right now, I agree."

The Brazilian Embassy in Washington said late Friday that the country's chargé d'affaires, Nestor Forster, tested positive after sitting at Trump's dinner table. So, too, did a top aide to Bolsonaro, who took a photo with Trump and attended a party with him, and another person who attended a campaign fundraiser with

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 56 of 73

the president that Sunday, according to two Republican officials who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss private health matters.

Republican chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, who earlier this month traveled to a campaign rally with Trump on Air Force One, awaited her own test results after experiencing a fever and flu-like symptoms. She and her family were quarantining at home, the RNC said Saturday.

Several top administration officials, including Attorney General William Barr and Trump's daughter and senior adviser, Ivanka Trump, met last week with an Australian Cabinet minister who on Friday was confirmed positive.

A handful of White House staffers were tested for the virus after exhibiting flu-like symptoms, but all tested negative, according to a senior White House official. Flu activity in the country is currently high.

The White House has been saying, citing CDC guidelines, that the president and other White House officials don't need to be tested or isolate themselves unless they are exhibiting symptoms, even though that advice is contradicted by many health professionals who note that the virus can be spread even by people who are asymptomatic.

The reporter who was not allowed into the White House briefing Saturday had a temperature above the 100.4-degree guidelines in three checks over 15 minutes, tweeted Pence's spokeswoman, Katie Miller, citing the White House Medical Unit.

Public health officials say that people with a cough and elevated temperatures of 100.4 degrees or higher are deemed concerning.

Dr. Deborah Birx, who is helping coordinate the U.S. response to the outbreak, noted that testing results reflect a snapshot in time and that it's crucial for people to maintain precautions.

"When you get a negative test, that means you're negative that day," Birx said. "That doesn't mean that you couldn't get the virus spreading overnight, because it replicates in your nose and your nasal secretions, and you would have a positive test tomorrow."

Bev Banks contributed to this report.

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What's Happening: Spain goes on lockdown to combat virus

Governments are responding to the coronavirus pandemic by imposing tight restrictions on businesses and ordering people to stay home. Spain became the latest country to follow Italy's example by imposing nationwide restrictions. President Donald Trump, days after mingling with people who later tested positive for the virus at his private club in Florida, is now screening anyone who is coming into close contact with him and Vice President Mike Pence for fevers.

These are some of the latest developments Saturday:

SPAIN ANNOUNCES EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN

The government of Spain announced severe restrictions on movement as part of a two-week state of emergency to fight the sharp rise in coronavirus infections. In a nationally televised address, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez detailed the battery of exceptional measures put in place. Health authorities in Spain said Saturday that more than 5,700 people there have confirmed coronavirus infections. That's an increase of more than 1,500 in 24 hours. The plan includes the closing of restaurants, bars and non-essential commercial establishments.

DOCTOR SAYS TRUMP TESTS NEGATIVE FOR VIRUS

President Donald Trump has tested negative for the new coronavirus, according to the president's personal physician. The White House released the test results Saturday night. Trump spent time last weekend at his private club in Florida with at least three people who have now tested positive. The White House also announced that it is now conducting temperature checks on anyone who is in close contact with the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 57 of 73

president and Vice President Mike Pence as a precaution. A representative from the White House physician's office took the temperature of members of the media who were at the White House for a briefing. A reporter with a suspected elevated temperature was not allowed in. Public health officials say people with a cough and elevated temperatures of 100.4 degrees or higher are deemed concerning.

US EXTENDS TRAVEL BAN

President Donald Trump says the United States will broaden its European travel ban to include the United Kingdom and Ireland, which were initially excluded. The announcement came on a day Britain's death toll nearly doubled from the day before to 21, and the number of people infected rose to over 1,100 from about 800 the previous day. Under the restrictions on European travel, American citizens, green card holders and others are still allowed to return home to the U.S., but will be funneled to 13 airports and be subjected to health screenings and quarantine orders. Trump says he's considering imposing restrictions on travel within the U.S. to areas hit hard by the coronavirus spread. "If you don't have to travel, I wouldn't do it," he said.

FRANCE TO CLOSE RESTAURANTS, CAFES, NON-ESSENTIAL SHOPS

French Prime minister Edouard Philippe says France is shutting down all restaurants, cafes, cinemas and retail shops that are not essential, starting from Sunday, to face the acceleration of the spreading of the virus in the country. Grocery stores, pharmacies, banks and other public services including transports were allowed to remain open, he said Saturday. French authorities had already ordered this week the shutting down of all schools, banned gatherings of more than 100 people and advised people to limit their social life. Philippe said these measures were "not well implemented." More than 4,500 cases have been confirmed in the country, including 91 deaths.

DEATH TOLL CONTINUES TO RISE IN ITALY

Deaths from the new coronavirus are continuing to rise in Lombardy, Italy's hardest-hit region. Lombardy health official Giulio Gallera said there were 145 more deaths of patients with COVID-19 since a day earlier. He added that 1,064 patients were in intensive care in Lombardy's struggling hospitals. Lombardy's hospitals will be the latest to try using a drug now prescribed for patients with chronic inflammatory diseases like rheumatoid arthritis to treat inflammation from pneumonia in gravely ill COVID-19 patients. Apart from China, Italy has the highest number of confirmed coronavirus cases with more than 17,000.

NEW YORK STATE REPORTS ITS FIRST DEATH

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo says the state has reported its first death in the coronavirus pandemic, an 82-year-old woman who had been previously hospitalized with emphysema. Cuomo said Saturday that she died the day before at a hospital in New York City. More than 500 New Yorkers have been officially diagnosed so far with COVID-19. But Cuomo says he believes perhaps tens of thousands of New Yorkers already have the disease. The true number of people with the virus in the state is unknown because testing is still being done across the U.S. on a very limited basis.

APPLE CLOSES STORES FOR TWO WEEKS

Tech giant Apple is closing its stores outside of China for two weeks and will only sell online as part of efforts to fight the global coronavirus pandemic. CEO Tim Cook tweeted Saturday that Apple would temporarily close those stores until March 27. Cook also said that Apple's stores in China have all now reopened. Apple's online stores remain open. The company temporarily shut its 42 stores in mainland China at the height of the country's outbreak. The iPhone maker has more than 500 retail stores worldwide, with about half in the United States.

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Washington confronts coronavirus with new tools and angst

By COLLEEN LONG, MICHAEL BALSAMO and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

President Donald Trump announced Saturday that the United States will expand its European travel restrictions to include Britain and Ireland as the U.S., armed with new tools against the pandemic, braced for it to get worse before it gets better. The government's top infection expert warned that COVID-19 may surge within the nation in coming days.

Under the restrictions on European travel, American citizens, green card holders and others are still allowed to return home to the U.S., but will be funneled to 13 airports and be subjected to health screenings and quarantine orders.

"If you don't have to travel, I wouldn't do it," Trump said.

Trump also said he had taken the coronavirus test following several interactions with people who are infected. Hours later, the White House announced that the president's test was negative.

The White House also began testing the temperatures of everyone who's been close to Trump; he told reporters that his own temperature was normal and he was feeling fine.

The House approved legislation early Saturday to provide direct relief to Americans suffering physically, financially and emotionally from the coronavirus pandemic. The Senate still must vote on the package. Trump supports it. As well, he declared a national emergency Friday, unleashing as much as \$50 billion for state and local governments to respond to the crisis.

There was little hope of a quick turnaround.

"We will see more cases and we will see more suffering and death," said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health, "particularly among the vulnerables." Yet he said "we still have opportunities" to lessen the severity of the pandemic. The U.S. has recorded at least 51 deaths and nearly 2,500 confirmed infections.

For most people, COVID-19 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. 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 be over it.

The new travel restrictions come as Britain has seen its death toll from the virus nearly double from the day before to 21, and the number of people infected rise to over 1,100 from about 800 the previous day. Ireland had 90 confirmed cases and one death by Friday.

The U.S. said earlier in the week a 30-day restriction on flights covered only the 26-nation Schengen area, the European Union's border-free travel zone, which excludes Britain and Ireland. Vice President Mike Pence said the restrictions on Britain and Ireland would go into effect midnight on Monday night.

Pence added that federal officials were "considering a broad range of measures" for potential domestic travel restrictions but no decisions have been made. "We're going to continue to follow the facts," Pence said.

But a senior homeland security official, in a briefing held on condition that the official not be identified, said "there's no expectation of any domestic travel restrictions at this time" by air or rail.

Britain has taken a different approach as countries across Europe and other afflicted areas have shut schools, scrapped large public events and shuttered bars and restaurants. The British government hasn't heavily restricted everyday activities, though there were indications it might.

Schools in Northern Ireland were operating as usual but across the border in the Irish Republic, schools, colleges, daycare centers and cultural institutions were closed.

In the U.S., Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell canceled the coming week's planned recess to deal with the matter. Senate Democrats called on McConnell, who let senators leave town for the weekend, to reconvene now and pass the aid package.

"Everyone is going to have new ideas, but that will slow things down," said Sen. Chuck Schumer, the

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 59 of 73

top Senate Democrat. "We have to act immediately." With the president's backing and robust Republican support from the House vote, passage appears likely.

While anxiety hangs over the nation, the president took a lighter tone at moments as he addressed the media. He boasted that he was "honored" that the Dow Jones Industrial Average reacted with a huge one-day gain Friday after he announced the national emergency declaration.

"I think we should do one of them every day perhaps," joked Trump, who wore a blue baseball cap emblazoned with "USA." "How about five times a day?"

The president didn't mention that despite Friday's pickup, the market had its worst week since October 2008. In just a few weeks, U.S. stocks have lost all the gains made during 2019.

The crush of activity capped a tumultuous week in Washington as the fast-moving virus left ordinary Americans suddenly navigating self-quarantines, school closures and a changed way of life.

Trump took a number of other actions to bolster energy markets, ease the financial burden for Americans with student loans and give medical professionals additional flexibility in treating patients during the public health crisis.

Central to the aid package from Congress, which builds on an emergency \$8.3 billion measure approved earlier, are the free testing, sick pay and family leave provisions.

Providing sick pay for workers is a crucial element of federal efforts to stop the rapid spread of the infection. Officials warn that the nation's healthcare system could quickly become overwhelmed with gravely sick patients, as suddenly happened in Italy, one of the countries hardest hit by the virus.

The ability to ensure paychecks will keep flowing — for people self-quarantining or caring for others — can help assure Americans they will not fall into financial hardship. The legislation also offers three months of paid family and medical leave. Small and mid-sized employers will be reimbursed through tax credits.

Both Treasury Secretary Mnuchin and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi promised a third coronavirus package will follow soon, with more aggressive steps to boost the U.S. economy, which economists fear has already slipped into recession.

Mnuchin said Saturday that lawmakers will have to fix a minor error in the approved House bill, which could create some hiccups in getting the measure to Trump's desk by early in the week. It involves a delicately negotiated provision about a tax credit for businesses to provide sick leave.

Trump on Friday also told people to expect the imminent rollout of a website "facilitated" by Google that would guide users through a series of questions to determine whether they should be screened for the virus. If testing is recommended, users would be directed to a local testing location, which could include parking lots at Walmart, Target, Walgreens and other chains.

But it quickly became apparent that such a fast track to testing was in early stages of development and would not be widely employed soon.

Meantime U.S. officials said most cruise companies had stopped new voyages and the few that hadn't were ordered to. Trump endorsed decisions some companies have taken to close their stores as the nation increasingly hunkers down.

The Pentagon and State Department announced new guidance aimed at limiting movement of its personnel and promoting social distancing in hopes of reducing the impact of the pandemic on the agencies. As part of that, State Department employees were to engage in "mission critical" travel only.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Lisa Mascaro and Andrew Taylor contributed reporting to this article.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 60 of 73

Iditarod mushes on; fans being urged to skip finish in Nome

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — As Iditarod mushers drove their dog teams across Alaska on Saturday, race officials scrambled to make last minute changes prompted by concerns over the new coronavirus, including asking fans not to fly to Nome for the finish.

Officials late Friday night urged race fans, especially those from out of state, to skip the finish this week. City officials in Nome followed most other Alaska cities in closing or limiting access to most public buildings in wake of the state's first positive test, that of a man from outside the United States. The man was tested Thursday at an Anchorage hospital after earlier arriving in the city on a private cargo plane.

"The Iditarod fully appreciates and is humbled by the passion and social energy of the Iditarod nation; however, we are asking you to not make any nonessential travel to the Nome finish, in particular, those who are traveling from outside of Alaska," according to a statement from the Iditarod.

Race officials are also paring down their own staff to only essential personnel needed in Nome for the finish. That list is limited to veterinarians, necessary dog handlers and staff needed for communications and to coordinate logistics.

The Iditarod had previously postponed post-race events in Nome, including the musher's banquet and an annual meet-and-greet with mushers.

Race Marshal Mark Nordman told the Anchorage Daily News that he didn't know how a race like the Iditarod could be canceled, but said continuing the race was being done under the guidance of state officials.

"If the state of Alaska said the race must stop, we'd stop," Nordman told the newspaper. "We have not heard that."

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. More than 80,000 people in China have been diagnosed with the coronavirus. More than 65,000 have recovered.

Iditarod officials were also scrambling to move checkpoints away from villages where mushers stop en route to Nome. Many times village schools are used as checkpoints or a place to allow a musher to rest but the Bering Strait School District, which includes many communities that serve as checkpoints, closed facilities and said it would not host Iditarod activities.

Jessie Royer of Fairbanks was in the race's lead Saturday. She was the first musher to reach the checkpoint in Kaltag, and picked up 25 pounds of fresh salmon filets and \$2,000 for the feat. Royer, an Idaho native who was raised in Montana, is vying to become the first woman in 30 years to win the Iditarod. The last woman to win the race was the late Susan Butcher, who won her fourth Iditarod in 1990.

Royer earlier Saturday was also the first at the checkpoint in Nulato. The checkpoint in this village of about 360 and originally founded in 1838 as a Russian trading post is normally the community hall, and the school is also widely used.

"Because the school in Nulato was not available, the Iditarod changed its checkpoint location to on the Yukon River," Nordman said in a statement. "All supplies are in place and the checkpoint is fully manned."

Another community closer to Nome is also off limits this year because of concerns over the virus. The Iditarod, in consultation with community leaders in Shaktoolik, decided to bypass the community and set up the checkpoint outside town.

Food that mushers have flown to the checkpoint will be moved to the new location, along with straw for dogs to bed down. Provisions are being made to allow the teams to get a hot meal before getting back on the trail.

The race started Sunday in Willow for 57 mushers, down to 53 after four withdrew, including Nils Hahn and Alan Eischens on Friday morning. The winner of the nearly 1,000-mile (1,600-kilometer) race across Alaska is expected in the town of Nome, on the Bering Sea, sometime next week.

Smart move or grave mistake? NYC keeps schools open

By **JIM MUSTIAN** and **JENNIFER PELTZ** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As schools across the U.S. shut down in hopes of helping to fight the coronavirus, New York City officials are arguing just the opposite: They're keeping the nation's largest school system open to ensure that health and emergency workers aren't tied down with kids at home.

But teachers, many parents and some health experts say the city is making a grave mistake by continuing to call more than 1.1 million children to public schools even as it calls for "social distancing" elsewhere to stem the virus' spread.

While many families elsewhere in the country spent Saturday making hasty plans for an unexpected school shutdown, New Yorkers debated the city's decision.

"You're not going to have a functioning health care system if the folks in the medical field, the doctors, the nurses, the techs, everyone has to stay home with their kids," Mayor Bill de Blasio said on MSNBC.

Parent Anna Gold didn't see it his way.

"It would be a hardship if they closed the schools, but I think it's a necessary one we need to take in the space of this emergency," said Anna Gold, who pulled her third-grader and kindergartner out of public schools in Brooklyn on Friday and plans to keep them home next week.

Another parent, Dori Kleinman, said she wishes the mayor would allow individual schools to make a decision about whether to close.

"I don't want my children at risk," she said.

New York City became a big outlier as other major U.S. cities, including Los Angeles and Boston, and several states decided to shutter schools for a week or more.

New York health care workers' unions said the city shouldn't close schools without a plan to care for the children of those staffing hospital wards. The unions and city officials fear that even New York's massive health care system could be quickly overwhelmed by a surge in serious cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

"If it's apparent it's the safe thing, then it must be done, but it's going to have a big impact on nurses," said Eileen Toback, executive director of the New York Professional Nurses Union, which represents nurses at Manhattan's Lenox Hill Hospital. "They're on the front lines. They need to be here in shifts. They're single mothers or single fathers sometimes, so they don't have many backups, and the hospital is 24/7."

De Blasio, a Democrat, has not ruled out closing schools eventually and said city officials would continue a day-by-day examination. But he has noted that the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that while there can be reasons to shut schools, it's not clear that closures will make more difference than other measures, such as hand-washing and isolating the sick.

But Dr. Dena Grayson, a researcher and infectious disease expert who works in the private sector, called de Blasio's decision so far to keep schools open "incredibly foolish."

"The virus will spread like wildfire among the children. They get infected, and they can spread that virus easily to older people who are at a much higher risk," she said.

The city has confirmed coronavirus cases in at least two public school students and at least one teacher. Their schools have been closed for cleaning but are expected to reopen.

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 illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover, but the outbreak has caused more than 5,000 deaths worldwide.

Teachers' unions are pressing de Blasio to close the schools, saying they're worried for their students' families, their own and New Yorkers at large.

"To have 1.1 million students and countless employees crisscrossing the city, it feels to me beyond irresponsible," says Derek Stampone, who teaches physics and computer science at a Manhattan high school where only about 2/3 of students showed up Friday, a dropoff echoed in the system as a whole. Stampone found himself spending much of Friday's classes talking about the virus and such prevention

tips as hand-washing.

"I can see the anxiety in the room," he said.

So did social studies teacher Elise Ritter, who works at a different Manhattan high school that happens to focus on emergency management.

The students who did attend, she said, were "really looking around and saying, 'Why are we still here?'" Many live with grandparents and worry about them contracting the virus, she said.

Teachers suggest the city could find ways to provide child care for health care workers — and supply food to the hundreds of thousands of poor students who depend on school meals — without keeping the entire school system open.

De Blasio has said that any alternative would recreate the problem that closing schools would seek to solve: People congregating.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, said school closings remain "purely a local decision" unless a student tests positive, in which case a school must be closed for cleaning.

"The closing of schools is a significant trade-off of benefits and burdens," he said Saturday in a conference call with reporters. "If you close the schools, there are people who will not show up for work the next day. The public education system is also a day care, in many ways."

Associated Press reporters Adam Geller and Vanessa Alvarez contributed to this report. The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Americans brace for new life of no school and growing dread

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

Millions of Americans braced for the week ahead with no school for their children for many days to come, no clue how to effectively do their jobs without child care, and a growing sense of dread about how to stay safe and sane amid the relentless spread of the coronavirus.

Are play dates for the kids OK? How do you stock up on supplies when supermarket shelves are bare? How do you pay the bills when your work hours have been cut? Is it safe to go to the gym? And how do you plan for the future with no idea what it holds?

"Today looks so different from yesterday, and you just don't know what tomorrow is going to look like," said Christie Bauer, a family photographer and mother of three school-age children in West Linn, Oregon.

Tens of millions of students nationwide have been sent home from school amid a wave of closings that include all of Ohio, Maryland, Oregon, Washington state, Florida and Illinois along with big-city districts like Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Some schools announced they will close for three weeks, others for up to six.

The disruptions came as government and hospital leaders took new measures to contain an outbreak that has sickened more than 150,000 people worldwide and killed about 5,800, with thousands of new cases being confirmed every day.

As the U.S. death toll climbed to 51 on Saturday and infections totaled more than 2,100, President Donald Trump expanded a ban on travel to the U.S. from Europe, adding Britain and Ireland to the list, and hospitals worked to expand bed capacity and staffing to keep from becoming overwhelmed as the caseload mounts.

"We have not reached our peak," said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health. "We will see more cases, and we will see more suffering and death."

Many working parents are scrambling to find child care, even if they are being allowed to work from home. The child care needs are especially dire for the legions of nurses, hospital and health care workers across the country who need to be on the job to deal with the crisis.

Governors drew up emergency plans to find child care for front-line medical workers and first responders, equating it to a wartime effort.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 63 of 73

"I would put this as a World War II-capacity daycare for our public health workers because we're going to need every single body we can get," said Oregon Gov. Kate Brown.

Parents desperate to get to work with schools closed have jumped on social media boards to seek child care or to exchange tips about available babysitters.

Seattle resident John Persak set up a Facebook group last week for parents with children at home because of school closings. The group exploded to nearly 3,000 members.

"We're getting about five requests a minute at this point," said Persak, a father and crane operator at the port of Seattle, who said his work hours have been curtailed for weeks by the coronavirus outbreak, which is affecting cargo deliveries from Asia.

In Maryland, where schools will be closing from Monday through March 27, parents are calling up their kids' former nannies and babysitters.

"They are desperate," said Ellen Olsen, who has been a nanny for more than 11 years and co-manages a Facebook group that connects parents, nannies and sitters in Maryland. "We've seen a lot of parents posting, 'Hey, schools are closed, but I still have to work.'"

Olsen takes care of two babies, but starting next week, two girls ages 9 and 11 whom she once watched will also be under her supervision. Olsen said the girls' parents are doctors and asked for her help after school was canceled.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio defied mounting pressure to close the nation's biggest school system, saying shutting the schools for the more than 1.1 million students could hamper the city's ability to respond to the crisis by forcing parents who are first responders and healthcare workers to cast about for child care or stay home.

"Many, many parents want us to keep schools open," he said. "Depend on it. Need it. Don't have another option."

The cascade of closings upended weekend routines for countless mothers and fathers. Little League and other sports were canceled. Parks were closed. Play dates were upended. The size of the crowd at a public library in suburban Portland rivaled that of the neighborhood Costco as parents scrambled to stockpile books for children.

While some people were opting to isolate themselves, not everyone was ready to put their lives on hold.

Despite the cancellation of St. Patrick's Day parades around the country and pleas to curtail public gatherings, pub celebrations continued in many places. In Chicago, pub crawls and other revelry went ahead as planned, prompting an angry rebuke from Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

"If you are young and healthy, listen up: We need you to follow social distancing, too," Pritzker said, urging partygoers to go home.

Spring Break partying in Florida also prompted official action, with authorities closing South Beach to prevent the virus' spread. Miami Beach officials ordered hundreds of college spring breakers and others from around the world off the beach Saturday and eliminated parking on major streets in the city's entertainment district to cut down on crowds at South Beach clubs and restaurants.

In New York City, where de Blasio called the scramble to fight the coronavirus a "wartime scenario," a passer-by who noticed relatively light crowds at a Whole Foods supermarket on Manhattan's Upper East Side remarked: "That's because there's no food left!"

That was far from true, though some items -- frozen foods, canned tuna, herbal teas, bagged salad -- were sold out or nearly so. Signs limited customers to two large packs of toilet paper apiece, and few were available. A similar scenario played out at supermarkets all around the country amid a run on household staples that reached a peak Friday.

San Antonio-based H-E-B, a grocery chain with more than 400 stores in Texas and Mexico, is reducing its late-night store hours to discourage hoarding and give it time to restock.

"There is no need for panic buying, this is not like a hurricane," H-E-B spokeswoman Dya Campos said. "This should not be a 'stock up' event."

Bauer, the photographer in Oregon, said the bans and fear of travel have hit her professional and personal life. First, a photography workshop she was set to attend in Greece was canceled. Now, she and

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 64 of 73

her husband are trying to decide whether to cancel their spring break trip to Charleston, South Carolina, next week.

"We're worried we'll get stuck out there or get there and be sick," Bauer said. "There's just so much unknown that you don't know what to do at the moment."

Keeping occupied was becoming challenging, for both children and adults, with so many businesses closed and uncertainty about whether routines like going to the gym were still advisable.

Minnesota resident Nancy Patton said she was sticking to her yoga class, for now, because it helped her feel mentally and physically healthy.

On Saturday, Patton was leaving a yoga class at a gym in the Minneapolis suburb of Plymouth, where she said "social distancing" was in effect with more space between each person.

She is taking all the recommended precautions, she said, including washing her hands as soon as she finishes the class and wiping down the equipment before and after she uses it.

Seattle resident Marlena Blonsky said she wanted to help friends in need. The 33-year-old sustainability director at a Seattle logistics company has no children and has flexibility at work. She sent out a tweet Thursday that she was available for child care for her working-parent friends, or to run errands for those who have health problems and don't want to go out in public.

Almost immediately, she had a taker and devoted a few hours last Thursday and Friday to watching a friend's 3-year-old daughter. The child's mother is a doctor who has long hours these days at work.

"I feel like this is hitting so many people harder than me, and this is the least I can do," she said.

In New York, Bonita Labossiere toted a bag filled with toilet paper, snacks and a couple of bottles of pinot noir — the final touches on stocking-up she has done for three weeks.

The singer, voice teacher and director had no plans to flee New York, even as the outbreak grew more deadly there, having seen New Yorkers weather 9/11 and other frightening times.

"People say, 'Why don't you get out of there?'" she said. "Because in a crisis, I think this is the best place to be. We will connect with each other."

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Associated Press writers Jennifer Peltz in New York, Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis and Regina Garcia Cano in Washington, Margery Beck in Omaha, Nebraska contributed to this report. Gecker contributed from San Francisco, Flaccus from Oregon.

Trump's latest travel ban highlights gaps in containment net

By CANDICE CHOI, BERNARD CONDON and CARLA K. JOHNSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In the weeks before President Donald Trump spoke from the Oval Office to announce restrictions on travelers from more than two dozen countries in Europe, thousands of people from the region already had stepped off planes at U.S. airports, and an untold number of them carried the coronavirus.

The same can be said of flights from China in the weeks before the U.S. clamped down on those. Thousands who visited the country where the illness began had entered the United States without any kind of health review.

Such sobering realities highlight just one element of the federal government's shortcomings in getting ahead of the virus and halting its spread from overseas travelers.

A day-by-day review of the spread of an unfamiliar virus from its earliest days shows U.S. officials have often been slow to respond or steps behind, with critical gaps in containment measures such as travel restrictions and airport screenings that allowed the crisis to grow to more than 2,100 infections and 51 deaths.

"There have been gaps in the way the U.S. has approached its response, which has not been comprehensive enough to contain the virus at the early stages of the epidemic," said Josh Michaud, associate

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 65 of 73

director of global health policy with the Kaiser Family Foundation in Washington.

That was evident from the very beginning of the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S. On Jan. 15, a 35-year-old man returned home to Washington state through the Seattle airport after traveling to Wuhan, China, where the virus was already spreading. He would become the nation's first known case. Shortly before, on Jan. 13, a woman in her 60s arrived home through the Chicago airport after traveling to Wuhan. She would be Chicago's first known case.

Both of those travelers came to U.S. days before the federal government began screenings for passengers who traveled through Wuhan at three U.S. international airports, New York's Kennedy, San Francisco and Los Angeles. That list was expanded on Jan. 21 to include hubs in Chicago and Atlanta. Seattle-Tacoma wouldn't be added to the list until Jan. 28.

Also, there's no guarantee those screenings — which involved passengers filling out health forms and having their temperatures taken — would have caught those early patients, who didn't report symptoms until later. U.S. researchers say screenings may miss half of COVID-19 infected people, since they may not develop symptoms for several days.

By Jan. 24, both the Chicago woman and Washington state man had sought medical care after feeling sick, and tests confirmed they had the virus. Learning of the two early cases, public health workers scrambled to reach hundreds of people who may have been exposed to them on flights and on the ground, knowing they wouldn't be able to find them all with certainty.

With infections in Wuhan multiplying at an alarming rate, the White House announced on Jan. 31 that non-residents who had recently been to mainland China would no longer be allowed entry.

Americans returning from the Wuhan region would be subject to a mandatory two-week quarantine. In Boston, a man who would become the city's first case had returned after traveling to Wuhan just days earlier.

By mid-February, cases in China had pushed past 44,000. But the threat still seemed low in the U.S. and the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed at its highest point ever amid investor optimism the trade wars initiated by Trump were being resolved.

Then on Feb. 24, a teenager at Jackson High School in Mill Creek, Washington, stayed home with fever, body aches and a headache. He was tested for flu at a clinic that week, but the test came back negative. Feeling better, he went to school on Feb. 28. Arriving on campus, he got a call to come home immediately. It was COVID-19.

The next day, Trevor Bedford, a Seattle scientist, tweeted about the "enormous implications" of finding genetic fingerprint similarities between the teenager's virus and the Washington man who became the first known U.S. case. "This strongly suggests that there has been cryptic transmission in Washington State for the past 6 weeks," he wrote on Twitter.

To some, containment still seemed like a possibility in the United States, which as recently as about two weeks ago had no deaths and just 60 known cases, mostly people who were under federal quarantine after being evacuated from China or a cruise ship in Japan.

"It may get a little bigger; it may not get bigger at all," Trump said in a national TV address at the time.

With cases rising above 1,000 in Italy and 3,000 in South Korea, the White House announced on March 1 that U.S.-bound passengers would undergo screenings before leaving those countries. But travelers from Italy who would eventually test positive were already on their way.

On March 4, California health officials announced that three of its six new cases were people who had visited northern Italy. A day later, Illinois announced its fifth confirmed case — a man who had recently returned from Italy. A day after that, Oklahoma announced its first case — a man who had returned from Italy about two weeks earlier. And a few days later, the state announced its second case had also traveled to Italy.

By the time Trump announced the European travel ban Thursday, cases in the region including Italy, Spain and France had mushroomed to more than 17,000. When a similar ban was announced on people traveling from China, that country had around 11,000 cases. Iran had about 600 confirmed cases when

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 66 of 73

the U.S. banned travelers who had recently been there.

"The European Union failed to take the same precautions and restrict travel from China and other hotspots," Trump said. "As a result, a large number of new clusters in the United States were seeded by travelers from Europe."

Saturday, Trump closed some glaring exceptions to his European travel ban, adding the United Kingdom and Ireland to the list and considering imposing travel restrictions within the U.S. as well. His decision came as deaths in Britain doubled from the day before to 21, and infections rose from 800 to over 1,100.

Some experts question the effectiveness of any kind of travel restrictions given the heavy volume of global travel. Last year, for example, 4.2 million passengers arrived in the U.S. on flights from China and 2.2 million from Italy.

Holes in the containment net may sound alarming to the general public, but experts in controlling outbreaks assume the net will let some slip through. The point is to slow down or "flatten" rates of infection to keep the number of severely sick patients from overwhelming hospitals, which aren't big enough to accommodate a surge.

"We are essentially spreading this spread over a longer period of time to allow health systems time to adapt and respond," said Dr. Sandro Galea an epidemiologist at Boston University.

The benefit of stopping a portion of new infections from entering also depends on how aggressively officials are simultaneously controlling infections already within their borders, said Benjamin Cowling, an epidemiologist at the University of Hong Kong.

But nearly two months after the first U.S. case was confirmed, the persisting lack of testing capacity has left experts uncertain about how many more infected people aren't being identified. Some researchers say the true count of infections in the U.S. may be upwards of 14,000..

"It is a failing, let's admit it," said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health on Thursday of the testing limitations.

Most people who get infected with the virus experience moderate symptoms. and the vast majority of people recover. Others, including older adults and people with existing health issues, can become severely sick.

Patricia Herrick, the daughter of an 89-year-old woman who died last week in the Seattle-area nursing home that has become ground zero of the U.S. outbreak with at least 25 deaths linked to it, said testing should have started much earlier so the sick could be separated from the well.

"We let this thing advance so far. We didn't take this seriously enough," said Herrick, whose mother was never tested for COVID-19. "I don't know that she would still be living. ... It's tragic."

Kaiser's Michaud acknowledged government health officials may have been "flying blind at first" but the inability to test and identify cases has put them behind.

"We're trying to catch up. But we can't catch up at this point."

Johnson reported from Seattle.

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'He's an inmate': Anguish mounts over virus-hit nursing home

By GENE JOHNSON and TED S. WARREN Associated Press

KIRKLAND, Wash. (AP) — Desperate to talk to their dad, Scott Sedlacek and his brother, Steve, stood outside his open nursing home window and shouted. They could barely hear his weak replies, but one came through clearly.

"I feel like (expletive)," the 86-year-old told them.

Chuck Sedlacek arrived at the Life Care Center of Kirkland three weeks ago for physical therapy, just before the suburban nursing home became the epicenter of the nation's worst coronavirus outbreak.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 67 of 73

Now he's in worse shape than before.

He's in isolation after contracting the virus, but his symptoms haven't progressed enough to warrant moving him to a hospital. He came seeking rehab for a broken ankle and banged-up knee after a fall, but he hasn't gotten out of bed in two weeks. Though he previously lived independently in a senior community where he could walk the halls and visit old friends, he's now losing his mobility from lack of exercise.

His five children have hardly spoken with him because his near blindness and neuropathy in his hands make it tough for him to use a phone. And, they say, the overwhelmed Life Care staff has given him just two sponge baths since he arrived.

"He's an inmate as much as he is a patient," said Scott Sedlacek, 64, who also caught the virus. "We all love and really care about our dad, and we are absolutely scared. Loneliness kills a lot of people, too. We think this is a license for death."

The Sedlaceks' experience is a grim tale of what residents and their loved ones face as the coronavirus spreads around the country and enters other long-term care facilities. While most people recover from the virus and many have mild symptoms, elderly residents are especially at risk.

The virus has been confirmed in at least 11 nursing homes or senior apartments in western Washington. A cluster has also emerged at a veterans home in Lebanon, Oregon, where eight cases were confirmed in recent days.

Nursing homes around the country — which are frequently cited for infection control problems — are on high alert for coronavirus, boosting their cleaning regimens and clamping down on visitors.

The families of the remaining Life Care residents have reason to be terrified. More than two dozen coronavirus deaths have been linked to the facility, and more than half of those inside have tested positive.

The residents remain in a purgatory. They are mostly restricted to their rooms with no visitors. Roommates or neighbors across the hall have vanished without explanation. Some people are confused about what's going on.

The families, meanwhile, say their anguish has been compounded by mixed messages and a lack of information.

The nurses have told the Sedlaceks they check their father's temperature every four to eight hours, less often than the two hours promised by administrators. That's troubling, since the virus seems able to cause fevers to spike drastically in a short period. The family has no idea how or when they'll be able to transfer their father out of the center if he recovers from the virus.

Families also question why, long after the outbreak began in China, the U.S. health system was so ill-prepared to test for coronavirus that the facility was still admitting new patients, including Chuck Sedlacek, even after the first resident had been sent to the hospital with flu-like symptoms.

Life Care said there was no reason to think the coronavirus was present until it received news Feb. 29 that a resident had tested positive. Administrators said remaining workers — one-third are out with virus symptoms — are doing what they can to care for residents.

"All I can say is the nurses share your frustration," spokesman Tim Killian told the Sedlaceks when they questioned him during a media availability outside the nursing home this week. "We have diminished capability to take care of all the patients in the exact manner they need. ... We do need more help."

The inability to comfort confused parents has been especially painful.

June Liu's family used to pick her up several times a week for home-cooked Taiwanese meals and church services. The 93-year-old, who doesn't speak English, has lived at Life Care for two years since a small stroke.

During a flu outbreak there last year, she was able to leave the facility to stay with her daughter, Su Wilson. But now she's stuck at the facility after developing a cough two weeks ago and testing positive for the virus. She doesn't understand why no one is coming to visit her and why she can't go stay with her family.

"I think she's very, very depressed, not knowing what's going on," Wilson said. "This is sad for a lot of families and for us. The staff are trying to do their best, but are you caring for their mental health, or is

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 68 of 73

it just 'Isolation! Isolation! Check vitals! IV!?'”

Wilson has now taken to leaving homemade soup outside the nursing home for staff to bring inside to her mom.

There is hope that outbreaks at other nursing homes might be less severe as they adopt restrictions and learn from Life Care's experience.

For example, at the senior living community where Chuck Sedlacek typically lives, Emerald Heights in Redmond, a staff member at a skilled nursing facility developed symptoms early this month and immediately began staying home before a test confirmed the disease. Eleven residents deemed at risk were quickly isolated and tested; only one was positive.

Meanwhile, though, a resident of the separate independent living community has been confirmed to have the disease and is now in self-isolation.

“Despite our advanced planning, we're having to run very, very fast to stay ahead of this virus,” said Kris Egskov, Aegis Living president, after a resident at Aegis Marymoor in Redmond, Washington, tested positive. “We are preparing for the long-haul and accept that this may in fact be an entirely new paradigm in which to protect our residents.”

Scott Sedlacek visited his dad four times before Life Care was locked down to visitors on Feb. 29. No one inside was even wearing face masks, he said.

On March 1, the son's joints began to ache. He spent two days trying to get tested for COVID-19, asking doctors as well as public health officials. Even though he'd spent time at Life Care, the center of the worst U.S. outbreak, he couldn't obtain a test until after his fever spiked, he had trouble breathing and his wife brought him to a hospital emergency room, which cleared him of the flu and other illnesses.

He felt fine again within 12 hours of being treated with a bronchial nebulizer, and he quarantined himself until last Wednesday, when he cut the period short so he could visit his dad through the hospital window. He wore a yellow face mask as he yelled to him.

“This is supposed to be my last day of quarantine, but being with my dad is way more important,” Sedlacek said that night. “He's in there and he's lonely. The big thing we wanted to convey to him was, ‘We're here for you, we love you and we want you to get better — we just can't be in there with you.’”

Johnson reported from Seattle.

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

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

Iraq officials: Rocket attack hits base housing US troops

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — A barrage of rockets hit a base housing U.S. and other coalition troops north of Baghdad on Saturday, Iraqi security officials said, just days after a similar attack killed three servicemen, including two Americans.

The U.S.-led coalition said at least 25 107mm rockets struck Camp Taji just before 11 a.m. Some struck the area where coalition forces are based, while others fell on air defense units, the Iraqi military statement said.

Five people were wounded in the attack, including three coalition members and two Iraqi soldiers, according to spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition Myles Caggins.

Jonathan Hoffman, chief Pentagon spokesman, said later that three U.S. service members were wounded in the Camp Taji attack. Two of them were seriously wounded and are hospitalized.

He said Iraqi security forces have made an initial arrest.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 69 of 73

Hoffman also repeated Defense Secretary Mark Esper's comments from last week, saying, "You cannot attack and wound American service members and get away with it. We will hold them accountable."

A statement from Iraq's military said the "brutal aggression" wounded a number of air defense personnel who remain in critical condition, but did not provide a number.

Iraqi forces later discovered seven platforms from which the rockets were in the Abu Azam area, north of Baghdad. Another 24 missiles were discovered in place and ready to launch.

The attack was unusual because it occurred during the day. Previous assaults on military bases housing U.S. troops typically occurred at night.

The earlier rocket attack against Camp Taji on Wednesday also killed a British serviceman. It prompted American airstrikes Friday against what U.S. officials said were mainly weapons facilities belonging to Kataib Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militia group believed to be responsible.

However, Iraq's military said those airstrikes killed five security force members and a civilian, while wounding five fighters from the Popular Mobilization Forces, an umbrella organization including an array of militias, including some Iran-backed groups.

Iran-backed Shiite militia groups vowed to exact revenge for Friday's U.S. strikes, signalling another cycle of tit-for-tat violence between Washington and Tehran that could play out inside Iraq.

Iraq's military also cautioned the U.S. from retaliating as it did on Friday without approval from the government. Taking unilateral action would "not limit these actions, but rather nurtures them, weakens the ability of the Iraqi state," the statement said.

Gen. Frank McKenzie, commander of the U.S. Central Command, said Friday that counterstrikes on PMF bases were intended to send a message to Kataib Hezbollah and Iran that further assaults on coalition forces would not be tolerated. If that message is ignored, the U.S. could respond with additional strikes, he told reporters.

"If it doesn't work, we got plenty more places we can go and go to work, and I'm confident we'll do that," he said.

America's killing of Iraqi security forces might also give Iran-backed militia groups more reason to stage counterattacks against U.S. troops in Iraq, analysts said.

"We can't forget that the PMF is a recognized entity within the Iraqi security forces; they aren't isolated from the security forces and often are co-located on the same bases or use the same facilities," said Sajad Jiyad, a researcher and former managing director of the Bayan Center, a Baghdad-based think tank.

"Now the (Iran-backed) groups who supported the initial strike in Taji, who were the most outspoken, feel obliged, authorized, maybe even legitimized to respond, ostensibly to protect Iraqi sovereignty but really to keep the pressure up on Americans," he added.

"There are no red lines anymore," Jiyad said.

Wednesday's attack on Camp Taji was the deadliest to target U.S. troops in Iraq since a late December rocket attack on an Iraqi base, which killed a U.S. contractor. That attack set in motion a series of attacks that brought Iraq to the brink of war.

After the contractor was killed, America launched airstrikes targeting Kataib Hezbollah, which in turn led to protests at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

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

The U.S. and Iran stepped back from further attacks after the Soleimani incident. A senior U.S. official said in late January, when U.S.-Iran tensions had cooled, that the killing of Americans constituted a red line that could spark more violence.

Straight-talking Fauci explains outbreak to a worried nation

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and LAURAN NEERGAARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — If Dr. Anthony Fauci says it, you'd be smart to listen. As the coronavirus has upended daily life across the globe, Fauci has become the trusted voice in separating fact and fiction.

The fear and confusion of outbreaks aren't new to Fauci, who in more than 30 years has handled HIV, SARS, MERS, Ebola and even the nation's 2001 experience with bioterrorism — the anthrax attacks.

Fauci's political bosses — from Ronald Reagan to Donald Trump — have let him do the explaining because he's frank and understandable, translating complex medical information into everyday language while neither exaggerating nor downplaying.

If you quizzed former presidents about who influenced their views on infectious diseases, "Tony's name would be first on the list, and you wouldn't have to remind them," said former health secretary Mike Leavitt, who worked with Fauci on bird flu preparedness.

At 79, the government's top infectious disease expert is by age in the demographic group at high risk for COVID-19. But he's working round the clock and getting only a few hours of sleep. He's a little hoarse from all the talking about coronavirus, and he'll be on the TV news shows Sunday. Yet his vigor belies his age, and he credits it to exercise, including running. As of Thursday, he had not been tested for coronavirus. The National Institutes of Health, where he works, said that's because he hasn't needed to be.

Fauci uses a metaphor from one of the fastest-moving sports to describe his strategy on the outbreak. "You skate not to where the puck is, but to where the puck is going to be," he told a House committee.

So he's simultaneously advocating containment to try to keep the virus from spreading, mitigation to check its damage once it gets loose in a community, immediate efforts to increase testing, and short-term and long-term science to develop treatments and vaccines. He's hoping a dynamic response will put the nation where the puck ends up going.

"It's unpredictable," he said. "Testing now is not going to tell you how many cases you're going to have. What will tell you ... will be how you respond to it with containment and mitigation."

Serving a president who until recently dismissed coronavirus by comparing it to seasonal flu, Fauci has been even-handed in public. He's won the respect of Democratic and Republican lawmakers, along with Trump administration officials.

Almost in matter-of-fact fashion Fauci acknowledged to Congress in recent days that the government system wasn't designed for mass testing of potential infections. "It is a failing, let's admit it," he told lawmakers.

But he also supported President Donald Trump's restrictions on travel from Europe. It's part of the containment strategy, he explained. "It was pretty compelling that we needed to turn off the source from that region," he said.

The threat of a pandemic has been on Fauci's mind for years. Many scientists thought it would come from the flu, but it turned out to be coronavirus.

Fauci was unflappable answering questions for hours from the House Oversight and Reform committee last week — except if there was any hint of questioning his scientific integrity.

"I served six presidents and I have never done anything other than tell the exact scientific evidence and made policy recommendations based on the science and the evidence," he said.

Democrats and Republicans have welcomed his approach.

"The scientists I've spoken with in committee see you as the lead man, and I believe most of America does," Rep. Clay Higgins, R-La., told Fauci.

Democratic Rep. Stephen Lynch of Massachusetts praised Fauci for accurately stating that a vaccine would not be available in a matter of months, contrary to what Trump has suggested at times.

"You have a certain level of credibility and honesty that I think ... should be persuasive to the American people," Lynch told him.

Fauci's candor hasn't stopped Trump from praising him. "Tony has been doing a tremendous job working long, long hours," the president said Friday at a Rose Garden event.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 71 of 73

Anthony Stephen Fauci was born in Brooklyn, New York, on Christmas Eve, 1940, into an Italian-American family. President George W. Bush, who in 2008 awarded Fauci the Presidential Medal of Freedom, noted that even as a boy he showed an independent streak: In a neighborhood full of Brooklyn Dodgers fans, Fauci rooted for the Yankees.

Fauci became head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in 1984, when the nation was in the throes of the AIDS crisis. He's recalled the huge frustration of caring for dying patients in the NIH's hospital with nothing to offer.

After hours, he'd chat with then-Surgeon General C. Everett Koop about what scientists were learning about AIDS, influencing Koop's famous 1986 report educating Americans about the disease.

In 1990, when AIDS activists swarmed the NIH to protest what they saw as government indifference, Fauci brought them to the table. Fast forward, and he helped to shape Trump's initiative to end HIV in the U.S.

Although he's spent his career in government, Fauci doesn't seem to have lost the human touch — and that may be part of the key to his success as a communicator.

During the 2014 Ebola outbreak, many Americans panicked when a U.S. nurse got infected by a patient she was caring for, a traveler from West Africa. Ebola can cause deadly bleeding.

Fauci confronted those fears by setting a personal example. When the NIH hospital released that nurse, not only did he say she wasn't contagious, he gave her a hug before TV cameras to prove he was not worried.

Wuhan soccer team leaving Spain to escape virus

By TALES AZZONI AP Sports Writer

MADRID (AP) — The Chinese soccer team that was originally stuck in Spain because of the coronavirus outbreak is going back home to try to avoid its rapid spread in Europe.

Wuhan Zall was expected to return to China on Saturday, nearly 1 1/2 months after it arrived in Spain for preseason training. The team had not been able to leave because of the restrictions in China, but expedited its departure because of the worsening situation in Spain.

The team initially planned to leave Spain mid-February but had extended its stay in the southern region of the country until at least the end of March. That plan changed this week because of the sharp spike in the number of cases in Spain and Europe generally.

"Things are well over there (in China) now," José González, the team's Spanish coach, told The Associated Press on Saturday. "The Chinese league will likely start at the beginning of May. We will have to enter quarantine when we arrive, so the sooner we leave, the better."

The team will first go to the city of Shenzhen, where it is expected to finish its preseason training for the Chinese Super League, the country's main first-division soccer competition. The league was supposed to start on Feb. 22 but was suspended because of the virus.

The city of Wuhan was the epicenter of the outbreak that rapidly spread to other countries and infected more than 145,000 people worldwide, with 5,400 deaths.

Spain was set to follow Italy on Saturday in declaring a nationwide lockdown as European countries took ever more sweeping measures to reduce contact among people and slow the accelerating spread of the coronavirus. Health authorities in Spain said more than 5,700 people were infected and the number of cases could reach 10,000 in the coming days.

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.

The number of new cases have dwindled in China, where more than 65,000 people recovered from the virus. The nation has been easing up on lockdown measures in its hardest-hit region that included the city of Wuhan.

None of the Wuhan Zall players were infected when the team arrived in Spain, but the grandmother of one player was among the coronavirus-linked deaths back home.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 72 of 73

Players have been away from home for several months because the team began its preseason in the Chinese city of Guangzhou, nearly 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) away from Wuhan.

Although the team was far away from the initial outbreak, Spanish health authorities had to come out publicly to say there was no reason for local citizens to be concerned about the squad's arrival in January. Three players arrived from China later and had to stay in quarantine and be tested for the virus before joining the rest of the group.

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.

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

Tales Azzoni on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/tazzoni>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, March 15, the 75th day of 2020. There are 291 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 15, 1913, President Woodrow Wilson met with about 100 reporters for the first formal presidential press conference.

On this date:

In 44 B.C., Roman dictator Julius Caesar was assassinated by a group of nobles that included Brutus and Cassius.

In 1493, Italian explorer Christopher Columbus arrived back in the Spanish harbor of Palos de la Frontera, two months after concluding his first voyage to the Western Hemisphere.

In 1820, Maine became the 23rd state.

In 1919, members of the American Expeditionary Force from World War I convened in Paris for a three-day meeting to found the American Legion.

In 1941, Richard C. Hottelet, a correspondent for the United Press, was arrested in Berlin by the German secret police on suspicion of espionage. (Hottelet was released four months later in a prisoner exchange.)

In 1944, during World War II, Allied bombers again raided German-held Monte Cassino.

In 1956, the Lerner and Loewe musical play "My Fair Lady," based on Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," opened on Broadway.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson, addressing a joint session of Congress, called for new legislation to guarantee every American's right to vote. The result was passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 1985, the first internet domain name, symbolics.com, was registered by the Symbolics Computer Corp. of Massachusetts.

In 1998, CBS' "60 Minutes" aired an interview with former White House employee Kathleen Willey, who said President Bill Clinton had made unwelcome sexual advances toward her in the Oval Office in 1993, a charge denied by the president. Dr. Benjamin Spock, whose child care guidance spanned half a century, died in San Diego at 94.

In 1999, an Amtrak train slammed into a steel-filled truck at a crossing in Bourbonnais, Illinois, killing 11 people.

In 2005, former WorldCom chief Bernard Ebbers was convicted in New York of engineering the largest corporate fraud in U.S. history. (He was later sentenced to 25 years in prison.)

Ten years ago: Michael David Barrett, an insurance executive who'd shot surreptitious hotel videos of ESPN reporter Erin Andrews, was sentenced in federal court in Los Angeles to 2 1/2 years in prison. (He was released in July 2012.) The United States demanded that Israel call off a contentious building project

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, March 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 257 ~ 73 of 73

in east Jerusalem.

Five years ago: The United States and Iran plunged back into negotiations in Lausanne, Switzerland, hoping to end a decades-long standoff on Iran's nuclear program. A pair of suicide bombers attacked two churches in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore, killing at least 15 people. Mike Porcaro, 59, who'd carved out a long, successful career as the bass player for the award-winning pop group Toto, died in Los Angeles. Actress-dancer Sally Forrest, 86, died in Beverly Hills, California.

One year ago: A gunman killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, streaming the massacre live on Facebook; Brenton Tarrant, an Australian white supremacist, is awaiting trial on charges including 51 counts of murder. President Donald Trump issued the first veto of his presidency, rejecting an effort by Congress to block the emergency declaration he had used to try to shake loose funding for his border wall; lawmakers failed to override the veto.

Today's Birthdays: Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is 87. Actor Judd Hirsch is 85. Jazz musician Charles Lloyd is 82. Rock musician Phil Lesh is 80. Singer Mike Love (The Beach Boys) is 79. Rock singer-musician Sly Stone is 77. Rock singer-musician Howard Scott (War; Lowrider Band) is 74. Rock singer Ry Cooder is 73. Actress Frances Conroy is 67. Actor Craig Wasson is 66. Rock singer Dee Snider (Twisted Sister) is 65. Actor Joaquim de Almeida is 63. Actress Park Overall is 63. Movie director Renny Harlin is 61. Model Fabio is 59. Singer Terence Trent D'Arby (AKA Sananda Maitreya) is 58. Rock singer Bret Michaels (Poison) is 57. Rhythm-and-blues singer Rockwell is 56. Actor Chris Bruno is 54. Actress Kim Raver is 53. Rock singer Mark McGrath (Sugar Ray) is 52. Rock musician Mark Hoppus is 48. Country singer-musician Matt Thomas (Parmalee) is 46. Actress Eva Longoria is 45. Rapper-musician will.i.am (Black Eyed Peas) is 45. Rock DJ Joseph Hahn (Linkin Park) is 43. Rapper Young Buck is 39. Rock musician Ethan Mentzer is 38. Actor Sean Biggerstaff is 37. Actor Kellan Lutz is 35. Actress Caitlin Wachs is 31.

Thought for Today: "There are no hopeless situations; there are only men who have grown helpless about them." — Clare Boothe Luce, American author, diplomat, member of Congress (1903-1987).