

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 1 of 56

- [1- State COVID-19 Update](#)
- [2- City Council Agenda](#)
- [3- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [5- GDI Living Heart Fitness Student Special](#)
- [6- Coronavirus School Closure - Meal Availability](#)
- [7- Map of COVID-19 Cases](#)
- [8- The arts in a COVID-19 world](#)
- [8- COVID-19 Updates for Deadwood History, Inc.](#)
- [9- Update on Potential Late Week Storm](#)
- [10- Windy on Thursday](#)
- [11- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [12- Weather Pages](#)
- [15- Daily Devotional](#)
- [16- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [17- News from the Associated Press](#)



No School This Week City Council Meeting Tonight

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 16, 2020

Positive*	10
Negative	494
Pending	0

South Dakota Counties with COVID-19 Cases

Beadle	1
Bon Homme	1
Charles Mix	1
Davison	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	4
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.

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 2 of 56

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda
March 17, 2020 – 7:00pm
Groton Community Center

1. Groton Firemen – Special Event Retail on Sale Liquor License April 25, 2020
2. Skating season report – Nicole Marzahn
3. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
4. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Discussion
5. Rescind motion declaring official newspapers as Dakota Press and Groton Independent, and declare new official newspaper
6. Minutes
7. Bills
8. February Finance Report
9. Appoint Election Board for April 14th Election:
Joyce Grenz, Julie Hinds, Wanda Hamilton, Linda Locken
10. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
11. Hire Summer employees
12. Adjournment

Equalization Meeting to follow approximately 7:30pm

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 3 of 56

Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

The news isn't great overall, but there are some bright spots. First the numbers:

We're at 4389 cases reported in 49 states, DC, and 3 US territories, PR, GU, and VI. This is about the same percentage increase as we've been seeing for several days now, but again, as the totals rise, the raw number increase rises with it. I expect the numbers to continue to rise as more testing capability comes online. We've seen that change greatly over the past few days. West Virginia still has none reported. We now have 10 states with over 100 cases: NY - 950, WA - 782, CA - 536, MA - 197, NJ - 176, CO - 161, FL - 142, LA - 136, GA - 121, IL - 105. There are 7 states with 50-99 cases, 24 with 10-49, and 8 in single digits.

There have now been 86 deaths in 16 states; reporting their first deaths are NV, SC, IN, and KY. The highest numbers of deaths have been in WA with 48, 29 of which were associated with a single nursing home, CA with 10, and NY with 9. All other states reporting deaths are reporting fewer than 5.

We are looking right now at case numbers that are doubling every three days; at this rate, if this increase continues unchecked, we'll be looking at over 100 million cases by May. This is not great, but that's not to say it will continue unchecked. Which, of course, is why your lives are being so greatly inconvenienced at the moment--time to pull out all the stops in an attempt to slow this train down. Remains to be seen how well that works; we're still getting a lot of push-back from many corners of the universe. If you hear any of this from friends and neighbors, feel free to set people straight. It matters.

Where this really goes depends on a number of factors, and folks have been busy trying to model the possible outcomes. Right now, that's a chore because we don't yet have a great deal of information to feed into those models. For example, we need to know how many people are currently infected, and we don't. The hold-ups on testing, which have not yet been completely resolved, but are improving, make an estimate extremely problematic. Because people shed this virus well before they have symptoms and we're only testing those having symptoms, any reported number of cases like the one above is actually a picture of where we were at some point in the past two weeks--interesting, but not all that useful. One expert says this is like seeing starlight and realizing what we're seeing is light from many years ago--doesn't tell us anything about the star today, only what was going on back when that light was emitted.

You will remember we talked a while back about RO, a virus's reproductive number, the number of people one case might be expected to infect. The higher this is, the faster an epidemic takes off; right now, most folks think this virus has an RO between 2 and 3. And we said the RO is premised on a population that is completely naïve (not immune)--like the current situation--and in a situation where nothing happens to interrupt spread. At present, we don't have a vaccine and we don't have drugs, so lowering the RO by interrupting spread is our only point of attack. If we can get this below 1, the epidemic stops spreading. Needless to say, we're not there yet, not even close; but that's the goal.

Now, this is tricky because the virus spreads from people who do not have symptoms; however, it doesn't appear to transmit as easily as influenza virus. So we have a shot, and that's what all of this social distancing stuff is aimed at and why it's so important. We're dealing with an invisible enemy lurking in undetected sources, so we have to treat everything as a threat for a while.

Current modeling, from best-case to worst-case, varies wildly, so much so that reporting it is sort of pointless. But know it's being done and the worst-case has over half the population infected over the next 2-3 years. We don't want that.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 4 of 56

Once again, slowing things down is critical to avoid overwhelming our health care system's ability to treat cases. We're not starting out in a good place for that. Consider that China, which started out with 4.3 hospital beds/1000 population was quickly swamped, and people died before they could even see a doctor. Italy, which started out with 3.2 hospital beds/1000 people, but had some warning, isn't faring well right now, having to simply deny care to some patients. The US has 2.8 hospital beds/1000 people, so we have to do better in terms of easing the demand.

I am very heartened to see the federal government finally getting on board today with the recommendations of its public health experts with respect to protecting our population. Some local governments that are hot spots have already placed fairly draconian restrictions on their residents; now the federal government is joining the fight. We're late on that; we won't know how late until we get widespread testing online. Not there yet, but getting there faster and faster. But sooner is always better, so I have some hope.

Other brighter news: We have a number of treatments in clinical trials, and human vaccine trials began today.

The treatments, some of which are long shots, include a combination of HIV drugs that inhibit an enzyme the virus needs to replicate; this was tried in SARS patients a few years back. You will remember this virus is a close relative of that one, so there is some cause to think there may be overlapping activity. Another is an antimalarial that showed some promise with SARS. We don't really know for sure how well either of them worked in SARS because that epidemic died down fairly quickly and we no longer had cases against which to test it; this and the fact that we're looking at a different virus is why there is some uncertainty about how effective they might be. Looks like we'll have the opportunity to find out this time. And then there is the drug developed for Ebola, but never approved, that I mentioned a while back. That one's in trials too. We don't know how well any of them work against Covid-19, but most of them are already through the first round of testing, so the preliminary safety testing is done. That will speed things up by a lot. Now we just have to figure out dosages and whether they actually work.

[I am throwing in this edit after the original piece posted because I've just read that an infectious disease specialist in Australia has actually tested the HIV treatment, a combination of lopinavir and ritonavir, and the antimalarial, Chloroquine, in Covid-19 patients with some success. It's too early to get overly excited before an appropriate controlled study is completed--too easy to misread the significance of results without that; but that study looks to get underway within a month or so.]

The vaccine that began trials today is being tested in Washington. First round is 45 healthy volunteers who will receive two doses a month apart. We'll be looking for dosage effects, side effects, and the quality of the immune response--that's the part where we know whether it works to confer protection. In a most unusual step, the WHO (with the FDA's concurrence) approved human trials before animal testing was complete. They did this after a careful consideration of risks to human test subjects and the urgency of the need, because a primary purpose for animal testing is for safety. This means these first-round volunteers are undertaking unusually high risks: Talk about heroes. We're still 12-18 months out from a production vaccine if everything goes well, but this step shortens the time by months.

There is another vaccine ready to begin trials in about a month and several others in development. Some of these vaccines use a new production method which is quicker; that will help if and when we're ready for commercial production. So there's some hope there too.

Something with more immediate potential to help is some creative work being done to expand our ability to treat critical cases. I watched a video of a physician showing how to use a single mechanical ventilator for up to four patients at the same time, apparently without compromising the effectiveness of

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 5 of 56

ventilation for any of the four. This would be a huge thing, although it is important to remember we still have to contend with a general lack of ICU beds and staff. I'm also seeing talk of adapting CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machines, those things a lot of folks have for sleep apnea, for treatment of people in acute respiratory distress. I'm not sure just exactly how these would work for the purpose, but the folks who do seem to think it's a possibility. That would also expand treatment capability by quite a lot, subject again to limitations on ICU capacity and staffing. I don't know what the current supply of these machines is in the US, but this is not an expensive piece of equipment. Both of these are hopeful developments if they are approved.

So the numbers are bad and our lives have changed and nothing's going to come easily, but we are not entirely without hope. There are some possibilities for treatment, and there are some things we know definitely will help to slow spread if we can just manage to do them.

Keep on keeping on. What you do now has the ability to make or break us, so make good choices. You don't have to take the risks these vaccine trial volunteers do, but you can still be a hero.

As always, everything's subject to rapid change. I will update when I have more for you.

Be well.

Attention Students: Students ages 15 and up
Under 15 need parental oversight

Don't let CORONA-19 stop you from your workouts!



**Keep Healthy!
Keep Fit!**



13 Main St., Downtown Groton *Open 24/7*
GDI Living Fitness

Call/Text Paul
605/397-7460
or Tina at
605/397-7285

Membership Fee is only \$10 from now until the school gym is reopened!



Coronavirus School Closure - Meal Availability

The Groton Area School District, through the contributions of generous community members, will be offering free lunches to children aged 1 through grade 12 regardless of whether a family meets income criteria for free or reduced priced meals. Sack lunch meals will be served from the Groton Area Elementary school main entrance from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM daily from Tuesday, March 17 through Friday, March 20. Lunches will be "grab and go" and provided at no cost. It is critically important for all community members that all individuals follow CDC guidelines for staying home if you are sick.

To help assist those members of our school community that live outside of the town of Groton and wish to receive meals, we want to assist in getting those meals to you. Please contact Joe Schwan at Joe.Schwan@k12.sd.us or 605-397-2351 (leave a message if no answer) for assistance in getting this service established for your family.

As the week progresses, we will be evaluating the effectiveness of this program and making modifications as necessary as well as developing contingencies in the event this service is required for a longer period of time.

If you wish to help financially support this important work, please contact Amanda Morehouse at the school business office at Amanda.Morehouse@k12.sd.us or 605-397-2351.

In addition, there is currently food available for families at Ken's Food Fair in Groton. Carts of donated food are available at the front of the store to help families with their nutritional needs. If you or someone you know is in need of support, stop at Ken's and take what you need.

The arts in a COVID-19 world

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

These are incredible times. Our world seems to be upside down and life as we know it has essentially come to a standstill. What did you have planned for last weekend? What did you end up doing? I'm sure most of us followed health experts' advice by staying home. Frankly, we did not have many choices, as most events were cancelled.

The current need to limit public gatherings has been especially hard-hitting for our artists and arts organizations. As a professional musician myself, I can attest to the rapidly changing reality of so many suspended events. Most of my performances, concerts and educational activities through at least the next several weeks have already been cancelled. I am fortunate to have another source of income, but many professional artists do not. As long as art openings, music festivals, local concerts, theater productions and virtually ALL arts events are cancelled, many artists will have zero income. And some artists may be less likely to have health insurance, so should they become ill, their hardships become even greater.

Arts organizations are also being impacted. With no concerts or events, and essentially no mission to carry out, local arts organizations are likely to suffer from a shortage in the revenue needed to support their employees and their facilities. The arts nonprofit sector will undoubtedly take a heavy blow during this pandemic.

We have many concerns to deal with as a community, but I urge you to remember our vulnerable creative sector. If you have the means, think about making additional donations to local arts organizations. Please consider not asking for ticket refunds to cancelled events. And when the all clear is given to resume programming, be the first in line to attend local arts events! Do you have an event planned for this summer? Make sure local artists are part of it.

Arts South Dakota will share news and support opportunities via our website for artists and arts organizations as we learn about them. We are also posting updates about arts event cancellations and postponements at www.ArtsSouthDakota.org. For other COVID-19 resources, use this direct link: <https://artssouthdakota.org/covid-19-resources/>.

South Dakota artists and arts organizations are a big reason we love living in our state—now is an especially important time to care for our creative community.

COVID-19 Updates for Deadwood History, Inc.

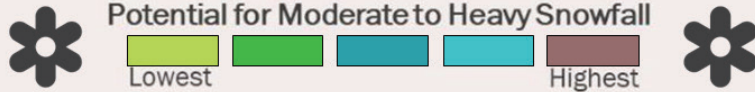
DEADWOOD – The Adams Museum and the Days of '76 Museum will be closed until further notice. This decision was made following regulations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the federal government, as well as Governor Noem's office. We will reassess this temporary closure on a weekly basis. The Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center (HARCC) will remain open at this time, Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Deadwood History, Inc. will temporarily suspend all public events and programming including Preservation Thursday: Homestake Water System Past and Present with Curt Betcher on Thursday, March 19, 2020, at the Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center.

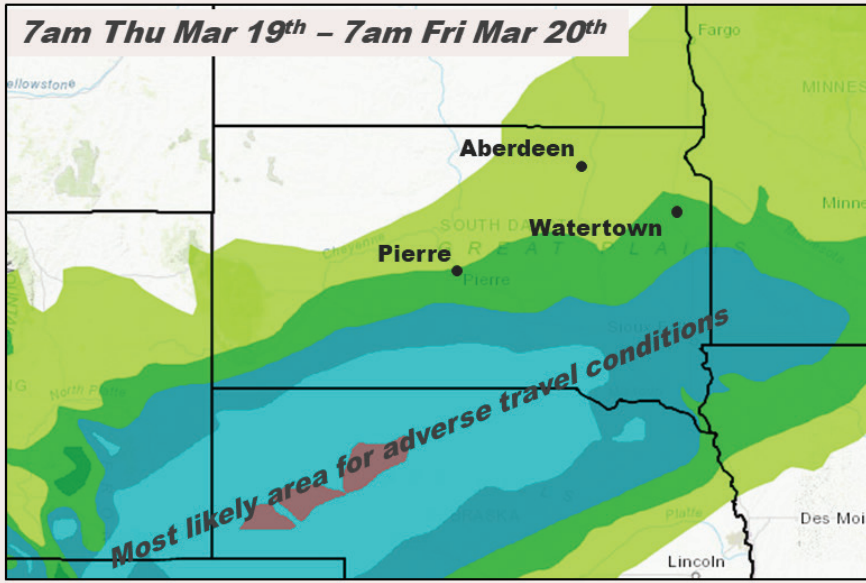
Nothing is more important than the safety and health of our community, visitors, staff, and volunteers. Thank you for understanding these very difficult decisions during these unprecedented times. For more information, please call 605-722-4800.



Potential Late Week Storm - Update



Updated: 3/16/2020 12:33 PM Central



What We Know

- Track has trended to the south.
- **Still the potential for adverse travel conditions.**
- Moisture from this system may still worsen spring flooding (Though this is looking less likely for the north half of the state).

What We Don't Know

- The exact track of this system and the rain to snow transition times continue to shift. **Stay tuned!**

What You Can Do

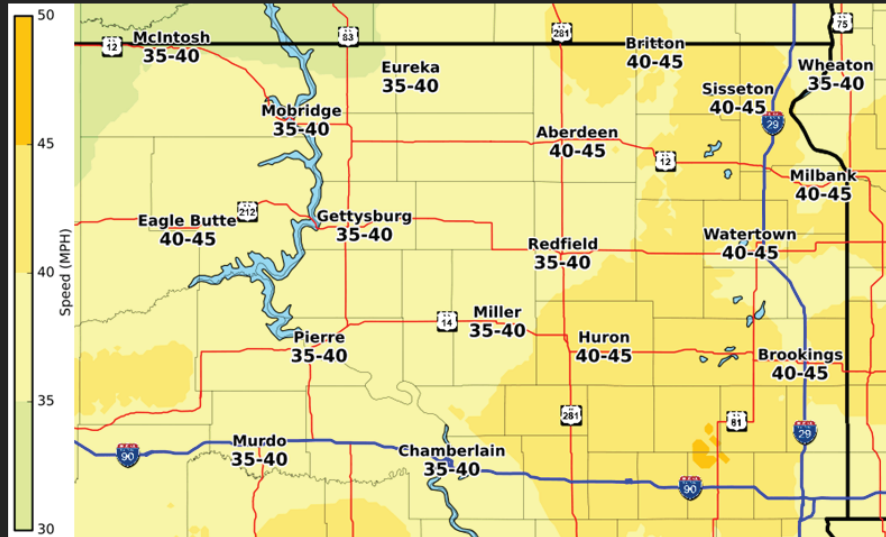
- Continue to monitor the latest forecast from a reliable source, especially if you have travel plans.

Heads up for potentially disruptive weather late in the week. Stay tuned for more information as models paint a clearer picture in the coming days.

Windy Thursday

Created at 4:11 AM - Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Peak Wind Gusts Thursday Afternoon through Thursday Night



What



Wind gusts of around 35 to 45 mph, leading to blowing snow Thursday Afternoon through Thursday Night.

For How Long



Winds will diminish west to east Thursday night.

Impacts



Use caution! Winds will combine with the falling snow to produce Blowing Snow, with reductions to visibility likely, especially over the southern half of South Dakota.

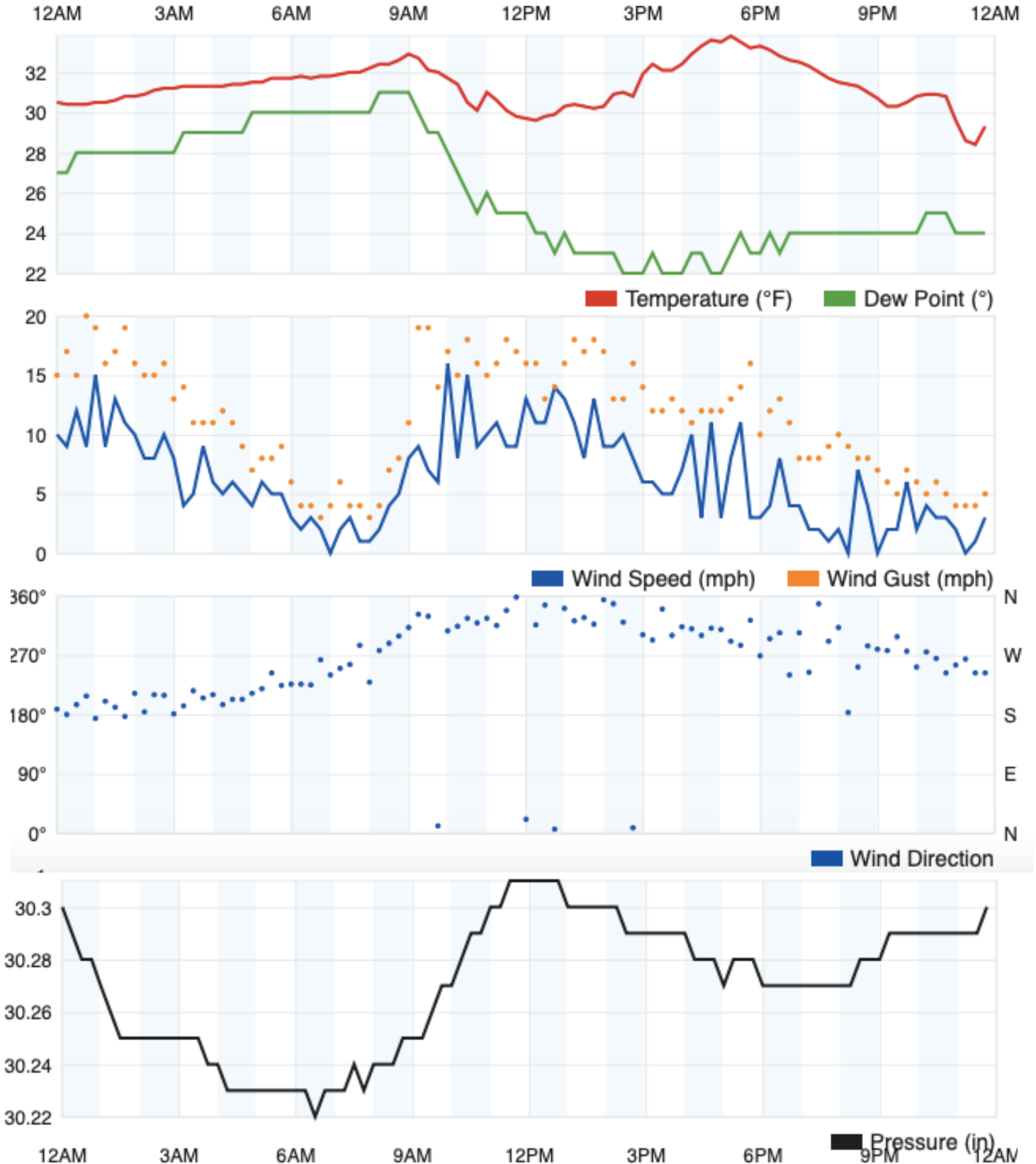


Wind gusts of around 35 to 45 mph will be possible Thursday afternoon, before diminishing west to east Thursday night. Winds will combine with the falling snow to produce blowing snow with reductions to visibility likely, especially over the southern half of South Dakota.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 11 of 56

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 12 of 56

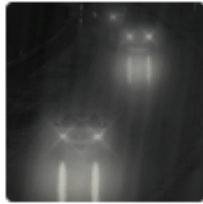
Today



Increasing
Clouds

High: 42 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance
Drizzle

Low: 35 °F

Wednesday



Chance
Drizzle

High: 43 °F

Wednesday
Night



Chance Rain
then Chance
Wintry Mix

Low: 25 °F

Thursday



Blustery.
Chance Wintry
Mix then
Chance Snow

High: 30 °F

Weather Outlook

Tuesday
37 to 44°
Icon: Sun with rays

Wednesday
40s
except low 50s south central SD
Light rain over E SD/W MN.
Little to no accumulation expected.
Icon: Cloud with raindrops

Thursday
25 to 35°
Light Mixed Precipitation in the morning,
changing to Snow. Accumulating snow
expected, mainly over the S half of SD.
Icon: Cloud with snowflakes

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 3/16/2020 2:54 PM Central

Dry weather will linger into Tuesday, as temperatures rebound into the upper 30s to low 40s. Light rain will be possible over eastern SD and western MN Wednesday, but little to no accumulation is expected. A light wintry mix of precipitation Thursday morning will transition to all snow. Accumulating snow is expected, mainly over the southern half of SD.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 13 of 56

Today in Weather History

March 17, 1997: High winds of 30 to 50 mph, gusting to over 60 mph, occurred over much of northeast South Dakota through the morning and into the early afternoon hours. Several homes and businesses sustained some roof damage. In Aberdeen, the high winds tore a large piece of the roof off the bowling alley and also ripped a part of a roof off an appliance store. The winds damaged some power lines and connections in Aberdeen, including some traffic lights. In Aberdeen, the power was out for 2500 customers for a few hours in the morning. The wind also damaged two old farm buildings west of Aberdeen. One barn lost 75 percent of its roof. The second barn was pushed six inches off of its foundation, suffering minor structural damage. The Edmunds County Highway Department Shop, under construction east of Ipswich, suffered much damage as many rafters came down, and the sidewall frame shifted. Finally, much small to medium-sized branches were brought down by the high winds. Some peak wind gusts across the area included 58 mph in Aberdeen and 63 mph in Watertown.

1892: A winter storm in southwestern and central Tennessee produced 26.3 inches of snow at Riddleton and 18.5 inches at Memphis. It was the deepest snow on record for those areas.

1906: The temperature at Snake River Wyoming dipped to 50 degrees below zero, a record for the U.S. for March.

1906: A magnitude 7.1 earthquake caused significant damage in Taiwan. According to the Central Weather Bureau in China, this earthquake caused 1,258 deaths, 2,385 injuries, and destroyed over 6,000 homes.

1952: The ban on using the word "tornado" issued in 1886 ended on this date. In the 1880s, John P. Finley of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, then handling weather forecasting for the U.S., developed generalized forecasts on days tornadoes were most likely. But in 1886, the Army ended Finley's program and banned the word "tornado" from forecasts because the harm done by a tornado prediction would eventually be greater than that which results from the tornado itself. The thinking was that people would be trampled in the panic if they heard a tornado was possible. The ban stayed in place after the Weather Bureau; now, the National Weather Service took over forecasting from the Army. A tornado that wrecked 52 large aircraft at Tinker Air Force Base, OK, on 3/20/1948, spurred Air Force meteorologists to begin working on ways to forecast tornadoes. The Weather Bureau also began looking for ways to improve tornado forecasting and established the Severe Local Storm Warning Center, which is now the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, OK. The ban on the word "tornado" fell on this date when the new center issued its first Tornado Watch.

1990: Showers and thunderstorms associated with a slow-moving cold front produced torrential rains across parts of the southeastern U.S. over two days. Flooding claimed the lives of at least 22 persons, including thirteen in Alabama. Up to 16 inches of rain deluged southern Alabama with 10.63 inches reported at Mobile AL in 24 hours. The town of Elba, AL, was flooded with 6 to 12 feet of water causing more than 25 million dollars damage, and total flood damage across Alabama exceeded 100 million dollars. Twenty-six counties in the state were declared disaster areas.

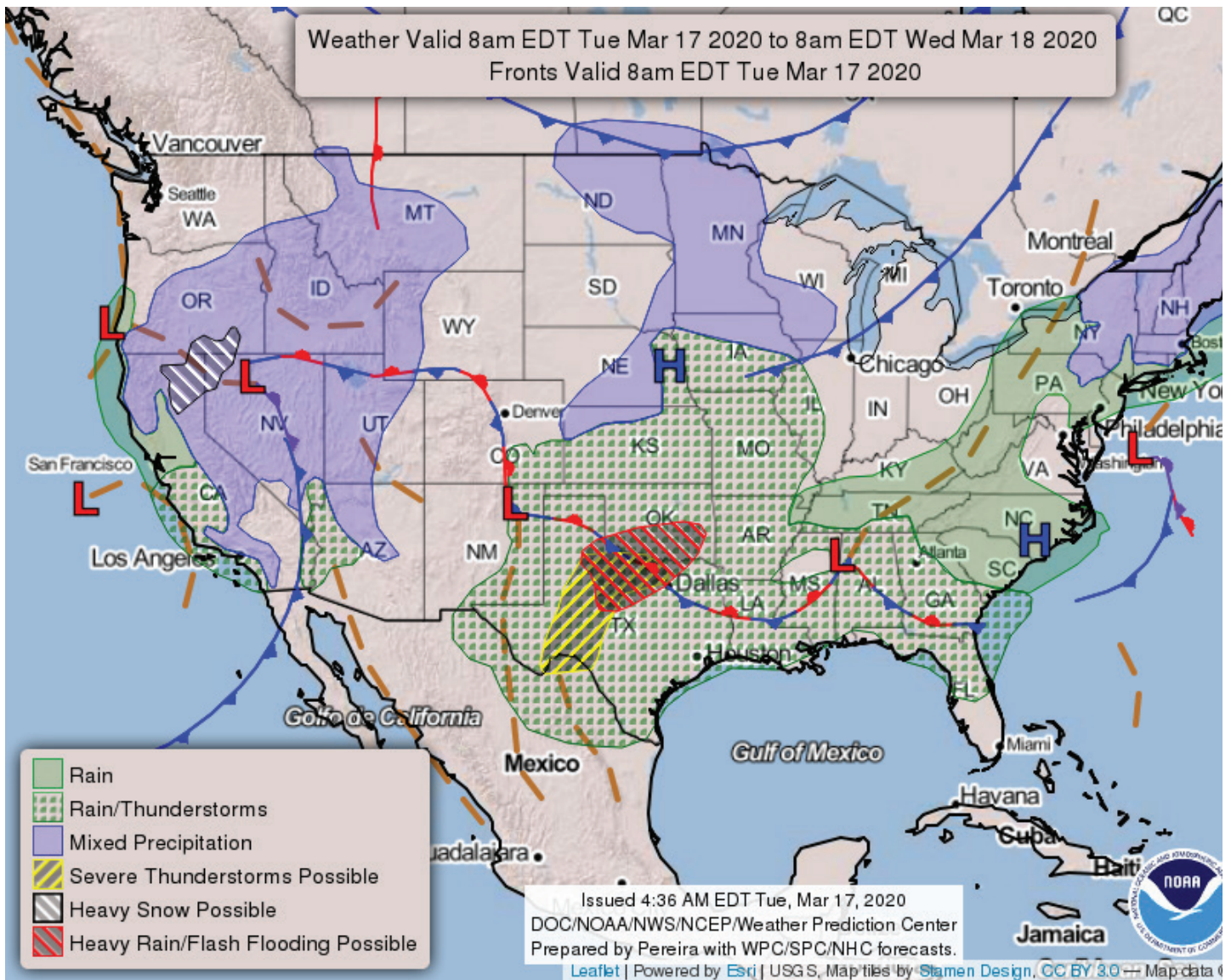
Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 14 of 56

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 34 °F at 4:37 PM
Low Temp: 28 °F at 11:23 PM
Wind: 20 mph at 12:41 AM
Snow

Record High: 77° in 2012
Record Low: -10° in 1906
Average High: 40°F
Average Low: 20°F
Average Precip in March.: 0.51
Precip to date in March.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.53
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 7:43 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:40 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 15 of 56



ONE FATHER'S LEGACY

Fathers always leave a legacy for their children. We do it by word and deed - sometimes consciously and through careful planning. Other times we do it without being aware of what we leave as their inheritance. In preparing to leave the throne to his son, Solomon, David gave him three legacies:

The legacy of courage. "Be strong, prove yourself a man." David knew his son would face difficult times and wanted him to have the strength that only comes from God. Having God's strength would enable Solomon to serve the Lord faithfully and fully.

The legacy of conviction. "Keep the charge of the Lord your God." Here David is advising Solomon to be a man of the Book – keep the charge - to always follow God's Laws. It is important to gain knowledge, but knowledge without God's wisdom is foolishness!

The legacy of conduct. "Keep His statutes." Godly courage is built on convictions that flow from God's Word which result in godly conduct. Godly conduct is a witness of the love and grace of God without ever saying a word. Through us, people see "God in action."

Our legacy lives forever in our children's lives. What legacy are you leaving yours?

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to be fathers who leave godly legacies for our children. May we leave them legacies that are consistent with Your teachings, are established in Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 1 Kings 2:1-4 Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 16 of 56

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

News from the Associated Press

South Dakota governor signs bills worth \$6.4M into law

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Monday signed legislation that will kick in over \$6.4 million to state programs including a new radio system for first responders and several new programs at state universities.

The biggest-ticket item was \$5.1 million for the radio system upgrade, a request Noem made for legislators back in December. It will help upgrade the radio system used by police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians. The old system is from 2003, according to the governor. The legislation includes an emergency clause that allow the funds to be used immediately.

The Republican governor also immediately made \$450,000 available for partial tax refunds for low-income people over the age of 65 or people with disabilities.

The rest of the money won't be available until July. It includes almost \$400,000 for a tech business startup center at Dakota State University and \$550,000 for a rural veterinarian program at South Dakota State University.

Noem signed six other bills into law. She has vetoed two bills so far this year. The Legislature will meet for one day at the end of the month to consider overriding her vetoes.

South Dakota man accused of running cattle Ponzi scheme

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man faces federal charges that he ran a multi-million-dollar cattle Ponzi scheme.

A federal grand jury earlier this month indicted Robert Blom, 58, of Corsica on charges of wire fraud, mail fraud and money laundering. Blom pleaded not guilty to the indictment Monday, U.S. Attorney for South Dakota Ronald Parsons said.

The indictment alleges that around January 2014 and continuing through February 2019, Blom devised a scheme to defraud investors. As part of his custom cattle-feeding business, Blom solicited investors for groups of cattle. After the cattle were sold, Blom paid profits to investors in the groups. But prosecutors allege Blom sold the same groups of cattle to multiple different investors.

Prosecutors allege Blom sometimes altered the cattle purchase invoices to try to conceal that he sold the same group of cattle to different investors.

Blom also is accused of telling investors he would use their money to purchase groups of cattle and to care for those cattle. But instead, he is accused of routinely using money from new investors to pay back old investors.

So far the loss is estimated at about \$20 million. Blom was released on bond pending trial. A trial date has not been set.

SD Governor: 1 new case of COVID-19, testing slows down

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota authorities reported one new positive test for COVID-19 on Monday, while reporting that the coronavirus was confirmed as the cause of death for one person last week.

Gov. Kristi Noem said the death last week of a man in his 60s with underlying health problems was caused by COVID-19. She said that though it was reported he resided in Pennington County, he spent the two weeks leading up to his death in Davison County, where he died .

The state has reported one death and 10 positive cases. Officials said all the positive cases came from people with recent travel history and that currently there is no community transmission. They have tested over 500 people for the coronavirus.

Noem said there is a slow down in test results from the the state lab. It still has plenty of tests, but is running low on other supplies needed to run the tests. This has forced the lab to prioritize tests from

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 18 of 56

medium and high-risk people. Noem said it would take one or two days to process tests after samples arrive at the lab in Pierre.

The new positive test came from a man in his 20s in Minnehaha County. The county contains Sioux Falls, the state's largest city. Sioux Falls health officials announced on Monday they would be moving to halt gatherings of 50 or more people in city-owned facilities and hoped private groups would follow their cue. The Sioux Falls School District has canceled classes for the week.

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 governor signed a state of emergency order last week, requesting public schools to close and ordering non-essential state employees to work from home. She also plans to assist small businesses and nonprofits in applying for federal loans if they are impacted by the outbreak.

"There isn't a single agency or department at the state level that isn't engaged," Noem said.

The governor indicated the state may decide to request schools to close for longer than her original request of one week. Schools are working to provide lunch and other meals to students while school is closed.

Noem said she was told by White House officials that the nation's grocery supply chain remains in good shape on a conference call with President Donald Trump on Monday.

Noem also confirmed that the president advised governors to find private sources for respirators, rather than rely on the federal government, as hospitals prepare for the possibility of treating people for the coronavirus.

"It's all hands on deck to meet supply needs," Noem said.

South Dakota public universities announced on Monday that all classes will move online next week after an extended spring break. Classes are currently scheduled to meet in-person again on April 6, but the Board of Regents noted the situation is "evolving."

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

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.

Man faces first-degree murder charge in fatal SD stabbing

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Prosecutors said on Monday they will charge a Yankton man with first- and second-degree murder and manslaughter for allegedly stabbing a woman in Sioux Falls.

Josephdeng Aganj Mamot, 50, was arrested on Sunday after stabbing a 39-year-old woman to death, according to police. An officer said the suspect and the victim, identified as Akoat Mater, lived together and there had been a verbal altercation. Mamot was also injured in the incident.

Minnehaha County State's Attorney Crystal Johnson said the first-degree murder charge is punishable by life imprisonment or the death penalty. In order to punish Mamot for first-degree murder, prosecutors will have to show he premeditated the murder.

Johnson said that under South Dakota law, it doesn't matter how much time passes between premeditating a murder and carrying it out.

"Premeditation can be formed in an instant," she said.

'Virus at Iran's gates': How Tehran failed to stop outbreak

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Appearing before the cameras coughing and sweating profusely, the man leading Iran's response to the new coronavirus outbreak promised it was of no danger to his country.

"Quarantines belong to the Stone Age," Iraj Harirchi insisted.

A day later, he himself would be in quarantine from the virus.

Harirchi's story is a microcosm of what has happened in Iran amid the coronavirus pandemic. Roughly nine out of 10 cases in the Middle East come from the Islamic Republic, which has reported over 16,000 people infected and at least 988 deaths amid fears that cases may still be underreported. While most people who are infected recover, the virus spreads rapidly and can kill the elderly and those with breathing problems or other underlying illnesses.

Days of denials gave the virus time to spread in Iran as the country marked the 41st anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution with mass demonstrations and then held a parliamentary election in which authorities desperately sought to boost turnout.

Although Iran has one of the Mideast's best medical services, its hospitals appear to be overwhelmed and authorities have asked for 172 million masks from abroad. It also has asked the International Monetary Fund for \$5 billion, the first such loan for Iran since 1962.

The Islamic Republic has an opportunity to limit the virus as the Persian New Year, Nowruz, approaches. But authorities appear unable or unwilling to stop travel between major cities as local towns affected by the virus threaten to set up their own checkpoints to turn away or even attack outsiders. That's in sharp contrast to Iraq and Lebanon, Iranian allies that have restricted movement while facing a fraction of the reported infections.

What happens next will not only affect Iran's civilian government and Shiite theocracy, whose officials already have fallen ill, but also the wider world.

"Judging by the fact that Iran has now asked for a \$5 billion loan from the IMF, this speaks to how dire the situation is getting and them realizing that it's spun out of control," said Dr. Amir A. Afkhami, an associate professor at George Washington University who studies Iran.

'PATIENT ZERO' AND AN ELECTION

In a country like Iran, where the state controls all broadcasters and journalists face restrictions, many things about the outbreak remain unknown. Chief among them is who was "patient zero" — the person who was first infected with the coronavirus in the nation, and where.

Public comments point to the city of Qom, 125 kilometers (80 miles) southwest of Tehran, on the country's windswept central desert plateau. How the virus arrived there remains in question.

Authorities suggested that perhaps an Iranian businessman returned from China with the virus. Qom is home to major Shiite seminaries that draw Chinese students. It also is along a \$2.7 billion high-speed train route that a Chinese company is building, a sign of China's outreach to Tehran amid crushing U.S. sanctions. China is also constructing a solar power plant there.

From late January, worries could be seen on the front page of the pro-reform newspaper Aftab-e Yazd.

"Mysterious virus at Iran's gates," its banner headline warned as China began a lockdown to control the outbreak.

Yet travel between China and Iran continued.

The first two coronavirus cases were reported Feb. 19, with the announcement that both died in Qom. Since it can take up to two weeks to show symptoms, they could have gotten it in early February.

Iranian authorities haven't offered any details. Iran analysts suggest it might be because the country marked the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution during that period.

Iran also held parliamentary elections Feb. 21. The government desperately wanted a large turnout to boost its legitimacy after shooting down a Ukrainian passenger jet, killing all 176 people on board. Days earlier, a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad killed top Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani, further

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 20 of 56

shaking its credibility.

Iranian authorities already had disqualified thousands of candidates from running, ultimately tilting the election to conservatives. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei even later accused foreign enemies of trying to influence turnout with the outbreak.

"The pretext of an illness and virus was used, and their media did not miss the slightest opportunity to discourage people from voting," he said.

The election saw Iran's lowest turnout since the revolution, with some voters wearing the masks that everyone soon would want. But people already were dying and fear was spreading.

SHRINES AND HAZMAT SUITS

Qom long has been the stronghold of Iran's Shiite clergy. A focal point of devotion is the golden-domed shrine of Fatima Masumeh, a Shiite saint. Crowds pray there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, touching and kissing the shrine.

That raises the risks for visitors. In Saudi Arabia, authorities have closed off access to the holiest sites in Islam over concerns about the virus. Churches, mosques, temples and shrines around the world have been closed or subject to stringent disinfecting campaigns.

But in Qom and elsewhere in Iran, the shrines stayed open despite civilian health authorities demanding they close. Mohammad Saidi, who oversees the Fatima Masumeh shrine, insinuated that closing shrines was part of a plot against Shiites by President Donald Trump.

"Defeating Qom is the dream of treacherous Trump and his domestic mercenaries, but this dream will not be realized even in their grave," Saidi said on Feb. 22.

That decision likely gave the virus time to spread. Police later arrested those who posted online video of themselves licking and kissing shrines.

"The city's religious epithet — 'the nest of the Prophet and his family' — was intended to reassure believers worldwide that it was insulated against epidemics and other disasters," wrote Mehdi Khalaji, a Qom-trained Shiite theologian who is an analyst at the Washington Institute for Near-East Policy. "If early reports about the spread of the coronavirus prove correct, Qom's status as the ideological capital of the Islamic Revolution helped make it the pathogen's transmitting center to the rest of Iran and at least seven other countries."

Since then, hazmat-suited workers have fogged disinfectant and cleaned the shrines. Some mosques even hand out alcohol as a disinfectant to the poor despite Islam forbidding its consumption.

By Monday night, the Fatima Masumeh shrine and another one in Mashhad had closed, only to see online videos purport to show hard-line faithful storming the shrines' courtyard, demanding they open. But by that point, the virus had spread, reaching the highest levels of Iran's theocracy.

'THE SITUATION IS TERRIBLE HERE AND I HOPE GOD HELPS US'

Like blood from a beating heart, the infections in Qom coursed out across Iran in maps later shared by the Health Ministry. In Tehran, the virus began moving through the government and the Shiite theocracy.

Among those first infected was Harirchi, the deputy health minister who tested positive only a day after he downplayed the virus in a televised news conference.

It didn't stop there.

The virus killed Expediency Council member Mohammad Mirmohammadi, described as a close confidant of Khamenei. Hadi Khosroshahi, Iran's former ambassador to the Vatican, and Ahmad Tuyserkani, an adviser to Iran's judiciary chief, also died along with several lawmakers and a member of the country's Assembly of Experts.

The sick included Vice President Masoumeh Ebtekar, better known as "Sister Mary," the English-speaking spokeswoman for the students who seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979 in the 444-day hostage crisis. The virus also infected senior Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri and two other Cabinet members, along with Revolutionary Guard members and doctors.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 21 of 56

Soon, even 80-year-old Khamenei was seen wearing disposable gloves at a tree-planting ceremony. President Hassan Rouhani, 71, was pictured at a teleconference with the nearest official a few meters (several feet) away.

The numbers soared. Iran's death rate from the virus now is higher than in other hard-hit nations.

That could be from the initial lack of testing kits and facilities. It also could be from what outside experts, Tehran lawmakers and other local leaders have alleged from the start: Iran was hiding the true number of infections and deaths.

Authorities initially denied that, especially after the BBC's Persian service said deaths far exceeded those reported at the beginning of the crisis. But that denial appeared to weaken over time.

"We found out a little late that the coronavirus had entered Iran because we mistook it for the flu," Reza Malekzadeh, a deputy health minister, later said.

A man in Qom filmed rows of bodies in black bags and caskets awaiting burial for days in a trench lined with lime. He alleged all had tested positive for the coronavirus, although officials later said the bodies had been held pending test results.

"The situation is terrible here and I hope God helps us," he said while walking through the mortuary.

Authorities later arrested him.

PAST EXPERIENCES, NEW WORRIES

Diseases have influenced Iranian history. Cholera outbreaks plagued its Qajar dynasty, long indebted to British and Russian powers. The chaos and debt set the stage for Iran's 1906 Constitutional Revolution and the creation of parliament.

That cholera outbreak saw Shiite religious leaders lash out at the West. Now, Iranian leaders, such as the head of its Revolutionary Guard and Khamenei himself, traffic in the baseless conspiracy theory that the coronavirus is a biological weapon created by the U.S., something echoed by Chinese officials as well.

"The psychology of the leadership in Iran has sort of an almost self-destructive need to double down on a lie just to sort of portray itself as competent," Afkhami said.

That's contrasted with the response to the El Tor strain of cholera that caused a pandemic through the 1960s. Iran produced millions of vaccine doses and inoculated its people, controlling its spread. It even gave broad-range antibiotics from the U.S. to pilgrims visiting Shiite shrines, Afkhami said.

"This rapid mobilization and this rapid response allowed the country to control the epidemic," he said.

That was under Iran's shah, toppled in the 1979 revolution. But even after, Iran fought off other outbreaks, and its hospitals, doctors and nurses are known as some of the best in the wider Middle East, with a network of clinics from villages to big cities.

However, the system appears to be stretching at the seams, with online videos purporting to show field hospitals going up. Meanwhile, Iran's 80 million people, whose sense of high risk has been dulled by years of international isolation, crowd into grocery stores and butcher shops, suspicious of anything in the state media.

Nowruz, the Persian New Year, looms on Friday, a holiday when millions travel. The government repeatedly has stopped short of ordering any major travel restrictions. It hasn't explained why, but there could be worry about further angering its people or slowing down its anemic, sanctions-hurt economy.

Online videos show Iranians ignoring government demands to stay home and moving instead toward the coast of the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Residents of hard-hit Rasht, on Iran's coast, have threatened to attack out-of-towners.

"We expect that, God willing, we can contain the rising trend of the disease, not the disease itself, by March 26," said Harirchi, the health official who is recovering from COVID-19. "But I say this very frankly: if the great people don't cooperate, the disease will continue to be there until late May or even in June, and turn into a huge crisis."

And the man who once called quarantines a thing of the past added: "I beg the people to minimize their trips and contacts, and isolate the infected people from others completely."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 22 of 56

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

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>.

What's Happening: Borders shut, reality dose for Big Brother

Borders have slammed shut, schools and businesses have closed and increasingly draconian restrictions on movement have been enforced to slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

Here are some of the latest developments on Tuesday:

VIRUS KEEPS MOVING WEST

Tens of millions of people are hunkered down, so gripped by fear that they are heeding government calls to isolate themselves and slow the spread of the coronavirus. Wuhan, the central Chinese city where the virus was first detected late last year and which has been under lockdown for weeks, reported just one new case on Tuesday. The fronts in the battle have clearly shifted outside China, with its caseload now outnumbered by those outside its borders. Spain is now the fourth-most infected country, surpassing South Korea, where new cases have been subsiding. Countries from Canada to Switzerland, Russia and Malaysia announced sharp new restrictions on the movement of people across their borders.

VIRUS REALITY TO HIT GERMAN "BIG BROTHER" PARTICIPANTS

Germany's Big Brother reality show participants are living in oblivion of the coronavirus outbreak — but not for much longer. On Tuesday evening they will be informed about the pandemic that has brought many countries around the globe to a standstill. In a special show airing Tuesday at 7 p.m. (1800 GMT), contestants living in isolation near the western German city of Cologne will be informed about the virus pandemic by a physician and the show's host. The participants have been cut off from the outside world since Feb. 6.

DAYS OF DENIAL IN IRAN ALLOWED VIRUS TO SPREAD

Iran, which now has the third-highest number of deaths worldwide, provides an example of the importance of imposing measures early. Days of denials at the outset of the coronavirus outbreak gave the disease time to spread. Officials ignored the problem as Iran marked the 41st anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution with mass demonstrations and then held a parliamentary election in which they sought to boost turnout. Even now, they seem unwilling to stop travel between cities as affected towns threaten to set up their own checkpoints to turn away outsiders. By contrast, Iraq and Lebanon have restricted movement and have a fraction of the reported infections.

PRESIDENT TRUMP ADOPTS MORE SOMBER TONE

President Donald Trump has struck a more urgent tone when speaking of the coronavirus pandemic after weeks of trying to play down its risk. In a somber message, Trump made a direct appeal to all Americans to do their part to halt the pandemic's spread. The shift was informed in part by a growing realization that the coronavirus crisis is an existential threat to Trump's presidency, endangering his reelection and his legacy.

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>

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. 'THERE IS NO EASY OR QUICK WAY OUT' Tens of millions of people are hunkered down, heeding government calls to isolate themselves and slow the spread of the new coronavirus.
2. LIFE IN BAY AREA SCREECHES TO A HALT Officials in the greater San Francisco area order residents to "shelter in place" and only leave their homes for essential activities, the strictest measures in America so far.
3. 'PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT JULY, AUGUST' After weeks of trying to play down the risk posed by the spreading coronavirus pandemic, Trump strikes a new, more urgent tone, delivering a sobering message to a reeling nation.
4. WHERE MIDEAST HAS BEEN HIT HARDEST Days of denials gave the new coronavirus time to spread in Iran and now officials worry the Iranian New Year could see the virus spread even further.
5. GLOBAL SHARES BOUNCE AFTER WALL STREET DIVE Share prices rebound in Europe and Asia after a brutal sell-off that gave the U.S. stock market its worst loss in more than three decades.
6. VIRUS CASTS PALL IN LATEST PRIMARIES Ohio calls off Democratic primary voting just hours before polls opened but officials in Florida, Arizona and Illinois say they will move forward with the vote.
7. 'AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING' The first people to receive an experimental vaccine for the coronavirus say they were inspired to help because they wanted to do more to fight the disease.
8. WORLD'S OLDEST PROFESSION IN SUDDEN SLUMP A general drop in nightlife in Berlin and fear and uncertainty about the new virus among sex workers in Germany puts a crimp in business.
9. KENTUCKY DERBY POSTPONED UNTIL SEPTEMBER It would mark the first time in 75 years that the first leg of the Triple Crown won't be run on the first Saturday in May, a newspaper report says.
10. TOM HANKS RELEASED FROM HOSPITAL The Oscar winner and his wife, Rita Wilson, have reportedly been discharged from an Australian hospital to self-isolate in a rented house.

Uncertainty surrounds Democratic primary as Ohio scraps vote

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Democratic presidential primary is consumed with uncertainty after leaders in Ohio called off Tuesday's election just hours before polls were set to open, citing the need to combat the new coronavirus. Officials in Florida, Arizona and Illinois said they would move forward with the vote.

Not since New York City postponed its mayoral primary on the day of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks has an election been pushed off in such a high-profile, far-reaching way. Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine initially asked a court to delay the vote, and when a judge refused to do so the state's health director declared a health emergency that would prevent the polls from opening.

The decision was a reminder that the most elemental act of American democracy — voting — will be severely tested Tuesday as several states hold presidential primaries while also confronting the impact of a global pandemic. The contests are playing out as the virus' impact is becoming more tangible with schools closing across the country, workers staying home and restaurants and bars shuttering.

The U.S. stock market on Monday plunged to its worst day in more than three decades.

The rapidly shifting developments amounted to a kind of chaos rarely seen in an election season. And it may not end soon as some states that have presidential contests in the coming weeks have already moved to postpone them and others were being pressed to follow.

"These are unusual restrictions," Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause New York, said of recommended federal limits to try and control the spread of the virus. Her group is urging the delay of that state's 2020 presidential primary from April 28 to June 23, when congressional and legislative primaries are already scheduled.

"Normally, we do not support postponing elections, but these are extraordinary circumstances," Lerner said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 24 of 56

Campaigns spent Monday sifting through data and talking to contacts on the ground to assess the impact of the coronavirus on turnout in places that will hold elections Tuesday. Former Vice President Joe Biden is moving closer to securing the Democratic presidential nomination but could face a setback if the older voters who tend to support him don't show up. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, meanwhile, can't afford to lose support from young voters who have been his most loyal supporters.

The tumult has left the campaign in a state of suspended animation. In-person rallies have been replaced with sometimes-awkward virtual events.

Sanders, the last Democrat standing between Biden and the nomination, isn't planning to drop out. His campaign looked to have nowhere to go after a big loss last week in Michigan, and another blow landed Monday night when Biden was declared the winner of the primary in Washington state, giving him victories in five out of six states that voted March 10. Yet Sanders' top advisers see no downside to staying in the race as they assess how the coming days and weeks unfold.

Sanders staged a virtual rally Monday night featuring himself, rocker Neil Young and activist actress Daryl Hannah. He also released a video criticizing Biden for suggesting as a senator that he'd be willing to cut Social Security benefits — a line of attack he employed frequently during Sunday's debate.

"I don't have to tell anybody that we are living in a very unprecedented and strange moment in the history of our country," Sanders said, urging supporters that it may be time to "rethink our value system, rethink many of the systems we operate under."

Sanders' team had expected Biden to do well in all four states set to vote on Tuesday. But the Vermont senator has also cast some doubt about the entire process, saying no one should risk being infected while voting and noting that it's important "to make sure that everybody who wants to vote has the right to vote, and that may not be the case now."

Still, Sanders faces an increasingly tough path to the nomination. About half of the delegates in the Democratic primary have already been awarded and, if Biden has another big night Tuesday, he will pad an already large and perhaps insurmountable lead. Sanders trails Biden by more than 150 delegates nationally, meaning he'd need to win more than 57% of those yet to be allocated to clinch the Democratic nomination.

Biden's campaign is trying not to look presumptuous about its prospects at this sensitive moment. Still, the former vice president is making moves to rally more voters to his campaign, including his announcement during the debate that he would choose a woman as a running mate.

Rep. Cedric Richmond of Louisiana, one of Biden's campaign co-chairs, said the former vice president has "started the process of looking at people seriously."

Biden appeared to keep his focus Monday on winning the nomination, as he encouraged voters in a telephone town hall to participate in Tuesday primaries but to do so safely.

Joining him was former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, who served during President Barack Obama's second term. Murthy encouraged voters at high risk of contracting coronavirus to vote by mail or use curbside voting, if available, but he also explained precautions elections officials are planning in the Tuesday primary states.

The call came three days after Biden's initial effort at remote campaigning was marred by technical difficulties, a testament to the challenge of balancing what amounts to a national shut-in with the demands of a presidential campaign. "I appreciate everyone bearing with us as we figure out all the logistics of campaigning in a new way here," Biden said Monday night.

The coming weeks will present additional uncertainties. After Tuesday, the campaign had been set to shift to Georgia next week, but officials there have already postponed their Democratic primary until May 19. That means voting isn't scheduled again anywhere until March 29 in Puerto Rico — and island officials are also seeking a delay.

The first week in April, meanwhile, would have featured Louisiana, but its decision to delay the primary until May leaves only primaries in far-flung Alaska and Hawaii and caucuses in Wyoming through April 4. That could leave the campaign in further limbo, perhaps prolonging a primary race that might otherwise have been wrapped up.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 25 of 56

Voting rights groups have advocated for upcoming elections to be postponed, or for states holding them as scheduled to adopt more lenient vote-by-mail and absentee ballot rules so that people don't have to choose between showing up at a polling place and putting their health at risk.

But Mustafa Tameez, a Democratic strategist with ties to many of the party's top donors, noted that Americans voted during World War I and World War II.

"There should be no circumstance in which we say, because of a crisis — regardless of the crisis — that we stop our electoral government," Tameez said.

Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Atlanta, Seth Borenstein in Washington and Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix contributed to this report.

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

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.

Global shares bounce after Wall St dive, recession warning

By **ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer**

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares rebounded in Europe and Asia on Tuesday after a brutal sell-off that gave the U.S. stock market its worst loss in over 30 years, with many economies grinding to a standstill in hopes of containing the spread of the coronavirus.

Paris, London, Hong Kong and Sydney logged solid gains while Tokyo's benchmark was flat.

"Market experts actually originally predicted at least a 1,000 point crash for the Hang Seng index. But surprise, surprise, there was bottom fishing. Investors went bargaining hunting," said Francis Lun, a stock analyst in Hong Kong.

Australia's benchmark led the gains, jumping 5.8% after a 7% plunge on Monday as investors snapped up miners and banks. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 climbed 0.8% at one point but barely eked out a gain, adding less than 10 points to 17,011.53.

In early European trading, the CAC 40 in Paris rose 3.4% to 4,012.99 after the government announced \$50 billion in aid for individuals and businesses. Germany's DAX gained 3% to 9,004.71. Britain's FTSE 100 fell back from early gains, shedding 0.2% to 5,143.06.

U.S. futures pointed to gains: the contract for the S&P 500 climbed 3.8% while the future for the Dow Jones Industrial Average added 3.2%.

The rebound in Asia followed news that the Trump administration plans strong support for airlines stricken by the outbreak and is pushing the Senate to enact a massive stimulus package to alleviate losses for businesses and individuals affected by the outbreak, which has infected more than 182,000 people worldwide, 4,661 in the United States.

Some shares in Hong Kong were too attractive to pass up, said Lun.

"It's a see-saw battle between the bulls and the bears," he said. "I think right now the bulls are winning the upper hand. The key is that Hong Kong is dirt cheap."

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo rose to 17,011.53, while Hong Kong's benchmark jumped 0.9% to 23,263.73. Sydney's S&P/ASX 200 jumped to 5,293.40, while the Shanghai Composite index sank 0.3% to 2,779.64. The Sensex in Mumbai rose 0.2% to 31,434.96. The Kospi in South Korea dropped 2.5% to 1,672.44. Shares also fell in Southeast Asia.

The Philippine stock market was closed as of Tuesday after the government imposed restrictions on movement in the capital.

Oil prices also rose Tuesday, with U.S. benchmark crude up 3.8%, or \$1.90 to \$29.79 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It plunged \$3.03 to \$28.70 on Monday. Brent crude,

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 26 of 56

the international standard, picked up 2.1, or 63 cents, to \$30.68 per barrel.

Analysts said bargain hunters appeared to be buying to help fill government oil reserves, anticipating China's economy will get a boost from massive stimulus yet to be announced.

But investors also are betting governments will step up their response to the outbreak.

"Details as yet are sparse. Investors are pinning their hopes on governments flooding people and businesses with enough cash to survive months of a coronavirus-induced lockdown," Jasper Lawler of LCG said in a commentary.

The question is how aggressively governments will move to counter the inevitable contractions.

"America needs to go big here for any hope to return to markets. If we are talking hundreds of billions, we think markets can find a base," Lawler said.

Recent losses in global markets have been the worst since the 2008 financial crisis.

Monday's 12% drop for the S&P 500, its worst day in more than three decades, came as voices from Wall Street to the White House said the coronavirus may be dragging the economy into a recession.

The S&P 500 has shed nearly 30% since setting a record less than a month ago, and it's at its lowest point since the end of 2018. Monday's precipitous losses accelerated in the last half hour of trading after President Donald Trump said the economy may be headed for a recession and asked Americans to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.

The plunge came even though the Federal Reserve rushed to announce a new round of emergency actions before markets opened for trading on Monday. The moves are aimed at propping up the economy and getting financial markets running smoothly again, but they may have raised fears even further. Investors are also waiting for the White House and Congress to offer more aid to an economy that's increasingly shutting down by the hour.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 2,997 points, or 12.9%.

Declines last week ended the longest-ever bull market on Wall Street, nearly 11 years following the financial crisis. There's seemingly no escape from the uncertainty: From parked airplanes to empty restaurants, nobody knows when economies might revive or even when countries will be able to get the spread of the virus under control.

Closing businesses can help slow the spread of the virus, but it also takes cash out of the pockets of companies and workers.

The best-case scenario for many investors is that the economic shock will be steep but short, with growth recovering later this year after businesses reopen. Pessimists are preparing for a longer haul.

For most people, the coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, and those with mild illness recover in about two weeks. But severe illness including pneumonia can occur, especially in the elderly and people with existing health problems, and recovery could take six weeks in such cases.

The Federal Reserve has been trying to do what it can to help the economy, and over the weekend it slashed short-term interest rates back to their record low of nearly zero.

It also said it also will buy at least \$500 billion of Treasury securities and \$200 billion of mortgage-backed securities to help calm the Treasury market, which is a bedrock for the world's financial system and influences stock and bond prices around the world. Trading in the market was starting to snarl last week, with traders spotting disconcertingly large gaps in prices offered by buyers and sellers.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 0.81% from 0.73% late Monday.

In currency trading, the dollar rose to 106.75 Japanese yen from 105.90 yen. The euro weakened to \$1.1124 from \$1.1184.

___ Alice Fung and Nadia Lam in Hong Kong contributed.

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

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 27 of 56

With borders and businesses closing, world hunkers down

By CHRIS BLAKE Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — With borders slamming shut, schools and businesses closing and increasingly drastic restrictions on movement in place, tens of millions of people were hunkered down Tuesday, heeding government calls to isolate themselves and slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

From Southeast Asia to Europe to the Americas, people found their lives upended by lockdowns and social distancing.

Shoppers in Malaysia stood in long lines to stock up at picked-over supermarkets. Commuters in the Philippines waited in huge traffic jams at checkpoints set up to take their temperatures before entering the capital city. Officials in seven San Francisco Bay Area counties issued a sweeping shelter-in-place mandate, ordering millions of residents to stay at home and go outside only for food, medicine and outings that are absolutely essential.

The cancellations of treasured holidays and community events continued to build, with Thailand saying it was calling off its water festival in April and the organizers of the so-called “most exciting two minutes in sports”— the Kentucky Derby — reportedly prepared to announce the delay the horse race for the first time since World War II.

Fresh moves to contain the virus came even as Wuhan, the central Chinese city where the virus was first detected late last year and which has been under lockdown for weeks, reported just one new case on Tuesday.

The fronts in the battle have clearly shifted outside China, with its caseload now outnumbered by those outside its borders. And Spain is now the fourth-most infected country, surpassing South Korea, where new cases have been subsiding.

With the number of cases worldwide topping 181,000, a surge of patients in Madrid’s hospitals fueled worries across Europe of what lies ahead. Pleas went out to funnel masks and ventilators to places struggling with soaring caseloads.

“There is no easy or quick way out of this extremely difficult situation,” Mark Rutte, the prime minister of the Netherlands, said in the first televised speech by a Dutch premier since 1973.

The virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, for most people, but severe illness is more likely in the elderly and people with existing health problems. More than 79,000 people have recovered from the illness.

Nevertheless a growing sense of crisis has roiled financial markets. Shares reversed early losses in Asia on Tuesday after the U.S. stock market plunged to its worst day in more than three decades and huge swaths of many economies came to a standstill as businesses and travel shut down due to the outbreak.

Only China, Italy and Iran have more infections than Spain, where the number increased by roughly 20%, to 9,191 and fatalities rose to 309, according to the Spanish Health Ministry. It switched to a new reporting system, so the actual number may be higher.

A somber Rutte told viewers “a large part” of the Netherlands’ 17 million people are likely to contract the virus. So far, 1,413 people have tested positive and 24 have died. The government closed schools, restaurants and bars and banned gatherings of more than 100 people.

Countries from Canada to Switzerland, Russia and Malaysia announced sharp new restrictions on the movement of people across their borders.

“We have a window of time at the moment to slow the spread of the virus,” said Ulrike Demmer, a spokeswoman for Germany’s government, which reversed its earlier insistence that border controls would not work. It imposed new limits on crossings with France, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and Luxembourg, after German infections increased by more than 1,000 over 24 hours.

Malaysia banned foreign travel and is allowing only essential services to stay open. France allowed people to leave home only to buy food, go to work, or do other essential tasks, restrictions President Emmanuel Macron said were heightened because people hadn’t complied with earlier guidelines and “we are at war.”

India shut down the Taj Mahal to visitors. Most schools and entertainment facilities were already closed

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 28 of 56

across India, the world's second-most populous country with 1.3 billion people.

The first confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported in Somalia, which has one of Africa's weakest health systems after nearly three decades of conflict.

As the pandemic expanded its reach, China and South Korea were trying to hold their hard-fought gains. China is quarantining new arrivals, who in recent days have accounted for an increasing number of cases, and South Korea starting Thursday will increase screenings of all overseas arrivals.

Infections have continued to slow in South Korea's worst-hit city of Daegu. But there's concern over a steady rise of infections in the Seoul metropolitan area, where new clusters have emerged.

Italy reported another jump in infections, up more than 3,000 to 27,980. With 2,158 deaths — including 349 more in just the last 24 hours — Italy now accounts for well over a quarter of the global death toll. Cases, however, slowed in Lombardy, the hardest-hit region.

In the United States, officials urged older Americans and those with chronic health conditions to stay home, and recommended all group gatherings be capped at 50 people. Americans returning from abroad encountered chaotic airport health screenings that clearly broke all virus-fighting rules against having packed crowds close together.

School closings in 56 countries kept more than 516 million students home, the United Nations said. New York City joined those ranks Monday, closing a school system with 1.1 million students.

Still, some countries have resisted more stringent measures to contain the virus.

In Britain, bars and restaurants remained open and there was no ban on large events. The prime minister's spokesman said closing schools hadn't been ruled out, but "the scientific and medical advice is that that's not a step which we should be taking at this point in time."

A senior official from South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Kwon Jun-wook, urged people to take the virus seriously and follow recommended precautions.

"In a similar way to how the Sept. 11 attacks completely changed people's perception about security, quarantine authorities like us believe the daily lives of all the people around the world will be changed because of COVID-19," Kwon told a briefing Tuesday. "From now on, if you are sick, you should voluntarily rest to prevent a spread to others."

Associated Press journalists Aritz Parra in Madrid, Adam Geller in New York, Mike Corder in Amsterdam, Jovana Gec in Belgrade, Frank Jordans in Berlin, Jill Lawless in London, Colleen Barry in Milan, Italy, Ken Moritsugu in Beijing, Kim Tong-hyung and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea, Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi 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.

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

Sex workers face ruin amid virus fears, brothel closures

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — It's 7 p.m. on a Friday night, a time when Aurel Johannes Marx's three-room brothel on the edge of Berlin would normally be preparing for its first customers. Sex for sale has long been a staple part of the German capital's freewheeling nightlife. But amid concerns over the new coronavirus, even the world's supposedly oldest profession is suffering a sudden slump.

At the "Lankwitzer 7" brothel, with its soft red light and bawdy paintings on the wall, disinfectant dispensers have been installed next to the washbasins. Marx says he's ordered staff to hot-wash all towels and sheets, and open the windows more often to let the warm, sticky air escape.

Still, customers just aren't coming round anymore.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 29 of 56

"Over the past week business has gone down by 50%," Marx said, blaming the decline on the general drop in nightlife that's occurred since the virus arrived in Berlin.

The city has registered 332 confirmed cases of COVID-19 so far. Several dozens infections have been traced to bars and clubs.

Susanne Bleier Wilp, a German former sex worker and spokeswoman for the Association of Erotic and Sexual Services Providers, or BESD, said the virus has caused fear and uncertainty among the estimated 100,000 to 200,000 sex workers in Germany, where prostitution was largely legalized almost 20 years ago.

"There are those who are withdrawing from the business entirely at the moment for safety reasons," Bleier Wilp told The Associated Press. Others are requiring that customers disinfect themselves, she added — a measure that medical experts say is unlikely to effectively stop the spread of the virus during close physical contact.

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

The vast majority of those who are infected 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.

One worry is that many sex workers are young and may not be too concerned about infection, while some clients are over 50, putting them at greater risk of complications. Reconstructing chains of infection — as authorities are trying to do when a case is confirmed — could also be tricky. "In the business it's normal to interact anonymously and to use aliases," said Bleier Wilp. "It's a problem."

Another problem is that prostitution is financially precarious. Unlike regular employees, most sex workers won't benefit directly from the half-trillion-euro package of loans the German government is making available to companies facing ruin because of the coronavirus outbreak.

"Sex workers are usually self-employed, not employees," said Bleier Wilp. "That means, they bear all the risks themselves"

Some sex workers may be able to rely on savings for several weeks, she said. "But it becomes more difficult if the crisis lasts for longer. Then many, particularly those who do it full time, may have to seek help."

Bleier Wilp said a provision in Germany's infectious disease protection law might allow self-employed sex workers to apply for compensation due to loss of earnings. The clause has never been tested before, however, and those who have worked on the legal fringes may be disinclined to seek official help: by some estimates, more than two-thirds of sex workers aren't registered.

By Saturday, authorities in Berlin had ordered the temporary closure of all entertainment venues, including brothels. Whether all sex workers will heed that order, or risk their and their client's health to make ends meet, was unclear.

In the Netherlands, Amsterdam's famed Red Light District was similarly hard hit after the government on Sunday night ordered the closure of schools, bars and restaurants for three weeks and made a point of mentioning that sex clubs also were affected.

By Sunday night, the normally packed canal-side streets and narrow, cobbled alleys that are normally a tourist magnet were largely deserted. On Monday, the windows where scantily clad sex workers pose to attract customers were largely empty. Some had signs taped to the glass saying: "The office is closed" due to the coronavirus restrictions.

Greece's closures also affected brothels, while in Poland, where brothels are officially illegal, "massage" parlors were affected by the shutdown. Geneva, where the U.N.'s European headquarters is located, closed all non-essential stores and services as of Monday evening, including barbers and "prostitution activities."

Before the closure, Berlin brothel owner Marx acknowledged that the women working at his establishment were hurting financially.

"Everybody wants more money, not less. But that's the situation at the moment, it's developing rapidly," he said. "I can't do anything to change that."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 30 of 56

"At some point it will be over, and when it's over things will work out again," he added.

Mike Corder and Peter Dejong in Amsterdam, Elena Becatoros in Athens, Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Monika Scislawska in Warsaw 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.

Report: Kentucky Derby to be postponed until September

By The Associated Press undefined

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The Kentucky Derby is being postponed from May to September because of growing concern about the coronavirus pandemic, according to a published report.

Citing unidentified sources close to the race, the Courier-Journal of Louisville said Churchill Downs will postpone the Derby from May 2 to Sept. 5, marking the first time in 75 years that the race won't be run on the first Saturday in May.

A formal announcement will be made Tuesday.

The last time the Derby wasn't held on the first Saturday in May was in 1945, when the federal government issued a ban on horse racing because of World War II. The ban was lifted on May 8, and the Derby was held on June 9. The only other year the Derby wasn't held in May was in 1901, when it was raced on April 29.

The Derby is the latest major sporting event to be postponed or canceled because of the coronavirus outbreak, joining the men's and women's NCAA basketball tournaments and the Masters golf tournament. Professional basketball, baseball and hockey leagues also have suspended their seasons.

Life in San Francisco area screeches to a halt amid shutdown

By JOCELYN GECKER and JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — First, people were advised to avoid large gatherings.

Californians adjusted. Life went on. Kids went to school, some people worked from home, but mostly it was business as usual.

Then came the shutdown of almost all California's schools, and restrictions on smaller and smaller gatherings. The call for bars and wineries to close down.

And finally, Monday, about 7 million people in the San Francisco Bay Area were ordered to shelter at their homes and only leave for "essential" reasons, the strictest measures in America so far, mimicking orders in place already across Europe in a desperate attempt to slow the spread of coronavirus.

The shelter-in-place order raised new questions. What exactly is an essential need to leave home? What happens if you go out for a non-essential reason? What about salaries and income during the extended home stay?

"No one is clear. No one has clarity as to what next steps are," said Oakland resident John McClinton. "And no one has a clear interpretation as to what's going to happen economically or the trickle-down effect that local businesses are experiencing because of this."

Under the order, supermarkets, pharmacies, banks and gas stations remain open, along with other essential government functions and businesses.

Restaurants will be open only for takeout.

All gyms and bars will have to close. Outdoor exercise is fine, as long as people practice "social distancing."

"You can still walk your dog or go on a hike with another person, as long as you keep 6 feet between you," said Dr. Grant Colfax, director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

It remained unclear if the rest of the state — and country — would follow California's lead. The nation's top infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, said over the weekend he would like to see aggressive measures such as a 14-day national shutdown that would require Americans to hunker down to help slow

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 31 of 56

the virus' spread.

President Donald Trump, asked Monday if he was considering a nationwide lockdown, said, "at this moment, no, we're not."

The new order in California applies to about 7 million people living in the counties of San Francisco, Marin, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Contra Costa and Alameda. It includes the cities of San Francisco, Berkeley and Oakland.

Speaking in urgent language, officials said the unprecedented directive was based on data that showed a rapid escalation of cases that required quick, bold action to slow down the virus. The order takes effect Tuesday and lasts until at least April 7.

"History will not forgive us for waiting an hour more," said San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, whose city is the most populous in the Bay Area and also the epicenter of the area's outbreak. "This is our generation's great test, our moment to stand together as a community. Amid our collective fears, we will find our uncommon courage."

The dramatic changes have caused confusion and, despite official calls not to panic, no shortage of anxiety. Across California, and the nation, the scene at supermarkets has been chaotic with lines forming outside before stores open in the morning with restocked shelves. Once open, shoppers jam the aisles and clear out the stock of toilet paper and other paper goods, canned beans, pasta and rice.

The shelter-in-place order set off a new rush. Shoppers in Berkeley flooded into the Berkeley Bowl grocery store after seeing online reports about the virtual shutdown before officials announced it.

"I saw the headline and got this pit in my stomach," Caroline Park, 38, said as she put on plastic gloves before pushing a shopping cart into the store. "I was going to shop for the week anyway. I'm not here to hoard."

By 2 p.m., shortly after the televised announcement was made, the line to the store snaked around the block. Store managers shut the entrance to limit the number of shoppers inside.

California's national and state parks remained open, but many shut indoor spaces, including visitor centers and museums.

California has confirmed nearly 400 cases of the virus and seven deaths. The virus usually causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, but can be deadly for older people and those with underlying health conditions.

The order came a day after Gov. Gavin Newsom told all California residents ages 65 or older to stay at home and also called for all bars, wineries, nightclubs and brewpubs to close. Newsom upgraded the orders with more force on Monday.

In Southern California, Los Angeles and San Diego counties — the state's two largest, with a combined 13.4 million people — ordered bars to close and restaurants to stay open only for pickup, drive-thru or delivery orders.

San Francisco Police Chief William Scott said violating the order is technically a misdemeanor punishable by a fine or jail time but authorities will take a "compassionate, common-sense approach" to enforcement with the goal of keeping the public safe.

The rapid pace of new restrictions — and the emptiness it has prompted in public places — caught people and institutions off-guard.

Kevin Jones, general manager of Buena Vista Cafe, an iconic San Francisco restaurant that has been a draw for tourists since 1952 in the popular Fisherman's Wharf, said the order is "going to hurt, but our duty is to protect our employees and our customers."

The cafe was the only one open Monday in one of the city's busiest tourist areas, and was almost full. He said he's worried about its 58 employees being able to pay their rent; owners and managers decided any perishable foods would go to the workers.

Near San Diego State University, Will Remsbottom's Scrimshaw Coffee had just three people, and one was an employee washing windows. "I'm just struggling with this moral conundrum of remaining open and being a potential spreader versus closing and not being able to pay my employees," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 32 of 56

At San Francisco's infamous Alcatraz, the shutdown closed tours until further notice. Tour guide Manuel Gomez, 49, who supports a wife and two children, said he hadn't yet come up with another plan to make money.

"It's devastating," Gomez said. "We only have enough savings to last us for 10 days."

AP reporters Olga R. Rodriguez and Juliet Williams in San Francisco, John Antczak and John Rogers in Los Angeles, Daisy Nguyen in Berkeley, Amy Taxin in Orange County and Julie Watson in San Diego contributed to this report.

A somber Trump urges Americans to follow virus guidelines

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ANDREW TAYLOR and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Racing to stall an expected surge of coronavirus cases, the White House released a series of sweeping guidelines that for the next 15 days will temporarily rewrite the norms of American society.

President Donald Trump, employing a newly somber tone about the crisis enveloping the globe, urged all older Americans to stay home and everyone to avoid crowds and eating out at restaurants. The president for the first time acknowledged that the pandemic may send the economy into a recession and suggested that the nation may be dealing with the virus until "July or August."

The guidelines were released Monday to an uneasy country. The stock market had its worst day since 1987, America's largest school system shut its doors and questions remained about the administration's ability to test for the virus and provide hospital space for those who fall ill.

Among the new recommendations: Over the next half month, Americans should not gather in groups of more than 10 people, schooling should be at home and discretionary travel and social visits should be avoided. If anyone in a household tests positive for the virus, everyone who lives there should stay home. The administration did not say how old people should be to follow the advice to stay home.

"We will rally together as one nation and we will defeat the virus," Trump said. "We can turn the corner and turn it quickly."

The president, when asked when the pandemic would subside, said that "if we do a really good job" the crisis could pass by the height of summer. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the administration's infectious disease expert, did not challenge that claim.

Trump's prediction was far less optimistic than his earlier ones, when he insisted it could be over in weeks. He also acknowledged that the virus may send the nation's economy into a recession, a potentially brutal blow for an incumbent seeking reelection.

That admission was startling for Trump, who for two weeks had struck a discordantly optimistic tone about the pandemic that endangered his presidency. On Monday that upbeat demeanor was gone as he acknowledged the virus was "not under control" in the United States or globally.

He said he did not yet plan to call for domestic travel restrictions while his administration made pointed appeals to millennials to stop socializing and risk spreading the virus. He was reluctant to advise states to cancel the primary elections ahead. And without providing details, he said "we're going to back the airlines 100%," a note of reassurance for an industry crippled by travel bans and fears of spreading the virus.

The expansive guidelines were issued on a day of fast-moving developments in a capital resplendent in cherry blossoms but awash in anxiety.

Congress convened to try to finish an aid package and consider another one behind it. The Supreme Court postponed oral arguments for the first time in over a century. And the U.S. surgeon general said that the United States is about where Italy was two weeks ago in the coronavirus struggle, a sign that infections are expected to rise.

"When you look at the projections, there's every chance that we could be Italy," Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams told Fox News. Yet he said the U.S. has opportunities to mitigate the pandemic.

Two weeks ago, Italy had 1,700 cases of coronavirus and had reported 34 deaths. Now, Italy is reporting

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 33 of 56

an estimated 25,000 cases and more than 1,800 deaths. About 3,800 cases have been reported in the United States and so far, more than 65 people have died from coronavirus. Although the numbers may not be directly comparable, the trajectory is, as Adams sees it.

The administration also alleged that a foreign disinformation campaign was underway aimed at spreading fear among Americans already spooked by the pandemic.

On Sunday, federal officials began confronting what they said was a deliberate effort by a foreign entity to make Americans think the government was going to impose a nationwide quarantine. Agencies took coordinated action Sunday evening to assure Americans that the government was not planning to do that.

And on Monday, national security officials said there had been a cyber attack involving the computer networks of Health and Human Services, but the networks were operating normally. They didn't detail the nature or scope of the problem or identify the foreign entity.

On Fox News, Adams claimed the U.S. has "turned the tide" on testing, a critical part of tracking and containing pandemics, but whether that is true remains to be seen. The U.S. effort has been hobbled by a series of missteps, including flaws with the testing kits first distributed by the federal government and bureaucratic hurdles that held up testing by private laboratories.

On Capitol Hill, a nearly empty House met to adopt a resolution to make what were described as technical changes to polish off a coronavirus response measure designed to speed testing for the virus and provide sick leave to workers kept home because of it. It went into recess before adopting the measure, however.

The measure is likely to pass the Senate this week, though the timing is uncertain. The 100 senators, with a few exceptions, were expected to gather Monday evening, despite the federal public-health guidelines prohibiting large gatherings.

Talks are already underway on another bill to try to blunt the damage the virus is doing to the economy. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said it will focus on direct financial help to individuals, help for businesses such as the airline industry, and further steps to support the health system.

Nearby, the Supreme Court said it is postponing arguments for late March and early April because of the coronavirus, including a round over subpoenas for Trump's financial records. The last time oral arguments were postponed was in 1918, due to the Spanish flu epidemic. In 2001, they were relocated, but not postponed, after an anthrax scare.

Within the White House, the pandemic altered daily life.

Everyone who entered the complex was screened for a fever and reporters were spaced out in the briefing room to reduce the chance of spreading the virus. And the outgoing acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, isolated himself in South Carolina as his niece, who had flu-like symptoms and lives with him in Washington, awaited test results to see whether she has the virus. Mulvaney has tested negative, but was isolating himself "out of an abundance of caution due to his proximity to the President," White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

Larry Kudlow, director of the National Economic Council, said the White House is working toward \$800 billion in fiscal relief, with about half of that having been approved through executive actions and legislation and much of the remainder being sought through a payroll tax cut that has been met coolly by both parties in Congress.

The Federal Reserve said Sunday it was taking emergency action to slash its benchmark interest rate to near zero. But the Fed's move did not calm markets. The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished Monday down nearly 3,000 points.

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

The worldwide outbreak has sickened more than 180,000 people and killed more than 7,100.

Trump in recent days has imposed sweeping travel restrictions for much of Europe. On Saturday, he

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 34 of 56

added Britain and Ireland to a list of countries facing travel restrictions over the next 30 days.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Aamer Madhani, Hope Yen, Darlene Superville, Deb Riechmann and Mary Clare Jalonick 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.

Government issues historic restrictions amid virus outbreak

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER** and **TIM SULLIVAN** Associated Press

The United States implemented dramatic new restrictions on Americans going out in public and 7 million people in the San Francisco area were put on a near-total lockdown to control the coronavirus emergency that has walloped the global economy.

Not everyone was adhering to the clampdowns, however.

On the same day that the Trump administration called on Americans to not gather in groups of more than 10 people and urged older people to stay home, Arizona, Florida and Illinois went ahead with plans to hold presidential primaries Tuesday. Ohio called off its primary just hours before polls were to open.

Beaches on Florida's Gulf coast near Tampa stayed open, including one that was flooded with spring breakers. Gov. Ron Desantis said he would leave it up to communities whether to restrict access to beaches.

"It's not probably advisable to have spring break gatherings" but that people in small groups at the beach is probably OK, he said. "I think the communities can work that out."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, praised the federal government's response as he took only limited action amid the outbreak. Unlike other governors of heavily populated states, Abbott has not made explicit calls for limiting mass gatherings.

"This is not a time to panic," he said. "It's not as if we have never been through this before. We've been through this many, many times."

The comments came on the same day that the number of infections in the U.S. climbed to nearly 4,500, with at least 81 deaths, two-thirds of them in hard-hit Washington state. Worldwide, more than 7,100 have died.

With the U.S. economy shuddering to a near-halt, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plummeted nearly 3,000 points, or 13%, its biggest one-day percentage loss since the Black Monday crash of 1987.

The rapid work stoppage had Americans fretting about their jobs and their savings, threatened to overwhelm unemployment benefit programs, and heightened fears the country could plunge into a recession.

The decision to move ahead with primaries ran counter to stern new guidelines put in place by the Trump administration.

Over the next half month, Americans should not gather in groups of more than 10 people, schooling should be at home and discretionary travel and social visits should be avoided.

The president for the first time acknowledged that the pandemic may send the economy into a recession and suggested that the nation may be dealing with the virus until "July or August."

Elections officials in Arizona, Florida and Illinois said they were taking precautions to make sure voters could safely cast their ballots, despite widening calls for people to avoid going in public. A handful of other states already postponed their elections.

Growing public unease over the coronavirus spread was causing disruptions to polling places in some states before they even opened.

In Pasco County, Florida, the number of poll workers dropping out surged from 20 last week to more than 150 by Monday after a case of coronavirus was confirmed in the county.

"It's a skeleton crew at a lot of locations," said Okaloosa County Supervisor of Elections Paul Lux. "We are at the honest end of the rope in terms of who I can grab and who I can get trained and get deployed."

In Illinois, counties were moving polling places out of nursing homes, offering ballot drop-off options for

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 35 of 56

jittery voters and scrambling to find replacements for poll workers canceling at the last minute.

Chicago elections officials worked late Monday to find replacements for 168 polling sites.

And the city elections commission was begging healthy people to volunteer to work at the polls amid a "tsumani" of cancellations.

"Please, please heed our call and volunteer," said Marisel Hernandez, the commission's chair. "Help us."

Meanwhile, millions of Americans were holed up at home, with many thrown out of work until further notice as the list of businesses forced to close across the U.S. extended to restaurants, bars, gyms and casinos.

Officials in six San Francisco Bay Area counties issued a "shelter in place" order affecting nearly 7 million people, requiring most residents to stay inside and venture out only for food, medicine or exercise for three weeks — the most drastic measure taken yet in the U.S. to curb the spread of the virus.

"I know today's order is a radical step. It has to be. We need to act now, all of us," said Dr. Grant Colfax, director of the San Francisco Health Department.

Health officials, politicians and business leaders are talking about "social distancing" and "flattening the curve," or encouraging people to avoid others to slow the spread of the virus and keep U.S. hospitals from being overwhelmed with a sudden deluge of patients.

Most people who come down with the disease have relatively mild symptoms, but it can be deadly for some, especially the elderly and those with underlying health problems. Most people infected with the virus recover in a matter of weeks.

The shutdowns touched every corner of the country: blackjack dealers in Las Vegas, theme park workers in Orlando, Florida, restaurant and bar employees nationwide, and winery workers in California. At least eight states called on all bars and restaurants to close at least part of the day.

The economy appears to be decelerating at a much faster pace than during the 2008 financial meltdown.

"This is like an avalanche. It's all happening at once," said Heidi Shierholz, senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute. "And no one knows how long it's going to last."

On the other side of the ledger, Amazon announced it wants to add 100,000 workers to deliver packages amid a surge in online orders from people unable or unwilling to set foot in stores. And gun sales soared in many places as fear took hold.

"I've never seen it like this," said Ed Turner, who owns Ed's Public Safety in Stockbridge, Georgia. "This is self-preservation. This is panic. This is 'I won't be able to protect my family from the hordes and the walking dead.'"

With schools closed for tens of millions of children across the country, parents began using lesson plans that included flash cards, online learning, dog walks and creativity sessions. Many did this while juggling work conference calls, emails and memos. Others scrambled to find child care.

Nationwide, many restaurants were restricted to takeout or delivery only.

Associated Press writers Kelli Kennedy and Terry Spencer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Mike Schneider in Orlando, Florida; Sophia Tareen and Tammy Webber in Chicago; John O'Connor in Springfield, Illinois; Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix; Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta; Julie Watson in San Diego; Olga R. Rodriguez in San Francisco; Philip Marcelo in Boston and Ted Warren in Seattle contributed to this report.

Military faces limitations in responding to virus outbreak

By **ROBERT BURNS** and **LOLITA C. BALDOR** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon is already helping combat the coronavirus outbreak in the United States and is considering ways to do more.

But the military faces limits. Its health care system is geared more toward handling combat casualties than infectious diseases. And there are logistical and legal concerns about expanding the military's role in civilian affairs, such as tasking it with enforcing quarantines. Defense officials also want to be careful not to do anything to weaken its ability to defend the nation.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 36 of 56

A look at the military's role in the crisis:

WHAT THE MILITARY IS DOING

At the request of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Pentagon has made housing available at four military bases for some passengers taken from the Grand Princess cruise ship, which was hit with a cluster of coronavirus cases. It also has made available housing at other bases for people entering the U.S. at certain civilian airports and needing monitoring.

At those bases, the people being given housing are cared for by civilian agencies, not the military.

Also, Army scientists are researching and testing vaccines for the coronavirus, in coordination with civilian agencies.

The most extensive role for the military thus far is by the National Guard, which is being called up by governors in several states to provide a range of support. More than 1,600 National Guard members have been called up so far. Some are helping at state emergency operations centers; others are providing transportation for civilian health care providers; and some are collecting and delivering test samples.

President Donald Trump has not federalized the National Guard as was done after the 9/11 attacks.

U.S. Northern Command, which is responsible for defending the U.S. homeland, said in a statement Monday that any Defense Department assistance to the coronavirus crisis "would be secondary to our primary mission to defend the United States. A range of planning efforts cover scenarios which include aiding in the establishment of medical treatment sites, providing shelter for displaced persons, assisting with food transportation, and numerous other logistical efforts."

WHAT THE MILITARY IS CONSIDERING

There are many ways the military could assist in the COVID-19 crisis, but few decisions have been made. Air Force Brig Gen. Paul Friedrichs, the top doctor for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters Monday that defense officials are trying to identify "what's within the realm of the possible," while also spelling out what the trade-offs for that would be.

For example, Friedrichs said, if large numbers of National Guard members were mobilized for medical assistance, they would be taken away from their civilian jobs, which in some cases are in health services already engaged in fighting COVID-19.

The military could deploy mobile hospitals, but they generally are designed to deal with combat casualties, not infectious disease.

The military also operates 36 fixed hospitals inside the United States; they could be used for the COVID-19 emergency, but in most cases they are relatively small. They exist to support active-duty military members, their families and some military retirees.

Some have questioned why the military cannot contribute to the civilian stockpile of ventilators, which might be in short supply in the weeks ahead. Jonathan Hoffman, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, declined to say how many ventilators the Pentagon has in stock. Asked why, he replied, "Because the number deals with our deployable medical capability, which is a number that we're not prepared to give out."

The Pentagon also has two hospital ships, the USNS Comfort and the USNS Mercy. They can be equipped to perform surgeries and provide other medical services, but the medical professionals who would be called on to staff the ships are currently performing those roles at domestic military hospitals and clinics or at private medical facilities.

WHAT THE MILITARY COULD DO IN AN EXTREME EMERGENCY

The Defense Department has a detailed pandemic response plan that lays out the myriad of things the military can do if requested, including a last-resort role in helping to impose quarantines and border restrictions.

The military could be called on to help establish "mass casualty" treatment sites, provide shelter for displaced persons, and help provide postal, power, water and sewer services, food deliveries and mortuary tasks. Troops also could provide logistics, communications and other support for law enforcement and the National Guard. Drafted and overhauled several times in recent years, the military's plan is closely guarded and officials decline to discuss details publicly.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 37 of 56

Officials, however, say that there is a broad assumption that local law enforcement, border control officers and the National Guard under the governors' command would be the first line of defense to stem the spread of any virus through travel restrictions at the borders and along state lines or outbreak areas.

The plan assumes that intelligence oversight laws and the Posse Comitatus Act would remain in effect. Under that Civil War-era act, federal troops are prohibited from performing domestic law enforcement actions such as making arrests, seizing property or searching people. In extreme cases, however, the president can invoke the Insurrection Act, also from the Civil War period, which allows the use of active-duty or National Guard troops for law enforcement.

Under the military's pandemic plan, the key goals are to defend the country, maintain the force and provide whatever support is needed to protect the national infrastructure and ensure that the government continues to function.

NATURE OF THE THREAT

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.

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.

Trump changes tone, gets real on virus threat

By JILL COLVIN, ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — He called on the country to come together. He warned of pain to come. And he deferred to the nation's public health experts while at least momentarily putting aside petty squabbling.

After weeks of trying to play down the risk posed by the coronavirus pandemic, President Donald Trump struck a new, more urgent tone on Monday as he delivered a sobering message to Americans grappling with a new reality that will dramatically alter their lives for months to come.

Trump's more somber tone came as he addressed the public at a White House briefing and made a direct appeal to all Americans to do their part to halt the pandemic's spread.

Gone — at least for now — were Trump's "do as I say, not as I do" handshakes that had continued even after health experts admonished people to avoid contact and practice social distancing. Also gone was the rosy talk aimed, in part, at propping up reeling financial markets.

The shift was informed in part by a growing realization within the West Wing that the coronavirus crisis is an existential threat to Trump's presidency, endangering his reelection and his legacy. Trump has told advisers that he now believes the virus will be a significant general election issue and he took note of the clear-eyed, somber tone used by his likely general election foe, Joe Biden, in Sunday's Democratic debate.

With reports from Italy growing grimmer, U.S. cases surging and America's economy in shock, Trump has also received a series of alarming briefings in recent days that have included dire projections about how many Americans could be infected if drastic action isn't taken.

He also has watched the dramatic escalation of precautions within the White House complex, where officials are now screening everyone who enters the building after Trump unknowingly interacted with at least three people who have since tested positive for the virus. Already, both his press secretary, Stephanie Grisham, and his outgoing acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, are isolating themselves at home after coming into direct or indirect contact with those who have COVID-19.

And so it was that on Monday, Trump matter-of-factly outlined the government's newest recommendations, including urging all older Americans and those with chronic health conditions to stay home. All Americans were advised to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 38 of 56

Trump repeatedly deferred to the public health professionals on stage with him to offer specifics and answer follow-up questions, and he acknowledged the disquieting reality that the economy may well be careening toward recession and that Americans' lives will likely be impacted for far longer than most people have even begun to process.

"If we do a really good job, people are talking about July, August, something like that," he told reporters who filled every other seat in the briefing room in an attempt to practice social distancing.

National crises are times of testing for presidents, and after days of shrinking from the urgency, Trump approached the moment with newfound gravity.

For all of that, though, Trump was still Trump. He said he would award himself a 10-out-of-10 rating. And on Twitter, he was still needling a longtime political foe, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who has called for a more assertive federal response.

As recently as Saturday, Trump had said, despite all evidence to the contrary, that the country had "tremendous control" of the virus, even as cases soared, local governments were shutting down schools, and doctors were warning of an impending health catastrophe. He reframed that comment Monday, saying that he'd been referring to his government's handling of the crisis and not the virus itself.

"It's not under control for any place in the world," he acknowledged.

Trump for weeks had taken his upbeat cues from a network of outside advisers who told him the media and Democrats were hyping the threat. But he has also heard from allies who have urged him to bolster his response and change his tone, including some Republicans on Capitol Hill who feared they had been personally exposed to the virus.

Jared Kushner, the president's influential son-in-law and senior adviser, who has recently taken a more active role in the administration's response, has privately compared the virus to a "war" that could imperil the nation's economy and population, according to two White House officials and Republicans close to the West Wing who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss private conversations. The pandemic's impact could rival that of World War II, he has said, requiring a national effort.

Trump, who has always viewed himself as his best spokesman, has also expressed frustration in recent weeks that Vice President Mike Pence, whom he appointed to lead the White House task force, has been too robotic when he speaks at White House briefings.

But while he often chides his press aides for failing to adequately defend him, Trump himself has stumbled in his recent public remarks. He immediately recognized that he had erred during his Oval Office address to the nation last week when he made several misstatements that later had to be corrected. And while the stock market soared during the Rose Garden address he delivered the following day to try to mitigate the damage, the White House again was forced to play cleanup when it turned out that some of the developments he'd announced had been dramatically overstated.

Trump had hoped the markets would rise again Monday after the Federal Reserve's announcement the previous day that it would slash interest rates, and he was rattled when they collapsed instead. Hoping to turn the tide, he told aides he wanted to speak at Monday's 3:30 p.m. press briefing — the same late afternoon time slot as Friday's Rose Garden news conference.

But this time, instead of a spike in the market, the Dow Jones continued to plummet as he spoke, dipped even further after the president admitted, for the first time, that the nation may be heading for a recession.

While Trump's changes in tones are often fleeting, White House officials and allies saw Monday's more measured approach as evidence the president was coming to grips with the magnitude of the challenges ahead for the nation and his presidency.

Americans — many struggling to work from home while juggling childcare, or facing job losses — needed to hear directly from their commander in chief exactly what they are in for, said Trump's former communication strategist Jason Miller.

"It's important for people to hear from him, especially the message that we are going to get through this together," Miller said.

Still, few expected Trump's more measured approach to last or to erase past missteps.

Said Princeton presidential historian Julian Zelizer: "I'm not sure a change in tone makes up for a kind

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 39 of 56

of complete lack of leadership that the country has seen in the first few weeks of this crisis.”

Bev Banks contributed to this report.

EDITOR’S NOTE — 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.

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.

As pandemic spreads, China’s ex-epicenter down to 1 new case

By ARITZ PARRA and ADAM GELLER Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — The battle to contain the coronavirus reached new urgency, as more governments locked down borders and ordered new closures and restrictions and pleas went out to funnel masks and ventilators to places struggling with soaring numbers of sick patients.

The growing sense of crisis rocked financial markets Monday, particularly on Wall Street, where the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 12.9%. Investors’ fears that the pandemic will throw the economy into a recession sent the market to its worst one-day loss since 1987.

The shift in the battle lines was made clear by tallies showing cases outside China have surpassed those inside it and Spain now has the fourth-most cases in the world. The central Chinese city that was the former epicenter where the viral illness was first detected in December was down to just one new case on Tuesday.

With the number of cases worldwide topping 181,000, a surge of patients in Madrid’s hospitals fueled worries across Europe of what lies ahead.

“There is no easy or quick way out of this extremely difficult situation,” said Mark Rutte, the prime minister of the Netherlands, in the first televised speech by a Dutch premier since 1973.

Only China, Italy and Iran have more infections than Spain, where the number increased by roughly 20%, to 9,191 and fatalities rose to 309, according to the Spanish Health Ministry. It switched to a new reporting system, so the actual number may be higher.

A somber Rutte told viewers “a large part” of the Netherlands’ 17 million people are likely to contract the virus. So far, 1,413 people have tested positive and 24 have died. The government closed schools, restaurants and bars and banned gatherings of more than 100 people.

Countries from Canada to Switzerland, Russia and Malaysia announced sharp new restrictions on the movement of people across their borders.

“We have a window of time at the moment to slow the spread of the virus,” said Ulrike Demmer, a spokeswoman for Germany’s government, which reversed its earlier insistence that border controls would not work. It imposed new limits on crossings with France, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and Luxembourg, after German infections increased by more than 1,000 over 24 hours.

With much-needed ventilators in short supply, the British government asked manufacturers, including automakers Ford and Rolls-Royce, to convert some of their assembly lines to making the life-saving equipment.

“We are facing what is an unprecedented situation and that is going to require an unprecedented response,” said James Slack, a spokesman for Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Around the world, fast-changing rules and restrictions tore up the script for daily life. Bars, pubs and restaurants were closed or restricting orders to takeout and delivery. Cemeteries in the Croatian capital

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 40 of 56

restricted attendance at funerals to the closest relatives. U.S. casinos went dark, not just in Las Vegas, but in more than a dozen states.

Malaysia banned travel in and out of the country for two weeks and is allowing only essential services to stay open. France allowed people to leave home only to buy food, go to work, or do other essential tasks, restrictions President Emmanuel Macron said were heightened because people hadn't complied with earlier guidelines and "we are at war."

The first confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported in Somalia, which has one of Africa's weakest health systems after nearly three decades of conflict between the government and the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group.

As the pandemic expanded its reach, China and South Korea were trying to hold their hard-fought gains. China is quarantining new arrivals, who in recent days have accounted for an increasing number of cases, and South Korea starting Thursday will increase screenings of all travelers arriving from overseas.

China on Tuesday reported 21 new cases of the virus, 20 of them imported. Just one new case was confirmed in Wuhan, the Hubei provincial capital where the illness was first detected in late December. The update raised China's totals to 80,881 cases and 3,226 deaths.

China this week relaxed travel restrictions in Hubei, sending thousands of workers back to long-shuttered factories.

Most of the world's 78,000 recovered patients are in China. The virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, for most people, but severe illness is more likely in the elderly and people with existing health problems.

In the United States, officials urged older Americans and those with chronic health conditions to stay home, and recommended all group gatherings be capped at 50 people.

Americans returning from abroad encountered chaotic airport health screenings that clearly broke all virus-fighting rules against having packed crowds close together.

School closings in 56 countries kept more than 516 million students home, the United Nations said. New York City joined those ranks Monday, closing a school system with 1.1 million students.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen suggested a 30-day ban on people entering the bloc for non-essential travel reasons.

"The less travel, the more we can contain the virus," she said in a video message.

A number of EU member countries have, so far, resisting such far-reaching controls. But many went ahead with measures to sharply curtail activities inside their borders.

Switzerland's government declared a state of emergency, ordering shops, restaurants, bars and other facilities shut down. The measures exclude health-care operations as well as supermarkets, but also include entertainment and leisure facilities, which will be closed until April 19.

"We need to do everything possible to slow the advance of the coronavirus," Swiss President Simonetta Sommaruga said, urging people to practice social distancing and follow government guidelines.

Still, some countries have resisted more stringent measures to contain the virus.

In Britain, bars and restaurants remained open and there was no ban on large events. The prime minister's spokesman said closing schools hadn't been ruled out, but "the scientific and medical advice is that that's not a step which we should be taking at this point in time."

Italy reported another jump in infections Monday, up more than 3,000 to 27,980. With 2,158 deaths — including 349 more in just the last 24 hours — Italy now accounts for well over a quarter of the global death toll. Cases, however, slowed in Lombardy, the hardest-hit region.

In Spain, a cut in the frequency of commuter trains created considerable crowds during rush hour.

Wearing blue latex gloves, cleaner Mari Carmen Ramírez said she, like many others, couldn't afford to risk her salary of 950 euros (\$1,042) per month.

"I fear the coronavirus, but I fear more not being able to pay the utility bills," the 55-year-old said. "When this is all over, how are we going to eat?"

Geller reported from New York. Associated Press writers Mike Corder in Amsterdam, Jovana Gec in

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 41 of 56

Belgrade, Frank Jordans in Berlin, Jill Lawless in London, Colleen Barry in Milan, Italy, Ken Moritsugu in Beijing, Kim Tong-hyung and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea and Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia contributed to this report.

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

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.

US tells older people to stay home, all ages to avoid crowds

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, ANDREW TAYLOR and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Racing to stall an expected surge of coronavirus cases, the White House on Monday released a series of sweeping guidelines that for the next 15 days will temporarily rewrite the norms of American society.

President Donald Trump, employing a newly somber tone about the crisis enveloping the globe, urged all older Americans to stay home and everyone to avoid crowds and eating out at restaurants. The president for the first time acknowledged that the pandemic may send the economy into a recession and suggested that the nation may be dealing with the virus until "July or August."

The guidelines were released to an uneasy country. The stock market had its worst day since 1987, America's largest school system shut its doors and questions remained about the administration's ability to test for the virus and provide hospital space for those who fall ill.

Among the new recommendations: Over the next half month, Americans should not gather in groups of more than 10 people, schooling should be at home and discretionary travel and social visits should be avoided. If anyone in a household tests positive for the virus, everyone who lives there should stay home. The administration did not say how old people should be to follow the advice to stay home.

"We will rally together as one nation and we will defeat the virus," Trump said. "We can turn the corner and turn it quickly."

The president, when asked when the pandemic would subside, said that "if we do a really good job" the crisis could pass by the height of summer. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the administration's infectious disease expert, did not challenge that claim.

Trump's prediction was far less optimistic than his earlier ones, when he insisted it could be over in weeks. He also acknowledged that the virus may send the nation's economy into a recession, a potentially brutal blow for an incumbent seeking reelection.

That admission was startling for Trump, who for two weeks had struck a discordantly optimistic tone about the pandemic that endangered his presidency. On Monday that upbeat demeanor was gone as he acknowledged the virus was "not under control" in the United States or globally.

He said he did not yet plan to call for domestic travel restrictions while his administration made pointed appeals to millennials to stop socializing and risk spreading the virus. He was reluctant to advise states to cancel the primary elections ahead. And without providing details, he said "we're going to back the airlines 100%," a note of reassurance for an industry crippled by travel bans and fears of spreading the virus.

The expansive guidelines were issued on a day of fast-moving developments in a capital resplendent in cherry blossoms but awash in anxiety.

Congress convened to try to finish an aid package and consider another one behind it. The Supreme Court postponed oral arguments for the first time in over a century. And the U.S. surgeon general said that the United States is about where Italy was two weeks ago in the coronavirus struggle, a sign that infections are expected to rise.

"When you look at the projections, there's every chance that we could be Italy," Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams told Fox News. Yet he said the U.S. has opportunities to mitigate the pandemic.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 42 of 56

Two weeks ago, Italy had 1,700 cases of coronavirus and had reported 34 deaths. Now, Italy is reporting an estimated 25,000 cases and more than 1,800 deaths. About 3,800 cases have been reported in the United States and so far, more than 65 people have died from coronavirus. Although the numbers may not be directly comparable, the trajectory is, as Adams sees it.

The administration also alleged that a foreign disinformation campaign was underway aimed at spreading fear among Americans already spooked by the pandemic.

On Sunday, federal officials began confronting what they said was a deliberate effort by a foreign entity to make Americans think the government was going to impose a nationwide quarantine. Agencies took coordinated action Sunday evening to assure Americans that the government was not planning to do that.

And on Monday, national security officials said there had been a cyber attack involving the computer networks of Health and Human Services, but the networks were operating normally. They didn't detail the nature or scope of the problem or identify the foreign entity.

On Fox News, Adams claimed the U.S. has "turned the tide" on testing, a critical part of tracking and containing pandemics, but whether that is true remains to be seen. The U.S. effort has been hobbled by a series of missteps, including flaws with the testing kits first distributed by the federal government and bureaucratic hurdles that held up testing by private laboratories.

On Capitol Hill, a nearly empty House met to adopt a resolution to make what were described as technical changes to polish off a coronavirus response measure designed to speed testing for the virus and provide sick leave to workers kept home because of it. It went into recess before adopting the measure, however.

The measure is likely to pass the Senate this week, though the timing is uncertain. The 100 senators, with a few exceptions, were expected to gather Monday evening, despite the federal public-health guidelines prohibiting large gatherings.

Talks are already underway on another bill to try to blunt the damage the virus is doing to the economy. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said it will focus on direct financial help to individuals, help for businesses such as the airline industry, and further steps to support the health system.

Nearby, the Supreme Court said it is postponing arguments for late March and early April because of the coronavirus, including a round over subpoenas for Trump's financial records. The last time oral arguments were postponed was in 1918, due to the Spanish flu epidemic. In 2001, they were relocated, but not postponed, after an anthrax scare.

Within the White House, the pandemic altered daily life.

Everyone who entered the complex was screened for a fever and reporters were spaced out in the briefing room to reduce the chance of spreading the virus. And the outgoing acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, isolated himself in South Carolina as his niece, who had flu-like symptoms and lives with him in Washington, awaited test results to see whether she has the virus. Mulvaney has tested negative, but was isolating himself "out of an abundance of caution due to his proximity to the President," White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

Larry Kudlow, director of the National Economic Council, said the White House is working toward \$800 billion in fiscal relief, with about half of that having been approved through executive actions and legislation and much of the remainder being sought through a payroll tax cut that has been met coolly by both parties in Congress.

The Federal Reserve said Sunday it was taking emergency action to slash its benchmark interest rate to near zero. But the Fed's move did not calm markets. The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished Monday down nearly 3,000 points.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 43 of 56

The worldwide outbreak has sickened more than 180,000 people and killed more than 7,100. Trump in recent days has imposed sweeping travel restrictions for much of Europe. On Saturday, he added Britain and Ireland to a list of countries facing travel restrictions over the next 30 days.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Amer Madhani, Hope Yen, Darlene Superville, Deb Riechmann and Mary Clare Jalonick 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.

Biden wins Washington primary, capturing 5 out of 6 states

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden has been declared the winner of last week's Democratic presidential primary in Washington state, giving him victories in five out of six states that voted March 10.

After nearly a week of counting votes, the former vice president on Monday held onto a small lead over Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders that turned out to be insurmountable.

Washington was a state that Sanders had been hoping to win. In 2016, he won more than two-thirds of the delegates from the Washington caucuses over Hillary Clinton.

Of the state's 89 pledged delegates, only 31 are allocated based on the statewide result. The remaining 58 are determined based on the results of the state's 10 congressional districts, and those results might not be calculated until the election is certified by the secretary of state's office, which could be as late as March 27.

Biden won four other states last Tuesday: Missouri, Mississippi, Michigan and Idaho. Sanders won North Dakota.

In Washington, Democrats used the vote-by-mail presidential primary — moved up this year from May — for the first time to allocate delegates instead of the smaller caucuses used in previous years.

Four states — Arizona, Ohio, Illinois and Florida — are scheduled to hold primaries on Tuesday.

Court approves PG&E's \$23B bankruptcy financing package

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Business Writer

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Pacific Gas & Electric on Monday won court approval to raise \$23 billion to help pay its bills over destructive California wildfires after Gov. Gavin Newsom dropped his opposition to a financing package designed to help the nation's largest utility get out of bankruptcy.

The milestone reached during an unusual court hearing held by phone moves PG&E closer to its goal of emerging from one of the most complex bankruptcy cases in U.S. history by June 30.

Newsom has said he fears P&E is taking on too much debt to be able to afford an estimated \$40 billion in equipment upgrades needed to reduce the chances of its electricity grid igniting destructive wildfires in the future.

The utility's outdated system triggered a series of catastrophic wildfires in 2017 and 2018 that killed so many people and burned so many homes and businesses that the company had to file for bankruptcy early last year.

But the recent volatility in the financial markets caused by the coronavirus pandemic apparently softened Newsom's stance after PG&E lined up commitments from investors promising to buy up to \$12 billion in company stock.

Those guarantees are looming larger, given the turmoil that has caused the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index to plunge by roughly 25% during the past three weeks. Because of the company's already shaky condition, PG&E's stock has been hit even harder, with shares losing nearly half their value during the same stretch. The stock fell 12% Monday to close at \$8.95, its lowest price since early December.

Given the potential for upheaval in the financial markets to persist, PG&E lawyer Paul Zumbro told U.S.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 44 of 56

Bankruptcy Judge Dennis Montali that the commitments are "critically important." A representative for Newsom said the governor agreed.

"People often talk tough when there is a level playing field, but in circumstances, almost all people want to make deal," said Eric Snyder, a bankruptcy lawyer who has been following PG&E's case.

Newsom has unusual leverage over PG&E because the company also needs state approval of its bankruptcy plan to qualify for coverage from a wildfire insurance fund that California created last summer.

In a statement, PG&E said it's making "good progress" in discussions with Newsom. The governor's office didn't immediately respond to requests for comment about Newsom's change of heart on PG&E's financing package or other aspects of his talks with the company.

Among other demands that still haven't been addressed, Newsom wants PG&E to replace its entire 14-member of board of directors to help ensure the utility is better managed. The company so far has promised to reshuffle its board but has resisted sweeping out all the directors, including CEO Bill Johnson.

Newsom has intensified his focus on the coronavirus during the past two weeks as the disease's outbreak worsened in California, but that doesn't mean the Democratic governor isn't keeping a close watch on PG&E, said Jared Elias, a UC Hastings College of the Law professor who has been tracking the case.

"The long-term health of PG&E has to remain a top priority because God forbid if this coronavirus remains a problem heading into wildfire season this summer," Elias said.

Besides issuing more stock to raise money, PG&E and its parent company will take on as much as \$11 billion in additional debt while refinancing billions in existing loans.

PG&E primarily needs the cash to pay off \$25.5 billion in claims as part of settlements reached with wildfire victims, insurers and government agencies. That's a fraction of the more than \$50 billion in losses that wildfire victims and insurers had estimated PG&E owed them in the early stages of the bankruptcy case.

Reflecting the complexity of the situation, Montali conceded that the nuances of PG&E's financing package are "beyond my understanding" and put his faith in the parties who put it together that it's now the best option available.

The unusual admission came during an extraordinary hearing that had to be held by phone because Montali's courthouse was closed to try to help limit the spread of the coronavirus.

Sheriff: North Carolina man kills 6 relatives and himself

PITTSBORO, N.C. (AP) — A 66-year-old man fatally shot six relatives in a small North Carolina community over the weekend, then killed himself, authorities said Monday.

The shooting happened late Sunday afternoon in the Moncure area of Chatham County, the county sheriff's office said in a statement. Evidence indicates that Larry Don Ray shot and killed the six others before turning the gun on himself, Lt. Sara Pack, an agency spokeswoman, said in a statement. Ray was found among the dead. Authorities said they're still investigating a possible motive.

The sheriff's office described the area as a "quiet, close-knit community where violence is out of the norm." Moncure is a community about 30 miles (50 kilometers) southwest of Raleigh.

The victims were identified as Jeanie Ray, 67, Helen Mason, 93; Ellis Mansfield, 73; Lisa Mansfield, 54; John Paul Sanderford, 41; and Nicole Sanderford, 39.

"To lose any family member is devastating, but to lose several at once to unexpected violence is unimaginable," Sheriff Mike Roberson said in a statement. "There are no words to describe the sense of loss we feel as a community in the wake of this terrible event."

Authorities released the tape of a 911 call late Monday afternoon.

"There's a guy in my house shooting right now," the caller can be heard saying on the tape obtained by The News & Observer, later adding: "Please get somebody here to the house"

The person tells the operator that his father and mother were in the house and that he heard around six shots. The caller remained on the line until officers arrived. It wasn't immediately clear what relation he or his parents were to the gunman.

On Monday, Mark Childress told the newspaper that his brother's daughter, son-in-law and mother-in-

law were killed.

"Right now, they're still in shock, and they don't want to talk to anybody," Childress said of the surviving family members.

'Don't stop': When Carnegie Hall canceled, show went on

By DAVID R. MARTIN and DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice. And when the coronavirus cancels the performance you've been practicing for? Take it outside.

A group of Oregon students decided they were going to perform Monday in New York City, even if it wasn't quite where they had originally planned.

The young musicians from the Alliance Charter Academy in Oregon City, Oregon, got word their planned Carnegie Hall performance had been canceled just before they were scheduled to leave. Some of them decided to come anyway, and took their stringed instruments to Times Square, playing for the few hardy souls still out and about.

"It's a good message to keep going and to teach kids to persist even when your dreams are crushed," said Anna Mersereau, 41, orchestra director at the school. "You don't stop, you make the most of it and you take what life gives you and you keep going."

There were tears initially, she said, but after about a day, some students figured they were no more at risk on the East Coast than they were on the West Coast, so they came, with plenty of hand sanitizer and maintaining distance between themselves and others.

In addition to Times Square, they were planning to play outside Carnegie Hall as well.

The kids found the bright side of the unusual experience.

"We're always probably going to remember as the trip we were going to play at Carnegie Hall but now it's the trip we played at Times Square which we weren't planning to do," said Christian Hall, 17.

"Even though that's kind of a disappointment, it's been a great trip," he said. "I'm happy the way it turned out, it would have been cool if it would have gone the other way, but either way it was a great trip."

The new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, in most people but can cause more severe illness and death for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems. The vast majority of people recover.

The worldwide outbreak has sickened about 175,000 people and left more than 6,700 dead.

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. This is the inaugural story in an AP continuing series called, "One Good Thing."

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.

Hajela reported from New Jersey.

MLB delays opening day to mid-May at earliest due to virus

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball pushed back opening day until mid-May at the earliest on Monday because of the new coronavirus after the federal government recommended restricting events of more than 50 people for the next eight weeks.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred made the announcement following a conference call with executives of the 30 teams.

"The clubs remain committed to playing as many games as possible when the season begins," the com-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 46 of 56

missioner's office said in a statement.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended Sunday that gatherings of 50 people or more be canceled or postponed across the country for the next eight weeks.

"The opening of the 2020 regular season will be pushed back in accordance with that guidance," Manfred said.

No telling at this point when games will start. The All-Star Game at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles on July 14 could be in jeopardy.

"We're not going to announce an alternate opening day at this point. We're going to have to see how things develop," Manfred told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch at Cardinals camp in Jupiter, Florida. He didn't want to speculate about the possibility of playing in empty stadiums, saying part of that decision would depend on timing.

MLB called off the rest of the spring training schedule on Thursday and said opening day, which had been scheduled for March 26, was postponed for at least two weeks. Teams and players agree that two to four weeks of additional spring training will be needed before the regular season begins.

"I'm just treating this as January of the winter time," Arizona catcher Stephen Vogt said in a text to The Associated Press. "I am working out with the anticipation of baseball activities ramping up over the next month. But my mentality is back to preparing for the season."

Under an agreement last week, between MLB and the players' association, players are allowed to decide whether to stay at spring training or go home, but some teams have ignored that deal and told players to leave.

"There should be no organized activities in the camps," Manfred told the Post-Dispatch. "We did agree with the MLBPA that spring training sites would remain open, but the thought there is with a skeleton crew, really to give players some place to use a gym, as opposed to being forced out into a public gym and the like. And we're really encouraging players to make a decision as to where they want to be over an extended period of time and get to that location as soon as possible."

The players' association sent an email to agents on Monday saying that for players who went home or to their team's regular-season city it would pay \$1,100 allowances through April 9 to players on 40-man rosters as of March 13. That amount also would go to players with minor league contracts at big league spring training who were on 40-man rosters at the end of last season.

The union is negotiating with MLB over resetting the dates for players with opt-out clauses in their deals, and the sides are likely to agree on a roster freeze. They are discussing the possibility of payments to major league players who have not reached the point of big-money deals to make up for paychecks they won't be getting in April and May.

This year marked the earliest opening day other than for international games. As it stood, Game 7 of the World Series would have been Oct. 28, and teams and players could push the postseason into November.

Any change to the 162-game schedule would necessitate bargaining over an array of issues, including when and how much players get paid and how much major league service they are credited for. Service time determines eligibility for free agency and salary arbitration.

Players made a counteroffer to MLB on Sunday, and management told the union it would not respond until Tuesday at the earliest.

Clubs also were told to call MLB if they wanted assistance with credit lines, a person familiar with Manfred's call said, speaking on condition of anonymity because that detail was not announced.

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

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

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

156 games.

The 1918 season was cut short because of World War I. Provost Marshal Gen. Enoch Crowder announced a regulation on May 23 that men not involved in useful occupations appear before the draft board. The War Department initially did not rule baseball was non-essential under the "work or fight" order but Secretary of War Newton D. Baker announced on July 26 that baseball had to comply by Sept. 1. After some negotiation, the regular season ended Sept. 2 with teams playing 123-131 games, and the Boston Red Sox beat the Chicago Cubs in a World Series played from Sept. 5-11.

Also Monday, MLB and the union announced a joint donation of \$1 million to Feeding America and Meals on Wheels America, aimed at fighting hunger resulted from school closures and quarantines.

AP Baseball Writer Janie McCauley contributed to this report.

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

Amazon seeks to hire 100,000 to keep up with surge in orders

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon said Monday that it needs to hire 100,000 people across the U.S. to keep up with a crush of orders as the coronavirus spreads and keeps more people at home, shopping online.

The online retailer said it will also temporarily raise pay by \$2 an hour through the end of April for hourly employees. That includes workers at its warehouses, delivery centers and Whole Foods grocery stores, all of whom make at least \$15 an hour. Employees in the United Kingdom and other European countries will get a similar raise.

"We are seeing a significant increase in demand, which means our labor needs are unprecedented for this time of year," said Dave Clark, who oversees Amazon's warehouse and delivery network.

Amazon said this weekend that a surge of orders is putting its operations under pressure. It warned shoppers that it could take longer than the usual two days to get packages. It also said it was sold out of many household cleaning supplies and is working to get more in stock.

Last week, Amazon tweaked to its time-off policy for hourly workers, telling them they could take as much time off as they wanted in March, although they would only be paid if they had earned time off. Additionally, Amazon said it would pay hourly workers for up to two weeks if they contracted the virus or needed to be quarantined.

The Seattle-based company said the new job openings are for a mix of full-time and part-time positions and include delivery drivers and warehouse workers, who pack and ship orders to shoppers.

Amazon is already the second-largest U.S.-based employer behind Walmart, with nearly 800,000 workers worldwide.

Follow Joseph Pisani at <http://twitter.com/josephpisani>

How social distancing works and what it means for you

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Can my kids go on a play date? Is it OK if I visit the gym?

In this time of coronavirus, once-easy questions have suddenly become complex.

Here are some questions and answers about the "social distancing" efforts to slow the epidemic in the U.S.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Social distancing are practices implemented by public health officials to keep contagious diseases from spreading.

The measures are aimed at trying to cut down the amount of virus spreading around, and ultimately protect those most vulnerable, including the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 48 of 56

WHAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN?

Governments have closed borders, and millions of workers and students have been ordered to stay home. On Monday, U.S. officials recommended that older people and those with underlying health conditions "stay home and away from other people." The U.S. is also telling people not to gather in large groups.

And experts also recommend people try to stay at least 6 feet (about 2 meters) away from each other. WHY 6 FEET?

Experts believe the virus is mainly spread through droplets that come out of your mouth and nose. When an infected person speaks or exhales or coughs or sneezes, the droplets travel about 3 to 6 feet (1 to 2 meters) before gravity pulls them to the ground.

"They fall pretty quickly," said Dr. Jill Weatherhead, an infectious disease expert at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

It's important to try to block coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, so as to not send those droplet flying directly toward someone nearby.

CAN I GO OUTSIDE AT ALL?

Yes, with some exceptions. And the guidelines vary based on where you live.

"We're not being told to stay at home and lock the doors," said Dr. William Schaffner, a Vanderbilt University infectious diseases expert. "We're not there yet, and I don't think we'll get there."

People who have coughs and sneezes should stay home as much as possible, and call ahead to the doctor's office if they're planning to get their illness checked out, he added.

People who have confirmed coronavirus illness should stay home, as should those who were in close contact with a confirmed case.

WHERE CAN I GO?

Options are becoming limited, with school, gym and restaurant closures in some places, and work-from-home edicts.

Officials in six San Francisco-area counties on Monday told nearly 7 million people to stay inside and venture out only for necessities.

If you live someplace without such restrictions, it's best just to use good judgment. If restaurants are open, it's OK to go to eat. But go in a small group and try to get a table away from others.

It's necessary to buy food. But try to go to the supermarket at times when it's less crowded, stay 6 feet away from other shoppers as much as you can, and wash your hands thoroughly when you get home.

CAN I GO TO THE GYM?

Exercise is important. But maybe stick to the machines, wiping them down before and after you use them, and skip games of basketball or other activities that put you in close physical contact with others. If possible, cut back on the gym and go for jogs, walks or bike rides instead, experts said.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIAL GATHERINGS?

The CDC on Sunday recommended that for the next eight weeks, organizers put off events that would draw at least 50 people. On Monday, the number was reduced to 10.

That could ice a lot of weddings, family reunions and birthday parties.

Dr. Deborah Birx, who is coordinating the federal response to the virus, said the change from 50 to 10 was influenced by research that tried to estimate the impact of different possible steps.

A CDC official, Dr. Jay Butler, said Monday there's no hard-and-fast rule. Officials are simply trying to set a reasonable parameter to "increase social distancing while not creating social isolation," he said in an interview streamed by the Journal of the American Medical Association.

CAN I GO ON DATES? OR SEND MY KIDS ON PLAY DATES?

There's some debate among experts about dates and play dates.

Adults who are not sick or considered to be at risk can still date, Schaffner said. But skip the bars, concerts and crowded theaters, and instead think about an intimate dinner at home.

For kids, play dates can be OK, especially if they're outside in parks and involve a small number of kids, he said. Of course, kids who are sick or who are particularly vulnerable to respiratory illness should not

go, he added.

Weatherhead had different advice, saying play dates are not recommended. Children generally have had more mild COVID-19 illnesses and therefore might spread the disease before anyone realizes they are sick.

WILL SOCIAL DISTANCING WORK?

It will be tricky to prove these measures made a difference.

Testing for the coronavirus was delayed in the U.S., but it is now starting to become more widely available. That means a lot of new cases may be diagnosed in the coming days, as labs finally find infections that happened weeks ago.

"We're going to see increasing (case) numbers, and that's going to be frustrating to people who are doing social distancing. But that doesn't mean social distancing isn't working," Weatherhead said.

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

5 dead, including officer and gunman, in Missouri shooting

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP) — A man fired randomly from his vehicle several times while driving through a southwest Missouri city before eventually crashing into a convenience store, where he walked inside, opened fire and left five people dead, including a police officer and himself, police said Monday.

The dead from Sunday night's shooting include a store employee and two men who were in the store, police said. A second officer was injured, along with another person.

The gunman's motives remain unclear, Springfield police Chief Paul Williams said at a news conference, where his voice broke as he described his officers' actions.

Williams said police received reports of "multiple shooting calls throughout the city" late Sunday starting in the south and moving north through the city's east side.

"In essence we had a roving active shooter moving from the south side of the city up," Williams said.

As officers were responding to those calls, witnesses reported a vehicle crashed into a Kum & Go gas station and convenience store, and the gunman walked inside and began shooting customers and employees, Williams said.

The Kansas City Star reported that the gunman opened fire from inside the store as police arrived, with officers taking cover behind vehicles and shields.

"Advise everybody arriving on the scene, the shooter is shooting out the window," one officer can be heard saying on audio captured by the online website Broadcastify.com, The Star reported. "The officer shot from inside the store outside. Take cover behind vehicles."

The first two officers who arrived were shot. Other officers pulled the injured officers from the store and then went inside, finding three people dead. The gunman also died, apparently from a self-inflicted gunshot, Williams said. Police identified the shooter as 31-year-old Joaquin S. Roman of Springfield.

Officer Christopher Walsh, 32, was shot and killed as he tried to rescue a victim, Williams said. He was with the Springfield police for 3 1/2 years, was an Army veteran and was active in the Army reserves.

Walsh, a Springfield native, is survived by a wife and daughter.

"Chris died a hero, rushing in without regard to his own safety to protect members of his community. His courageous actions serve as an example to us all," Williams said in a news release.

Police identified the three other men who died as 57-year-old Troy D. Rapp, who was employed by Kum-N-Go, 46-year-old Shannon R. Perkins, who was employed by WCA Waste Corporation, and 22-year-old store customer Matthew J. Hicks-Morris. All were from Springfield.

Officer Josiah Overton, whose injuries are not life-threatening, has been with Springfield police for two years, he said.

"Both officers showed significant bravery and were heroic in their actions," Williams said.

"There are no words to express the shock and sorrow many of us are feeling," Kum & Go spokesman Aerial Rubin said, adding "We remain grateful for the courage of our first responders and will do our utmost to

support the investigation going forward.”

A Springfield woman said the man fired at her as she was driving home from work about 11:30 p.m. Casey Parrish said the man was driving in front of her and everything seemed normal until she heard what she thought at first was a blown tire. Then she saw muzzle flashes from from the driver’s side of the car in front of her, The Springfield News-Leader reported.

Parrish said she did nothing to provoke the shooting and the gunman was driving normally until just before the shots started. He fired seven or eight shots as his car was swerving but her car was not hit. Parrish said she slowed down and the suspect eventually turned off of Highway 65 away from her. When she called 911, she was told officers were investigating similar reports from other locations.

“It was so surreal,” Parrish said.

Williams said it was too early to comment on the impact the shooting had on his department.

“We’re still investigating multiple crime scenes and dealing with grieving the loss of one of our own,” he said.

AP Exclusive: Coronavirus vaccine test opens with 1st doses

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writers

SEATTLE (AP) — U.S. researchers gave the first shots in a first test of an experimental coronavirus vaccine Monday, leading off a worldwide hunt for protection even as the pandemic surges.

With careful jabs in the arms of four healthy volunteers, scientists at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Research Institute in Seattle began an anxiously awaited first-stage study of a potential COVID-19 vaccine developed in record time after the new virus exploded out of China and fanned out across the globe.

“We’re team coronavirus now,” Kaiser Permanente study leader Dr. Lisa Jackson said on the eve of the experiment. “Everyone wants to do what they can in this emergency.”

The Associated Press observed as the study’s first participant, an operations manager at a small tech company, received the injection in an exam room.

“We all feel so helpless. This is an amazing opportunity for me to do something,” Jennifer Haller, 43, of Seattle said before getting vaccinated. Her two teenagers “think it’s cool” that she’s taking part in the study.

After the injection, she left the exam room with a big smile: “I’m feeling great.”

Three others were next in line for a test that will ultimately give 45 volunteers two doses, a month apart.

Neal Browning, 46, of Bothell, Washington, is a Microsoft network engineer who says his young daughters are proud he volunteered.

“Every parent wants their children to look up to them,” he said. But he’s told them not to brag to their friends. “It’s other people, too. It’s not just Dad out there.”

Monday’s milestone marked just the beginning of a series of studies in people needed to prove whether the shots are safe and could work. Even if the research goes well, a vaccine would not be available for widespread use for 12 to 18 months, said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

At a news conference, President Donald Trump praised how quickly the research had progressed. Fauci noted that 65 days have passed since Chinese scientists shared the virus’ genetic sequence. He said he believed that was a record for developing a vaccine to test.

This vaccine candidate, code-named mRNA-1273, was developed by the NIH and Massachusetts-based biotechnology company Moderna Inc. There’s no chance participants could get infected because the shots do not contain the coronavirus itself.

It’s not the only potential vaccine in the pipeline. Dozens of research groups around the world are racing to create a vaccine against COVID-19. Another candidate, made by Inovio Pharmaceuticals, is expected to begin its own safety study next month in the U.S., China and South Korea.

The Seattle experiment got underway days after the World Health Organization declared the new virus outbreak a pandemic because of its rapid global spread, which has infected more than 169,000 people and killed more than 6,500.

COVID-19 has upended the world’s social and economic fabric since China first identified the virus in

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 51 of 56

January, with broad regions shuttering schools and businesses, restricting travel, canceling entertainment and sporting events, and encouraging people to stay away from each other.

Starting what scientists call a first-in-humans study is a momentous occasion for scientists, but Jackson described her team's mood as "subdued." They've been working around-the-clock readying the research in a part of the U.S. struck early and hard by the virus.

Still, "going from not even knowing that this virus was out there ... to have any vaccine" in testing in about two months is unprecedented, Jackson told the AP.

Some of the study's carefully chosen healthy volunteers, ages 18 to 55, will get higher dosages than others to test how strong the inoculations should be. Scientists will check for any side effects and draw blood samples to test if the vaccine is revving up the immune system, looking for encouraging clues like the NIH earlier found in vaccinated mice.

"We don't know whether this vaccine will induce an immune response or whether it will be safe. That's why we're doing a trial," Jackson stressed. "It's not at the stage where it would be possible or prudent to give it to the general population."

Most of the vaccine research under way globally targets a protein aptly named "spike" that studs the surface of the new coronavirus and lets it invade human cells. Block that protein and people cannot get infected.

Researchers at the NIH copied the section of the virus' genetic code that contains the instructions for cells to create the spike protein. Moderna encased that "messenger RNA" into a vaccine.

The idea: The body will become a mini-factory, producing some harmless spike protein. When the immune system spots the foreign protein, it will make antibodies to attack — and be primed to react quickly if the person later encounters the real virus.

That's a much faster way of producing a vaccine than the traditional approach of growing virus in the lab and preparing shots from either killed or weakened versions of it.

But because vaccines are given to millions of healthy people, it takes time to test them in large enough numbers to spot an uncommon side effect, cautioned Dr. Nelson Michael of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, which is developing a different vaccine candidate.

"The science can go very quickly but, first, do no harm, right?" he told reporters last week.

The Seattle research institute is part of a government network that tests all kinds of vaccines and was chosen for the coronavirus vaccine study before COVID-19 began spreading widely in Washington state.

Kaiser Permanente screened dozens of people, looking for those who have no chronic health problems and are not currently sick. Researchers are not checking whether would-be volunteers already had a mild case of COVID-19 before deciding if they are eligible.

If some did, scientists will be able to tell by the number of antibodies in their pre-vaccination blood test and account for that, Jackson said. Participants will be paid \$100 for each clinic visit in the study.

Neergaard reported from Washington, D.C.

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

With 208th song on Hot 100 chart, Drake sets new record

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Drake has landed his 208th song on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, setting a new record for most songs on the music chart.

The rapper's latest track, "Oprah's Bank Account" with DaBaby and Lil Yachty, debuted at No. 89 on the Hot 100 chart this week and helps Drake surpass the 207-song run the cast of "Glee" held on the chart.

"Glee" aired its popular run from 2009 through 2015, and its cover versions of well-known songs would debut on the charts after episodes aired. The cast released several platinum- and gold-selling albums and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 52 of 56

even earned a Grammy nomination in a category reserved for pop groups, pitting the cast against the likes of Maroon 5, Sade, Paramore and Train.

Drake, who launched his entertainment career as a cast member of the high school series "Degrassi: The Next Generation," first charted on the Hot 100 with "Best I Ever Had" in 2009, eventually reaching the No. 2 spot. He has topped the chart with the songs "One Dance," "God's Plan," "Nice for What" and "In My Feelings." His collaborations with Rihanna — "What's My Name?" and "Work" — also reached No. 1.

Lil Wayne is behind Drake and "Glee" with 168 songs to reach the Hot 100 chart. The top 10 also includes Elvis Presley, Nicki Minaj, Kanye West, Jay-Z, Chris Brown, Taylor Swift and Future.

Google sibling Verily launches COVID-19 screening website

By RACHEL LERMAN AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google sister company Verily has launched a website to screen people who think they might have COVID-19 and point them to testing sites. But you probably can't use it to get tested quite yet.

Verily, a health tech company owned by Google parent Alphabet, launched the screening tool Sunday night for those that live in or near Santa Clara County and San Mateo County south of San Francisco.

As of Monday morning, the screening form said it was "unable to schedule more appointments at this time." Verily said the actual testing is conducted by health care providers from different organizations and Verily is in charge of "clinical oversight."

Some people won't even get that far. Answering "yes" to having severe symptoms, for instance, leads the site to explain that "in-person COVID-19 testing through this program is not the right fit." It then suggests medical attention.

The sites are "not prepared to provide medical attention," a Verily spokeswoman said.

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

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

The screening website is managed through Verily's Project Baseline, an initiative to collect more information on people's health to map and bolster community health.

Verily launched the screening website quickly over the weekend after President Donald Trump gave an exaggerated and misleading account of it during a press conference last Friday, before Verily had announced the project.

Verily announced the screening process in a blog post this weekend, saying it intends to start with the highest risk people in the Bay Area, and hopefully expand the service if testing becomes more widely available.

"In these first few days of this pilot, we expect appointment availability to be limited as we stand up operations and that testing capacity will increase in the days to come," a company spokeswoman said.

Another piece of the screening may give some people pause. Verily asks that users connect or create a Google account before it will screen them.

The company says this is to help schedule appointments and send test results, and that the information won't be connected to other Google services without permission.

But it may still cause hesitation amid broader concerns about online privacy and the vast amount of data Google and other tech giants collect from users.

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.

Virus fears fuel spike in sales of guns and ammunition

By LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The world's largest gun store, in metro Atlanta, has had lines that are six and eight people deep. A gun store in Los Angeles had lines that stretched down the block. And at least one store in Idaho put limits on sales after its shelves were nearly cleared out.

Just as grocery stores have been stripped bare by Americans panicked by coronavirus, guns and ammunition have started flying off the shelves. Retailers say the buying frenzy is being fueled by consumers who are worried that people are becoming so desperate and unpredictable, they need to ensure they can protect themselves.

"It's been insane," said Jay Wallace, who owns Adventure Outdoors in Smyrna, Georgia, adding that his ammunition sales are up more than five times the usual numbers. "This is like a Rod Serling 'Twilight Zone' episode."

Sales spiked in a matter of days, industry experts say. Some of the purchases are made by people buying their first firearm. Others are existing gun owners adding to their collection or stocking up on ammunition after seeing grocery stores depleted, schools closed and big events canceled, including the National Rifle Association's annual meeting.

Also potentially driving the sales are concerns that elected officials may try to restrict access to firearms. A mayor in Illinois recently signed an executive order that would give her the right to ban the sale of guns or ammunition, as did the mayor of New Orleans.

Specific data on the size of the sales spike will not be available until next month. But already this year, background checks are up considerably over last year. According to data from the FBI, just over 5.5 million background checks were conducted in January and February combined.

Gun sales generally rise in an election year, as they did in 2016. But this past January and February have outpaced 2016 by nearly 350,000.

Betsy Terrell, a 61-year-old resident of Decatur, Georgia, said she thought for years about purchasing a handgun and decided to finally get one after seeing chaos at her local Costco, with long lines and people stockpiling goods.

She feels the metro Atlanta area already has a lot of crime. She's worried that if the economy tanks, crime will rise even more.

"I was beginning to see people acting oddly. That was a little unnerving," she said. "I feel there's potential political upheaval. ... It's scary. It's only now I've felt this overwhelming need to arm myself to protect myself."

After spending the past couple of weeks stocking up on food, coffee, water and medicine for one of her cats, she decided it was time to act.

She went to Cabela's and was shocked to see lines that were two and three deep. Many guns were out of stock as well as some rounds of ammunition, but she was able to pick up a Glock 42 handgun.

"If it sits in my nightstand, if I never touch it, I'm happy about that," she said.

It was a decision she's somewhat surprised she took. She has a lot of friends who oppose firearms and won't be advertising her purchase on Facebook. "I'm crashing a line I thought I'd never crash."

Some gun shows have been canceled, but online sales and in-person sales at federally licensed dealers appear to be up. Ammo.com has reported sales up nearly 70 percent from Feb. 23 to March 4 over the previous 11 days.

At Sportsmen's Warehouse in Meridian, Idaho, some shelves holding handgun ammunition were nearly wiped out. The store posted signs telling customers that sales were limited to no more than two handguns per person each day and no more than one AR- or AK-platform rifles each day. It also placed limits on ammunition.

As recently as Friday, Retting Guns in Culver City, California, posted on its Facebook page that it had plenty of handguns and a decent supply of ammunition. But by the weekend, photographs showed lines extending out its doors and down the block. The store posted on its Facebook page that the staff was

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 54 of 56

too busy to answer the phone or continue holding firearms safety certification classes.

Ed Turner, who owns Ed's Public Safety in Stockbridge, Georgia, said his shop was not seeing people "flailing their arms screaming it's the end of the world," but sales were up five times the usual volume. "Worst day on the stock market since 1987 and shelves getting bare apparently have got everyone's attention," he said.

In the 27 years he's been in business, he said, "I've never seen it like this. ... This is self-preservation. This is panic. This is 'I won't be able to protect my family from the hordes and the walking dead.'"

Paratrooper exercise is all about preparation - and the jump

By SARAH BLAKE MORGAN Associated Press

TOLEMAIDA AIR BASE, Colombia (AP) — Under a covered pavilion near a steaming runway at Colombia's Tolimaida Air Base, dozens of American paratroopers lie sweating on a concrete slab. Green and brown camouflage face paint drips from their brows.

The soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division can't move much — they're loaded down with rifles and nearly 100 pounds of gear. In less than an hour, it will all drop out of a C-130 aircraft moving 150 mph.

The group's banter quiets to make way for directions from jumpmasters moving from one soldier to the next, making sure buckles and straps are in place.

Spc. Parker Firth is quieter than usual. After 22 jumps, he admits he's still scared

"When the doors open, it's not in your hands anymore," the 22-year-old said. "You just got to believe in the parachute to open. Whatever happens happens."

For these 75 American paratroopers from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, this weeklong training exercise with the Colombian Army is not a deployment — a word reserved for occasions like the New Year's Eve mobilization that sent members of the division's Immediate Response Force to the Middle East, amid rising tensions with Iran. For now, 2,500 division paratroopers remain in the Middle East on standby.

It's intense training like the exercise in Colombia that allows the soldiers to deploy with lightning speed. Their readiness inspired the old saying around Fort Bragg: "When the president dials 911, the 82nd answers the phone." The division, with nearly 18,000 paratroopers, operates under a constant state of readiness, rotating soldiers on and off standby.

The Associated Press was given rare access to accompany the group on its January joint training mission with Colombia, amid a humanitarian crisis in neighboring Venezuela that has sent hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees fleeing over the border. U.S. diplomatic and political efforts to replace Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro with opposition leader Juan Guaido have been unsuccessful.

There have been no signs pointing to potential military intervention by the U.S. or Colombia. But as the United States has spent billions of dollars restoring peace and building a partnership in a region that's heavily influenced by Russia and Iran, cementing relationships like the one with Colombia is key to U.S. strategy.

U.S. and Colombian forces spend several days mapping out the exercise, which simulates the securing of an air base. They spend hours jumping off elevated wooden platforms and practicing their landings in what resemble oversized sandboxes.

"It's an honor to jump with the 82nd Airborne Division," Colombian Maj. Gen. Pablo Alfonso Bonilla Vasquez tells the Americans, adding that their cooperation will send a message to the region.

The night before the jump, Sgt. Juan Dominguez sits on the floor and pulls at a maze of straps on his rucksack. The 33-year-old joined the U.S. Army at 27, later than many of his comrades. It was always a dream, but his wife and five children needed to be taken care of before he enlisted. He said he wants "to show my kids that even though I'm afraid of heights, you can overcome pretty much anything."

At 4 a.m. on jump day, Sgt. 1st Class Nathan Fair and the soldiers of Bravo Company 325th Infantry Regiment rise and begin loading their gear onto buses bound for the airfield.

This is Fair's second stint in the military. The 37-year-old left in 2006 but realized civilian life wasn't his speed. "You miss the little things, like how easy it is to fall asleep on a gravel road on the range, with rocks digging into your back and you're so ridiculously exhausted that you can just fall asleep anywhere," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 55 of 56

Fair calls himself a "super-patriot" and is fiercely proud of the soldiers he leads: "They're motivated, they're in shape, they're funny, they're quick-witted, they're aggressive. They're alpha males and that's the kind of men you want on the front lines defending you."

On this mission, only one paratrooper sent from Fort Bragg is a woman — the division, much like the Army, is mostly men. Senior medic Sgt. Sara Sanders grew up hearing about the 82nd's legacy from her father and grandfather, both paratroopers. "Everyone grew up wanting to be professional ballerinas," she said. "And I was like, 'No, I want to be in the Army.'"

On jump day, all the members' preparation is put to a test. The soldiers are nervous but calm. (And if any say they aren't, "they're either lying to you or have something wrong upstairs," Staff Sgt. Wesley Lee says.)

Packed into the C-130, waiting for the flashing green light that tells them it's time to jump, they are no longer Americans or Colombians. They are just soldiers, focused on their task.

Maj. Gen. Daniel Walrath is first out the door. The jump — his first in 10 years — is a sign of leadership to his soldiers and a symbol of friendship to the Colombian general leading the way through the door on the other side of the airplane.

One by one, Colombian and American paratroopers follow, stepping off the ledge and spiraling downward. As each jumps, a white canopy unfolds above, slowing their fall but not the pace of their breath.

The division declares the exercise a success, with only one minor injury: a broken bone on the Colombian side.

The next day, the troops from both nations gather on Tolemaida Air Base. They have earned the right to wear one another's jump wings. For Fair, this is not just an alliance on paper; it's a bond among soldiers. "And if it comes to it, and we have to fight together," he said, "they know we've got each other's backs."

Follow Morgan at www.twitter.com/StorytellerSBM

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, March 17, the 77th day of 2020. There are 289 days left in the year. This is St. Patrick's Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 17, 1988, Avianca Flight 410, a Boeing 727, crashed after takeoff into a mountain in Colombia, killing all 143 people on board.

On this date:

In 1762, New York held its first St. Patrick's Day parade.

In 1776, the Revolutionary War Siege of Boston ended as British forces evacuated the city.

In 1912, the Camp Fire Girls organization was incorporated in Washington, D.C., two years to the day after it was founded in Thetford, Vermont. (The group is now known as Camp Fire.)

In 1936, Pittsburgh's Great St. Patrick's Day Flood began as the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers and their tributaries, swollen by rain and melted snow, started exceeding flood stage; the high water was blamed for more than 60 deaths.

In 1958, the U.S. Navy launched the Vanguard 1 satellite.

In 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Tibet for India in the wake of a failed uprising by Tibetans against Chinese rule.

In 1969, Golda Meir became prime minister of Israel.

In 1970, the United States cast its first veto in the U.N. Security Council, killing a resolution that would have condemned Britain for failing to use force to overthrow the white-ruled government of Rhodesia.

In 1973, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Robert L. Stirn, a freed prisoner of the Vietnam War, was joyously greeted by his family at Travis Air Force Base in California in a scene captured in a Pulitzer Prize-winning AP photograph.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 259 ~ 56 of 56

In 1992, 29 people were killed in the truck bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In Illinois, Sen. Alan Dixon was defeated in his primary reelection bid by Carol Moseley-Braun, who went on to become the first black woman in the U.S. Senate.

In 2005, baseball players told Congress that steroids were a problem in the sport; stars Rafael Palmeiro and Sammy Sosa testified they hadn't used them while Mark McGwire refused to say whether he had. (McGwire owned up to steroid use in January 2010.)

In 2009, U.S. journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee were detained by North Korea while reporting on North Korean refugees living across the border in China. (Both were convicted of entering North Korea illegally and were sentenced to 12 years of hard labor; both were freed in August 2009 after former President Bill Clinton met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il.) The Seattle Post-Intelligencer published its final print edition.

Ten years ago: Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter became the first state chief executive to sign a measure requiring his attorney general to sue Congress if it passed health reforms requiring residents to buy insurance (a mostly symbolic action on Idaho's part, since federal laws supersede those of the states). Michael Jordan became the first ex-player to become a majority owner in the league as the NBA's Board of Governors unanimously approved Jordan's \$275 million bid to buy the Charlotte Bobcats from Bob Johnson. Singer-guitarist Alex Chilton, 59, died in New Orleans.

Five years ago: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party won a resounding victory in parliamentary elections after an acrimonious campaign, giving him a mandate to form the next government. U.S. Rep. Aaron Schock, R-Ill., abruptly resigned following a cascade of revelations about his business deals and lavish spending on everything from overseas travel to office decor in the style of "Downton Abbey."

One year ago: New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand formally joined the 2020 Democratic presidential race. (She would leave the race in August amid low polling and major fundraising struggles.) Thousands of people paid tribute at makeshift memorials to the victims of a gunman who killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Today's Birthdays: The former national chairwoman of the NAACP, Myrlie Evers-Williams, is 87. Former astronaut Ken Mattingly is 84. Singer-songwriter Jim Weatherly is 77. Singer-songwriter John Sebastian (The Lovin' Spoonful) is 76. Former NSA Director and former CIA Director Michael Hayden is 75. Rock musician Harold Brown (War; Lowrider Band) is 74. Actor Patrick Duffy is 71. Actor Kurt Russell is 69. Country singer Susie Allanson is 68. Actress Lesley-Anne Down is 66. Actor Mark Boone Jr. is 65. Country singer Paul Overstreet is 65. Actor Gary Sinise is 65. Actor Christian Clemenson is 62. Former basketball and baseball player Danny Ainge is 61. Actor Arye Gross is 60. Actress Vicki Lewis is 60. Actor Casey Siemaszko (sheh-MA'-zshko) is 59. Writer-director Rob Sitch is 58. Actor Rob Lowe is 56. Rock singer Billy Corgan is 53. Rock musician Van Conner (Screaming Trees) is 53. Actor Mathew St. Patrick is 52. Actor Yanic (YAH'-neek) Truesdale is 51. Rock musician Melissa Auf der Maur is 48. Olympic gold medal soccer player Mia Hamm is 48. Rock musician Caroline Corr (The Corrs) is 47. Actress Amelia Heinle is 47. Country singer Keifer Thompson (Thompson Square) is 47. Actress Marisa Coughlan is 46. Rapper Swifty (D12) is 45. Actress Natalie Zea (zee) is 45. Sports reporter Tracy Wolfson is 45. Actress Brittany Daniel is 44. Singer and TV personality Tamar Braxton is 43. Country musician Geoff Sprung (Old Dominion) is 42. Reggaeton singer Nicky Jam is 39. TV personality Rob Kardashian (kar-DASH'-ee-uhn) (TV: "Keeping Up With the Kardashians") is 33. Pop/rock singer-songwriter Hozier is 30. Actress Eliza Hope Bennett is 28. Actor John Boyega is 28. Olympic gold medal swimmer Katie Ledecky is 23. Actor Flynn Morrison is 15.

Thought for Today: "May your neighbors respect you, trouble neglect you, the angels protect you, and heaven accept you." — Irish saying.