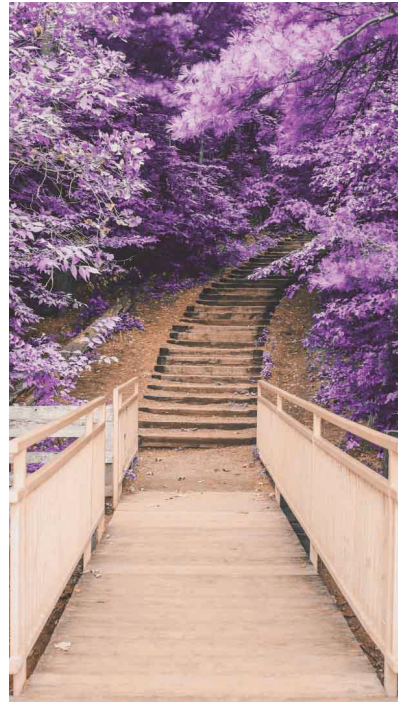


Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 1 of 69

- [2-Groton Area plans for flexible learning](#)
- [4- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [9- Groton Subway Ad](#)
- [10- COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA](#)
- [11- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [12- Weather Pages](#)
- [15- Daily Devotional](#)
- [16- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [17- News from the Associated Press](#)

No School through March 27th



Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“
IF YOU CAN
FIND A PATH
WITH NO
OBSTACLES, IT
PROBABLY
DOESN'T LEAD
ANYWHERE.
”
-FRANK A. CLARK

Brown County SD Office of Emergency Management

As we all sit here and wait for what will be next, We need to think what can we be doing to make this better. Everyone needs to do their part to help.

- 1.Continue to wash your hands is #1.
- 2.Social distancing is a high #2, its time to stay home folks. (Not the time for travel just to get away.)
- 3.Cover your cough.
- 4.Quit hording supplies, everyone needs soap and cleaning supplies, (and TP). This only works if everyone can wash & clean. Buy what you need and let supplies catch back up.
- 5.If you want to socialize pick up the phone, (it's that thing that has numbers on it and two people actually talk to each other).
- 6.Play games with your kids, find new things to do. They are as bored as you.
- 7.Tempers will get short at times, so stop and pause for a couple seconds.
- 8.Don't spread rumors. Use the appropriate websites for only accurate info.

We are all in this, we all must do our part, and we all will get thru this.
Stay Safe Friends...

Covid.sd.gov
1-800-997-2880

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

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 2 of 69

Groton Area plans for flexible learning by Joe Schwan, Groton Area Superintendent

Dear Families of Groton Area School Students,

The faculty of the Groton Area School District has been provided with a framework from which to build alternative forms of instruction beginning next week. We will be hosting a virtual meeting with all of them on Monday morning to further clarify our plan and help to provide any support that we can. I am very happy to say that they are eager to be back in touch with their students providing educational opportunities.

Following our staff meeting we are asking our teachers to reach out to families by phone to establish a line of communication, check in, and find the answer to four questions:

Are you aware of what our plan for the coming week is?

Do you have access to meals for your children? Do you want to participate in the free meals [Details below] being offered by the District?

What is the best way for us to communicate with you?

What is your access to technology devices and/or Internet?

They will also try to answer any questions you have about what your next steps should be.

In order for us to accomplish our goals, we need to be able to get supplies and materials into the hands of the students. This will take place on Wednesday, March 25 from 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM. During this process, we want to ensure that we can be mindful of the recommendations of health officials concerning the size of group gatherings, personal hygiene for clean hands, and social distancing. The following schedule of material pick-up has been established for in-town residents.

If possible, we ask that you make every effort to follow the timelines provided. If families are unable to make the established times work, they will not be turned away, but access may be managed if certain times become too busy. Each building will be open for pick-up from 7:00 AM until 12:00 PM. Pick-up from the elementary will be held in the Elementary Commons. Pick-up from the MS/HS will be held in the GHS Gymnasium.

Time	Grade Level
8:00 AM	JK and Grade 6
8:15 AM	K and Grade 7
8:30 AM	Grade 1 and Grade 8
8:45 AM	Grade 2 and Grade 9
9:00 AM	Grade 3 and Grade 10
9:15 AM	Grade 4 and Grade 11
9:30 AM	Grade 5 and Grade 12
9:45 AM	Buses will be loaded with materials for our out-of-town students.

Beginning at 9:45, we will be loading the school buses with materials for every student on a regular bus route whose materials haven't been picked up. The buses will run their normal routes, stopping to drop off all of the materials for the rest of the week.

Materials to be picked up and/or delivered on Wednesday will include student computers and chargers for students in grades 6-8, coursework and materials (e.g. textbooks) needed for the remainder of the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 3 of 69

week, personal items from student lockers, and school meals for three days.

In the event that the school closure is extended, a similar system will be employed for the return of completed coursework and distribution of new material and meals on Monday, March 30 with adjustments made as necessary based on lessons learned from the initial distribution. The current plan is to provide material exchanges on a week-by-week basis on Mondays with the exception of school meals which will be provided on Mondays and Wednesdays.

During the week, staff will be available via email or telephone from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM daily to answer questions, and provide support and assistance to students. There will not be any face-to-face meetings or contacts made during the closure.

School Meals

The District will be providing free meals to all enrolled students regardless of income who wish to participate. Meals for three days will be sent along with classroom materials on Wednesday, March 25. If the closure is to continue, additional meals will be provided on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Groton Area Elementary from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Pending approval, we plan to also distribute meals to our out-of-town students through our transportation services (bus routes). There is no charge for these meals. One change from the way we've provided meals for this week will be that students have to be physically present to receive a meal. This is a USDA requirement which has not yet been waived. We are encouraging all families to participate in this service.

We appreciate the support of our community as we work through these days. Among all of the uncertainty, many have reached out to provide support for students and families in need. I've always felt that our communities are supportive of our children through action. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we continue to proceed the implementation of these flexible learning opportunities. If there is anything that we can do to help you support your children or your families please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Joe Schwan Superintendent

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 4 of 69

Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

First, a quick note: I am fielding a great many "friend" requests these days. While I am flattered by that, I don't believe a bunch of strangers really want to keep track of my frequent rants and my cooking adventures in ordinary times, so I do not accept most of those when we don't have real-life friends in common or some connection. Please know that these Covid updates are public and you can follow me to see these without becoming my official "friend."

OK, deep breath. This was another bad day, and likely not the last one either. Here's where we are: 17,836 cases in all 50 states plus 3 territories, driven largely by huge increases in NY which showed a 71% increase in cases. Almost 3000 of the overall 5500 case increase was in that state. Because there is about a one-week lag between diagnosis and people showing up in hospitals, they are bracing for a flood of new patients requiring care next week; and they're already strained. Things are getting serious, and hospital staff are falling ill themselves. I hope the federal government is preparing to move in with additional resources, or people will die who should have been saved. Meanwhile, the state is virtually closed down. I most sincerely hope this works.

We have 3 states with over 1000 cases, NY with 7102, WA with 1402, and CA with 1247. There are five more with over 500 cases, another 7 with more than 200, and 12 more with over 100. There are only 8 states plus DC left with 50-99 cases, 14 plus PR and GU with 10-49, and a single state plus VI in single digits.

238 people have died in 29 states and DC. Highest numbers are in the following states: WA – 85, NY – 24, CA – 23, LA – 14, GA – 13. Everyone else is in single digits yet. Reporting their first deaths are MA, OH, DC, and AZ.

We simply have to learn to stay home, avoid crowds, stop indulging ourselves. If you must go to work, go, but then go home and stay there. Run essential errands, but carefully limit your definition of essential. We must serious up because it's going to take some time for this distancing to work its way through the system and start to make a difference; the better we do it, the less time it will take. Hospitals, even in less hard-hit areas are running out of personal protective equipment; that means their staff will get sick. We need those people well and working, and we owe them for the risks they take; certainly we can at least try to mitigate those risks with a little personal inconvenience, can't we? If we fail to stem this increase, a whole lot more people will die; some of them will be people you love.

So last night, I promised you a look at what we're doing to get ahead of this thing. Recognizing that none of these is going to be available tomorrow, it still helps me to feel hopeful to see there is at least a glimmer on the horizon. So here we go.

If you read last night's update, then you have a fundamental understanding how viruses work to cause disease, why it's so difficult to find antiviral drugs that are both safe and effective, and how our immune system protects us and, sometimes, makes things worse. So let's talk about what's happening on the research front. I've done a bunch of reading, but it's likely I've missed one or two possibilities floating around out there. Nonetheless, I'm going to try to provide you with some idea of the range of efforts going on to find solutions to this disease.

First, vaccines. They're the brass ring. If we can develop a vaccine to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, we can protect the people before they're even exposed. This is how we wiped out a bunch of serious diseases like smallpox, measles, and so many more—at least until some of us decided we were

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 5 of 69

smarter than viruses and could protect ourselves and our children using pure food and emanations from the heavens or whatever. (And if you detect a whiff of contempt for anti-vaxx nonsense in this, then you're still wide awake. Good for you.)

Remember when we talked about the time it takes for your immune system to get cranked up to mount an effective response to a virus like this one? Well, a vaccine does us the favor of buying us the time to do that in advance of the need. We deliberately expose you to a harmless form of the virus—either to just a part of it or to an inactivated or modified virus that can't make you sick—and let your immune system go to work on it. The antibodies and specialized cells you produce in that response tend to last a pretty long time so that, even much later, if you encounter the real thing, an active, infective virus, there's no lag time. You go right to work scouting out, targeting, and destroying those viruses before they get a chance to cause trouble.

For some kinds of viruses, you need vaccine boosters from time to time to sort of wake up and remind your immune system so it stays sharp and can respond quickly if needed. Other viruses, like flu virus, have a tendency to mutate from time to time, and when they do, your old response isn't as effective any more because the antibodies have trouble recognizing the new, mutated virus as an old, familiar enemy. For those, we need to reimmunize every year or so to keep your immune system up-to-date on the latest thing in viruses. We don't yet know whether SARS-CoV-2 is going to be like one of these; right now, we're just trying to get something in production to protect people. We can sort the rest out as we go along.

So there is one vaccine trial that just started up this week. The vaccine was developed remarkably quickly, considering the virus was only identified a couple of months ago, and there are several other candidates in varying stages of development. If this one doesn't work or isn't safe, there are others in the pipeline. The usual protocol is to first test the vaccine in animals. When you do this, one of the important things you're trying to find out is whether the vaccine is safe to administer; you're also interested in how well the animal reacts to it, making antibodies that are protective against disease. In a highly unusual step, the WHO (with the concurrence of our FDA and agencies in other governments) approved beginning human trials before animal testing was completed. This decision was made due to the urgency of our current situation, but carries additional risks for the first round of human volunteers. That cuts a few months off the whole process. After this first round of testing—two doses given a month apart, those people will be evaluated for ill effects and for the quality of their response—whether they made protective antibodies. If everything looks good at that point, a larger group of volunteers will engage in the next phase of testing, and then a very large group in the final round. This is because, if there is some rare side effect that only shows up in, say, one out of a thousand recipients, you're going to have to vaccinate a few thousand people to spot it. If something bad shows up in the small group, you're not going to want to give the vaccine to the larger group and hurt even more people, so you have to finish each phase before starting on the next one. Only after all those phases are complete can we start to produce the vaccine and distribute it to the general population; but since this last phase can take years, I'm guessing (but don't know for sure) that this stage will receive a further shortcut. You can see that there are some limits, though, to how much we can hurry this along; you absolutely do not want to inject millions of healthy people with something you don't know is safe. These things take time; every expert agrees we're a year out at best.

Then there's another way to use immunity to prevent and maybe treat this infection. We talked about this a bit a couple of days ago, and that is the use of what we call passive immunity—taking someone else's antibodies and putting them into the person we're trying to protect. When I explained about the use of convalescent serum the other day—blood serum from a recovered patient, that's what I was talking about. That serum contains antibodies which should be able to immediately go to work labeling viruses for destruction by the recipient's immune system. Nice shortcut, but one, as I explained, that doesn't

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 6 of 69

last super long—a few months at best. The reason for this should be clear after our talk about how the immune system works; remember when we said its whole job is figuring out what's yours and leaving that alone while identifying what's not yours and destroying it? Well, these antibodies are definitely not yours, and so you're going to, at some point, attack and destroy them. We also have the issue of supply; it takes the serum of a fair number of recovered individuals to help very many people. Still, this would be enormously helpful, especially in prevention for health care workers or in treatment of disease at an early stage. There are stages in the approval process for this too, but the tool is one we know how to use. We won't be reinventing the wheel here.

Then there are drugs intended to prevent and treat the infection. There are several which show some promise. We have identified the human proteins in our cells that the virus uses to manipulate our cells, and we've used that information to figure out what the virus needs them for. Once we've mapped that, we can look for drugs already in existence which shield those proteins the virus depends on. Some smart person put a supercomputer to work going through some 20,000 drugs for signs they interact with the proteins on the map and identified about 50 drugs to test. They then published this list for everyone to see, saying essentially, "Here you go, guys. Get to work." And so they have. Labs all over the world are working their way through this list, looking for things that might help.

There are plenty of these, but I'll mention a few that seem to have excited the most interest.

Now there are ethical standards for treating patients with random drugs—for good and, I hope, obvious reasons. Doctors can legally prescribe an approved drug off-label, that is, for an unapproved use; but there are ethical guidelines intended to protect the patient against a sort of mad-scientist approach to treatment. Generally, off-label uses occur when there is plenty of evidence the drug works for the unapproved use, but the approval process for that use is not yet complete. But, of course, for Covid-19, there are no approved drugs and precious little evidence of anything; the disease is too new for that. Outside of the context of a well-designed and approved study, widespread administration of some drug for a use never intended or investigated carries real risks.

I think we're going to see some of this over the next few months because of the seriousness of the situation in which we find ourselves. There will be plenty of clinical trials going forward, and I'm mentioning some of those here. Additionally, there will be cases where a treatment will be used for a dangerously ill patient because we simply don't have any other options; this will likely happen outside of a study as well as within one. It is important to remember that these drugs are, for the most part, not new drugs no one's ever used before; they're things already on the market. That means we know they're generally safe at some dosage, even if we don't know how they'll act in a person in, say, acute respiratory distress, which is where the risk lies. Let's talk about a few of them.

First are chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine. These were developed as antimalarials and have also been used to treat autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis. They have the advantage of being cheap, not protected by patent, and easy to make; so if they work, it shouldn't be a heavy lift to hit the market with as much as needed relatively quickly. One of these drugs, hydroxychloroquine, was used quite a lot in China during the worst of the epidemic there and was also tested on patients in Australia and France. Those results showed it is worth further study.

The drug seems to interfere with viral attachment to host cells; you will remember that is one of the steps on our fairly narrow pathway to antiviral effectiveness. It also suppresses the production and release of inflammatory proteins, which may help to tamp down those cytokine storms we talked about yesterday. It's not suitable for everyone; for example, patients with abnormal heart rhythms should not take it. But in

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 7 of 69

an initial 24-patient trial (tiny, as drug studies go) in France, hydroxychloroquine appeared to eliminate the virus in about 70% of patients. When the antibiotic, azithromycin (you probably know it as Z-pack), was added to the hydroxychloroquine, the virus was eliminated in all patients in 6 days. I don't want you to get overexcited at this point; a study this small has all sorts of credibility problems, but this is promising. The University of Minnesota is just starting a 1500-person clinical trial with exposed individuals; there are also trials underway in other countries. We should have some sort of preliminary data fairly soon.

A second drug being considered is the blood pressure medication, losartan. This drug appears to block an enzyme that the virus uses to bind to your cells and may prevent mild cases from becoming more serious. The University of Minnesota has a trial getting underway for this drug too.

And then, there's Remdesivir, a failed Ebola drug. It appears to prevent virus from making new RNA inside host cells and eliminates the virus in lab cultures and animal models. If it turns out to be effective, it would speed up recovery in seriously ill and high-risk patients. There are currently five clinical trials underway in patients with moderate and severe disease, including at the University of Minnesota, at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and a National Institutes of Health study that began last month. We expect results in some of these within a couple of months. This is an unapproved drug, so it cannot be used outside a clinical trial except with what's called compassionate use permission, reserved for very seriously ill patients who have no other options.

There has been some work done with a drug called Kaletra, a combination therapy (lopinavir and ritonavir) that has been used in the past for HIV. There was initial interest in this drug, but Chinese reports are that it failed to improve outcomes for the seriously ill. I haven't seen any trials underway, but I may have missed something.

And then there is tocilizumab, an immunosuppressive drug used to treat rheumatoid arthritis. Immunosuppressive means the drug actually tamps down your immune system, which doesn't exactly sound like something you'd want to do if the patient has an infection. But in a patient having an overly intense inflammatory reaction that might lead to a cytokine storm, this might be just the thing. So there is interest in using it for that purpose.

There is a whole lot going on at the moment. I am old enough to have been teaching microbiology back when AIDS was first diagnosed and through the years in which HIV was identified as the causative virus and during the desperate search for answers to all of those people dying while we stood around watching--because there wasn't anything we could do to stop it. This time feels like that one. Except that our tools for working with viruses and our understanding of what is operating in these patients have come an enormous way in forty years. None of this is to say we're almost out of the woods or that next week this thing will be over. Because we're not and it won't. But there's a great deal of good work being done at an astonishing pace.

The reason we can move so quickly now is that for years basic research—that is science with no immediate practical application, finding things out just to find them out—has been going on in the field of virology. If we had invested more in basic research over the past 30 years, we'd have started out further ahead and now be moving even faster. A lot of folks turn up their noses at basic research because it seems impractical; they don't see what you're ever going to do with a bunch of random information with no real use. It doesn't seem to make sense to pay people to just mess around in a lab somewhere when they're not directly solving a Great Problem. That all seems a little self-indulgent. Until a new virus shows up and starts burning through the population. Then we wish we'd spent a little more on that stuff so we'd be better prepared. I hope we remember that when this current crisis is in the rear-view mirror. I wonder

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 8 of 69

whether we will.

Up to today in these updates, I have hewed closely to the science—what’s going on and how to understand it. I am about to briefly depart from that narrow path and ask you to consider something beyond the science, if you will indulge me for a moment. Today, I had a long talk with a friend about the trend we’ve both observed in our society over the past few years to look out for ourselves and our own and ignore or dismiss the effects on others of our choices about what to do and what to tolerate. It’s an ugly thing: It was ugly before, and now it’s grim when this insistence on “me first” can kill people. The only thing that makes a society work is a focus on caring for something outside your own interest, for giving attention to the plight of others, for reaching out to help someone when it won’t benefit us in any direct way. In all the newfound time we have these days now that we’re not running hither and yon to this appointment and that engagement, I will ask you to devote some attention to how you view your obligation to humankind. We know our world has changed forever with this pandemic. Let’s consider together what kind of world we want to build on the foundations of the old one.

I’ll leave you tonight with words I committed to memory way back when I was in high school, words which have informed most of my path through the many years since. I’ll ask you to reflect on them and consider how they might illuminate the days ahead for you. Then we’ll go back to just science tomorrow.

Each man’s death diminishes me,
For I am involved in mankind.
Therefore, send not to know
For whom the bell tolls,
It tolls for thee.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 9 of 69

We're here for you.

Groton Subway is still open for takeout.

It's our priority to serve you the delicious meals you love in the easiest and safest ways possible.



Groton Subway is open daily 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

605/397-SUBS (7827)
1202 N 1st St - Suite D
Groton



FREE Footlong when you buy ANY Footlong

Add 2 Footlongs to your cart & discount automatically applies for participating shops.



Free sub of equal/lesser price. No Extras. At participating restaurants. No add'l discounts.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 10 of 69

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

The charts below have not been updated on the Department of Health Website. Governor Noem came on-line last night and reported that 29 cases were tested in the State Health Lab and none were positive. She also pointed out that several hundred other tests were sent to other labs out of South Dakota and they only report the positive ones back. So with that being said, the negative number on the SD DOH web site is only the in-state testing and does not reflect the hundreds done in out of state labs. As reported earlier today at Brown County, Avera and Sanford are hoping to get test sites up and going next week here in South Dakota.

As of now, there is no community spread of COVID-19, which is great news. North Dakota had one new positive case yesterday.

SOUTH DAKOTA CASE COUNTS: AS OF MARCH 19, 2020

Test Results	# of Cases
Positive*	14
Negative	663
Pending	270

**Positive test results are no longer required to be sent to the CDC for confirmation*

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases
0 to 19 years	0
20 to 29 years	1
30 to 39 years	3
40 to 49 years	4
50 to 59 years	3
60 to 69 years	3
70 to 79 years	0
80+ years	0

SOUTH DAKOTA COUNTIES WITH COVID-19 CASES

County	# of Cases
Beadle	4
Bon Homme	1
Charles Mix	1
Davison	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	5
Pennington	1

There is no known community transmission at this time.

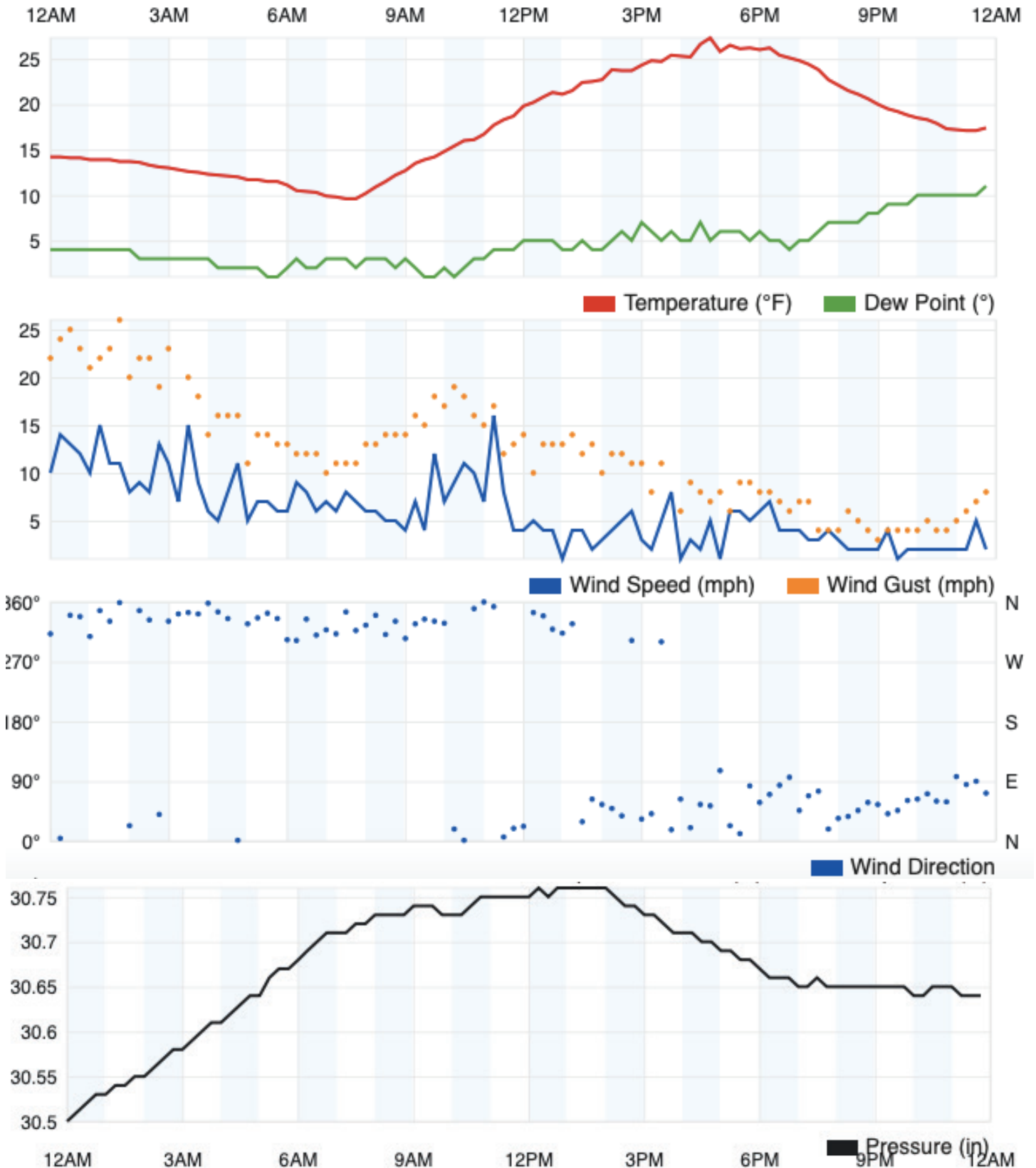
SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases
Male	11
Female	3

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 11 of 69

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 12 of 69

Today



Decreasing
Clouds and
Breezy

High: 40 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 27 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 45 °F

**Sunday
Night**



Slight Chance
Rain/Snow
then Slight
Chance Snow

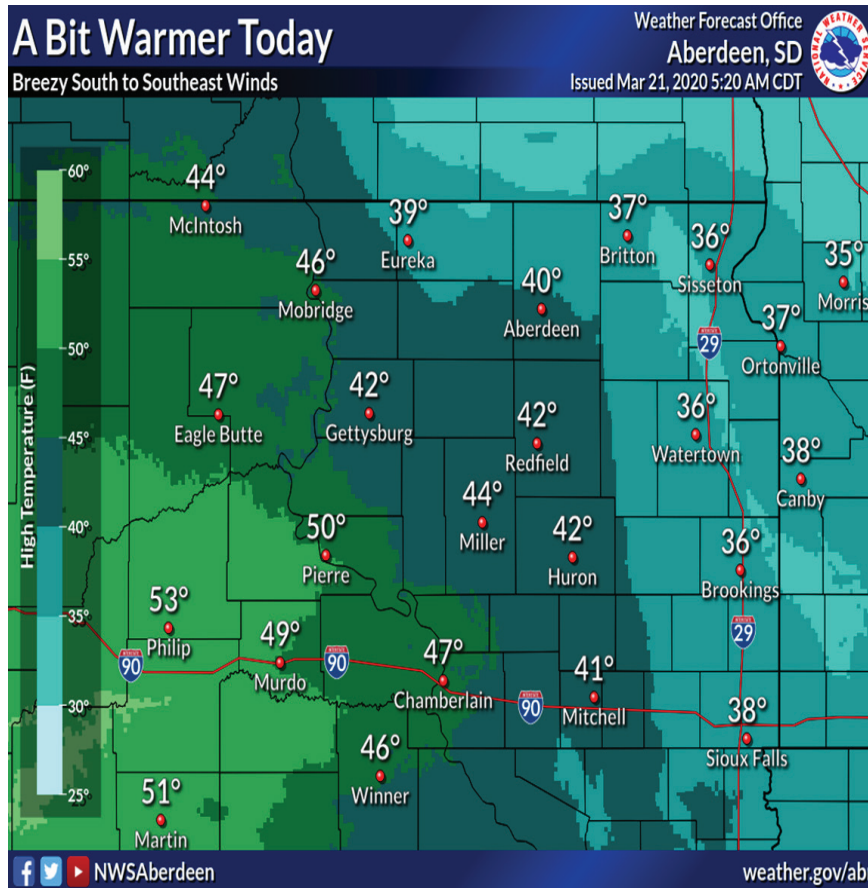
Low: 25 °F

Monday



Mostly Sunny

High: 48 °F



High pressure to our east and low pressure to our west will lead to southerly winds today that will help to usher in milder air across central and northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Afternoon readings more typical for this time of year can be expected. More sunshine will be had out west with thicker cloud cover holding onto eastern areas. Dry conditions should prevail through the day but we will see an increase in rain chances by the end of the weekend as a system moves into the region.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 13 of 69

Today in Weather History

March 21, 1997: As temperatures began to warm up towards the end of March, the near-record to record winter snowpack over central, north central, and northeast South Dakota began melting. The resulting runoff filled up ditches, lakes, creeks, streams, and low-lying areas. The massive amount of water swamped hundreds of sections of county and township roads as well as several state and federal highways. The inundated parts of roads were either broken up or washed out. Tens of culverts were blown out or damaged, and several bridges were either destroyed or washed out by chunks of ice and the high water flow. Road closures were extensive, with rerouting taking place for school buses, mail carriers, farmers, and ranchers. Many spillways and dams received some damage or were washed out. In addition, thousands of acres of farmland and pastureland were underwater. Due to the high groundwater, a countless number of homes received water in their basements. A few towns were partially flooded, including Twin Brooks in Grant County, Corona in Roberts County, and Raymond in Clark County. The following week, in the early morning hours of March 27, water flowed into Raymond filling the basements of several homes. In rural areas, several farms were surrounded by water and were inaccessible, leaving some people stranded and livestock marooned. Many other residences and businesses, mainly across northeast South Dakota, received significant damage or were a total loss. As a result, several people had to be evacuated. At the time, many long-term residents said this was the most significant flooding they had seen in their lifetimes. The flooding continued into early to mid-April.

March 21, 2012: Several record high temperatures occurred across the region in March. Click [HERE](#) for a recap.

1801: The Jefferson Flood hit the Connecticut Valley. The flooding was the greatest since 1692. The Federalists named the flood for the new President, who they blamed for the disaster.

1876: More than 40 inches of snow stopped traffic at Montreal, Quebec Canada. Trains were delayed, and mail carriers resorted to snowshoes.

1932: A tornado swarm occurred in the Deep South. Between late afternoon and early the next morning, severe thunderstorms spawned 31 tornadoes in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Tennessee. The tornadoes killed 334 persons and injured 1784 others. Northern Alabama was hardest hit. Tornadoes in Alabama killed 286 persons and caused five million dollars damage.

1951: Antarctica is the windiest place in the world. Port Martin averaged 40 mph winds throughout the year. On this day, the winds averaged 108 mph.

1932 - A tornado swarm occurred in the Deep South. Between late afternoon and early the next morning severe thunderstorms spawned 31 tornadoes in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Tennessee. The tornadoes killed 334 persons and injured 1784 others. Northern Alabama was hardest hit. Tornadoes in Alabama killed 286 persons and caused five million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1952 - Severe thunderstorms spawned thirty-one tornadoes across Arkansas, Tennessee, Missouri, Mississippi, Alabama and Kentucky. The tornadoes killed 343 persons and caused 15 million dollars damage. Arkansas and Tennessee each reported thirteen tornadoes. The towns of Judsonia AR and Henderson TN were nearly wiped off the map in what proved to be the worst tornado outbreak of record for Arkansas. A tornado, one and a half miles wide at times, left a church the only undamaged building at Judsonia. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm in the Northern High Plains Region produced blizzard conditions in western South Dakota. Winds gusted to 70 mph at Rapid City SD, and snowfall totals ranged up to 20 inches at Lead SD. The high winds produced snow drifts six feet high. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Bitterly cold weather prevailed across the northeastern U.S. Portland ME reported their coldest spring day of record with a morning low of 5 above, and an afternoon high of just 21 degrees. Marquette MI reported a record low of 15 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (The Weather Channel)

1989 - Snow blanketed the northeastern U.S. early in the day, with six inches reported at Rutland VT. Morning and afternoon thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds from southwestern Mississippi to southwest Georgia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

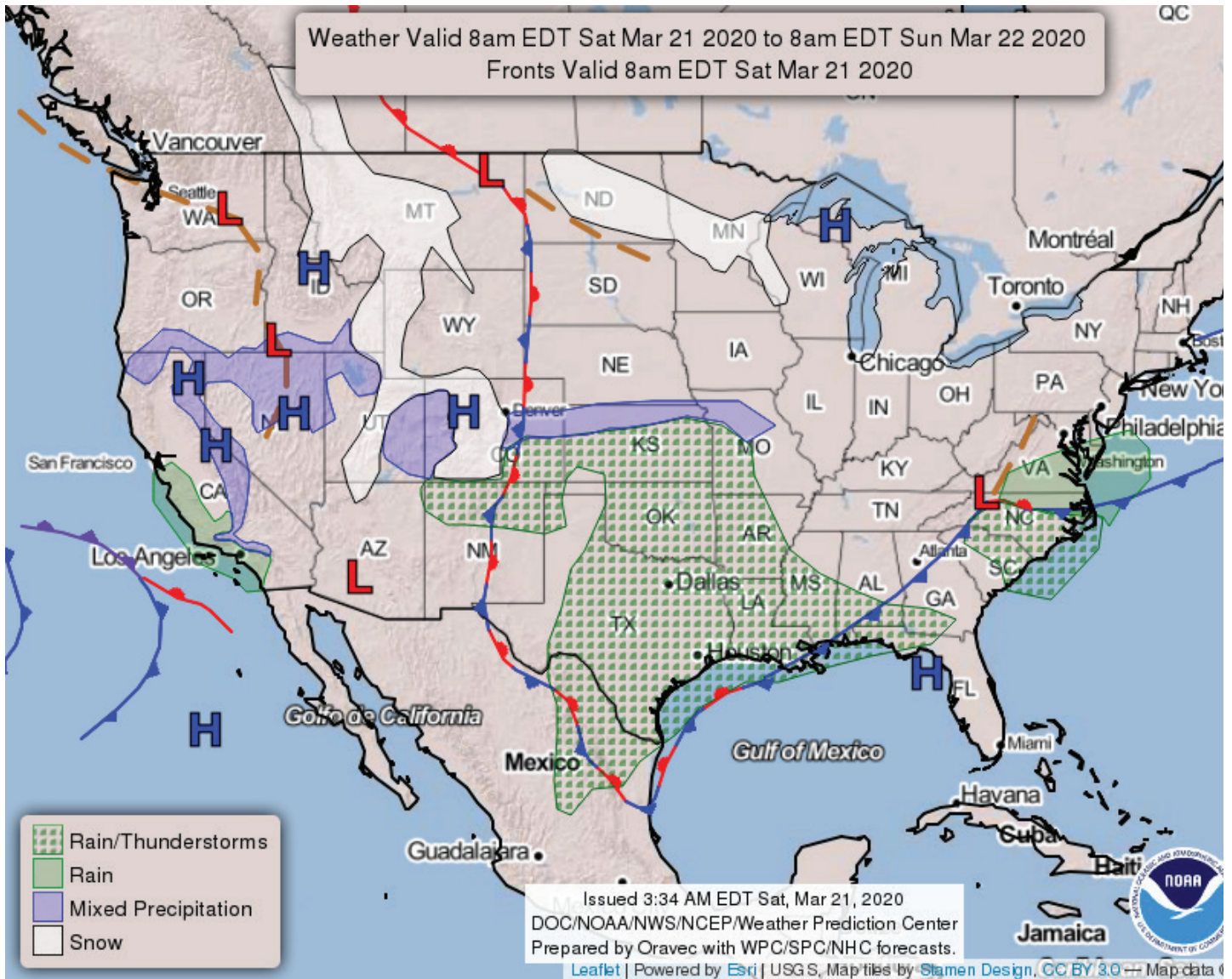
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 14 of 69

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 27 °F at 4:43 PM
Low Temp: 10 °F at 7:38 AM
Wind: 26 mph at 1:43 AM
Snow

Record High: 76° in 1926, 1910
Record Low: -12° in 1965
Average High: 42°F
Average Low: 22°F
Average Precip in March.: 0.67
Precip to date in March.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.69
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 7:48 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:32 a.m.





STRESS AND DISTRESS

A man hurrying to meet a deadline was caught in a traffic jam. As his anger grew and his patience diminished, he noticed a bumper sticker that read, "Go ahead and honk. It's your ulcer." It added to his rage, and he tried to strangle his steering wheel by squeezing it as tightly as he could. But, nothing happened as his rage grew, and he became more upset.

Stress invades all of our lives and quickly causes distress. Whether it is a problem we are having difficulty solving, a goal we can't achieve, or a decision that eludes us, we all face events that seem to be more than we can bear or beyond our capabilities. What then?

Peter said, "Give all your cares and concerns, worries and woes to God for He cares about what happens to you!" When we refuse to give our stressors and struggles to God, we reveal our lack of trust in His power and strength. Often this shows a lack of humility on our part because we are saying to Him: "I really don't need You - I can do this all by myself!" It takes real humility to admit to God that we need His help and the help of others who care for us and are concerned about us. We need to recognize our limitations and His greatness and willingness to do for us what we can't do for ourselves.

Prayer: Father, give us an understanding of our limits and limitations, and our need for Your help. When we come to the end of our abilities, may we be humble enough to call on You for Yours! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 1 Peter 5:7 Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 16 of 69

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

SD inmates make staff for ride honoring killed ancestors

By DANIELLE FERGUSON *Argus Leader*

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Tohani Isnana Mani was hand-crafted by a man behind bars, but the staff will take a significant journey across the plains.

At a powwow in the gym at the South Dakota State Penitentiary, inmates presented the carefully created staff to Sacred Horse Society riders who will carry it in an August ride honoring those lost at the battle of Inyan Ska Paha, or Whitestone Hill.

Tohani Isnana Mani, or Never Walks Alone, is a staff made of golden and bald eagle feathers, and represents ancestors lost in the 1863 battle at Whitestone Hill, where hundreds of Native American men, women and children were killed or captured in North Dakota.

"The people we're honoring today, we're descendants of them. We think about stuff like that in here," said Mark Milk, 45, who emceed the March 7 powwow.

Two inmates spent a few hours each day for a week making the staff, which included an inmate's personal eagle feathers, which can only be obtained with a permit through the repository and can take years to receive, the *Argus Leader* reported.

The staff was presented after a grand entry with inmates dancing through the gym in traditional colorful clothing. One inmate wrote a song for the event, and the men performed it for the first time when the staff was handed over.

It's a significant gesture, said one of the staff recipients, Perry Little, who is also the staff keeper for the Sacred Horse Society and tribal liaison for the Yankton Sioux. Inmates at the prison represent numerous tribes. It's almost as if they're all coming together again, Little said.

"The ride and staff is (sic) made for everybody," Little said. "You get that here."

The 1890 Battle of Wounded Knee may get a bit more historical attention in South Dakota, but the significance of the White Stone Hill battle – or massacre, as the men referred to it – is one to remember, the men said.

On Sept. 3, 1863, General Alfred Sully's troops attacked a tipi camp of Yanktonai, Dakota, Hunkpapa Lakota and Blackfeet as part of a military mission to punish participants of the Dakota Conflict, according to the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

Though there is no accurate historical count of the total loss, the North Dakota Historical Society says, it's estimated that between 100 and 300 members and 20 American soldiers were killed and more than 150 tribal members were captured. In the following days, tipis, buffalo hides, wagons and as much as half-million pounds of buffalo meat were destroyed.

The Battle of Whitestone Hill resulted in more Native casualties than any other conflict in North Dakota and more overall deaths than at Wounded Knee.

"It's our way of honoring our past, our forefathers that made the ultimate sacrifice for us," said Milk, who has been serving a life sentence since 1994. "Even in prison, there's a positive side."

Many younger men who come to the prison don't know much about their culture, and they often learn and practice it on the hill.

People may say it's an "sad place" to learn about their culture, Milk said, but the men don't see it that way.

"They're all sober and clear-minded here," said Native American Council of Tribes Pipe Carrier Shawn Mousseau, 41, who helped make the staff given to the riders.

The powwows are a chance for the inmates to reconnect with culture and share a meal a step above the average prison tray. A meal of fry bread, buffalo soup made with donated buffalo meat, wojapi and potato wedges is a welcome change of pace for the men.

Many of the men meet new people at the gatherings. It's hard to talk with people who aren't in your housing area or other activities, they say. They can don traditional clothing and sing and dance with mini-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 18 of 69

mal security. But they still must do daily head count with the rest of the inmates.

The most recent powwow, held earlier this month, was one of four such gatherings on the hill at the penitentiary each year, put on by the Native American Council of Tribes. Two are family powwows, which are held in the visit room instead of the gym, where inmates' families can attend and share songs, dances, games and a meal.

The other two are held in the gym in the penitentiary, which can be reached through narrow tunnels and an elevator by the prison's kitchen. The Jameson Annex, the prison's top-security section, also has four powwows: two gym and two family.

Almost 100 inmates and 15 outside guests attended the most recent powwow.

The staff will make its way from Fort Thompson on the Crow Creek reservation to Whitestone Hill in North Dakota in August. The ride is slated to start Aug. 28 and end Sept. 3, the anniversary of the battle.

"We are honored," Little said of receiving the staff. "It's humbling for them to do this for us. They all made a mistake. Nobody is perfect."

Legion celebrates 75-year membership of WWII vet

By **KELDA J.L. PHARRIS** Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Lester Clarke remembers how he had to sleep on the deck of a Navy ship during World War II because it was safer than in the ship's belly if a bomb or torpedo hit.

He and those he served with slept above board, doused in shark repellent, armed with a sheath knife and life vest. His on-person identification was a pay record tucked in — he glances around the room before continuing, "I think you can handle this," — a condom. It was the only waterproof item available. Clarke sets the scene so well listeners can almost feel the waves and hear the bombs.

He's been asked many times over if he was ever shot at and he never knows quite how to answer the question. He was on a ship. There was no combat with rifles. They were at sea and bombs were the constant threat.

"So, I suppose so," Clarke shrugs.

He recounted the tales over personal pizzas at a small gathering of family and fellow Wessington American Legion members at Mother Joseph Manor on March 10 — the day before the Aberdeen assisted-living facility went on lockdown because of spreading viruses, including the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19, the Aberdeen American News reported. It marks another tic in his unprecedented history. His foot taps like a metronome, keeping the cadence in his speech. Clarke speaks clearly with specific dates, countries and travels. The group had gathered to celebrate his 75 years of membership with the American Legion.

Clarke grew up in Wessington. He attended South Dakota State University for his bachelor's degree. He signed up for the Navy in 1942 and continued with school until his graduation in 1943. He was called to duty immediately upon getting his diploma. In 1945, while on leave, he was signed up for the American Legion. On Dec. 27, 1945, he married Charlotte, a relationship that lasted 66 years. She died in 2012.

At the present day event, servicemen laugh knowingly at the 98-year-old's anecdotes. Clarke acknowledges earnest, self-induced hazards that come with the mix of young men thrown into the chaos of war. There's one story in which he had his men training on firefighting while onboard a ship. His captain shouted, "Clark-ee!" — because that's what he always called him. Clarke hustled over, and the captain asked if he had packed the vessel in Pearl Harbor. Clarke answered yes. The captain reminded him of the 5,000 drums of aviation gas and a bottom loader of ammunition.

"He said if we take a torpedo we're never coming back from that. So I put my firefighting equipment away. I've never forgotten that," Clarke said, punctuating the line with a wary chuckle as his guests followed suit in harmony.

Then there was the time they they were fogging with a blend of diesel and some other chemicals to create the gaseous camouflage they needed at sea. The men were to wear gas masks, but one dissented and ended up extremely bloated. The crowd laughs when Clarke said he had to give the guy an enema, thus proving the extent of his medical knowledge, he said. The man never forgot his mask again.

Clarke forces the important words. They catch in his throat, but he expels them, his voice rising an octave as he remembers the 14 men from his 1943 SDSU graduating class who died during the invasion of Normandy. He tears up just as much at a more recent memory of the salute and "Thank you for your service" a 10-year-old gave him when he took an Honor Flight for veterans to Washington, D.C., a few years back. That moment touched him; the memories flooded the rims of his eyes.

In all, Clarke traveled to more than 100 countries by ship, plane and train. One stretch of rails was 10,000 miles long and took about a month to get from London to Hong Kong. He names Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Taipan, the Marshall and Marianas islands. It was difficult, he said.

Clarke also got his master's degree from SDSU. He spent 12 years in the Navy and was discharged in 1954. He and wife then moved back to South Dakota. The couple taught in Sisseton for 12 years. He then took an assistantship and earned his doctorate at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. Eventually he and Charlotte settled in Aberdeen, and Clarke joined the faculty at then-Northern State College. He served as vice president and dean and as an interim president. He retired from the school in 1992, he said, but he still follows it closely.

"I had a wonderful stretch at Northern. Northern is a darn good school. We had a couple dud presidents, but right now they've got a good one and they're doing alright," Clarke said.

He drops the line as his guests marvel and laugh again with the man who, pushing a century on Earth, still weaves an awesome yarn and, so long ago, served both his country and this community.

Imports of medical supplies plummet as demand in US soars

By MARTHA MENDOZA and JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press

The critical shortage of medical supplies across the U.S., including testing swabs, protective masks, surgical gowns and hand sanitizer, can be tied to a sudden drop in imports, mostly from China, The Associated Press has found.

Trade data shows the decline in shipments started in mid-February after the spiraling coronavirus outbreak in China led the country to shutter factories and disrupted ports. Some emergency rooms, hospitals and clinics in the U.S. have now run out of key medical supplies, while others are rationing personal protective equipment like gloves and masks.

The United States counts on receiving the vast majority of its medical supplies from China, where the coronavirus has infected more than 80,000 people and killed more than 3,200. When Chinese medical supply factories began coming back on line last month, their first priority was their own hospitals.

The government required makers of N95 masks to sell all or part of their production internally instead of shipping masks to the U.S.

The most recent delivery of medical-grade N95 masks arrived from China about a month ago, on Feb. 19. And as few as 13 shipments of non-medical N95 masks have arrived in the past month — half as many as arrived the same month last year. N95 masks are used in industrial settings, as well as hospitals, and filter out 95% of all airborne particles, including ones too tiny to be blocked by regular masks.

Governors across the country are becoming panicked as states run out of equipment. President Donald Trump has urged them to buy masks on the open market, but few if any are available.

"Without adequate protection, more of our hospital staff could become ill, which would mean there wouldn't be people to care for patients," said Nancy Foster, the American Hospital Association's vice president of quality and patient safety policy.

Some hospitals are down to just a day or two of personal protective equipment, she said.

The AP found that in the past month, hand sanitizer and swab imports both dropped by 40%, N95 mask imports were down 55%, and surgical gowns, typically sourced from China, were at near normal levels because the sourcing was shifted to Honduras.

Typically, medical supplies are delivered along both coasts. But almost all the supplies that did arrive in the past month came into Newark, New Jersey, across the country from the earliest and most severe coronavirus outbreaks.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 20 of 69

The AP identified the falling imports by looking at shipment data maintained by ImportGenius and Panjiva Inc., services that independently track global trade.

In mid-February, the World Health Organization warned that global demand for safety gear for medical providers was 100 times higher than normal. Prices were 20 times higher, stockpiles were depleted and there was a four- to six-month backlog. Despite this, federal contracting data shows there was no big effort at that point to submit orders.

Trade policies haven't helped. Tariffs on medical supplies made them more expensive, and they were only lifted March 5, even though health care associations asked the administration last year to exempt items like masks, gloves and gowns. And now countries including South Korea, India and Taiwan are blocking exports of medical supplies to save them for their own citizens, leaving the U.S. with fewer options.

"The lag time could be weeks. It could be upward of months," said Khatereh Calleja, CEO of the Healthcare Supply Chain Association.

Doctors, nurses and first responders in the U.S. are resorting to spraying their masks with bleach at the end of each day and hanging them up at home to dry to use for another day, according to the American College of Emergency Physicians.

"There is a little bit of anxiety, as you can imagine, going to work and not knowing if you will have enough personal protective equipment," said Dr. David Tan, president of the National Association of EMS Physicians.

The decline in swabs included multiple varieties, not just ones needed to test for COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has for weeks warned state and local health departments about shortages of swabs, which are needed for the testing that is critical to containing the pandemic.

Even over-the-counter medical shipments are decreasing. Ten shipping containers filled with medical thermometers arrived at U.S. ports a year ago this month. But in the last 30 days, there were just five.

Hand sanitizer, also commonly sourced from China, has disappeared from U.S. stores, and it may stay scarce. Last year by this time, 223 shipments had arrived. This year, since January, just 157 shipments have come.

The shortages affect patients because they can't get tested and their providers may be carrying the virus from one person to the next. But the far greater risk is to medical personnel: Already, there are reports of dozens of doctors, nurses and medical staff who have contracted the virus.

Nurses across the country report that they are not receiving the proper personal protective equipment and their hospitals don't have the isolation rooms they need to safely care for COVID-19 patients, according to National Nurses United, the largest union of registered nurses in the U.S.

"It's not safe at all. Nobody is safe," said Consuelo Vargas, an emergency room nurse at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. On Friday morning, after a possible exposure at work, she went to a local hardware store and bought all the painter booties and jumpsuits they had to wear while caring for people.

"It's so frustrating because we feel like health care workers are being asked for a lot — and that's fine, we can do our job. We're just asking for the equipment we need," she said.

The shortage doesn't affect only health care. The humanitarian medical firm Direct Relief thought it was heading into 2020 well-stocked, with several million N95 masks. The organization had increased its orders in 2019 after massive wildfires in the West filled cities with smoke, squeezing its supplies in recent years.

But then bushfires overwhelmed Australia with smoky skies and so Direct Relief began sending the masks there, vice president Tony Morain said.

When the coronavirus hit China, the organization began shipping the masks to Wuhan — the outbreak's epicenter — in an effort to contain the disease.

Morain said they've ordered 2 million more masks and are awaiting the shipments. Those typically take at least five weeks to arrive: two weeks to make the masks, two weeks of shipping and a week to get through the port. Meanwhile, he said, Direct Relief has received well over 100 requests from hospitals and health centers down to their last boxes.

In an effort to fill the gap, Minnesota-based 3M is running its Aberdeen, South Dakota, plant around the clock, producing millions of N95 masks per month. The company is also ramping up production of surgical

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 21 of 69

masks and commercial cleaning solutions, CEO Mike Roman said.

Nonetheless, one federal contract with 3M for \$4.8 million of N95 masks dated March 12 says the masks will be delivered April 30 — seven weeks later, according to public contract data.

A number of Chinese companies told the AP this week that they will be resuming exports — which bring higher prices — but that they are overwhelmed and can't meet demand.

"Chinese mask manufacturers have received too many orders from abroad, but have no time to produce all of them and make a delivery," said David Peng, manager of Ningbo Buy Best International Trading Co. Ltd.

Trade data shows importers have managed to maintain some supplies by shifting to factories outside China. Shipments of surgical gowns, for example, have dropped less than 5% since December, since they are now coming from Honduras. The same is true for medical gloves, which are now primarily coming from South Korea.

The federal government said a national stockpile was being made available at the state level, but governors said they weren't getting what they need.

"I think every governor in the United States has been banging on the door of the federal government with respect to the stockpile. We certainly have, and we're going to continue to," Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker said at a news conference this week.

Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious-disease specialist at the University of California-San Francisco, said he was alarmed by new CDC advice for hospitals that run out of masks.

"For the CDC to say people can wear bandanas is actually quite frightening," he said. "I never thought the CDC would say something like that. We're in the United States of America in 2020, and we have a recommendation to use bandanas?"

AP researcher Yu Bing in Beijing, reporter Steve LeBlanc in Boston, reporter Michael Biesecker in Washington and data editor Meghan Hoyer contributed to this story.

Contact the AP's global investigative team at Investigative@ap.org.

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.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

34-35-41-45-54, Mega Ball: 5, Megaplier: 4

(thirty-four, thirty-five, forty-one, forty-five, fifty-four; Mega Ball: five; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$96 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$140 million

Noem signs county zoning streamlining, 14 other bills

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem on Friday signed 15 bills from the South Dakota Legislature, including a law to streamline the county permit process.

The Republican governor spent a considerable amount of effort in this year's legislative session pushing a proposal to streamline the permitting process for feedlots and other projects. She cast the overhaul as a part of her focus on economic development, arguing it would allow people to start profitable projects in rural communities. The proposal makes wide-ranging changes to how counties decide on permits.

Noem also signed a bill to give people the option to take the written portion of the driver's license exam

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 22 of 69

in Spanish. She gave lawmakers the go-ahead to examine the state's public universities. The legislation requires the Board of Regents to assemble a task force with at least eleven members, including four legislators. It paves the way for a potential shake up in public universities.

The governor has vetoed two bills so far this year. The Legislature is scheduled to meet for one day at the end of March to consider overriding those vetoes. Noem said lawmakers could also adjust the state budget due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The new laws take effect in July.

Noem reports no new cases, but irked by test supply shortage

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem was frustrated in video of a call with President Donald Trump after she found out a local hospital system received COVID-19 testing supplies before the state's lab.

The state lab halted testing this week after running out of reagent, the compound needed for the chemical analysis in COVID-19 tests. Labs around the country are running low on testing supplies. The South Dakota lab received a shipment on Thursday morning, but only enough to run high-priority tests.

Noem said Friday the state lab ran 29 high-priority tests, but none came back positive. The lab is also sending some of its lower-priority tests to commercial labs out of state, but those take four to five days to process.

Video of Trump's conference call with governors was posted Thursday by NBC News.

Noem had publicly praised the White House for its help in finding supplies, but told Trump that she got "pushy with a few people" when shipments kept getting canceled. She then learned a local hospital system got supplies before the lab, even though it does not have an operating lab.

"They've received what I was trying to get," Noem told the president in the call.

Trump then signaled to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar that he should respond to Noem, making a circular hand motion conveying he wanted to move forward with the call.

"I just don't want to not be a priority area because we are a smaller state or less populated," Noem said.

Azar then told the governor that most labs are buying testing supplies on the open market and that there's a "trillion" dollar supply.

After testing 692 people for COVID-19, the state has 14 positive results, including one person who died. But there are 270 more tests awaiting results.

South Dakota's lab has supplies to run about 100 tests. Officials are saving those for people like health-care providers and nursing home workers who could easily spread the coronavirus.

In the call, Noem said she has reached out to other governors to see if they could spare any supplies after several shipments of reagent were canceled.

White House staff told Noem that private hospitals can now purchase reagents.

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

The vast majority of people recover from the virus. According to the World Health Organization, people with mild cases recover in about two weeks, while those with more severe ones can take three to six weeks to get better.

Noem said in an update Friday that she spoke with federal officials and they "failed" in the shortage situation. She also raised concerns about how the economic downturn from the coronavirus outbreak will impact the state budget. Lawmakers are scheduled to meet in Pierre for one day at the end of the month.

Small businesses and nonprofits are now eligible for federal loans for disaster relief, the governor's office announced. The unemployment claims call center has been flooded with calls, but an updated number of claims was not available.

The state has closed schools, but the governor has not issued an order to shutter businesses.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 23 of 69

A spokesperson for Sanford Health, which is working to develop testing, said Sanford has not acquired reagent. Avera, another large healthcare provider in the state, did not immediately comment.

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.

Not guilty plea entered to assault, abuse of child under 7

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Roberts County man has pleaded not guilty to felony child abuse, assault resulting in serious injuries and child neglect.

Michael Robinson, 21, appeared before a federal magistrate judge in Minneapolis following his arrest, the U.S. Attorney in South Dakota said this week.

An indictment alleges Robinson assaulted and abused a child under age 7 in October 2019.

Each charge carries a maximum life in prison with a minimum of 10 years behind bars.

The investigation was done by the FBI and the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Sioux Tribe's law enforcement.

The U.S. Attorney says Robinson was released on conditions pending trial and ordered to appear in federal court in Aberdeen March 31.

USA Track joins swimming in pushing for Olympic postponement

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

DENVER (AP) — U.S. Olympic leaders face a growing rebellion after the USA Track and Field chief added to the call for a postponement of the Tokyo Games because of the mushrooming coronavirus crisis.

CEO Max Siegel sent a two-page note to his counterpart at the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Sarah Hirshland, asking the federation to advocate for a delay. It came late Friday, only a few hours after USA Swimming's CEO sent a similar letter.

Now, the sports that accounted for 65 of America's 121 medals and 175 of its 554 athletes at the last Summer Games are on record in urging, in Siegel's words, "the USOPC, as a leader within the Olympic Movement, to use its voice and speak up for the athletes."

Other national committees are already doing that. The federations in Norway and Brazil each went public with requests to postpone.

"Our clear recommendation is that the Olympic Games in Tokyo shall not take place before the COVID-19 situation is under firm control on a global scale," Norway's federation wrote in a letter to IOC President Thomas Bach.

The U.S. brings the largest contingent to every Summer Games and wins the most medals — both factors that lead have led NBC to pay billions to televise the games through 2032. It would seem to give the USOPC leverage in talks about almost any subject with the IOC, but the federation has been reluctant to use its power. It spent years, in fact, trying to smooth over tense relations with its international partners.

And since Hirshland took over as CEO in 2018, the focus has been inward, as the sex-abuse scandals that have consumed American sports have shifted the focus to athlete welfare and safety.

Hirshland and the USOPC board chair, Susanne Lyons, were insistent that the USOPC won't sacrifice athlete safety in the current crisis. But they stopped well short of pushing the IOC toward a postponement.

"The decision about the games does not lie directly with us," Lyons said in a conference call with reporters Friday. "It lies with WHO, the Japanese government and the IOC. Under no circumstance would the USOPC send athletes into harm's way if didn't think it was safe."

Leaders of the track and swimming teams don't appear willing to take that risk, either, though whether they'll act on their own — without the sign-off from the USOPC — remains in question. The leader of the

third sport that makes up the backbone of the Olympics — gymnastics — has sent a survey to athletes, asking for their thoughts on what the USA Gymnastics stance should be.

As offerings dwindle, some churches fear for their future

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — As in-person worship services are canceled or downsized amid the coronavirus outbreak, some churches across the U.S. are bracing for a painful drop in weekly contributions and possible cutbacks in programs and staff.

One church leader, Bishop Paul Egensteiner of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Metropolitan New York Synod, said some of the 190 churches in his region were unlikely to survive because of a two-pronged financial hit. Their offerings are dwindling, and they are losing income from tenants such as preschools which can no longer afford to rent church venues.

"As much as I'd like to help them, everybody's reserves are taking a hit because of the stock market," Egensteiner said,

At Friendship Baptist Church in Baltimore, a mostly African American congregation of about 1,100, the Rev. Alvin Gwynn Sr. bucked the cancellation trend by holding services last Sunday. But attendance was down by about 50%, and Gwynn said the day's offering netted about \$5,000 compared to a normal intake of about \$15,000.

"It cuts into our ministry," he said. "If this keeps up, we can't fund all our outreach to help other people."

There was a brighter outcome at the Church of the Resurrection, a large United Methodist Church congregation that operates out of five locations in the Kansas City area.

Cathy Bien, the church's communications director, said about 25,700 people logged in to join online worship last Sunday after in-person services were canceled. That compared to normal Sunday participation of 14,000 worshippers — 8,000 in person and 6,000 online.

"It blew our minds," Bien said. "They were coming from all over the country — a lot of Methodists from other churches."

The huge turnout didn't translate into a larger than normal offering, although the church is still processing checks that were sent by some of the worshippers, Bien said. She expressed hope that financial support will remain robust as the church stresses the need to bolster food pantries and other community programs in the face of COVID-19.

At Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, giving was down modestly last weekend as the church cancelled in-person worship and made the service available online.

The pastor, Walter Kim, said some of his roughly 1,000 congregants have grown accustomed to online giving in recent years, but many worshippers still give in person at the services - an option not available for now.

"We'll be asking them to sign up (for online giving) or mail a check," said Kim. He will be urging congregants to bolster the church's "mercy fund" for use assisting hard-up members of the community as job losses multiply.

In addition to his pastoral duties Kim is president of the National Association of Evangelicals, which represents more than 45,000 evangelical churches. The NAE will be co-hosting a two-day digital summit next week featuring videos from church leaders advising other pastors nationwide how to respond creatively and effectively to the virus outbreak.

The co-host is the Humanitarian Disaster Institute at Wheaton College in Illinois, which already has offered resources to churches in response to COVID-19.

"Some changes are going to be required," Kim said. "The church is a very creative institution. In the end it will find ways of fulfilling its mission."

In Western Massachusetts, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield has indefinitely cancelled all public Masses, and recently rescinded permission for parishioners to pray individually at their churches.

Funeral Masses were still allowed with a maximum attendance of 25; the diocese said the times of those

Masses were not to be shared in the media,

"Lack of access to the churches and Eucharist is particularly difficult for many older parishioners whose entire daily routine is built around getting up, out of the house, and going to Mass," said the Rev. Mark Stelzer, who has served in the diocese as a parish priest and college chaplain.

The Rev. William Tourigny, pastor of Ste. Rose de Lima Church in Chicopee, Massachusetts, said his parish had a solid financial foundation and expected it could maintain all programs and staff payroll for the time being.

"For smaller faith-based communities with little or no reserved funds, difficult decisions will need to be made," he said.

Joe Wright, executive director of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network in Nashville said many pastors in the network have been holding regular in-person services, while monitoring the spread of the virus.

"Once the coronavirus rises to the level where it starts hitting smaller groups, then we'll see even the smaller groups back away and seek ways to gather, probably electronically," he said.

When that happens, Wright said, financial giving will depend on the church, especially the age of the congregations.

"Some churches with older congregations do not give electronically so the transition to that will be a little bit harder," he said.

Ron Klassen, executive director of Rural Home Missionary Association, said it's too early to say how the rural churches he represents are being impacted.

"My sense is that in the past, people rise up and, if anything, the giving might increase," he said. "People are going to give. They'll take care of their church and their community."

In Baltimore, pastor Gwynn worries that tensions might rise past the point that church outreach programs can help.

"With all the uncertainty, I'm afraid this could turn into anarchy," he said. "Not everybody's patient. Not everybody's law abiding."

He even envisioned the possibility of a stampede toward the goods being doled out after church's annual food drive.

"My biggest fear right now is what's happening to the minds of our people," Gwynn said. "How long can we hold them together?"

AP Religion Editor Gary Fields contributed.

Nursing home outbreaks lay bare chronic industry problems

By BERNARD CONDON and CANDICE CHOI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Burgeoning coronavirus outbreaks at nursing homes in Washington, Illinois, New Jersey and elsewhere are laying bare the industry's long-running problems, including a struggle to control infections and a staffing crisis that relies on poorly paid aides who can't afford to stay home sick.

That came into clear focus at the deadliest single spot in the nation's coronavirus crisis, the Life Care Center in the Seattle suburb of Kirkland, where federal investigators believe a contributing factor in 35 deaths so far was low-pay workers who came to work with the illness and potentially even spread it to other nearby facilities where they took shifts.

Beyond that outbreak, at least 15 more have died and dozens have been infected at long-term care facilities across the nation, with major outbreaks of 46 infected in the Chicago suburb of Willowbrook, four deaths at two facilities in New Jersey, 13 infected in Little Rock, Arkansas, and 11 infected in Troy, Ohio, with 30 more showing symptoms.

"Nursing homes would always have been ground zero, but given we already have huge staffing shortages, this will be magnified," said David Grabowski, a Harvard Medical School professor who has studied

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 26 of 69

staffing problems at homes. "It could be worse for today's nursing homes than ever."

Most troubling, he said, is that 75 percent of the nation's nursing homes don't meet federal suggested minimum levels for staffing and many workers are inexperienced. Four out of five nursing home employees are hourly workers, and given the low wages often leave for retail and restaurant jobs just as they become familiar with proper care procedures.

And staffing problems at the nation's 15,000 long-term care facilities could only be exacerbated by the coronavirus crisis, experts said, because lockdowns and school closures have left many such workers with no choice but to stay home and take care of their children.

"We have the most vulnerable people in a situation where ... nursing homes don't do what they have to do because they are understaffed, not sufficiently trained and there is high turnover," said Steven Levin, a Chicago lawyer who has sued nursing homes over their practices. "I am extremely frightened."

Sherry Perry, a certified nursing assistant at a nursing home Lebanon, Tennessee, has been working through the coronavirus crisis and believes her employer has been taking extra precautions to prevent infections, such as cleaning hand rails multiple times a day.

But she knows the effect worker shortages have on her life — she's often responsible for the care, washing and feeding of 13 patients on a given shift.

"It's challenging. We don't get to spend as much as time as we'd like with the patients," said Perry who after 34 years on the job makes \$17 an hour. Those just starting out make \$10 or \$11. "The work is hard, they're underpaid and they're underappreciated."

At the same time, nursing homes have been struggling to control infections. Nearly 10,000 homes in the U.S. — almost two thirds of the total — fell short on at least one infection control measure over the past four years, according to an analysis of inspection reports by Kaiser Health News. Some "deficiencies" cited seem relatively minor, such as incomplete record keeping. Others are more serious, such as staff not washing hands before helping residents put on a diaper or leaving open sores on a foot exposed to dirty floor.

Lapses are common even at homes with high government ratings for overall quality. Four of 10 of the highest ranked homes have been cited for infection problems. Among the lowest rated facilities — those with a single star — 8 in 10 have been cited.

The Chateau Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Willowbrook, Illinois, which had a two-star overall federal rating at the time of this week's outbreak, was found in a 2018 inspection to have big gaps in basic care.

In the space of a few hours, three nurse's aides cleaning the buttocks of residents not only failed to wash their hands afterwards, they didn't even remove their dirty gloves before walking into the hall, changing bed linens or helping residents put on diapers and clothes. Nearby a resident was lying in bed sheets that were stained from a spill from a rectal tube — a recurring problem, two relatives told investigators, because staffers don't check in enough.

One reason for all the sloppiness, according to Toby Edelman, a senior policy attorney at the Center for Medicare Advocacy: The vast majority of care deficiencies don't come with a fine.

"One thing this coronavirus has shown is that the enforcement system is way too tolerant of facilities not meeting the standards of care," she said.

Just months before the outbreak, the Trump administration proposed easing up more in a key area: stopping infections. The administration said it planned to change the rule requiring homes to have an infection control specialist on staff "at least part-time" to having one working a "sufficient" amount of time, drawing protests from industry critics and watchdogs that the change left too much wiggle room.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which oversees long-term care facilities, said the change was intended to make clear the specialist does not have to be limited to a part-time position, but that is reviewing public feedback to determine its next steps.

Despite its five-star rating, state inspectors at Life Care in Kirkland last April found infection-control deficiencies following two flu outbreaks that affected 17 residents and staff. A follow-up inspection found that it had corrected the problems.

Several family members and friends who visited residents at Life Care in the days before the outbreak told The Associated Press that they didn't notice any unusual precautions, and none said they were asked

about their health or if they had visited China or any other countries struck by the virus. They said visitors came in as they always did, sometimes without signing in. Staffers had only recently begun wearing face masks. And organized events went on as planned, including a Mardi Gras party Feb. 26 attended by dozens of residents, visitors and staffers.

Although federal and state health authorities haven't tied the Kirkland outbreak and infections at 23 other area nursing homes to any one staffer, they found homes in the area were vulnerable because staff members worked with symptoms, worked in more than one facility, and sometimes didn't know about or follow recommendations about protecting their eyes or being careful while in close contact with ill patients.

"They need the money. They don't have sick leave. They don't recognize their symptoms. They deny their symptoms," Dr. Jeff Duchin, public health officer for Seattle and King County, told reporters this week.

Dr. David Gifford, chief medical officer for the American Health Care Association, an industry group, said that such problems can't suddenly be fixed, and that the outbreaks at nursing homes reflect the nature of the virus, which can be spread by asymptomatic patients, rather than underlying staffing issues.

"Any sort of crisis unmasks systematic problems that have been around for awhile."

AP Medical Writer Carla K. Johnson in Seattle 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.

Despite lockdowns cases keep rising, straining hospitals

By FRANK JORDANS and KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Streets, squares and highways were deserted in large parts of the world Saturday as curfews and lockdowns multiplied in the face of a rapidly advancing virus that is severely straining many health systems.

Three American states with a combined population of 70 million are moving to restrict residents to their homes to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus. California started Friday and New York and Illinois were to follow this weekend. Connecticut and Oregon were preparing to do the same.

Almost a week into tight restrictions on free movement and the closure of most shops in Spain, police intensified their efforts to enforce confinement rules with fines and extra patrols to stop city-dwellers with second homes in the country from leaving town for the weekend.

Spain now has the third-highest number of infections worldwide. On Saturday it reported almost 5,000 new cases in the past day, bringing the total to nearly 25,000. The death toll rose to 1,326, up from 1,002 Friday.

As hospitals and nursing homes buckled under the burden of the virus outbreak, Spanish health authorities have acknowledged that some intensive care units in the hardest-hit areas are close to their limit, and warned that they expect infections to continue to rise before measures to reverse the trend have an effect.

The army was building a field hospital with 5,500 beds in a convention center in Madrid, where hotels are also being turned into wards for virus patients without serious breathing problems.

In Germany, once-bustling outdoor plazas fell quiet in Bavaria after it became the first of the country's states to tell people to stay home, except to go to work, buy food, visit the doctor or exercise. Police reported fewer people breaching the curfew than in previous nights.

Colombia became the latest South American country to announce a lockdown, and Sri Lanka closed all expressways for a weekend curfew.

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 recorded in Africa rose above 1,000 Saturday, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least 40 of Africa's 54 countries now have cases.

More than 275,000 cases have been confirmed globally, including over 11,000 deaths, according to a running tally by Johns Hopkins University. At least 88,000 people have recovered.

For most people, the new virus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 28 of 69

some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority recover.

Officials in many countries are desperate to prevent — or at least limit — a repeat of what has happened in China and southern Europe. The coronavirus outbreak overwhelmed medical services in the central Chinese city of Wuhan earlier this year and now is pushing them to the limit in Italy, Spain and France.

Italy's surging case numbers have frustrated health officials. Statements by authorities earlier on in the outbreak had raised hopes that new infections might soon start dropping off. But on Friday, officials reported further record increases, with 5,986 new cases and 627 new deaths. The country, which has Europe's largest outbreak, now has at least 47,021 cases and 4,032 dead.

On Saturday, tighter rules closing down parks and playgrounds nationwide took effect, in a desperate bid to discourage Italians from congregating outdoors.

Germany's southwestern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg on Saturday offered to take in patients from the neighboring French region of Alsace that's struggling with a surge of infections overwhelming hospitals.

Britain still lags behind Italy, Spain and France in the spread of the virus, but the country's overstretched health system is creaking. The state-funded National Health Service has about 4,000 critical-care beds and some 5,000 ventilators, and officials say that's far fewer than will be needed as the number of cases spikes in the coming weeks. Britain, which has recorded 3,983 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 177 deaths, has already asked 65,000 retired nurses and doctors to return to work.

Workers near Moscow are rushing to build a clinic to treat hundreds of coronavirus patients as Russia prepares for a wave of infections. Placards in the style of Soviet propaganda posters have been erected near the site, with one showing Mayor Sergei Sobyanin pointing at the viewer and the slogan "Builders — Minutes count!"

China has been sending aid to several European countries, promoting its expertise and experience gained from fighting the outbreak at home. An Air China flight carrying 18 tons of medical supplies including hundreds of thousands of surgical and protection masks landed in the Greek capital, Athens, Saturday morning.

As the pandemic has eased in Asia, China and other parts of the region are now trying to avoid importing cases from Europe, the U.S. and elsewhere.

China reported Saturday that its mainland had no new home-grown cases of the disease for the third straight day, but 41 imported ones in the previous 24-hour period.

Restrictions on movement are being eased gradually in China as it tries to restart the economy without bringing back the disease. Officials in Wuhan are permitting supermarkets, convenience stores and some other retail businesses to reopen from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. if they are in areas with no confirmed or suspected cases.

In the U.S., the restrictions on movement take effect Saturday in Illinois and Sunday in New York. All workers in nonessential businesses will be required to stay home and gatherings of any size are banned in New York. Exceptions will be made for important errands, such as buying groceries and medicine, and for exercise.

The lockdowns in California and other states sent stock markets tumbling again. Wall Street had its worst week since the 2008 financial crisis, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average falling more than 900 points and down 17% for the week.

Car maker BMW said it would shut down a huge manufacturing complex in South Carolina from April 3 to 19 and Nissan said it would suspend vehicle production at its two Mexican assembly plants from next Wednesday through April 14. Auto production has resumed in China, but only partially.

Colombian President Iván Duque announced Friday night that everyone would be required to isolate in their homes for three weeks starting Tuesday. The capital, Bogota, began its own lockdown Friday, leaving the city's usually traffic-filled streets largely empty.

Colombia has 158 confirmed cases, and officials are hoping that drastic measures now will limit the number of new cases in the weeks ahead. Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela already are in lockdown.

But there was concern about the possible unwanted side-effects that extended curfews around the world

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 29 of 69

might have, including isolation of elderly persons and increased instances of domestic violence.

"The authorities know or should know that confinement measures will also cause casualties, among women and children," Agnes Callamard, a U.N. appointed human rights expert, said on Twitter.

"An emergency plan to protect them is needed."

Moritsugu reported from Beijing. Associated Press reporters around the world 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.

Enjoyable at a distance, holiday lights brighten dark times

By **HOLLY RAMER** Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — At a time of great uncertainty, even the seasons seem scrambled. Christmas lights in springtime?

Wrapped around a tree trunk in Colorado, fashioned into a heart in Alabama and hung high over Main Street in a New Hampshire town, holiday lights are going back up. As the coronavirus spreads, the displays are providing a bit of emotional and actual brightness. And they're especially easy to enjoy from a safe social distance.

"We live out in the country, but I know you can see them from the highway," said Julie Check, who turned on the white lights that trace the roof line of her home in Eastman, Wisconsin, on Wednesday night. "Anything I can do to make people happy right now, I'm going to try to do."

In Farmington, New Hampshire, a roughly five-block stretch of downtown has been re-illuminated with holiday lights that swoop and zigzag between tall wooden posts. So cherished is the town's 80-year decorating tradition that taxpayers approved spending \$11,500 six years ago to erect the posts after the electric company said lights could no longer be affixed to its poles.

"It's a small town; we don't have a lot of traditions. That was one of them, and we just didn't want it to go away," said Lee Warburton, president of the Farmington Preservation and Improvement Organization, which maintains and installs the lights. At his suggestion, the 27 strands totaling 2,000-plus bulbs were tested and turned back on Thursday night.

"It's tough for everybody right now. Everyone is on edge," he said. "We just thought it would be nice to give the folks in town something to smile about."

Police Chief John Drury was all for the idea. He remembers how pretty the lights looked when he first visited the town for a job interview on a December day 20 years ago.

"It was one of the things that actually drew me to this community when I was first looking to be a police officer," he said. "By bringing the lights back, hopefully it gives people the sense of hope that we're all in this together. We'll get through it."

Many of the posts on Twitter and other social media platforms point back to a Colorado man who tweeted Monday that his mom thought people should put Christmas lights in their windows "to remind each other there is still life and light" while they stay home to avoid the virus.

Rosemary Peterson, the mom in question, said Thursday she made the offhand suggestion after making the wrenching decision to indefinitely postpone the funeral for her sister, Marlene, who died on March 13.

"We know we are not alone. Many are giving up events, experiences, celebrations and milestones," she said. "So in the midst of a lot of darkness, I thought we could all use some light."

Both she and her son were surprised that his tweet took off.

"He told me, 'Mom, there are a lot of people looking at this!' and I said, 'Oh, no! We have to go put out some lights!'" Peterson said. "We ran out and wrapped a tree and had another light string we put around our front window. Nothing too fancy, I'll tell ya."

Since then, others have adopted his #lightsforlife hashtag to share photos of their efforts. In Huntsville, Alabama, Sarah Bang said she usually just winds a string of white lights around the railing of her apart-

ment balcony for Christmas. But after seeing Peterson's tweet, she made a heart shape instead.

"I had Christmas lights because I'm super into Christmas, so I dug them out and decided love was a good thing to spread," she said.

This story has been corrected to show the last name of the Farmington Preservation and Improvement Organization president is Warburton, not Warbutonpu.

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is a continuing AP series reflecting these acts of kindness.

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.

Election limbo as coronavirus outbreak upends US primaries

By **CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY** Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — U.S. elections have been upended by the coronavirus pandemic. At least 13 states have postponed voting and more delays are possible as health officials warn that social distancing and other measures to contain the virus might be in place for weeks, if not months.

The states that have yet to hold their primaries find themselves in a seemingly impossible situation as they look to balance public health concerns with the need to hold elections. While election officials routinely prepare for natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires, the virus outbreak poses a unique challenge.

"Usually when we are dealing with a crisis in elections, it's something that happens and then it's done," said Chris Harvey, Georgia's director of elections. "The difference now is that it's a spreading threat, a fast-growing threat. We don't know where, when or how it is going to end."

Primaries scheduled for Georgia, Ohio, Maryland, Indiana, Louisiana, Connecticut and Kentucky have all been postponed to May or June. The Rhode Island Board of Elections has recommended the primary be delayed to June, while officials in Wisconsin are debating what to do.

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers has insisted the April 7 primary be held as scheduled, but a state elections commissioner said this past week that doing so would put people at risk. The state's chief elections official cited a host of problems Wisconsin could face if it moved forward with the election: a poll worker shortage, lack of polling places and potential disruption of absentee voting if mail service in the U.S. were to shut down.

All this comes at the worst possible time for election officials, in the middle of a major election year. The virus outbreak erupted halfway through the presidential primary season. Voters in 23 states have yet to cast their ballots.

While Arizona, Florida and Illinois held their elections as scheduled last Tuesday, Ohio halted voting over public health concerns after federal officials encouraged people over age 65 to stay home.

"We cannot tell people to stay inside, but also tell them to go out and vote," Gov. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, said on Twitter, in announcing plans to delay.

The states that have opted to press ahead have found themselves dealing with what one Chicago elections official called a "tsunami" of cancellations by poll workers, who tend to be older, and a last-minute scramble to relocate polling places away from nursing homes and senior living communities. Severe illness and death associated with coronavirus has been most common in people 65 and older, especially those who have heart disease or other chronic conditions.

In addition to the presidential race, dozens of congressional and local primaries are in limbo. Primaries play an important role in deciding which party candidates will appear on the ballot for the November general election.

Runoff elections in Alabama and Mississippi were also delayed, as were local elections in Oklahoma,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 31 of 69

Missouri, New Jersey and Texas.

There's no indication May or June will be any better to hold elections, but officials say postponing voting even for a few weeks gives them an opportunity to put in place plans to keep the public safe while voting. This includes moving polling places, recruiting backup poll workers and acquiring enough cleaning supplies for voting sites.

"At some point, we have to execute an election," Harvey said, adding Georgia planned a major push to expand absentee voting for the May primary.

There have been calls, including from Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez, for elections to be held mostly by mail. But making this switch will be difficult for some and impossible for others.

In several states, it would take legislation or even a constitutional amendment to allow. Even then, election experts say there would be costs and logistical hurdles.

For instance, states would have to decide whether taxpayers or individual voters would be responsible for return postage. It would require new machines and software in many places to track ballots in the mail and process and count them when they're returned. All of that could cost billions of dollars, at a time when state revenues are likely to drop amid increased unemployment and decreased tax collections.

Further, advocates say not all voters can fill out ballots by hand and that sending ballots could miss some voters, such as Native Americans who live on reservations where mail isn't delivered to every home.

Meanwhile, steps taken — or not taken — to change aspects of the voting process are being met with lawsuits from political parties and voting rights advocates.

In Ohio, voting rights groups are suing the state for refusing to reopen the voter registration window for the state primary, now scheduled for June 2. Under Ohio law, voters can register up to 30 days before an election. Advocates say the other states with postponed primaries are allowing voter registration ahead of rescheduled elections.

In Wisconsin, the Democratic Party has sued to force the state to make it easier to register to vote and request an absentee ballot. They also have asked for mailed ballots to count if they are postmarked by Election Day and received within 10 days after voting.

Any increase in absentee voting will surely add to the workload for election offices already stretched thin and navigating recommendations that people work from home.

The elections office in Cobb County, Georgia, has sent home most of its temporary and seasonal employees brought on to help prep for elections. That means more work for the full-time employees who remain, as they are already seeing an increase in applications for absentee ballots.

"As we prepare for May, there is still so much to do," said Janine Eveler, elections director for the metro Atlanta county. "Many of us are here when we would like to be home with our families because it's scary right now."

Looming over the scramble over the primaries are worries about the general election in November, a date that is set by federal law. Federal legislation has been proposed that would have all voters receive a mail-in ballot for the November election and provide federal funds to help states cover the costs.

The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU's School of Law is calling for task forces in every state to implement plans for executing an election amid a pandemic and urging Congress to provide money to help states. They estimate their proposals, including universal mail-in voting, could cost up to \$2 billion.

"Things will need to change," said Wendy Weiser, head of the center's democracy program.

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 weeks to six weeks to recover.

Associated Press writer Geoff Mulvihill in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, contributed to this report.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 32 of 69

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.

Singer, actor, 'The Gambler': Kenny Rogers dies at 81

By KRISTIN M. HALL AP Entertainment Writer

Actor-singer Kenny Rogers, the smooth, Grammy-winning balladeer who spanned jazz, folk, country and pop with such hits as "Lucille," "Lady" and "Islands in the Stream" and embraced his persona as "The Gambler" on record and on TV, died Friday night. He was 81.

He died at home in Sandy Springs, Georgia, representative Keith Hagan told The Associated Press. He was under hospice care and died of natural causes, Hagan said.

The Houston-born performer with the husky voice and silver beard sold tens of millions of records, won three Grammys and was the star of TV movies based on "The Gambler" and other songs, making him a superstar in the '70s and '80s. Rogers thrived for some 60 years before retired from touring in 2017 at age 79. Despite his crossover success, he always preferred to be thought of as a country singer.

"You either do what everyone else is doing and you do it better, or you do what no one else is doing and you don't invite comparison," Rogers told The Associated Press in 2015. "And I chose that way because I could never be better than Johnny Cash or Willie or Waylon at what they did. So I found something that I could do that didn't invite comparison to them. And I think people thought it was my desire to change country music. But that was never my issue."

"Kenny was one of those artists who transcended beyond one format and geographic borders," says Sarah Trahern, chief executive officer of the Country Music Association. "He was a global superstar who helped introduce country music to audiences all around the world."

Rogers was a five-time CMA Award winner, as well as the recipient of the CMA's Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013, the same year he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. He received 10 awards from the Academy of Country Music. He sold more than 47 million records in the United States alone, according to the Recording Industry Association of America.

A true rags-to-riches story, Rogers was raised in public housing in Houston Heights with seven siblings. As a 20-year-old, he had a gold single called "That Crazy Feeling," under the name Kenneth Rogers, but when that early success stalled, he joined a jazz group, the Bobby Doyle Trio, as a standup bass player.

But his breakthrough came when he was asked to join the New Christy Minstrels, a folk group, in 1966. The band reformed as First Edition and scored a pop hit with the psychedelic song, "Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)." Rogers and First Edition mixed country-rock and folk on songs like "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town," a story of a Vietnam veteran begging his girlfriend to stay.

After the group broke up in 1974, Rogers started his solo career and found a big hit with the sad country ballad "Lucille," in 1977, which crossed over to the pop charts and earned Rogers his first Grammy. Suddenly the star, Rogers added hit after hit for more than a decade.

"The Gambler," the Grammy-winning story song penned by Don Schlitz, came out in 1978 and became his signature song with a signature refrain: "You gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em." The song spawned a hit TV movie of the same name and several more sequels featuring Rogers as professional gambler Brady Hawkes, and led to a lengthy side career for Rogers as a TV actor and host of several TV specials.

Other hits included "You Decorated My Life," "Every Time Two Fools Collide" with Dottie West, "Don't Fall In Love with a Dreamer" with Kim Carnes, and "Coward of the County." One of his biggest successes was "Lady," written by Lionel Richie, a chart topper for six weeks straight in 1980. Richie said in a 2017 interview with the AP that he often didn't finish songs until he had already pitched them, which was the case for "Lady."

"In the beginning, the song was called, 'Baby,'" Richie said. "And because when I first sat with him, for the first 30 minutes, all he talked about was he just got married to a real lady. A country guy like him is married to a lady. So, he said, 'By the way, what's the name of the song?'" Richie replies: "Lady."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 33 of 69

Over the years, Rogers worked often with female duet partners, most memorably, Dolly Parton. The two were paired at the suggestion of the Bee Gees' Barry Gibb, who wrote "Islands in the Stream."

"Barry was producing an album on me and he gave me this song," Rogers told the AP in 2017. "And I went and learned it and went into the studio and sang it for four days. And I finally looked at him and said, 'Barry, I don't even like this song anymore.' And he said, 'You know what we need? We need Dolly Parton.' I thought, 'Man, that guy is a visionary.'"

Coincidentally, Parton was actually in the same recording studio in Los Angeles when the idea came up. "From the moment she marched into that room, that song never sounded the same," Rogers said. "It took on a whole new spirit."

The two singers toured together, including in Australia and New Zealand in 1984 and 1987, and were featured in a HBO concert special. Over the years the two would continue to record together, including their last duet, "You Can't Make Old Friends," which was released in 2013. Parton reprised "Islands in the Stream" with Rogers during his all-star retirement concert held in Nashville in October 2017.

Rogers invested his time and money in a lot of other endeavors over his career, including a passion for photography that led to several books, as well as an autobiography, "Making It With Music." He had a chain of restaurants called Kenny Rogers Roasters and was a partner behind a riverboat in Branson, Missouri. He was also involved in numerous charitable causes, among them the Red Cross and MusiCares, and was part of the all-star "We are the World" recording for famine relief.

By the '90s, his ability to chart hits had waned, although he still remained a popular live entertainer with regular touring. Still he was an inventive businessman and never stopped trying to find his way back onto the charts.

At the age of 61, Rogers had a brief comeback on the country charts in 2000 with a hit song "Buy Me A Rose," thanks to his other favorite medium, television. Producers of the series "Touched By An Angel" wanted him to appear in an episode, and one of his managers suggested the episode be based on his latest single. That cross-promotional event earned him his first No. 1 country song in 13 years.

Rogers is survived by his wife, Wanda, and his sons Justin, Jordan, Chris and Kenny Jr., as well as two brothers, a sister and grandchildren, nieces and nephews, his representative said. The family is planning a private service "out of concern for the national COVID-19 emergency," a statement posted early Saturday read. A public memorial will be held at a later date.

Associated Press journalist Mallika Sen contributed from Los Angeles.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump's breathless takes on drugs for virus

By CALVIN WOODWARD, MATTHEW PERRONE and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Could be a game changer." "Very exciting." "The way they acted with this kind of speed is an incredible thing." "Very powerful." "This could be a tremendous breakthrough. Tremendous breakthrough." "We're going to be able to make that drug available almost immediately." "There's tremendous promise."

That's President Donald Trump, inflating expectations about an end game to the coronavirus crisis with his positive spin on a disease that is spreading with no federally approved drug treatments, no preventive medicine, no cure and not enough equipment to help everyone sick from it.

Trump commanded the daily coronavirus task force briefings at the White House this past week, fashioning himself as a wartime president and making a variety of statements about the pandemic that were problematic or just wrong.

The public health officials who were with him walked back some of those statements. Most strikingly, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, spoke forcefully to dampen expectations that a drug to treat COVID-19 was at hand, as the president had repeatedly suggested.

A review of some of the rhetoric:

TRUMP: "We're going to be able to make that drug available almost immediately, and that's where the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 34 of 69

FDA has been so great. They — they've gone through the approval process. It's been approved." — briefing Thursday.

THE FACTS: It's not true that a new drug has been approved and is about ready to ship out.

The drug in question, known chemically as chloroquine, has been available for decades to treat the mosquito-borne illness malaria. Technically, doctors can already prescribe the drug to patients with COVID-19, a practice known as off-label prescribing. But Trump falsely suggested that the FDA had just cleared the drug specifically for the viral pandemic. That would mean that the drug had met the FDA's standards for safety and effectiveness.

Minutes later, the FDA commissioner, Dr. Stephen Hahn, emphasized that the drug still needs testing to determine whether it can help patients. He said chloroquine would have to be tested in "a large pragmatic clinical trial to actually gather that information."

Drug trials typically require hundreds or thousands of patients and, even when accelerated, take weeks or months to complete. In his remarks, Hahn warned against giving patients "false hope" before drugs are fully vetted.

While chloroquine has shown promise in preliminary laboratory studies, some experts are skeptical it will prove effective in human testing.

"I think it could be a game changer, and maybe not," Trump said, discussing the drug.

But the FDA reiterated in a statement hours after Trump's remarks that there are "no FDA-approved therapeutics or drugs to treat, cure or prevent COVID-19."

TRUMP: "If chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine works, or any of the other things that they're looking at that are not quite as far out ... your numbers are going to come down very rapidly."

THE FACTS: The drugs he is referring to are for treatment in patients already infected. That doesn't prevent spread of the virus. One study is testing chloroquine to try to protect health care workers at highest risk of infection, because a vaccine is probably a year or more away. It's too early to invest great hope in that or other drugs.

TRUMP, on using the malaria drug for COVID-19: "There's tremendous promise based on the results and other tests. There's tremendous promise. — briefing Thursday.

THE FACTS: "No. The answer ... is no." That was Fauci's response when asked Friday whether there's any evidence that the drug is useful for COVID-19.

He went on to say that hopes for the drug are based on "anecdotal" information. "It was not done in a controlled clinical trial, so you really can't make any definitive statement about it."

TRUMP: "Today, I'm also announcing that the Department of Housing and Urban Development is providing immediate relief to renters and homeowners by suspending all foreclosures and evictions until the end of April." — news conference Wednesday.

THE FACTS: His assurance about renters is misleading, Most renters are not protected from being evicted if they cannot make their payments through April.

Under HUD's plan for the pandemic, foreclosures and evictions would stop for 60 days on single-family homes with loans through the Federal Housing Administration. That would apply to roughly 8 million homes, according to HUD, and many of them are not rentals. Andrea Shapiro of the Metropolitan Council on Housing, a New York-based housing advocacy organization, said the new protections only help a small number of people.

Associated Press writers Hope Yen, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Marilyn Marchione and Ken Sweet contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apne.ws/2kx8bd>

Follow @APFactCheck on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APFactCheck>

Endangered gray wolf population on the rise in southwest US

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

THE EDGE OF THE GILA WILDERNESS, N.M. (AP) — A voice interrupted the crackle of the radio at basecamp: "Starting pursuit."

The rest of the team on the ground was anxious to hear those words after the low-flying helicopter crew had been working all morning to get close to one of the Mexican gray wolves that had been targeted as part of an annual survey of the endangered predators.

For months, crews combed the rugged mountains of the southwestern United States, tracking collared wolves and looking for evidence of new packs to build the most accurate picture possible of just how many wolves are roaming the wild in New Mexico and Arizona.

The results of the painstaking effort were finally released Wednesday, revealing there are more wolves in the wild than at any time since federal wildlife managers initiated efforts to conserve the animals decades ago.

Since the first wolves were released in 1998, the program aimed at re-establishing the species across its historic range has had its share of fits and starts due to illegal shootings, courtroom battles and politics. The challenges are mounting as ranchers and rural residents say the situation for them has become untenable as 2019 marked a record year for livestock kills.

ENCOURAGING NUMBERS

At least 163 wolves were counted during the recent survey. That marks a nearly 25% jump in the population from the previous year and puts wildlife managers about half way to meeting the goal that has been set for declaring the species recovered.

Officials say the population has increased an average of 15% annually over the last decade, marking what they consider to be a healthy pace.

"This is the second year we have seen a significant increase in the wild population of Mexican wolves, a success that is directly tied to the science-based, on-the-ground management efforts of the Interagency Field Team," said Amy Lueders, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest regional director.

The recent count found there were 42 packs in the wild and half of them had pups last spring. In all, about 90 pups were born last year and nearly 60% of them survived, beating the average survival rate for Mexican wolf pups.

The recovery team also placed 12 captive-born pups into five wild dens to boost the genetic variability of the wild population. The cross-fostering technique has been used for a few years now and appears to be paying off as four fostered wolves have survived to breeding age, resulting in multiple litters of pups born in the wild. Three more fostered wolves will reach breeding age this spring.

"You've got wild wolves raising those pups, teaching them to be wild rather than taking a captive adult that's used to people and not used to killing and feeding itself. When you put those adults out in the wild, they're the ones that tend to cause problems," said Brady McGee, the Mexican gray wolf recovery coordinator. "The last few years, we've shied away from doing the adult releases for that reason and working more with the pups."

'BEYOND FRUSTRATING'

No matter the number of wolves on the landscape, ranchers say the threat to their livelihood is becoming more dire. They point to the recent spike in the number of cattle kills.

In fact, 2019 marked a record with more livestock being killed than in any year since the first captive-bred wolves were released in 1998. Federal wildlife officials have been poring over the data to determine the reason for the increase and to develop potential strategies to reverse the upward trend.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 36 of 69

Megan Richardson runs a cattle ranch with her husband near Beaverhead, in the heart of the wolf recovery zone. She said the predators have harassed her horses and that packs like to nibble on the back ends of her cattle, leaving them with open wounds.

Richardson and others believe there are more wolves in the wild than what the annual count turns up. She says she and her neighbors are the boots on the ground and see them regularly.

"Almost daily we pass volunteers who have the trackers who go out and track the wolves," she said. "They won't even stop and speak with us. It's come to the point where it's like they hate us, we hate them, they don't want us there. We're trying to survive and make a living and support our families so it's beyond frustrating."

Audrey McQueen, a single mother of four young children, said her ranch southwest of Reserve, New Mexico, has been hit hard over the last year as there are three packs that roam the mountainous area that includes her spread. She said her losses due to cattle and calf kills average about \$50,000 annually but it could be more than a year before ranchers see any money from the claims they file with a co-existence council set up to address some of the financial effects of the reintroduction.

"We can't even have a normal life," McQueen said. "We work all day and at night we're driving up and down, shining the light just trying to haze off wolves. Everyone is worn out. Normal stuff is building fence and riding and we're not even able to do that because all we are is wolf patrol."

Richardson and McQueen say they've tried to work with federal officials to haze the wolves but nothing has worked.

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Unlike wolf reintroductions in Yellowstone and the northern United States, wildlife managers in the Southwest are faced with a climate that has encouraged a year-round calving season, meaning conflicts between livestock and wolves are constant rather than just a few months out of the year.

"The ranching culture is passed on from one generation to the next and they've always done it this way. With the wolves here, they do need to do things a little different," McGee said. "We've been talking with a few of the ranchers and throwing a few ideas out."

Those include calving in the late spring or early summer when there are also elk calves in the wild to lessen the pressure on livestock herds. McGee also has suggested moving herds further from wolf den sites during calving season.

Ranchers say that's not always possible since the cattle need to be where feed is available and there are certain pastures that need to be avoided at certain times of the year due noxious weeds, making the chess game nearly impossible.

Last year, 184 livestock kills were confirmed across New Mexico and Arizona and ranchers say some cases went unreported. Wildlife managers acknowledge the problems and are trying to determine what might be behind the spike.

"Every partner that's engaged, that's our top priority going into 2020 — figuring out some really good solutions for the depredation because it's not a sustainable level for anybody," said Fish and Wildlife Service spokeswoman Aislinn Maestas.

There already are a lot of tools in the chest — from range riders on horseback who scare the wolves away with cracker shots to flagging along fence lines and sometimes feeding caches to draw the wolves away from the cattle.

In December alone, the wolf team conducted more than two dozen days and nights of hazing in problem areas and maintained one diversionary food cache. The work has continued this year and there are regular calls and meetings with ranchers.

Still, McGee said it's been hard overcoming the lore attached to the predators. "There's still a huge misconception about wolves out there," he said. "People think wolves are big bad dangerous animals."

Once common throughout the Southwest U.S. and northern Mexico, the Mexican gray wolf is now the rarest subspecies of gray wolf in North America. It was all but eliminated by the 1970s, prompting the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 37 of 69

federal government to develop a captive breeding program.

Environmentalists have pushed for years for releasing more captive wolves into the wild, saying the current population is not sustainable without constant human intervention and cannot withstand current mortality rates. There were 14 wolves found dead in the wild in 2019, far less than the 21 documented the year before.

"Ensuring that wolves and people can coexist is an essential part of long-term success," said Bryan Bird with Defenders of Wildlife. "The Mexican gray wolf is an integral part of southwestern ecosystems and we must do everything we can to ensure the species is given the protections they need to survive."

ORGANIZED CHAOS

Back at basecamp on the edge of the Gila National Forest, it looks like a NASCAR pit stop. All hands are on deck as the team scrambles to process the wolf that had just been darted and captured. They have to work quickly.

The young male is weighed and measured. Teeth are checked. Blood is drawn. Vaccines are given. Its temperature is taken repeatedly to ensure it's not in distress. A new collar is affixed as it's stretched out on the bed of a pickup truck.

Activity swirls all about, but the wolf is nearly motionless, except for the occasional lick of its tongue.

"We have a really good crew," biologist Maggie Dwire says. "A lot of these people have been doing it for a really long time so it's a pretty well-oiled machine when an animal comes in. It may look like chaos, but it's organized chaos."

With a collective breath, the team then loads the wolf back onto the helicopter, the blades spin up and away it goes.

Congress toils on \$1 trillion rescue, Trump unleashes fury

By ANDREW TAYLOR and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Negotiators from Congress and the White House, narrowing differences on a sweeping \$1 trillion-plus economic rescue package, were set to resume top-level talks Saturday after President Donald Trump unleashed fury on those questioning his handling of the coronavirus outbreak.

It was an extraordinary moment in Washington: Congress undertaking the most ambitious federal effort yet to shore up households and the U.S. economy and an angry president lashing out at all comers. All while the global pandemic and its nationwide shutdown grip an anxious, isolated population bracing for a healthcare crisis and looming recession.

When one reporter asked Trump what he would tell a worried nation, the president snapped, "I say that you're a terrible reporter."

Despite the enormous pressure on Washington to swiftly act, the challenges are apparent. On Capitol Hill, lawmakers and administration officials labored late into the evening over eye-popping sums and striking federal interventions, surpassing even the 2008-09 bank bailout and stimulus.

"Everybody is working very hard," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said, exiting one closed-door session and heading into another.

While key negotiators said they made progress during the daylong talks, they failed to hit an end-of-day deadline to strike a deal. Talks broke around 10:30 p.m.

Mnuchin launched negotiations with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer and senators from both parties using McConnell's GOP offer as a starting point.

"Our nation needs a major next step, and we need it fast," McConnell said earlier in the day to an empty chamber, the iconic U.S. Capitol closed to visitors.

Preliminary Senate votes are set for Sunday. McConnell said the goal is passage by Monday.

But Mnuchin also conferred privately Friday with Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as the two leaders pressed for Democratic priorities. Pelosi late Friday called the GOP plan a "non-starter."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 38 of 69

At one point, Schumer told reporters, "We're making good progress." But Schumer acknowledged trying to wrap up "tonight is hard."

The GOP plan aims to pump billions into \$1,200 direct checks to Americans and billions to small businesses to pay idled workers during the global pandemic.

But Democrats say McConnell's plan is insufficient, arguing for greater income support for workers and a "Marshall Plan" for the U.S. healthcare industry, which is preparing for an onslaught of newly sick patients.

At the White House, Trump welcomed the stimulus plan, believing it is needed to stabilize the economy.

But Trump spent much of Friday's daily briefing in a fury, an angry president lashing out at reporters' questions.

At times, he seemed to refuse to want to hear the reality of an increasingly dire situation. It was when one reporter noted the hard facts in the U.S. — that more than 200 are dead, more than 14,000 infected and millions scared — that he snapped back.

Trump also sowed further confusion about whether he is using the powers of the Defense Production Act to force American businesses to manufacture needed medical supplies.

In Friday phone calls with Trump, Schumer said he specifically implored the president to invoke the Korean War-era act to ramp up production of desperately needed ventilators and other gear.

Trump told the Democratic leader he would do it — and then Schumer said the president could be heard yelling to someone in his office "get it done."

But Trump told reporters he had put the order he invoked Wednesday "into gear" Thursday night. He said he had directed companies to launch production. But then he walked it back, saying, "You know, so far, we haven't had to" because companies are volunteering.

The administration also announced a further closing of the nation's border, as the U.S. and Mexico agreed to limit crossings to all but essential travel and trade, while the U.S. moved to restrict entry to anyone without documentation.

Later Friday, the White House said a member of Vice President Mike Pence's staff had tested positive for the new coronavirus. Pence spokeswoman Katie Miller said the staff member, who is not being identified, did not have "close contact" either the vice president or Trump.

Unveiled Thursday, McConnell's rescue proposal from Republicans builds on Trump's request for Congress to "go big."

The GOP plan proposes \$300 billion for small businesses to keep idled workers on payroll and \$208 billion in loans to airlines and other industries. It also seeks to relax a just-enacted family and medical leave mandate on small to medium-sized businesses from an earlier rescue package.

It puts McConnell's imprint on the GOP approach after the Senate leader left earlier negotiations to Pelosi and Mnuchin, which angered some of his GOP senators feeling cut out of the final product.

Keeping paychecks flowing for workers not at work is a top priority for both Democrats and Republicans as jobless claims skyrocket.

But how best to send direct payments to Americans — as one-time stipends, ongoing payroll support or unemployment checks — is a crucial debate.

Under McConnell's approach, small businesses with 500 or fewer employees would be able to tap up to \$10 million in forgivable loans from the federal government to continue cutting paychecks.

Democrats prefer sending the money to workers via the existing unemployment insurance system. Schumer called it "unemployment insurance on steroids."

Both income support approaches have benefits and drawbacks, lawmakers said. Republicans say their plan would keep workers linked to employers, for easy recall once the crisis abates. Democrats argue the unemployment system provides a ready-made distribution channel, though states could also become overwhelmed by the surge of jobless claims.

Meanwhile, industries of all kinds are lining up for help.

As the Senate chairmen hammered out the details — and House chairmen funneled their input — the total price tag is sure to grow beyond \$1 trillion, lawmakers said.

The House, which adjourned last weekend, is not expected to resume until the new package is ready.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 39 of 69

Lawmakers on conference calls with leaders this week said they preferred not to board airplanes amid the virus outbreak. Despite calls to change the rules, Congress does not have a mechanism in place for remote voting.

Trump has already signed into law a \$100 billion-plus bill to boost testing for the coronavirus and guarantee paid sick leave for millions of workers hit by it. Earlier, Trump signed an initial \$8.3 billion package from Congress.

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.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Darlene Superville, Matthew Daly, Mary Clare Jalonick, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Alan Fram and Padmananda Rama in Washington 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.

China, on virus PR offensive, sends masks and experts abroad

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — As the fight against a new virus shifts to Europe and beyond, China is supplying millions of masks and other desperately needed items to struggling governments, hoping to build political ties and defuse criticism that it allowed the disease to spread early on.

Serbia's president plans to be at the airport this weekend to welcome a shipment of medical supplies from his "brother and friend," Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Xi's government has flown gloves and protective clothing to Liberia. It is sending 100,000 test kits to the Philippines. More than 10 flights carrying millions of masks and other supplies are bound for the Czech Republic this week.

China, said Czech Interior Minister Jan Hamacek, is "the only country capable of supplying Europe with such amounts."

It's part of an effort by the Communist Party to reshape the narrative, from one of early missteps to a nation that acted decisively to bring the outbreak under control. China is touting its deliveries of ventilators and masks overseas and dispatching its medical experts to share the lessons of its success.

China hopes to benefit from a realization in the West of how difficult it is to bring the virus under control, said Julian Ku, a law professor at Hofstra University in New York.

"The Chinese government's failures ... will be less harshly viewed in light of the failures of other governments to respond effectively as well," he said.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic blasted the European Union and praised China for offering help when he announced a state of emergency to combat the outbreak. His country wants to join the EU, but his government has moved closer to Russia and China in a seesaw battle for influence.

"I believe in my brother and friend Xi Jinping and I believe in China's help," Vucic said. "European solidarity," he said, was just a fairy tale.

EU officials denied they were stopping aid to Serbia, but said their first priority was EU members.

China has given \$20 million to the World Health Organization for COVID-19 efforts. While the EU and the U.S. have made larger pledges to combat the disease, they are now preoccupied by the crisis at home.

The Chinese "are winning points," said Theresa Fallon, the founder of the Center for Russia Europe Asia Studies in Brussels. "Serbia thinks that China is their savior."

Six weeks ago, Chinese authorities were trying to quell outrage at home and condemnation abroad. The critics said due to politically motivated foot-dragging, China had mishandled the viral outbreak racing

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 40 of 69

through a major province and its capital, Wuhan.

Now the criticism is raining down on governments from Tehran to Washington, D.C. A visiting Chinese Red Cross official chastised Italy on Thursday for letting so many people stroll the streets of Milan.

"Right now we need to stop all economic activity, and we need to stop the mobility of people," said Executive Chairman Sun Shuopeng.

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.

At one level, China is reciprocating assistance it received. Nearly 80 countries sent supplies to China, some on charter flights they sent to evacuate their citizens from Wuhan.

"It is China's traditional virtue to repay goodwill with greater kindness," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said, citing an ancient Confucian saying: "You throw a peach to me, and I give you a white jade for friendship."

But at the same time, China is deepening ties with countries that have been receptive to its outreach as it assumes a larger international role. It is shipping supplies to Cambodia, whose Prime Minister Hun Sen has been an outspoken supporter of Xi and even visited him in Beijing last month as the outbreak raged.

China moved quickly to send experts and equipment to Italy, which last year became the first western European country to join China's Belt and Road Initiative. The massive program seeks to expand trade by building ports, roads and other transportation projects in a 21st century version of the fabled Silk Road.

China is ready to work with Italy to contribute to international cooperation on epidemic control and to the building of a "Health Silk Road," Xi was quoted as telling Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in a phone call Monday.

"It's not an accident that the heat map of where Xi Jinping is sending condolences and China is sending N95 masks overlaps pretty closely with those countries that have demonstrated a willingness to accommodate China," said Daniel Russel, a former senior U.S. diplomat now with the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York.

Opinions vary on the effectiveness of China's efforts.

"It's an open question how far that's going to get ... but they're clearly giving it the old-school try," Russel said. The Communist Party's propaganda, he said, has been more successful at home than abroad.

Clive Hamilton, author of "Silent Invasion: China's Influence in Australia," said that China has poured enormous resources into shaping the global discourse in recent years.

"It would be a mistake to underestimate how effective" this "major international campaign to rewrite the history of the coronavirus" might be, he said.

But Chu Yin, a professor of public administration at the University of International Relations in Beijing, said China lags the U.S. and Europe in its understanding of public diplomacy and has always struggled to convert humanitarian aid into diplomatic returns.

"If people really expect a big boost of China's influence through the aid, it will be difficult," he said. "In my opinion, let's just take the aid as doing a good deed, and it would help China's economy if the epidemic situation in these countries is contained."

Associated Press writers Jamey Keaten in Geneva, Dusan Stojanovic in Belgrade, Serbia, Karel Janicek in Prague, Victoria Milko in Jakarta, Indonesia, and researcher Yu Bing in Beijing 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.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 41 of 69

Trump keeps talking during market hours; stocks keep tanking

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When President Donald Trump speaks, financial markets gyrate and quiver in real time.

But that hasn't stopped the president from holding forth almost daily about the coronavirus pandemic and its economic implications without waiting until markets have closed for the day.

While many of his predecessors worked consciously to not affect the markets, Trump has overtly made market movements and performance a measure of his effectiveness and central to his argument for a second term.

Earlier this week, public health officials announced a surge of infections in the U.S. as leading economists predicted unemployment spiking to 10% or more. Trump, meanwhile, took the White House podium in the middle of the trading day to offer an optimistic take on his administration's response to the crisis.

"One of the elements that is being worked on very much so on the Hill is to keep the jobs going so that when we do get rid of the virus, we're going to be able to just really...go like a rocket," said Trump on Thursday as at the market spiked more than 300 points, then dove into negative territory and then inched back into positive territory over the course of his 77-minute press conference. "I think the economy is going to be fantastic."

The president headed to the same place again on Friday while the markets were open for an even longer news conference, where he vacillated between expressing optimism and lashing out about "nasty" journalists' negativity.

Amid more difficult news—the number of confirmed infections around the globe surpassed 250,000 cases—the Dow Jones industrial average closed down more than 4.5 percent on Friday.

At the end of the market's heaviest losses in more than 30 years, the market closed at 19,173.98, below where it stood on the day before Trump was inaugurated and erased the so-called "Trump bump" that he's pointed to throughout his presidency as evidence of his prowess as the economic steward.

Nevertheless, in the midst of one of the most volatile moments ever for the U.S. economy, Trump has wagered that his voice is the daily balm needed to soothe investor concerns.

Over the course of the last eight days—all on which he held extended news conferences about the coronavirus response in the midst of trading -- his comments haven't stopped the bleeding. The Dow has lost more than 17% since March 13, and has plummeted more than 34% since the market hit an all-time high Feb. 19.

The president's decision to offer daily affirmations to the health of the stock market, and the economy writ large, is not surprising. But no president has tied his fortunes to Wall Street more closely than Trump, who until the market crash bragged that the rising stock market was evidence of his success leading the economy.

"Maybe, he should take it offline," said Mark Zandi, chief economist for Moody Analytics. "But this president? He's not going to do that."

Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush avoided talking about the stock market with substance, let alone trying to impact the market in the midst of trading. Bill Clinton took to heart his economic adviser Robert Rubin's advice that markets go up and markets go down.

Barack Obama was ridiculed as the stock-picker-in-chief less than two months into office when he suggested in the midst of a market slide that it was a good time to buy undervalued stocks.

For much of his next six years in office, the 44th president was often measured when even talking about the improved health of the economy: his first term started in throes of the Great Recession but he left office with 75 straight months of job growth. By the latter part of his presidency, Obama began claiming credit for the bull market on occasion.

"The stock market is booming," Obama declared in a speech in a July 2014 speech in Kansas City.

Those close to Trump said he was fully aware that the coronavirus posed an enormous threat to the very same once-booming markets he touted as the calling card of his presidency, even as he was publicly downplaying concerns about the virus.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 42 of 69

In the weeks that the pandemic ballooned into a public health emergency, Trump had become increasingly frustrated as he privately expressed concerns to his advisers about the effect the virus could have on the markets and ultimately his reelection effort, according to White House officials and Republicans close to the West Wing.

Trump throughout his presidency has viewed the market's performance as his "daily report card" of his job performance, Zandi said. With the pandemic thrusting the economy toward a recession, Zandi said that Trump now appears to be turning to the market for an "hourly report card" to gauge the effectiveness of his response.

"In the past, sometimes it worked and sometimes it doesn't," Zandi said of the president's years-long cheerleading of the market. "Recently, it hasn't. He's in fact, as of late, done less to instill confidence and more to upset investors. They don't view his actions as very productive in terms of this crisis. It's worked against him."

Throughout his presidency, Trump has used off-the-cuff diatribes to try to shame major, publicly-traded companies whose business dealings are at odds with his political interests, tapped out timely, friendly tweets about China's Xi Jinping to calm market concerns about trade wars, and repeatedly berated Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell about the central bank's policies during market dips.

Trump has repeatedly made clear that the battered market is top of his mind, as trillions of dollars in wealth and nearly all the gains for the Dow Jones Industrial tallied since his inauguration have been erased. He has sought to will a comeback with his daily updates about his administration's efforts to contain the virus in the midst of trading day, Zandi said.

It mostly hasn't worked.

Trump held a Rose Garden press conference on March 13, just before the New York Stock Exchange closed for the weekend, to declare a national emergency, to announce greater availability of virus testing kits were in the pipeline, and to declare he was ordering the purchase of oil for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Later that weekend, he boasted during another news conference that the market responded to his performance with its biggest single-day gain ever. Left unsaid by the president was the fact that market had its single-worst day since the 1987 Black Monday the day before the record gain.

"I think we should do one of them every day, perhaps. How about five times a day?" Trump remarked. "We'll do one five times a day. But that was something to watch and — I had no idea."

The huge Friday gains that Trump bragged came from his market-whispering were followed by a wipe-out Monday that saw a historic, nearly 3,000-point slide for the Dow.

Investors dumped stocks after the Fed's surprise move on Sunday evening to cut interest rates to near zero, a move that appeared to only exacerbate investor worries about a global recession. The Fed rate cut came the day after Trump again publicly berated Powell over lending rates.

Jason Furman, a Harvard University economist who served as Obama's chief economic adviser, said Trump should provide important coronavirus updates whenever he and his team sees fit. But Furman also advised that Trump should "let the stock market take care of itself."

Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton, said the "genie is out of the bottle" with Trump's consistent attempts to shape the market through Twitter and the media. And with the global nature of the marketplace, when Trump makes his comments remains less important than the substance of his remarks, she said.

"This is where facts matter, information matters and very focused communication matters," Swonk said. "His experts should be all the focus. His job should be to be the steward right now. Often, the alpha dog isn't the first one in the pack."

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed reporting to this article.

Trump's big promises on COVID-19 often fall short

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's become a fixture of life under quarantine. Almost daily, President Donald Trump appears on television, flanked by officials, to announce his latest maneuver in the fight against the new coronavirus. He typically unveils a dramatic-sounding emergency measure, a solution that appears imminent or a bold promise meant to reassure Americans that he's got this.

Often, the reality falls short of the promise.

The new national testing infrastructure he unveiled in the Rose Garden last week is actually a modest pilot program still in development. The drug he branded a possible "game-changer" still needs testing. It's unclear whether he's using all his power to ramp up production of medical equipment — or whether he's just preparing to do so.

Here's a look at Trump's most high-profile announcements and how they line up with reality.

THE PROMISE: Trump has said that 1.4 million tests would be available by next week and 5 million by mid-April. "I doubt we'll need anywhere near that," he said.

THE RESULT: For more than two weeks administration officials have talked about shipping millions of tests to U.S. labs. But it's become clear those numbers have little bearing on the actual number of patients tested since most U.S. labs can process fewer than 100 patient samples per day. Last week, the FDA approved the first coronavirus tests for "high-volume" laboratory systems, which are capable of processing thousands per day. That's expected to quickly increase U.S. testing capacity.

Efforts to tally U.S. testing numbers have been stymied by the fragmented nature of the country's health system, involving federal, state and local efforts and the private sector.

This week, members of Trump's coronavirus task force gave the most comprehensive figures on testing yet. They estimated that about 60,000 people in the U.S. have been screened for the virus since January, split roughly between government and industry labs. But they acknowledged that those figures don't yet reflect numbers from hospitals.

THE PROMISE: Under pressure to simplify the testing process, Trump last week declared that Google would jump in to help. "Google is helping to develop a website," Trump told reporters gathered in the Rose Garden. "It's going to be very quickly done ... to determine whether a test is warranted and to facilitate testing at a nearby convenient location."

Trump previewed a nationwide network of drive-thru testing sites at chains like Walmart and Target linked by the "Google-facilitated" website.

THE RESULT: It quickly became clear that the seamless online network Trump described will not be available immediately. Verily, a subsidiary of Google, issued a statement clarifying that its website was in the early stages of development and initially would serve just the San Francisco area.

Google followed up with a statement that it would launch a national website to provide "education, prevention, and local resources nationwide" on COVID-19. A Google spokesman said Thursday the company was still working to "roll out a website later this week."

The White House plan has now changed to focus on community-based testing centers that would be staffed by state and federal emergency personnel.

THE PROMISE: On Thursday, Trump offered an upbeat promotion of therapeutic drugs in early testing that he said could be "a game-changer" in treating those suffering. Trump said a common malaria drug called chloroquine had shown "very encouraging early results" against coronavirus. "We're going to be able to make that drug available almost immediately," he said.

THE RESULTS: Minutes later, from the same podium, FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn tamped down Trump's enthusiasm. The drug wasn't approved for treatment of the coronavirus. His agency would be taking a closer look to see if it could benefit those patients.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 44 of 69

"We want to do that in the setting of a clinical trial -- a large, pragmatic clinical trial -- to actually gather that information and answer the question that needs to be asked and answered," he said.

That process takes months and might or might not yield any results. The FDA later issued a statement further clarifying that there are "no FDA-approved therapeutics or drugs to treat, cure or prevent COVID-19."

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, also noted that data needs to be collected and analyzed to prove that it is effective and safe against the coronavirus. "There's no magic drug out there," he said.

Trump defended his optimism about the drug on Friday, saying it might or might not work, but said there was no reason not to try it.

THE PROMISE: Trump said the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services will have the authority to waive laws and regulations on such things as telemedicine and licensing requirements for doctors operating across state lines to provide the medical community with greater flexibility to respond to the pandemic.

THE RESULTS: Following the emergency declaration of March 13, HHS and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued directives that, among other steps:

- Expanded the use of telemedicine for Medicare patients.
- Waived license requirements so that doctors from one state can work in others with the greatest needs.
- Waived Medicare requirements of a three-day hospital stay before a patient can be admitted to a nursing home.
- Waived requirements that critical-access hospitals limit the number of beds to 25 and the length of stay to 96 hours.

Health care is one of the most heavily regulated areas of the economy, and that's done both to protect patients and safeguard federal dollars. But in a national emergency, some of those rules can get in the way, driving the system toward a breaking point. The temporary waivers of federal regulations allow hospitals to allocate scarce resources more efficiently in the face of rapidly changing circumstances. The telemedicine provisions, if seniors take advantage of them, could reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus for millions of people. The waivers were sought by the health care industry, and AARP was a leading proponent of the telemedicine option.

THE PROMISE: Trump said last week he would suspend entry into the United States by foreign nationals who had been to Europe during the past 14 days. "Citizens, permanent residents and our families — and even families returning from Europe — will be subject to extra screening" and self-isolation for 14 days.

THE RESULT: The administration's ban went into effect over the weekend for Europe and then on Monday for Britain and Ireland. But at the 13 airports where American citizens and green card holders returning from overseas were routed, the result initially was hours-long delays and throngs of travelers crammed together in tight spaces, the opposite of social distancing.

It's not clear yet whether any of those people had the illness or passed it on while they were trapped waiting for screening and clearance. It's also unclear whether anyone is adhering to the self-quarantine, because there is no way to track it.

THE PROMISE: Trump said on Wednesday that he invoked the Defense Production Act, a 70-year-old authority to give the government more power to steer private companies to produce equipment, such as masks, ventilators and other supplies, needed to combat the virus.

THE RESULTS: By the end of Friday, it was unclear if he had actually used the act to trigger production of the medical equipment.

On Thursday, he tweeted that he had signed the act "should we need to invoke it in a worst case scenario in the future. ... Hopefully there will be no need." On Friday, he said he had put the Defense Production Act "in gear" but then added "you know, so far, we haven't had to" use it because companies are volunteering.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 45 of 69

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said he implored Trump during a phone call earlier Friday to use the Korean War-era act immediately to order the manufacture of ventilators and other critically needed medical equipment. The president told Schumer he would, then could be heard on the telephone seeming to make the order. He yelled to someone in his office to do it now, said Schumer's spokesman, Justin Goodman.

Associated Press writers Matt Perrone, Colleen Long and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report.

The drive-in, relic of yesterday, finds itself suited to now

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The drive-in theater, long a dwindling nostalgia act in a multiplex world, is experiencing a momentary return to prominence.

With nearly all of the nation's movie theaters shuttered due to the coronavirus pandemic, some drive-in owners think they're in a unique position to give moviegoers a chance to do something out of the house while keeping distance from others. This weekend, some drive-ins aren't the only show in town. They're the only show in the country.

The Showboat Drive-In Theater in Hockley, Texas, about a 30-minute drive outside Houston, normally sees ticket sales go down about 40% on a weekend when they don't have any new movies. Last weekend, they saw a 40% increase, says the theater's owner, Andrew Thomas. Usually open weekends, Thomas has kept screenings going through the week.

"Obviously this isn't the way you'd want it to occur, but I'm excited for the idea that there may be a new generation of people that will get to experience going to a drive-in theater and — I was going to say catch the bug," said Thomas, laughing. "Maybe some other turn of phrase."

There are just over 300 drive-ins left in the country. They constitute a small, oft-forgotten flicker in today's movie ecosystem that hardly competes with the megawatt glare of the megaplex and the nation's 5,500 indoor theaters. But through decades of disruption and change in American life, they have managed to survive. They've somehow clung to life as relics of past Americana only to find themselves, for a brief moment anyway, uniquely suited to today.

Not many drive-ins are open. It's a seasonal business to begin with, with many drive-ins not planning to open until April. John Vincent, president of the United Drive-in Theater Owner Association, estimates about 5-10% were open as of last weekend, and some of those are closing due to the pandemic. In states like California and New York, restrictions on movement and gathering are being ramped up that mandate closures. As infections rise in other parts of the country, Vincent suspects the drive-in's window is already closing.

"We'd love the drive-ins to shine but this is probably not the moment," said Vincent, who owns Wellfleet Cinemas on Cape Cod.

However long it lasts, the drive-in is for now, in certain parts of the country, one of the only remaining refuges of public entertainment — of getting out the house to do something while still staying inside your car. At the Paramount Drive-in near Los Angeles, Forrest and Erin McBride figured a drive-in movie was one of the only ways they could responsibly celebrate their anniversary.

"We were like, what can we do? Everything's closed," said Forrest before a showing of "Onward" on Thursday night. "We were like, 'Well, a drive-in theater is kind of like a self-quarantined movie date.'"

Aman Patel, a 25-year-old from Los Angeles, attended his first drive-in with his roommate and friends. "I always wanted to do it," said Patel.

Drive-ins aren't without their own virus concerns. Concessions and restrooms, in particular, still pose issues. All owners interviewed for this article said they were spacing out cars, reworking how customers could order food (sometimes via text messages) and limiting restroom occupancy.

Chris Curtis, owner of the Blue Moon Drive-in in Guin, Alabama, said he was doing something that has long been anathema to drive-ins: allowing outside food and drink in. "In fact, we suggest it," reads the Blue

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 46 of 69

Moon's Facebook page. Like indoor theaters, drive-ins make their money almost entirely by concessions. "We're just trying to pay the power bill and the water bill and get through this, and give the community something to do at a time when there's not a whole lot to do," said Curtis, who's owned the Blue Moon for 24 years. "It's not about the movies anymore. It's about having something to do."

Curtis is concerned that too many people could show up this weekend, given the responses he's gotten. To keep the Blue Moon uncrowded, Curtis launched online ticketing for the first time. "I don't want people driving from long distances just to see that we're sold out," he said.

There are few movies left for drive-ins to play. For now, they can still screen recent releases like "Onward" and "The Hunt," but those movies are already available on various digital platforms as studios have funneled their films to homes due to the virus. Earlier this week, all of the nation's movie chains shuttered following federal guidelines that urged against gatherings of more than 10 people. The studios have cleared out their release calendars into May.

Those postponements have extended all the way to major summer releases, including Marvel's "Black Widow" (previously slated for May 1). Eating into spring releases will be hard enough for drive-ins, but summer is when they sell most of their tickets. Owners say that if they manage to remain open in the coming weeks, they could potentially play older films (though those cost almost as much as new releases to play).

"We don't know how long we're going to have to live this way," said Thomas. "Everybody's wrestling with what it is going to be like in the middle of the summer when normally everyone is high-fiving and having a good time because the box office is going crazy. It's when you go: This is why I got into this business."

Drive-ins could also improvise in other ways. Lisa Boaz, who with her husband has operated the Monetta Drive-in in Monetta, South Carolina, since 1999, said they've been contacted by churches interested in using the drive-in for Sunday services. Parishioners would listen to sermons from their cars through the drive-in's FM-radio transmitters.

"We're kind of playing it by ear right now," said Boaz.

Boaz said they had opened the Monetta earlier in March, hopeful for a good year. They have stacks of souvenir cups with "2020 season" printed on them. She's not sure how long the Monetta will stay open, and — like other owners — said she would be quick to follow any state-ordered shelter-in-place guidelines. Deciding just to open this weekend, she said, was difficult. And she's worried that other drive-ins won't be able to withstand a few dark months.

But so long as it's safe, Boaz appreciates the irony that in the year 2020, the best — and in many cases only — way to see a movie outside the house is at the drive-in. The pandemic hasn't proven the supremacy of streaming as much as it's shown how indomitable the urge is to spend a night at the movies.

"It is kind of nice that we're getting a little bit of extra attention. Maybe people don't want to stay inside as much as they thought they did," said Boaz. "The old ways are the best ways."

Associated Press Television News Producer Marcela Isaza contributed to this report from Los Angeles

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 tourists stranded abroad don't know when they'll return

By MITCH WEISS and HOLBROOK MOHR Associated Press

Linda Scruggs and Mike Rustici trained for months to hike the winding trails leading to Machu Picchu's complex of Inca ruins. So they were thrilled when their flight landed last Friday in the Peruvian capital.

They managed to do part of their trek but now they are trapped in a Lima hotel room and do not know when they will make it back to the U.S. The couple, like thousands around the world, are trapped after nations closed their borders to try to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Peru confirmed its first case of the virus on March 6. By the time Scruggs and Rustici arrived a week later, it was spreading. Days after the hikers landed, Peruvian President Martín Vizcarra declared an emergency,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 47 of 69

ordering the country's borders closed and for Peruvians to stay home.

There is no official count of how many Americans or citizens of other nations are stranded outside their home countries, but the couple's plight offers a window into the lives of tourists trapped abroad as the COVID-19 pandemic spreads.

Scruggs and Rustici, both in their 40s and from Nashville, Tennessee, told The Associated Press in telephone interviews they were given about 24 hours notice to leave Peru, but couldn't find a flight.

Since they couldn't leave, they were ordered to stay in their hotel room for at least 15 days. Other than to get food or supplies, they can't leave the hotel in the city's financial district.

The couple said they got little help or information from the U.S. State Department. One tourist, they said, walked to the U.S. Embassy only to be turned away and told to send an email and register for an online notification system.

Scruggs and Rustici feel like the world has closed in on them.

"There's heavily-armed guards on the streets patrolling," Scruggs said.

The virus has caused 10,000 deaths around the world, but the figure goes up every day. Americans in Morocco, Ecuador and other nations also told the AP that they feel abandoned by the State Department.

They said embassies have not helped them or returned their phone calls and emails. When they did reach someone, they were told to check embassy websites for updates and try to charter flights out of the countries on their own.

Dora Figueiredo, 37, an American from Newark, New Jersey, was trying Friday to determine whether her flight from Argentina to the U.S. would leave as scheduled on Sunday.

She had traveled to Buenos Aires to marry her now-new Argentine husband who cannot yet move to the U.S. because he doesn't have U.S. residency, a process she said could take more than a year.

"I'm feeling a bit stressed out about how to get home now that the Argentinian president announced a lockdown as of midnight last night," she said. "I have been tweeting at my airline, my embassy at travel.gov about how to get back home."

As of Friday her flight had not been cancelled, but she wasn't sure if that would still be the case Sunday and did not know how she would get to the airport.

"I really need to get home to check on my parents, who are elderly," she said.

Catherine Ferguson, a 77-year-old artist from Omaha, Nebraska, is holed up in a hotel in Rabat, Morocco, with her husband and 10 other Americans, most over age 60.

Ferguson and her husband were traveling for the past month with three other friends on a trip that started in France when the coronavirus cases began to increase.

Now they are trying to get permission from the Moroccan government to charter a flight to take them directly to the U.S.

"We really don't want to be here when things get worse in Morocco," Ferguson said.

Their small hotel is one of the few still open in the city, she said. The family that runs it has been feeding the 12 Americans there and they can walk around its garden, but it's too cold to swim in the pool.

They are prohibited from leaving the hotel and have been in contact with the U.S. Consulate in Casablanca, where officials told the travelers that they are working on a plan. The travelers spend their days using their iPads trying to find flights to book.

Some are running low on blood pressure pills and other medication. Ferguson said Nebraska's governor and state lawmakers have been in touch and are trying to help.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday that he is working to bring home Americans stranded in countries around the world with little or no warning as nations closed their borders to stop the spread of the virus.

And the U.S. military's Southern Command said Friday that it was flying 89 U.S. citizens from Honduras to Charleston, South Carolina, after they could not to return home, in the second Air Force Mission to bring people from Honduras. But it's unclear how the State Department plans to repatriate Americans stuck in other countries.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 48 of 69

Desperate to get home from Peru, Scruggs and Rustici used social media to connect with hundreds of other tourists who were trapped in the country, trying to draw attention to their plight by reaching out to elected officials and reporters.

Scruggs, a nurse, said some tourists in Peru are running low on life-sustaining medications like insulin and that some foreign college students trapped in the country were running out of money for food.

"I think everyone has been shocked at the lack of communication from the U.S.," Scruggs said.

On Friday morning, hope came in an email from the office of U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper, a Republican from Tennessee, who the couple had contacted for help.

"I just received word that United (Airlines) charter flights are beginning and are going to head to Lima," wrote Bess McWherter, who works in Cooper's office. "The guidance I've received from State (Department) is that you should continuously monitor the Embassy's website for information they post on flights. I will try to get more specific info."

Scruggs and Rustici used a flight tracking website and found that a United Airlines Boeing 777 was traveling from Houston, to Lima. But they couldn't find out if the plane was there for them or others. Some disillusioned tourists discussed "storming the airport," Scruggs said.

In a statement to AP, Cooper said his office is in touch with "Tennesseans who are stuck overseas in Peru and a dozen other countries" and is working with the State Department to help get them home.

When the flight arrived at 3:37 p.m., there was a group of about 50 people outside the airport, including Americans, but they were not allowed inside. A few hours later, the plane departed for Washington D.C. It's unclear how many Americans — if any — were on the flight.

The State Department and United Airlines did not respond to messages seeking comment. But Scruggs, Rustici were disappointed.

For now, they're still stuck in their hotel room, wondering how long they'll stay in Peru. They said they had managed to start their Machu Picchu trek as the spread of the virus around the world expanded, but never reached the top to see the ruins.

"We are desperate to get home," Rustici said. "And Linda's mother is on lockdown in a nursing home and Linda is her primary caregiver. Absolutely, our lives are completely on hold."

Associated Press writers Anita Snow in Phoenix and Julie Watson in San Diego contributed to this report.

Trump angrily defends his handling of coronavirus pandemic

By JILL COLVIN and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defending his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, an angry President Donald Trump on Friday lashed out at reporters and broke with his own health officials on the science of the outbreak.

Trump said he was tapping the Defense Production Act to order American businesses to manufacture and send supplies, like testing kits, ventilators and masks, to hospitals preparing to be overwhelmed by a wave of coronavirus cases. But he gave conflicting accounts as to when he officially invoked the rarely used order — and even if he had ultimately done so — and did not specify which companies he was marshaling for the effort. Trump had said earlier in the week he would tap the act as needed; he then added Friday that he has put that "in gear."

The president also announced an effective closure of the U.S. border with Mexico, prohibiting most travel except for trade. That brings it in line with the restriction on the Canadian border earlier this week. The U.S. is also suspending interest on student loans to help young people cope with job losses and the financial crunch.

As Congress debated a financial relief package that could reach \$1 trillion, officials again urged Americans to maintain social distancing. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious-disease expert, applauded strict new measures put in place by the governors of California and New York to limit mobility.

But Trump and Fauci broke openly during the White House briefing on the possible effectiveness of new

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 49 of 69

drugs being explored to treat the virus. Trump said he believed that a combination of medications he announced Thursday would work to treat the virus. Fauci said no such declaration could be made without testing, again highlighting the sharp divide between data-driven health officials and a president who admits he follows his gut.

The president spent much of the Friday briefing in a fury, sparring with reporters he deemed overly critical of the response. And he again painted an unrealistically rosy picture of the outlook, as doctors and nurses have already made desperate appeals for help even as the anticipated wave of new patients has yet to hit.

Trump scoffed at questions about continued testing shortfalls and deficiencies in medical supplies, suggesting that even mentioning the issues was problematic. When asked to speak directly to those marooned at home and frightened, Trump voiced objection to the question itself.

"I say that you're a terrible reporter," Trump responded.

"I think it's a very bad signal that you're putting out to the American people," he added. "The American people are looking for answers and they're looking for hope. And you're doing sensationalism."

Vice President Mike Pence, when asked the same question later in the briefing, responded, "Don't be afraid. Be vigilant."

More than 200 people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S., and sickness from the disease is on the rise, with hospitals at risk of being overrun. Most people who get it have 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.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said he implored Trump during a phone call Friday morning to invoke the Korean War-era act immediately to order the manufacture of ventilators and other critically needed medical gear. The president told Schumer he would and then could be heard on the telephone yelling to someone in his office to do it now, said Schumer's spokesman, Justin Goodman.

Later at the briefing, Trump said he had actually activated the measure Thursday night. He declined to reveal any companies he had ordered to step up production, though, and then walked back his claim, saying, "You know, so far, we haven't had to" because companies are volunteering.

The president and the Cabinet officials who briefed reporters focused on the border as they moved to restrict the entry of people without documentation. This follows a stepped-up State Department travel advisory telling Americans they should not leave the country.

On another front, Trump said the Education Department will not enforce standardized testing requirements for students in elementary through high school for the current year. Under federal education law, states are required to administer standardized tests every school year.

"Americans from every walk of life are coming together," Trump said. "We are winning and we are going to win this war."

The administration is trying to overcome its inability to provide the needed masks, ventilators and other supplies to hospitals on the verge of being overwhelmed by coronavirus patients. Already doctors and nurses have been making desperate public pleas. And numerous local officials, including New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, have warned that their medical facilities will shortly run out of vital supplies, endangering both patients and health care workers.

On Capitol Hill, lawmakers have been working toward an aid package to prop up households and the U.S. economy that would put money directly into Americans' pockets. The president has embraced the stimulus, believing it is needed to stabilize the economy and stock markets, which have been pummeled by the crisis.

Mere weeks ago, Trump expected to be campaigning for reelection on the strength of a robust economy and now the nation is staring at a recession, if not worse — a difficult hand for any incumbent to play.

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.

Associated Press writers Matthew Perrone and Deb Riechmann 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.

Quarantinis anyone? Happy hours go virtual amid virus crisis

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The hottest new bar's dress code? Your sweatpants. And you don't even have to leave your couch.

With bars shuttered and stressed-out workers stuck at home, companies and friend groups across the U.S. are holding happy hours over video chat to commiserate and keep spirits high amid the new coronavirus pandemic. In one community, neighbors are toasting to one another every night from the ends of their driveways to unwind — while keeping a safe distance, of course.

"Let's be honest, we could all use a break and a drink right now," said Nick Miner, who recently took part in a virtual cocktail hour with more than 30 of his home-bound colleagues with Hendersonville, Tennessee-based STR, which provides data and analytics for the hospitality industry.

Video chat happy hours have popped up all over social media as communities have closed bars and restaurants to all but delivery and takeout and banned large gatherings in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19.

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

Emily Anderson, who runs an organization that connects moms in New York City, was forced to cancel all of her events because of the virus. Now she's planning to host weekly video chat happy hours to help moms "celebrate surviving another week of the Coronapocalypse" with a "quarantini."

"On a good day, a lot of moms feel isolated, particularly new moms ... So now, more than ever, moms need one another's support and camaraderie," Anderson, founder of Mom Crew, said in an email.

Even book clubs, game nights and support groups are going virtual.

Brian Koppelman, co-creator of the Showtime series "Billions," said he and his friends played their weekly poker game using an app and chatting over Zoom video conferencing.

"It was a pretty great way to stay connected despite the distancing," he tweeted.

For others, it's been a way to check in on friends who live across the country and share tips about how to stay sane while staying at home.

Tracy Stallard said a group of her friends from high school caught up over drinks via video chat and talked about their new normal.

"Have you been going out and taking a walk? Do you wear real pants when you get up in the morning? How many days did it take before you stopped wearing makeup?" they asked each other, according to Stallard, who lives in New York City.

In Montclair, New Jersey, a group of more than a dozen neighbors is taking a different approach with a nightly happy hour in front of their homes. It started with a text suggesting they all come outside one night and share a drink from afar, said Gail Stocks.

While each family stays in their own yard, they've sang happy birthday to those whose celebrations were spoiled by the virus and toast "to better times, but never better neighbors," Stocks said. They plan to keep the tradition going until their lives go back to normal to give everyone a chance to get away from their computers for a bit and a reason to smile, she said.

"It's keeping everyone's spirits up," Stocks said. "I was feeling very down around the late afternoon... And by the time I came in the whole blues had lifted."

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

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

The death toll from the global coronavirus pandemic surpassed 10,000 people worldwide and the effects of a global economy grinding to a halt because of the pandemic were beginning to show, from millions of unsold flowers rotting in piles in Kenya to the slow emptying of the world's skies. In Southern Europe, gasping patients filled sick wards and field hospitals went up in hotels and a convention center in Madrid.

The U.N. chief warned of a looming global recession "perhaps of record dimensions." The governors of California, New York and Illinois ordered residents to stay home unless they have vital reasons to go out. Those orders affect 70 million Americans and encompass three of the country's largest cities. Other states, including Connecticut, appeared poised to follow suit with similar directives.

Here are some of AP's top stories Friday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow APNews.com/VirusOutbreak for updates through the day:

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— President Donald Trump invoked the Defense Production Act to get needed medical supplies on the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak and the private sector mobilized against it.

— The Dow Jones Industrial Average slid more than 900 points, ending the week with a 17.3% loss — its largest drop since 2008. The index has declined in four of the last five weeks.

— As the federal government tries to ramp up nationwide screening, laboratory workers are warning of a new roadblock: dire shortages of testing supplies.

— The federal income tax filing deadline was pushed from April 15 to July 15, though the administration advises Americans expecting refunds to file sooner.

— Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army, said the military branch will move to "virtual" recruiting, wooing recruits more aggressively through a variety of social media sites and other online activities.

— Most Americans who rent their homes, many of whom have lost their jobs in the sudden economic slowdown, will not be eligible for eviction protections despite what President Donald Trump said this week.

— In the Italian city of Bergamo, the coronavirus is depriving families of a bedside farewell with virus-stricken loved ones, or even a traditional funeral, and the cemetery is so overwhelmed by the number of dead that military trucks transported 65 bodies to a neighboring region for cremation this week.

— Members of President Donald Trump's economic team convened Friday on Capitol Hill to start negotiations with Senate Republicans and Democrats racing to draft a \$1 trillion-plus economic rescue package.

— Republican Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr sold as much as \$1.7 million in stocks just before the market dropped in February amid fears about the virus epidemic.

— Newscasts bring word of "hot zones" and "lockdowns." Conversations are littered with talk of "quarantines" and "isolation." Leaders urge "social distancing." In an instant, the pandemic has changed people's vocabulary, just like everything else.

— What sheltering in place looks like from one AP journalist's perch: Like many across the nation, we've already been hunkering down, working from home and home-schooling to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. Now it's official, and even more eerily quiet.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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

Here are the symptoms of the virus compared with the common flu.

One of the best ways to prevent spread of the virus is washing your hands with soap and water. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends first washing with warm or cold water and then lathering soap for 20 seconds to get it on the backs of hands, between fingers and under fingernails before rinsing off.

You should wash your phone, too. Here's how.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 52 of 69

ONE NUMBER:

Nearly 624,000: That's the number of passengers who passed throughout outbound checkpoints Thursday, according to the Transportation Security Administration. That's the lowest number at U.S. airports of outbound passengers ever recorded by an agency created in November 2001 in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. It compares with 2.4 million on the same day a year earlier.

IN OTHER NEWS:

PANDEMIC POT: Companies in California and elsewhere are reporting big jumps in marijuana deliveries and sales, as consumers stock up ahead of lockdowns or simply light up in search of relief during anxious times.

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>

'Accept it': 3 states lock down 70 million against the virus

By **TIM SULLIVAN** and **NICOLE WINFIELD** Associated Press

Illinois and New York state joined California on Friday in ordering all residents to stay in their homes unless they have vital reasons to go out, restricting the movement of more than 70 million Americans in the most sweeping measures undertaken yet in the U.S. to contain the coronavirus.

The states' governors acted in a bid to fend off the kind of onslaught that has caused the health system in southern Europe to buckle. The lockdowns encompass the three biggest cities in America — New York, Los Angeles and Chicago — as well as No. 8 San Diego and No. 14 San Francisco.

"No, this is not life as usual," New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said as the death toll in the U.S. topped 200, with at least 35 in his state. "Accept it and realize it and deal with it."

Cuomo said that starting Sunday, all workers in nonessential businesses must stay home as much as possible, and gatherings of any size will be banned in the state of over 19 million people. California likewise all but confined its 40 million residents on Friday, and Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced a similar order set to take effect on Saturday for the state's 12.6 million people. The governor of Connecticut, New York's neighboring state, said he also was poised to issue a comparable directive.

Exceptions were made for essential jobs and errands, such as buying groceries and medicine, as well as for exercise.

The lockdowns sent another shudder through the markets, where many fear a recession is a near certainty. Stocks tumbled on Wall Street, closing out their worst week since the 2008 financial crisis. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell more than 900 points, ending the week with a 17% loss.

The increasingly drastic measures in the U.S. came as gasping patients filled the wards of hospitals in Spain and Italy, and the global death toll surpassed 11,000, with the virus gaining footholds in new corners of the world. Over a quarter-million people worldwide have been infected, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University, though close to 90,000 of them have recovered.

Italy, the hardest-hit country in Europe, reported 627 new deaths, its biggest day-to-day rise since the outbreak began, and said new cases also shot up. Italy now has seen over 4,000 deaths — more even than China — and 47,000 infections. The soaring numbers came despite a nationwide lockdown.

The World Health Organization highlighted the epidemic's dramatic speed, noting it took more than three months to reach the first 100,000 confirmed cases but only 12 days to reach the next 100,000. Among those infected was a member of Vice President Mike Pence's staff. The White House said that staffer did not appear to have "close contact" with either Pence or Trump.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 53 of 69

Across the U.S., where the number of infected topped 17,000, governors and public health officials watched the crisis in Europe with mounting alarm and warned of critical shortages of ventilators, masks and other gear at home.

In New York City, health officials told medical providers to stop testing patients for the virus, except for people sick enough to require hospitalization, saying testing is exhausting supplies of protective equipment.

As promised earlier in the week, President Donald Trump officially invoked emergency wartime authority to try to speed production of such equipment.

Countries frantically prepared for a deluge of patients in the coming weeks.

In Britain, the government asked 65,000 retired nurses and doctors to return to work. A convention center and hotels in Madrid were being turned into field hospitals for nearly 10,000 patients. France's military worked to build a makeshift medical center in the hard-hit town of Mulhouse. The U.S. readied military hospitals for civilian use.

Trump also announced the closing of the Mexican border to most travel but not trade. That brings it in line with the restrictions on the Canadian border earlier this week. The federal government also moved the income tax filing deadline from April 15 to July 15.

"We're about to enter into a new way of living here in Los Angeles," Mayor Eric Garcetti said as California went into lockdown. "What we do and how we do it and if we get this right will determine how long this crisis lasts."

The streets of America's cities were quieter than normal, even in many communities not under lockdown.

In New York, Edjo Wheeler said he knew two people very sick with flu-like symptoms, which can indicate the coronavirus.

"That makes me walk around with my hands in my pocket to make sure I'm not touching things," said Wheeler, 49, who runs a nonprofit art center. He added: "If everyone doesn't cooperate, it's not going to be effective."

At the Paramount Drive-in near Los Angeles, Forrest and Erin McBride figured a drive-in movie was one of the few ways they could responsibly celebrate their anniversary.

"We were like, what can we do? Everything's closed," Forrest said before a showing of "Onward." "We were like, 'Well, a drive-in theater is kind of like a self-quarantined movie date.'"

The virus has struck at the very identities of many countries: closing down cafes, restaurants and boulevard life in France, ending la dolce vita in Italy, shutting down England's pubs and the ceremonial changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, damaging sales of tulips from Holland and shuttering the Statue of Liberty in the U.S.

Governments are trying to balance locking down residents with the need to keep food, medicine and other essentials flowing.

In Britain, the category of vital workers includes doctors, nurses and paramedics — and also vicars, truckers, garbage collectors and journalists. In New York, people venturing outside will have to stay at least 6 feet apart. And while they will be free to get some exercise to keep their sanity, there will be no "playing basketball with five other people," Cuomo said.

"These provisions will be enforced," the governor said. "These are not helpful hints."

In Bergamo, the epicenter of the Italian outbreak, cemeteries were overwhelmed. Patients at the city's main hospital lined up in a narrow ward, struggling for breath as doctors and nurses moved swiftly from one beeping machine to the next.

"When the virus arrived here, there was no containment, and it spread through the valleys very quickly. ... Some said it was the normal flu. We doctors knew it was not," said Dr. Luca Lorini, head of intensive care at the hospital, where nearly 500 beds were dedicated to people suffering severe symptoms. Eighty patients were in intensive care.

While the illness is mild in most people, the elderly are particularly susceptible to serious symptoms. Italy has the world's second-oldest population, and the vast majority of its dead — 87% — were over 70.

Still, even younger people are at risk.

"You're not invincible," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned them. He noted that many

countries are reporting that people under 50 make up a "significant proportion" of patients needing to be hospitalized.

Some of the only good news came from Wuhan, the Chinese city where the outbreak began and where hospitals were struggling just weeks ago. For the second day in a row, no new infections were reported and only 39 cases were recorded nationwide, all brought from the outside, the government said.

With the crisis waning there, China has begun sending medical supplies to Europe.

The shutdown of whole swaths of the world economy took its toll, from millions of unsold flowers rotting in piles in Kenya to the slow emptying of the world's skies. Canada received 500,000 applications for unemployment benefits, versus 27,000 for the same week last year.

In the U.S., lawmakers and the White House sought to put together a \$1 trillion economic rescue plan that would include the dispensing of relief checks of \$1,200 for adults and \$500 per child. The British government likewise unveiled a huge package under which the country for the time in its history would help pay the wages of those in the private sector.

Iran's official toll of more than 1,400 dead was rising quickly as well amid fears it is underreporting its cases.

As the virus strengthened its foothold in Africa, the continent's busiest airport, in Johannesburg, announced that foreigners will no longer be allowed to disembark.

Associated Press reporters around the world 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.

US virus testing faces new headwind: Lab supply shortages

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — First, some of the coronavirus tests didn't work. Then there weren't enough to go around. Now, just as the federal government tries to ramp up nationwide screening, laboratory workers are warning of a new roadblock: dire shortages of testing supplies.

The shortages are the latest stumble in a botched effort to track the spread of coronavirus that has left the U.S. weeks behind many other developed countries. Dwindling supplies include both chemical components and basic swabs needed to collect patient samples.

There are "acute, serious shortages across the board" for supplies needed to do the tests, said Eric Blank, of the Association of Public Health Laboratories, which represents state and local health labs.

Late Friday, Blank's group and two other public health organizations recommended that testing be scaled back due to "real, immediate, wide-scale shortages." The groups said only patients with COVID-19 symptoms who are elderly, have high-risk medical conditions or are medical staff should be tested.

"Testing for individuals who are not in these three groups is not recommended until sufficient testing supplies and capacity become more widely available," said the joint statement, issued with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists.

Testing is a critical part of tracking and containing infectious diseases like COVID-19. But the U.S. effort has been plagued by a series of missteps, including accuracy problems with tests the CDC sent to other labs and bureaucratic hurdles that slowed the entrance of large, private sector labs.

With the virus spreading, officials in the U.S. have shifted focus from tracking the virus to extraordinary measures to blunt its damage. On Thursday California's governor told its 40 million residents to stay home indefinitely and venture outside only for essential jobs.

But public health experts stress that policymakers are "flying blind" in deciding how to manage the pandemic.

"The only way to get through it without testing is to keep the entire country quarantined for the next 18 months" said Dr. Ashish Jha, a Harvard University global health professor. "That obviously is untenable."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 55 of 69

Jha and his colleagues say the U.S. should be screening 100,000 to 150,000 people per day. The current rate is roughly 20,000 per day, he estimates, though it is accelerating as larger commercial companies ramp up testing.

The director of Missouri's state lab said Friday that his facility is facing shortages of swabs, liquids to store patient samples and kits to develop the results. Many labs are having similar problems, said Bill Whitmar. "Quite frankly, 95% to 98% of the talk between lab directors has been about the shortage of supplies," Whitmar said.

At this point only 500 swabs are available. And the lab only has supplies to last through Tuesday, he reported.

The Jefferson City lab does only a fraction of the coronavirus testing performed in Missouri, with commercial labs now doing the largest share. But Whitmar's lab is where tests are run on the people most likely to be infected in that state.

The shortages have become a central concern in increasingly urgent communications among governors and federal officials.

"Most of my phone calls today have been about swabs," Gov. Gina Raimondo of Rhode Island said during a Tuesday news conference. "That's our big issue at the moment."

The Trump administration's top health official suggested Friday that the "anecdotal" reports of shortages are caused by confusion about how to find alternative supplies.

"Usually it's that the lab people do not understand that there are alternative supplies in the marketplace that they are perfectly free to use," Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar told reporters in a briefing at the White House. He said the federal government is purchasing and shipping swabs to states.

Whitmar, the Missouri lab director, said many suppliers just don't have the products in stock.

"An order is not a swab in hand," he said.

On Friday, New York City health officials directed medical providers to limit COVID-19 testing to people sick enough to require hospitalization, saying wider testing is exhausting supplies of protective equipment. The city's health department said unnecessary testing was contributing to a shortage of masks, gowns, collection swabs and other supplies.

The coronavirus test uses a chemical chain reaction to detect tiny traces of the virus' genetic material and reproduce it many times. State and local health labs follow the technique first developed by the CDC, which calls for a specific genetic kit made by German diagnostic firm Qiagen. Labs around the globe are reporting shortage of those kits.

Qiagen said this week it is trying to boost production from normal levels, which are capable of testing 1.5 million patients per month, to amounts that would allow for testing more than 10 million patients by the end of June.

The World Health Organization has instructed countries to "test, test, test" to track and isolate those carrying the virus. But the evolving message from U.S. decision-makers acknowledges that many suspected cases will likely go untested.

The White House has increasingly emphasized that testing should prioritize the elderly and health care workers who have symptoms of the virus. While most cases of COVID-19 are mild and tens of thousands of people have recovered, older people and those with underlying health problems are at higher risk for more serious problems, such as pneumonia.

"We don't want everyone to go out and get a test because there's no reason for it," President Donald Trump told reporters in a briefing Friday. (Two weeks ago, Trump declared "anybody who wants a test can get a test." But his deputies later walked back that statement.)

The CDC tells people to seek testing if they have certain symptoms of the flu-like illness caused by the coronavirus – fever, cough and trouble breathing – and if they have traveled recently to an outbreak area or have been in close contact with someone who is infected. They should first be tested for the flu and other routine infections.

While doctors are supposed to decide who ultimately gets tested, many state labs have adjusted their

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 56 of 69

guidelines depending on testing availability.

The Trump administration is expected to soon announce the rollout of nearly 50 community-based testing centers around the country, including drive-thru sites.

Some experts worry the introduction of convenient, mass screening will divert supplies from people with severe symptoms to those who face lower risks.

"It's taking supplies that are already in very short supply away from the testing laboratories that are doing necessary testing," said Blank, of the public health labs association.

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter: www.twitter.com/AP_FDWriter

AP writers Mike Stobbe in New York, Michelle R. Smith in Providence, Rhode Island, and Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, contributed to this report.

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.

Dow drops more than 900 points, ending worst week since 2008

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

Wall Street ended the week the same way it began: in full retreat from the coronavirus.

Stocks fell sharply and the price of oil sank Friday as federal and state governments moved to shut down bigger and bigger swaths of the nation's economy in the hope of limiting the spread of the outbreak.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average slid more than 900 points, ending the week with a 17.3% loss. The index has declined in four of the last five weeks.

The latest sell-off wiped out the gains from a day earlier and capped the market's worst week since the financial crisis of 2008.

Investors are worried that the coronavirus will plunge the U.S. and other major economies into deep recessions. Steps to contain the spread of the outbreak are causing massive disruptions and layoffs. Optimism that emergency actions by central banks and governments to ease the economic damage has waned as investors wait for the Trump administration to deliver on legislation that will pump billions of dollars into hurting households and industries.

"The coronavirus is shutting the economy down," said Lindsey Bell, chief investment strategist at Ally Invest. At the same time, oil prices are being pulled lower by increased supplies at a time when demand is declining.

"This is kind of a double-whammy for the economy," she said.

Friday's selling accelerated after New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered that most workers stay home. The declaration came a day after California announced similar measures. The move leaves restaurants, retailers and other businesses dependent on consumer traffic in economic limbo as they're forced to close doors and furlough or lay off workers.

The measures also mean less demand for oil. U.S. crude dropped about 21% and moved below \$20 a barrel for first time since February 2002.

Investors say they need to see the number of new infections stop accelerating for the market's volatile skid to ease.

"We just don't know what the next two weeks will bring," said Paul Christopher, global market strategist at the Wells Fargo Investment Institute. "Are we going to follow the same infection curve as other countries and the number infections will drastically accelerate? That's when the storm is going to come."

More than 10,000 people have died. There are more than 246,000 cases worldwide, including nearly 85,000 people who have recovered.

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. Severe illness including pneumonia can occur, especially

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 57 of 69

in the elderly and people with existing health problems, and recovery could take six weeks in such cases.

The Dow fell 913.21 points, or 4.5%, to 19,173.98. The S&P 500, the benchmark for many index funds held in retirement accounts and the measure preferred by professional investors, fell 4.3% after being up 1.8% earlier. The index is down 31.9% since reaching a record high a month ago.

Investors sought safety in U.S. government bonds, driving their yields broadly lower. The 10-year Treasury yield, which influences interest rates on mortgages and other consumer loans, slid to 0.88% from 1.12% late Thursday. At least that's normal markets behavior. Earlier in the week investors were selling stocks and bonds at the same time in a desperate rush to raise cash.

Oil has been plunging recent weeks as investors anticipate a sharp drop in demand for energy as manufacturing, travel and commerce grind nearly to a halt. It's down from \$45 a barrel earlier this month. A price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia has also pushed oil lower.

European and Asian markets closed broadly higher.

Despite the latest bout of selling, hopes remain that there will be progress in finding virus treatments and that "a boatload of stimulus by both central banks and governments will put the global economy in position for a U-shaped recovery," said Edward Moya of Oanda in a report.

On Capitol Hill, lawmakers continued to work to finalize a \$1 trillion-plus aid package to prop up households and the U.S. economy that would put money directly into Americans' pockets. President Donald Trump has embraced the stimulus, believing it is needed to stabilize the economy and stock markets, which have been pummeled by the crisis.

"We hope to see the Congress act on that early next week," Vice President Mike Pence said during an afternoon press conference.

At the same briefing, Trump announced an effective closure of the U.S. border with Mexico, prohibiting most travel except for trade. That brings it in line with the restriction on the Canadian border earlier this week.

Even with the market's broad slide, airlines, hotels and cruise line operators climbed as Congress worked on the economic stimulus bill that would include billions to bail out those industries. United Airlines surged 15.1% and MGM Resorts International jumped 18.3%. Carnival rose 20%. Despite the big gains, the stocks are still down sharply for the year.

In just its latest move to backstop the markets, the U.S. Federal Reserve said Friday it would seek to hold down spiking interest rates in the state and municipal bond market by supporting banks' purchase of the bonds.

Investors are jumpy due to uncertainty about the size and duration of the impact of the coronavirus outbreak and the spreading wave of business shutdowns meant to help contain it.

Markets are likely in for more turbulence next week as investors get a better look at the economic fallout from businesses closures and layoffs. Goldman Sachs Group analysts project that this week's U.S. unemployment aid applications increased more than 2 million, a record.

"We are going to start to see really scary economic numbers," said Lindsey Bell, chief investment strategist at Ally Invest.

AP Business Writer Ken Sweet contributed.

Poland's idle restaurants send free food to medical 'heroes'

By **MONIKA SCISLOWSKA** Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — A popular Warsaw entertainment center looks empty and closed amid a government ordered shutdown from the coronavirus, but inside, cook Bozena Legowska is busy.

One hot pizza after another is lifted out of the oven, boxed and whisked to a nearby hospital for a hungry staff of doctors who are working harder than ever under the pressure of the spreading virus.

The pizza boxes are inscribed with upbeat messages, including, "You are our heroes."

The Ale Zebra center in northern Warsaw has joined a growing nationwide network of restaurants and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 58 of 69

eateries showing their appreciation for the doctors, nurses and other medical professionals by bringing them free meals.

Last week, the government imposed a "national quarantine" that closed schools, universities, restaurants and culture centers, asking everyone to stay home if possible. But that order doesn't apply to health care workers, who face a time of incessant, intensified effort. A nation of 38 million, Poland has 378 confirmed cases of coronavirus infections. Five of the patients have died.

While restaurants are closed to the public to try to keep the virus from spreading, they can still do take-out orders and deliveries.

That has prompted #gastropomaga — "Gastronomy is helping" — and similar actions on social media to alleviate at least some of the worries for hospital workers who have no time to get a tasty meal.

"At least the doctors don't go hungry or worry where and how to get food," said Iwona Sobczak, a secretary at the rescue ward of the Bielany Hospital, as she came out into the parking lot to collect the 10 offered pizzas. While those infected with the coronavirus are being treated at another facility, the Bielany Hospital is under greater pressure than usual as other patients are transferred there.

Other messages on the pizza boxes for the doctors read: "We are with you" and "Zebra is helping."

Maciej Kolacinski, the host-manager at Ale Zebra, said the "feeling of joy one has when doing something good for the others is hard to describe."

His usually bustling Ale Zebra club caters to all ages with its pizza parlor that can host a party for 120 people, and features laser tag, billiards, slot machines and even an "Escape Room" where players are locked in and must hunt for clues to try to find a way out.

It's all empty and quiet now. Hand disinfectants are next to a wash basin and on the counter. A customer collects his order of two pizzas through a small window from the outside and pays with a touch card.

"Our financial situation is not a comfortable one," Kolacinski said. "We are making no money, but this is true for every one now. We are trying to do something positive."

On March 11, the government announced a "shield program" worth 212 billion zlotys (\$52 billion; 47 billion euros) for businesses hit by the pandemic. The bailout includes state contributions to wages, postponement of social insurance payments and an injection of cash for infrastructure and education investments.

The "meals for medics" campaign has been joined by many others in Warsaw.

The Indian Taste restaurant is among those delivering food to the contagious diseases hospital on Wolska street, where coronavirus patients are treated.

One of the deliverymen wearing a scarf across his face carried a container of spicy food with lots of garlic and ginger.

"I live nearby. Maybe I also catch the virus and I will have to be hospitalized here," he told the OKO.press independent news portal in a video interview.

The campaign to provide free food for medics began last week in the eastern city of Bialystok and has spread nationwide.

Magdalena Rothe, owner of the Futu Sushi bar in Bialystok, was among the first to call hospitals to ask how she can help. Now a group of restaurants and bakeries have organized a schedule of deliveries to hospitals to avoid overlapping.

"We will not feed the entire hospital, but those 15 meals will allow the doctors to sit down for a while and eat something," Rothe told The Associated Press by phone. "It is a spontaneous gesture of thanks for their very stressful work these days."

In other acts of social solidarity during an uncertain time in Poland, people are posting notices for elderly neighbors, offering to go shopping or walk their dogs so the vulnerable can stay home and isolate themselves from infection.

An ambulance station that is on the front line of the virus crisis was another recipient of the free pizzas from Ale Zebra.

Paramedic Jozef Grygo took to social media to thank them, saying a "full rescuer is a good rescuer."

—

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have become commonplace, so, too,

are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is an AP continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Returning troops denied water, bathrooms under quarantine

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It wasn't the welcome home that U.S. soldiers expected when they returned from war zones in the Middle East in the past week.

When their planes landed at Fort Bliss, Texas, they were herded into buses, denied water and the use of bathrooms, then quarantined in packed barracks, with little food or access to the outdoors. "This is no way to treat Soldiers returning from war," one soldier told The Associated Press in an email.

The soldiers posted notes on social media about the poor conditions. Their complaints got quick attention from senior Army and Pentagon leaders. Now changes are under way at Fort Bliss and at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, where the first soldiers placed under quarantine also complained of poor, cramped conditions.

Quarantining troops on military bases is becoming a greater challenge for military officials. While continuing missions and training, they also have to try to prevent the spread of the highly contagious coronavirus by enforcing two-week quarantines of soldiers who have spent months overseas.

In one of Bragg's remote training areas, large white tents have popped up over the past few days to house hundreds of 82nd Airborne Division troops returning to the base from Afghanistan and Middle East deployments. The tent city, being called Forward Operating Base Patriot (FOB Patriot), materialized almost overnight, after commanders realized the limits of the barracks when troops began arriving on Saturday.

Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy said senior leaders were looking into soldiers' complaints and seeking answers from Fort Bliss. Pentagon chief spokesman Jonathan Hoffman told reporters that Defense Secretary Mark Esper had heard about the problems and "his response is, we can do better and we need to do better."

Hoffman said the commander at Fort Bliss has met with all of the quarantined soldiers and "talked through some of their concerns. The spokesman added, "We are going to do better. This is something unusual for all these bases to be handling, and they are doing the best they can."

In the early days of the quarantine, soldiers at Fort Bliss posted photos on social media showing foam food trays dotted with small piles of peas and rice. On Thursday, in an email statement, Fort Bliss described changes that have been made.

"The dining facility we initially used could not keep pace with demand," said the statement. "The portions were inadequate, and led to our number one complaint. Fort Bliss leaders saw photos and immediately took action."

One soldier, in an email to the AP, said when soldiers got off the plane from Afghanistan, they were loaded onto buses and did not get water or permission to use the bathroom for hours.

"We can't walk down the hall, go outside, or exercise. We finally received drinking water at 0900 this morning," said the soldier, describing Day Two. "The Army was not prepared, nor equipped to deal with this quarantine instruction and it has been implemented very poorly. "

The AP is not identifying soldiers who described the conditions, in order to protect their identity so they could speak freely and not worry about potential reprisals.

Fort Bliss said that the food service plan has already increased to give troops three hot meals a day and that soldiers are now getting donated snacks and are allowed to order food and have it delivered to a central location. The troops are also allowed to go outside more and will get more access to gym equipment.

Another soldier at Bliss, who had been deployed to Kuwait, said in a message that the food has gotten better and troops are now allowed to go outside more. But as they begin Day Six there, packages have

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 60 of 69

been held up and there has been no access to laundry facilities.

At Fort Bragg, some of the first soldiers to return on Saturday were sent to rooms in barracks that had been quickly emptied. Soldiers previously living in those rooms were moved to make room.

According to officials, soldiers are being separated into groups that returned from overseas together for the two-week quarantine. But realizing the need for more space, the 82nd Airborne decided on Saturday to build a new facility, and on Monday morning the first tent stakes were being pounded into the ground.

Because the area has been used for training in the past, workers were able to quickly bring in and hook up shower and toilet trailers and set up food tents and other facilities. By Thursday, several hundred troops had already moved in.

The 82nd Airborne's 3rd Brigade has been deployed to Afghanistan, and is steadily returning home. Members of the 1st Brigade had gone to Kuwait and Iraq to help bolster security due to threats from Iranian-backed militias. Some members of that group have also come home.

According to Army Lt. Col. Mike Burns, a spokesman for the 82nd Airborne, FOB Patriot will be able to hold as many as 600 soldiers, but numbers have been changing as adjustments are made. He said Maj. Gen. James Mingus wanted to ensure that the returning troops knew "we were proud of what they accomplished and were doing everything we can to take care of them and stop the spread of the virus."

Of the 1,700 82nd Airborne troops that have returned so far to Bragg, a bit less than half are housed in barracks and at FOB Patriot, and the rest are in quarantine in their homes. As of Friday about 200 were at FOB Patriot.

Anyone who exhibits symptoms of the virus will go into isolation and medical treatment.

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 weeks 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.

Just get through today: Sheltering in place amid a pandemic

By MARTHA IRVINE Associated Press

OAK PARK, Ill. (AP) — A week ago, I was that crazy parent. "Did you tell my friends' parents I can't hang out?" my teen protested. Yep, I basically did.

Today, we are "sheltering in place," an order from the mayor in our Chicago suburb, Oak Park, to leave home only for essential services until at least April 3 — and to stay 6 feet (1.8 meters) away from others when outside. Like many across the nation, we've already been hunkering down, working from home and home-schooling to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. Now it's official, and even more eerily quiet.

My mind races. Two more weeks?? I try to shut it down. Just get through today.

And then tomorrow.

I text my nephew Sam in San Francisco. He's already a sheltering veteran, as it were, with his entire state now being told to do so. New York state also is asking businesses with nonessential services to keep employees home. "Well, we just ordered delivery burritos!" he responds. I laugh. Moments of levity — the toilet paper jokes, the video with comedian Mel Brooks protected behind his glass door, the dog on Twitter who howls along with the "Law and Order" theme — are like a salve.

Then my nephew brings me back to reality. "I'm expecting a couple waves of virus rebound followed by shelter in place," he adds, ominously.

There are at least three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Oak Park, two of them emergency room physicians. With so few tests available, surely there are others, says Tom Powers, spokesman for the village of about 52,000 in a metropolitan area with millions.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 61 of 69

While Oak Park's population is relatively small, Powers said the hope was to encourage the governor of our state and even those elsewhere to follow suit, which Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker ultimately decided to do, beginning Saturday evening.

"It's almost like grab you by the lapel and shake you a little bit and say, 'It's not business as usual. This is different,'" Powers says. He notes that Mayor Anan Abu-Taleb owns a restaurant that is among the many businesses that have temporarily closed. "This isn't easy for him either."

In our household, grumpiness over space, or who has the laptop, or who won't JUST SHUT UP, is already starting to creep in, with many sheltering days to go. A slapping match between kids becomes cause for yet another family meeting. We play a game and move on.

These are tiny problems. We know we are among the lucky ones who still have jobs and our health, so far. We can still take the dog for a walk. Can still get prescriptions and groceries. Can drive in and out of town anytime we like. This isn't jail, even if it sometimes feels like it.

I chuckle as my neighbors rush home with a huge flat-screen TV in the last hours before the sheltering order begins. The grocery stores are often packed with people, more of them now wearing surgical masks. There's still little to no toilet paper, but a liquor store in the neighboring suburb now has drive-up service. Meanwhile, the library has long been closed, as have the nearby homes of Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway, both museums. A makeshift sign at a local music school reads, "Wash Your Hands."

As I work from a desk in our front window, I watch our street like a TV show. The mail carrier is now wearing latex gloves and a mask, though it falls off his face from time to time.

A group of kids from a day care that regularly walks down our block, their little hands hanging on to a rope to keep them together, dwindled from about a dozen to just three on Thursday, a day before the sheltering order took effect. Now the facility is closed, its empty cribs lined up in rows in a corner. I wonder how some of these parents are coping now. Are they doctors, police officers, grocery store clerks, pharmacists? Whatever they are doing, I hope they stay well.

From the other room, I listen to my daughters video-chatting with my 87-year-old mom in Michigan. She is a social butterfly who's had to give up her bridge games and church. Even though my dad died four years ago, she says being alone this much has stirred up those feelings of loss all over again. Like many children, I struggle with the notion that staying away is keeping her safer.

"I am OK," she assures me. She is a tough Depression-era kid. She knows sacrifice far more than I do. Sheltering to protect her and the most vulnerable among us is the least we can do. So I will get through today.

And then tomorrow.

Martha Irvine, an AP national writer and visual journalist, can be reached at mirvine@ap.org or at <http://twitter.com/irvineap>

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.

Going stir crazy? Then train like an astronaut, mimic space

By **MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Isolated at home? Then train like an astronaut. That's the inspirational advice from a public engagement specialist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

Astronaut wannabe Rachel Zimmerman-Brachman said Friday that isolation is a lot like astronaut training. So she came up with this positive message and launched it via Facebook on Thursday:

"Attitude is everything: I'm on an adventure in a confined space with a small crew for a long duration mission, with occasional space walks and resupply missions. Sounds like astronaut training to me."

Zimmerman-Brachman, a longtime JPL employee with degrees in physics and space studies, said she's

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 62 of 69

wanted to be an astronaut since childhood. She's applied four times through NASA and the Canadian Space Agency. (She has dual citizenship.)

She immediately thought of friends who have lived in simulated Martian habitats and taken part in other long-duration isolation studies, once the coronavirus outbreak hit the U.S. and space program employees like herself were urged to work from home. Her 14-year-old son is home, too, in Sherman Oaks, California, dealing with schoolwork.

JPL is working up a list of space-related educational activities that youngsters can do while home.

"Life is a combination of what happens to you and what you do about it. We're going to be at home for a while, so we may as well make the best of it," she wrote in an email to The Associated Press.

"I hope other people will be inspired to have a positive attitude during this challenging time, and find a way to find silver linings in the current situation," she added.

"We're all in this together."

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.

Top Flyer: Dayton's Obi Toppin leads AP All-American team

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

The college basketball season came to an emphatic, dramatic end with the cancellation of the NCAA Tournament. The dream of playing under the bright lights of March Madness, of possibly hoisting a national championship trophy, wiped out by the coronavirus.

For a handful of players, earning a postseason honor offers a glimmer of happiness amid the uncertainty. "Getting these awards, it brings brightness to my life right now," Seton Hall's Myles Powell said. "To have it end so quickly was just like ... man."

Powell added to his load Friday when he joined Dayton's Obi Toppin, Iowa's Luka Garza, Marquette's Markus Howard and Oregon's Payton Pritchard on The Associated Press All-America first team.

Toppin was the lone unanimous choice, receiving 65 votes from a nationwide media panel after averaging 20 points and 7 rebounds while shooting 63% in a breakout season. The 6-foot-9 sophomore helped the third-ranked Flyers match the program's highest ranking and be on track for a potential No. 1 seed before the NCAA Tournament was shelved. He is Dayton's first first-team AP All-American.

"I feel like everybody just knew what they had to do to help the next person succeed and that's why I was so successful this year," Toppin said. "I thank my teammates every single day for that."

Garza blossomed into one of college basketball's best players as a junior. A 6-11 forward, he increased his scoring average more than 10 points from a year ago to 23.9 per game, averaged 9.8 rebounds and shot 54% from the floor.

Garza set Iowa's single-season scoring record with 740 points and is the first Big Ten player since Ohio State's Dennis Hopson in 1987 to have at least 20 points in 16 straight conference games. He is Iowa's first first-team All-American since Chuck Darling in 1952.

"I never could have envisioned this," Garza said. "It's honestly crazy, but it's what I did all the work for and what I'm going to continue to strive for. It kind of adds motivation for me just knowing that putting in the hard work, it can all pay off and makes me grateful for the situation I'm in and the program I'm at."

Howard was a second-team AP All-American as a junior last season after finishing fifth nationally in scoring at 25 points per game. The 5-11 senior upped his scoring average to 27.8 points to lead the nation in 2019-20 and finished seventh in NCAA history with 434 career 3-pointers.

"It's truly amazing to be mentioned among other great players across the country," said Howard, the first Marquette player to make the first team since Dwyane Wade in 2003. "It's truly an honor and definitely means a lot. It's definitely something I wouldn't be able to accomplish myself. There were so many people who helped me accomplish that."

Powell bypassed a shot at the NBA to return for his senior season. A preseason AP All-American, the 6-2

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 63 of 69

guard averaged 21 points per game, 17th nationally, with 4.3 rebounds and 2.9 assists. Behind Powell, No. 15 Seton Hall earned a share of its first Big East Conference regular-season title since 1993.

"When (they) told me that was I an All-American, I don't want to say it was relief, but I did feel like the world was lifted off my shoulders," Powell said. "I feel like I accomplished a lot with that one. When I heard those words, it touched me."

Pritchard went to the Final Four with Oregon as a freshman and was hoping to lead the 13th-ranked Ducks back as a senior. He never got the chance, but will go down as one of the greatest players in program history.

The 6-2 guard was the first player in Pac-12 history to have 1,900 points, 500 rebounds and 600 assists during his career. He also was the fourth player in conference history to lead in scoring (20.5 points) and assists (5.5).

Oregon had five previous players make AP All-America teams, most recently Dillon Brooks in 2017, but Pritchard is the first to earn first-team honors.

"Obviously, it means a lot," Pritchard said. "Making first-team All-American is what a lot of people for, dream for, so for me to be making these first-team All-Americans, especially AP, it means all my hard work paying off."

Kansas' Devon Dotson and Udoka Azubuike both received more than 20 first-team votes, but fell to the second team after essentially taking votes away from each other by playing for the same team.

AP Basketball Writers Aaron Beard and Dave Skretta contributed to this story.

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

Filthy lucre: Paper money shunned for fear of virus spread

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In a world suffering a pandemic, cash is no longer king.

A growing number of businesses and individuals worldwide have stopped using banknotes in fear that physical currency, handled by tens of thousands of people over their useful life, could be a vector for the spreading coronavirus.

Public officials and health experts have said that the risk of transferring the virus person-to-person through the use of banknotes is small. But that has not stopped businesses from refusing to accept currency and some countries from urging their citizens to stop using banknotes altogether.

Open Books, a non-profit bookstore in Chicago, sent an email to customers last week asking individuals not to use cash. A chain of diners in Washington State has also stopped accepting cash. And delivery services like Grubhub, Door Dash, and others have instituted "no contact" deliveries, and have either stopped offering cash as a payment option or are actively discouraging it.

Experts say cash does carry a risk of transmitting the virus, but the risk from cash so far is small compared with other transmission routes. A scientific paper published early in the outbreak found the virus can live on cardboard for up to 24 hours and up to three days on plastic and stainless steel. The researchers, however, did not test whether it can live on banknote paper.

The presence of live virus particles on banknotes does not mean they are a health hazard, public health experts said. Virus particles are unlikely to return to the air, or aerosolize, once on a surface.

"It's not impossible that there might be traces of virus on dollar bills but if you wash your hands it should provide adequate protections, you shouldn't need anything else," said Julie Fischer, a professor at the Center for Global Health Science and Society at Georgetown University, on C-SPAN.

Other devices used to pay for items are just as likely to be vectors for disease transfer. Credit and debit cards are made of plastic and metal. ATMs are touched by hundreds of human hands a day. And there have been studies that show smartphones are heavily contaminated with bacteria because of their constant use.

Even the Federal Reserve has taken efforts to make sure the money supply is not contaminated. Banknotes

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 64 of 69

that circulated in Europe and Asia are being quarantined for seven to 10 days as a "precautionary measure," according to a Federal Reserve spokesperson.

While businesses are discouraging cash usage, there have been reports of customers making large withdrawals from ATMs in several parts of the country. Some banks have had to order additional cash from the Fed or keep ATMs stocked at higher levels to allow larger customer withdrawals.

Banknote avoidance is not just happening in the U.S. In South Korea, which has been more successful in stemming the outbreak, the country's central bank took all banknotes out of circulation for two weeks or, in some cases, burned paper money.

The National Bank of Poland said Thursday on Twitter that "Polish banknotes are subjected to a quarantine" and are therefore safe to use in cash transactions. The bank did not respond to a request sent Friday for more details about how that works. But a business daily, Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, described how commercial banks send the banknotes to the National Bank of Poland, which holds them two weeks and disinfects them at temperatures of at least 150 degrees Celsius (300 Fahrenheit). After such operations, "clean" banknotes go back into circulation.

In Hungary, the central bank said that it is withdrawing billions of forints from circulation daily for two weeks, then "resting" them for a period of time that is believed to coincide with the virus' survival time.

Iran is suffering the worst outbreak of the virus in the Middle East. Using cash there is common, but in recent weeks many people have avoided it and banks have announced that they will not accept cash from customers. Iranians often have multiple debit cards but cash is widely used in small-scale transactions, like buying bread in bakeries or leaving a tip. Many people have started even being careful in how they hand over debit cards, as contactless payment methods haven't caught on there.

Christopher Rugaber in Washington, D.C, and Nassar Karimi, in Tehran, Iran, contributed to this report. Vanessa Gera contributed to this report from Warsaw, Poland.

Income tax filing deadline moved to July 15 from April 15

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The income tax filing date has been pushed back from April 15, to July 15, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said.

Mnuchin announced the decision in a tweet Friday saying that at President Donald Trump's direction "we are moving Tax Day from April 15 to July 15. All taxpayers and businesses will have this additional time to file and make payments without interest or penalties."

At a White House briefing, Trump said the delay on filing and paying taxes until July 15 was done to give taxpayers more time and "hopefully by that time, people will be getting back to their lives."

Trump said that if people are expecting refunds, they should go ahead and file now so that they can get their refunds from the IRS more quickly.

The administration had announced earlier in the week that it would delay the payments, a move that Mnuchin said would leave \$300 billion in the economy at a critical time.

The administration used authority under Trump's national emergency declaration. The delay is available to people who owe \$1 million or less and corporations that owe \$10 million or less.

It is expected that many states will follow the lead of the federal government and delay their tax filing deadlines as well but that will be a state by state decision. .

Mnuchin had said the payment delay could provide \$300 billion in temporary support to the economy by giving households and businesses the ability to use money they would have paid to the IRS as financial support to meet other needs during the economic emergency created by the efforts to contain the coronavirus.

The administration is working with Congress to develop a \$1 trillion support package and Mnuchin has said the IRS payment delay will add \$300 billion to that effort.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 65 of 69

Democrats fret as virus halts in-person voter registration

By ANITA SNOW and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The coronavirus is idling a potentially powerful force in the Democratic Party — liberal canvassers who go door to door or cruise through public gatherings, clipboard in hand, to register new voters.

Such efforts have been all but frozen because Americans now are being asked to stay inside and keep their distance to prevent the spread of the virus. In Arizona, Latino registrations drives have moved online. In Michigan, community organizers are trying to reach out remotely.

It's a quiet change with potentially big consequences for Democrats up and down the ballot in the November general election. The party is depending on expanding the electorate to include more Latinos, young people and other groups that lean Democratic but have high rates of unregistered voters. The process of registering those voters is a yearlong, labor intensive project. An extended hiatus is a serious setback, particularly in a presidential election expected to hinge on which party turns out its key voting blocs.

"The most effective engagement is person to person, so having to cease those operations will have an effect," said Clarissa Martinez, deputy vice president for UnidosUS, the nation's largest Hispanic advocacy group and formerly the National Council of La Raza.

UnidosUS said it has moved its voter registration campaign online after temporarily sidelining in-person canvassing aimed at signing up 145,000 Latinos, mostly in Florida, but also Arizona, California, Nevada and Texas.

"Now, we are looking at texts, calls and digital tools to get people to register," Martinez said.

Smaller groups are also hobbled. One Arizona, a coalition of nonprofit groups that hoped to register 250,000 new voters this year in the state said it pulled some 200 canvassers from the streets last week as public health measures shuttered schools and businesses.

In Michigan, Detroit Action, which organizes minorities in that city, is practicing social distancing like much of the country. Staffers are working from home and limiting in-person contact. "It's a kind of oxymoronic for community organizing," executive director Brendan Snyder said.

"Our constituency, black and brown folks, are young people, housing insecure, sometimes formerly incarcerated," Snyder said. "Those are vulnerable populations that will not be able to get to the polls if this thing extends."

Though Democrats have normally been most reliant on electorate-expanding efforts, a slowdown in voter registration could affect Republicans as well. President Donald Trump's reelection campaign has vowed to find and register thousands of new and infrequent voters to expand its voter pool.

Trump has sent out canvassers to expand registration and sign up new voters at his rallies, which now are on hold, like all mass gatherings. His campaign has shifted to livestreamed events featuring prominent surrogates and will push online volunteer training and voter registration.

"Thanks to our fantastic data operation, our team will be increasing online voter registration efforts by identifying supporters of President Trump such as rally attendees who are not currently registered to vote and making sure they're registered come November," spokeswoman Ali Pardo said.

African Americans and Latinos both have lower turnout and registration rates than whites and make up a far greater share of the Democratic electorate when compared with the Republican electorate. That forces Democrats to rely more on registering new voters and getting those who don't normally vote to come out and vote.

"It's a structural necessity," said Matt Morrison, executive director of Working America, a 3-million-member labor-backed national group that tries to turn out workers who do not belong to a union. "This puts pressure on us."

Morrison's group is relying on emails and text messages to reach out, but it's easier to do face to face.

Morrison expect in-person efforts will be sidelined until July, when his group will have to move scale up fast before November. He's already adjusted his targets. His group aimed to add 500,000 votes to aid the candidates they support, largely Democrats, around the country. They have scaled back that goal to 300,000 to 400,000, and in fewer states.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 66 of 69

"Every progressive organization needs to be looking at their plans and how it can use these lemons to make lemonade," Morrison said.

In Arizona, liberal groups have worked mightily to expand the minority electorate since the GOP-controlled Legislature passed a controversial immigration law in 2010. Last year, One Arizona reported registering 190,000 people, predominantly Latino and Native American. Democrats narrowly won a few statewide races for the first time in a decade, including a U.S. Senate seat.

Earlier this month, at a majority Latino high school in Phoenix, the coalition registered hundreds of students who will turn 18 before Election Day. The school is now closed, along with all others statewide.

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

Fleeing virus for resort homes, some find welcome mat yanked

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

OCEAN CITY, N.J. (AP) — Some city folk have been fleeing to their second homes in resort areas to ride out the coronavirus outbreak near the beach or the ski slopes. But neighbors in many of those places are yanking the welcome mat — fearing infection and the overwhelming of already stretched resources in sleepy shore and mountain communities.

In southern New Jersey, Cape May County Freeholder Director Gerald Thornton asked summer home owners, who make up nearly half the property owners, to stay away for at least two weeks.

"Because the children are out of school, people are taking that as an opportunity to go to the shore," he said Wednesday. "Instead of a national emergency, they're taking it like an additional vacation."

Thornton said a quarter of the county is aged 60 or older — and thus particularly vulnerable to the virus. The county is particularly popular with Canadian tourists.

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

"We don't know where these people are coming from or who they've been exposed to," he said. "We got reports today that someone from New York who was exposed to the virus came down here, and now we're investigating whether he's positive."

An hour later, county officials announced that the man, a 30-year-old New Yorker, had indeed tested positive, and was the first confirmed case of the virus in Cape May County. That led the county's director of nursing to issue another request for visitors to stay away.

Similar debates are raging in many shore and mountain towns.

One Maine island that is reachable only by boat or plane barred part-time residents from the island — before backtracking and simply "strongly" encouraging them to stay away, for their health and the health of North Haven's full-time residents.

In Ocean City, New Jersey, which has a large percentage of summer residents, and draws vacationers from Philadelphia and New York, Melissa Wahl, a resident, said there was not a single piece of meat available at a local supermarket Wednesday morning.

"The cashier who checked me out said she had been seeing a lot of out of towners," she said. "People are afraid of them bringing in this virus and our hospital not having the ability to handle all of the influx."

During the outbreak, business has more than doubled at the Winhall Market near Stratton Mountain Ski Resort in southern Vermont, as residents of New York and Boston pour in. Locals aren't thrilled as they watch items selling out at the small market and fear that out-of-staters could be bringing the virus with them.

"They're really hoarding everything," market owner Lorraine Neuhaus said of the out-of-towners. "We've put restrictions on everything."

The phenomenon is not unique to America; in the weeks before China instituted a travel ban, 2% of the residents of Wuhan, the epicenter of the virus, fled to Guangdong province, the coastal manufacturing

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 67 of 69

powerhouse across from Hong Kong.

Valencia, Spain, has closed its beaches to prevent people fleeing the virus from coming there, and leading to a reverse migration away from the shore.

In the U.S., Point Pleasant Beach, which has one of New Jersey's most popular boardwalks, is trying a similar tactic, urging people not to walk on it for the foreseeable future.

"While fresh air and spending time outside is positive, the narrow boardwalk will force people to be in close proximity to each other, thus negating all attempts to adhere to social distancing," police chief Joseph Michigan said in a Facebook posting.

Some were fleeing not to a second home but to someone else's home.

Josh Rodriguez, from Tempe, Arizona, had planned for months to attend a jiu jitsu tournament in Big Bear Lake, California. When it got canceled due to concerns about the virus, he and his wife went to California anyway.

"We decided to get out of the craziness of the city and lock ourselves in a cabin," Rodriguez said. "It's just us and a fire watching the snowfall."

Cailin Sandvig and her husband Justin Bracken left their apartment in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn on Monday, packing their 10-month-old twins, Milo and Aurelia, into the family car along with baby supplies and a week's worth of clothing for themselves. They were heading to Wheaton, Illinois, where Sandvig's mother lives by herself in a four-bedroom house.

Practicing social distancing in Brooklyn would mean keeping the twins inside their small apartment, and that would be untenable since they're crawling and almost walking.

"To keep them in a room where they have at most 10 feet of distance is a nightmare," she said.

Candice Cobb owns a home on Ocracoke Island, a strip of land on North Carolina's Outer Banks. But she won't be making the trip from her residence in Hillsborough, North Carolina.

"I would have the potential of contaminating the island as would anybody else who is not a full-time resident," said Cobb, who retired from a public television station a few years ago. "I want to protect my friends and family on the island just as much as I want to protect the people in Hillsborough. I'm not going now. I think that defeats the purpose of having the emergency declaration in the first place."

Associated Press writers Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia, Lisa Rathke in Marshfield, Vermont, and Deepti Hajela in New York contributed to this story. Follow Wayne Parry at <http://twitter.com/WayneParryAC>

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.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, March 21, the 81st day of 2020. There are 285 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 21, 1685, composer Johann Sebastian Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany.

On this date:

In 1871, journalist Henry M. Stanley began his famous expedition in Africa to locate the missing Scottish missionary David Livingstone.

In 1918, during World War I, Germany launched its Spring Offensive on the Western Front, hoping to break through the Allied lines before American reinforcements could arrive. (Although successful at first, the Spring Offensive ultimately failed.)

In 1945, during World War II, Allied bombers began four days of raids over Germany.

In 1963, the Alcatraz federal prison island in San Francisco Bay was emptied of its last inmates and closed at the order of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 68 of 69

In 1972, the Supreme Court, in *Dunn v. Blumstein*, ruled that states may not require at least a year's residency for voting eligibility.

In 1976, champion skier Vladimir "Spider" Sabich was shot and killed by his girlfriend, actress-singer Claudine Longet, in the home they had shared in Aspen, Colorado; Longet, who maintained the shooting was an accident, served 30 days in jail for negligent homicide.

In 1981, Michael Donald, a black teenager in Mobile, Alabama, was abducted, tortured and killed by members of the Ku Klux Klan. (A lawsuit brought by Donald's mother, Beulah Mae Donald, later resulted in a landmark judgment that bankrupted one Klan organization.)

In 1990, Namibia became an independent nation as the former colony marked the end of 75 years of South African rule.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin wrapped up their summit in Helsinki, Finland, still deadlocked over NATO expansion, but able to agree on slashing nuclear weapons arsenals.

In 2006, the social media website Twitter was established with the sending of the first "tweet" by co-founder Jack Dorsey, who wrote: "just setting up my twttr."

In 2007, former Vice President Al Gore made an emotional return to Congress as he pleaded with House and Senate committees to fight global warming; skeptical Republicans questioned the science behind his climate-change documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth."

In 2017, on the second day of his Senate confirmation hearing, Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch declared he'd made no promises to President Donald Trump or anyone else about how he would vote on abortion or other issues.

Ten years ago: Frustrated with the pace of action to overhaul the country's immigration system, thousands of immigrant rights supporters descended on the nation's capital, waving American flags and holding homemade signs in English and Spanish. France's long-flailing political left made a big comeback, crushing President Nicolas Sarkozy's (sahr-koh-ZEEZ') conservatives in regional elections.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, in an interview with *The Huffington Post*, said he took Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "at his word" for saying an independent Palestinian state would never co-exist with Israel as long as he was in office, yet another sign of the strained relations between longtime allies. A super tide turned France's famed Mount Saint-Michel into an island and then retreated out of sight, delighting thousands of visitors who had come to see the rare phenomenon. In Meribel, France, Marcel Hirscher of Austria became the first skier to win the men's World Cup overall title for a fourth straight year.

One year ago: President Donald Trump abruptly declared that the U.S. would recognize Israel's sovereignty over the disputed Golan Heights, a major shift in American policy. A Florida man, Cesar Sayoc, pleaded guilty to sending pipe bombs to CNN and prominent critics of President Donald Trump in the days before the 2018 midterm elections; no one was harmed. (Sayoc was later sentenced to 20 years in prison by a judge who concluded that the bombs were not designed to explode.) Facebook acknowledged that it had left hundreds of millions of user passwords readable by its employees for years, storing them in readable plain text. Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant signed one of the nation's strictest abortion laws, one that would ban most abortions once a fetal heartbeat could be detected, about six weeks into pregnancy. (A federal judge blocked the law from taking effect.) Ichiro Suzuki, a batting star in Japan and with the Seattle Mariners, played in his final game at the age of 45; it was the second of two games in Japan between the Mariners and the Oakland Athletics.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Kathleen Widdoes is 81. Songwriter Chip Taylor ("Wild Thing") is 80. Folk-pop singer-musician Keith Potger (*The Seekers*) is 79. Actress Marie-Christine Barrault is 76. Singer-musician Rose Stone (*Sly and the Family Stone*) is 75. Actor Timothy Dalton is 74. Singer Ray Dorset (*Mungo Jerry*) is 74. Rock singer-musician Roger Hodgson (*Supertramp*) is 70. Rock musician Conrad Lozano (*Los Lobos*) is 69. Rhythm-and-blues singer Russell Thompkins Jr. is 69. Comedy writer-performer Brad Hall is 62. Actress Sabrina LeBeauf is 62. Actor Gary Oldman is 62. Actress Kassie Depaiva is 59. Actor Matthew Broderick is 58. Comedian-actress Rosie O'Donnell is 58. Actress Cynthia Geary is 55. Hip-hop DJ Premier (*Gang Starr*) is 54. Rock musician Jonas "Joker" Berggren (*Ace of Base*) is 53. Rock MC Maxim (*Prodigy*) is 53. Rock

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, March 21, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 263 ~ 69 of 69

musician Andrew Copeland (Sister Hazel) is 52. Actress Laura Allen is 46. Rapper-TV personality Kevin Federline is 42. Actress Sonequa Martin-Green (TV: "The Walking Dead") is 35. Actor Scott Eastwood is 34. Tennis player Karolina Pliskova is 28. Actress Jasmin Savoy Brown is 26. Actor Forrest Wheeler is 16.

Thought for Today: "Is it worse to be scared than to be bored, that is the question." — Gertrude Stein, American writer (1874-1946).