

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 1 of 81

- [1- Plop!](#)
- [1- Governor calls off in-person school](#)
- [2- Lana's Annals](#)
- [2- Winter and Spring SDHSAA Sports events are cancelled](#)
- [3- Publish your book ad](#)
- [4- DSS stresses need to seek help in crisis situations](#)
- [5- Labor Department Outlines CARES Act Benefits and Implementation](#)
- [6- Testing for New CDLs To Be Offered This Week](#)
- [7- SD News Watch: S.D. ethanol industry and corn growers facing economic 'bloodbath' due to COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [11- City Council Agenda](#)
- [12- AREA COVID-19 CASES](#)
- [13- Dakotas COVID-19 Update](#)
- [14- COVID-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [16- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [17- Weather Pages](#)
- [20- Daily Devotional](#)
- [21- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [22- News from the Associated Press](#)



Governor Noem to have news conference today at 12:30



Plop!

The snow took a slide down the pool and into the dry bottom of the pool. Will the pool even be open this summer due to the COVID-19 virus? The city council will meet tonight to talk about the summer recreation program, the park, basketball and tennis courts and the pool. The council meeting will be livestreamed at GDILIVE.COM.

No in-person school for the rest of the school year

Governor Noem, in her news briefing on Monday, said that South Dakota Schools should not be in personal session for the rest of the year. She said bringing the students back into school would not make an sense at this stage of the COVID-19 virus.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 2 of 81

Lana's Annals by Lana Greenfield

Greetings to all. I want to send out information about three emergency bills that were passed on Veto Day last week. Two pertain to all schools that were wanting clear direction. The first is SB188, which was passed, waives the number of mandatory hours that a school must be in session per year. Current law states that high school students must complete a minimum of 962.5 hours. As this has been an uncommon year, and schools have struggled to try to put online classes and other creative teaching ideas into place, it made sense to waive the hour requirement. The second, SB189, waived the statewide testing requirements, otherwise known as a standardized or achievement test. Usually these are given in the spring during a narrow time frame.

New information was given just today (Monday) that South Dakota schools will remain closed the rest of the school year. This would then provoke discussion as to how, when, or if graduation ceremonies will take place. Therefore, I have enlisted input from members of other communities and states. These are some ideas: Most think it is a good idea to leave the graduation date as planned and veer from the norm. Some are having the ceremony on the high school football field where parking is available and there would likely be access to the PA system. Students would have adequate space for distancing, and parents could sit on chairs in front of or inside vehicles. A second idea put forth was to have a graduation parade. Students could each drive a car (maybe decorated in some fashion) and well wishers could be spread out along the streets. After the parade, a meeting spot for students to receive diplomas and for parents to get pictures could be decided...maybe the school gym or parking lot. Finally, (and this one will only be lending to those in a certain vicinity), perhaps a park, a baseball field, or even an outdoor drive in would be available. I think one can see that these ideas could be conversation starters. Receptions may have to be postponed for later, if at all. Perhaps some of the schools out there have other unique ideas or may want to piggyback off some of these.

The last bill to be discussed this week was to give an extension for commercial and operators' licenses that would be or are currently expiring during this time of courthouse closures. Also applicable would be car renewal stickers if your last name happens to fall within this time frame. There will be a grace period no longer than 90 days beyond the declared time of emergency as the bill reads. Your first half of your taxes, however, are still due at the end of April if you are accustomed to paying twice per year!

I want to thank school personnel for faithfully executing your duties in a most professional, calm manner. It does not go unnoticed. I also want to thank courthouse staff for remaining at your work when we had nothing in place for guidance. I have tried to shed some light on issues which affect many people.

Last, I want to wish my son, Brock, and his lovely wife, Kelli, God's blessings on their April 4 marriage. A formal wedding will come later this summer.

Next week I will try to cover some other emergency legislation. Have a good, safe week!

Rep. Lana Greenfield

Winter and Spring SDHSAA Sports events are cancelled

With the Governor's announcement of in-person school closure for the remainder of the school year, all remaining SDHSAA events for 2019-20, to include all spring activities and all postponed winter events, are cancelled. This is an unprecedented time across our state and country, and we do not make this decision lightly. We thank all of the participants, their coaches/directors/advisors/administration, their parents, and everyone else who has dedicated tremendous amounts of time, passion, and effort to these events. To our senior participants- we thank you for everything you have done for your schools and communities and wish you the very best in your bright futures. This is difficult, but the lessons you've learned and friendships you've made through high school activities will last your lifetime. The cancellation will be formalized at the April 21st Regular Meeting of the SDHSAA Board of Directors. We look forward to the resumption of high school activities during the 2020-21 school year, and will continue work on those events at this time. The SDHSAA thanks everyone involved for their patience and understanding throughout this process.

- Dr. Dan Swartos, SDHSAA Executive Director



INSPIRE THE WORLD PUBLISH YOUR BOOK TODAY WITH

THE MOST RESPECTED
FULL-SERVICE
PUBLISHING FIRM

Hard cover and digital distribution
Custom designs and illustrations
Full Publicity and Promotion Campaign

Your book made available at
all major secular and specialty
Christian bookstores including:



Christian Faith
PUBLISHING



BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS



and many more.

Call today for your Free Publishing Kit!

605-626-8856

DSS stresses need to seek help in crisis situations

PIERRE – During this period of uncertainty and stress, the Department of Social Services urges people to seek help when they need it.

“Anxiety about the current health emergency, financial stress, and isolation from friends, family, and support systems can cause major issues for many South Dakotans,” said DSS Cabinet Secretary Laurie Gill. “It is important that we take steps for ourselves or others to seek help in crisis situations. Help with mental health concerns or substance use disorders is readily available for whoever needs it.”

While everyone reacts differently to stressful situations like the COVID-19 outbreak and requisite social distancing, some may have heightened feelings of worry, fear, uncertainty, boredom, frustration, anger, depression, or a desire to use alcohol or drugs to cope. It is important to recognize those feelings and find healthy coping mechanisms.

To find help in your area, visit <https://dss.sd.gov/behavioralhealth/agencycounty.aspx> or [FindTreatment.gov](#).

If a friend, family member or yourself is feeling overwhelmed with emotions such as sadness, depression or anxiety, please reach out to the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.TALK (8255) or text “Hello” to 741741.

“While it may feel like you are alone, please know that we are all in this together,” Gill said. “There is help available to listen and provide the support you need.”

Stress can go beyond the individual and have serious impacts on families and communities. Some may turn to drugs and alcohol to cope and the incidence of child abuse and neglect can worsen.

To report child abuse or neglect, please call 1.877.244.0864. Intake Specialists will be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. If reporting an emergency situation before 8 a.m., after 5 p.m., on the weekends, or during a holiday, please contact your local law enforcement.

For those dealing with substance use issues, call 1.800.920.4343 or text “ONMETH” to 898211 for immediate assistance.

“During these unprecedented times, it can be easy to slip into behaviors that are harmful to yourself or others,” Gill said. “It’s up to all of us to help each other get through times of crisis. Please reach out to those you know who may be having a difficult time, or if you are experiencing problems yourself, please seek the assistance you need. There is no shame in asking for help.”

For more information, please visit dss.sd.gov or search for South Dakota Department of Social Services on Facebook.

Labor Department Outlines CARES Act Benefits and Implementation

PIERRE, S.D. – The Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) is outlining the benefits of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, which provides unemployment benefits for the self-employed, independent contractors, nonprofit employees, gig economy workers, those who have exhausted other unemployment insurance benefits, and those who may not have sufficient work history to qualify for a regular state claim.

The CARES Act also includes eligibility for those receiving unemployment insurance benefits in any amount to be paid an additional \$600 weekly benefit.

After receiving guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, DLR has begun aligning resources and technology to create the necessary processes to be able to pay qualified individuals their benefits as quickly as possible. Payments will be issued as soon as administratively feasible and paid retroactively to eligible individuals.

The CARES Act provides the following unemployment insurance benefit programs:

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC). The FPUC program provides individuals with an additional \$600 per week who are collecting regular Unemployment Compensation (UC), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Extended Benefits (EB), Trade Readjustment Act (TRA), and Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA).

The first week a claimant can be compensated on this benefit is the week beginning March 29, 2020, and the last week is the week ending July 25, 2020. Our goal is to issue payments to those who are eligible as soon as administratively feasible. Claimants do not need to request the FPUC payment.

Please keep in mind you cannot quit your job and continue to draw these benefits. If you refuse to return to work without a documented medical note consistent with the Families First Act, you will be disqualified from ALL benefits including the \$600 payment. Additionally, if your employer receives a loan under the PayCheck Protection Act and places you back on the payroll, full time, you will no longer be eligible for unemployment or FPUC benefits.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). This program provides up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits to individuals who are self-employed, independent contractors, nonprofit employees and gig economy workers, as well as to individuals working part-time, or who otherwise would not qualify for regular UC or EB under state or federal law or PEUC.

A claimant can be compensated with this benefit beginning Feb. 2, 2020, or the first week a claimant was unable to work as a result of COVID-19, whichever date is later. The last week this benefit is payable is the week ending Dec. 26, 2020. Our goal is to issue payments to those who are eligible as soon as administratively feasible. This benefit also applies to anyone who has exhausted all unemployment insurance payment options at the state or federal level, including the PEUC program.

PUA claims cannot be taken yet; DLR is creating the application. Claims can be backdated if the individual meets the eligibility requirements under PUA.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). The PEUC program provides up to 13 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits to individuals who have exhausted regular unemployment benefits under state or federal law, or have no rights to regular unemployment benefits under state or

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 6 of 81

federal law. The first week a claimant can be compensated on this benefit is the week beginning March 29, 2020, and the last payable week is the week ending Dec. 26, 2020.

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The PPC provides a loan to businesses with fewer than 500 employees to keep their workers on the payroll. The Small Business Administration will forgive these loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the loan is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities. Employees of businesses that take advantage of the PPP who are recalled to work (or are being paid full-time pay and benefits) are not eligible for unemployment benefits, and if they have a current claim, they should update their claim appropriately to reflect the day they were no longer eligible for unemployment benefits. For more information on the PPP see: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program-ppp>

Important note: None of the benefits described above, nor unemployment benefits of any kind, are available to employees who quit their job, refuse to return to work, or refuse to receive full-time pay. Attempts to collect payments after quitting a job could be viewed as fraudulent and will be further investigated. The CARES Act specifically provides for serious consequences for fraudulent cases including fines, confinement, and an inability to receive future unemployment benefits until all fraudulent claims and fines have been repaid.

DLR frequently updates its FAQs for employers and claimants regarding this information at dlr.sd.gov/CARES.

Testing for New CDLs To Be Offered This Week

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota's Driver Licensing Program will open driver exam stations starting Tuesday (April 7) in four cities "by appointment only" to help those who are applying for new commercial driving licenses (CDL) or new CDL endorsements.

CDL testing will be done on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at the driver exam stations in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Testing will be by appointment only and only for applicants applying for new CDL licenses and CDL endorsements.

"The need for CDL drivers, especially in the agricultural and transportation industries, is always a high priority in South Dakota during the spring," said Department of Public Safety Cabinet Secretary Craig Price. "By opening these exam stations at certain times, we can help ensure more people can take the required CDL test."

Officials plan to start the program on Tuesday, April 7. There will be two testing work stations in Sioux Falls and one each in Aberdeen, Pierre and Rapid City. Driver Licensing director Jane Schrank said at least 60 applicants a week could take their CDL tests through this program.

"Tests will be done in two-hour blocks per workstation due to the length of testing," she said. "We also will make sure there are the appropriate health protection measures implemented as recommended by the CDC, including social distancing, based on the size of the office and additional staff in the office."

To schedule an appointment, applicants need to email DPSLicensingInfo@state.sd.us or call (605)773-6883 to schedule a time and location for taking the test.

The Driver Licensing Program is part of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



S.D. ethanol industry and corn growers facing economic 'bloodbath' due to COVID-19 pandemic

Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

The ethanol industry in South Dakota and across the Midwest is in an economic free-fall due to decreased global demand for ethanol-infused gasoline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fear of spreading the deadly virus has led governments around the world to cancel gatherings and urge or require people to stay home, and many individuals are self-isolating to stay safe, significantly reducing the global demand for gasoline.

The pandemic has hit the ethanol industry at a time producers were already suffering through poor market conditions owing to the trade war with China, a glut of oil production during a price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia that sent ethanol prices tumbling and waivers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that enabled American refineries to use less ethanol.

"The important context here is that a lot of the ethanol industry was hanging on by a string before the coronavirus hit," said Brian Jennings, CEO of the American Coalition for Ethanol, a nonprofit national trade group based in Sioux Falls. "And we're seeing unprecedented demand destruction right now, so undoubtedly, 2020 is going to be a bloodbath for the industry."

The market upheaval has jeopardized the jobs of hundreds of well-paid ethanol plant workers in South Dakota and beyond, but has also hurt the financial fortunes of tens of thousands of farmers who provide the corn that is the basis for the biofuel and byproducts such as distiller's grains.

The per-gallon price paid to ethanol producers has fallen to record lows, dropping 37% in one month from \$1.24 a gallon on Feb. 27, 2020, to just 78 cents a gallon on March 27, 2020, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The per-gallon price in late March was down 47% from a recent high of \$1.47 per gallon in South Dakota in late November.

The per-bushel price paid to South Dakota corn producers has followed the downward trend in the ethanol industry. According to USDA, the per-bushel price of corn fell by 16% from \$3.57 per bushel on Feb. 28 to only \$2.99 per bushel on March 27.

The U.S. is the top ethanol-producing country in the world, followed by Brazil. In 2018, American plants produced more than 16 billion gallons of ethanol, exporting 1.7 billion gallons to 78 countries. The industry supported 365,000 jobs and added \$46 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product.

Across the country, dozens of ethanol plants have closed, gone idle or reduced production as Americans and people across the world have dramatically cut back on driving amid the pandemic. Production levels



The Redfield Energy ethanol plant in Redfield, S.D., is operating at 75% capacity due to ongoing market headwinds and a low demand for ethanol-infused gasoline across the world brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo: Courtesy Redfield Energy

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 8 of 81

for 2020 are expected to be down by 4 billion gallons, Jennings said.

About 30 of the roughly 200 ethanol plants in the U.S. have shut down, and another 80 have reduced production by 50% or more, Jennings said.

The Siouxland Ethanol plant in Jackson, Neb., just southwest of Sioux City, Iowa, ceased production in April, and Jennings said the NuGen Energy plant in Marion, S.D., has also gone idle during the market crisis (an employee who answered the phone at NuGen had no comment.)

Redfield Energy in Redfield, S.D., has reduced production to 75% of its maximum capacity amid the market slowdown, said Dana Siefkes-Lewis, chief administrative officer at the plant.

By storing excess ethanol in tanker rail cars or on-site storage tanks, the plant that typically produces 63 million gallons of ethanol a year has avoided laying off or cutting any of its roughly 50 employees, Siefkes-Lewis said. The plant has also transitioned into making hand sanitizer to aid in the battle against COVID-19 and to help keep the plant operating, she said.

"It's a day-by-day situation, and we are still running but being very cautious about the situation," she said. "We do have quite a bit of storage on our site, so we think we'll be able to continue production through the duration of the virus."

Farmers also stung by ethanol slowdown

TOP 10 U.S. ETHANOL-PRODUCING STATES

This chart shows the Top 10 U.S. states in terms of gallons of ethanol produced in 2018.

Rank	State	Billions of gallons/year
------	-------	--------------------------

1	Iowa	4.2
2	Nebraska	2.2
3	Illinois	1.8
4	Minnesota	1.3
5	Indiana	1.2
6	South Dakota	1.1
7	Wisconsin	0.6
8	Ohio	0.5
9	Kansas	0.5
10	North Dakota	0.5

Source: U.S. Renewable Fuels Association

The ethanol market meltdown has also hurt South Dakota's roughly 12,500 corn farmers, said Lisa Richardson, executive director of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association.

In a typical year, South Dakota farmers produce about 800 million bushels of corn, about 450 million of which are used for ethanol production, 100 million for livestock feed and the rest for global food exports, Richardson said. Many corn farmers are also investors or have some type of financial stake in ethanol plants, she said.

Corn growers were looking forward to a strong growing season in 2020 given the weather so far, but that may not help them if markets for their products don't rebound, Richardson said. The effects of the ethanol market collapse will be felt far beyond the production plants and farmers who supply them with corn, she said.

"The problem here is unprecedented," she said. "Corn is your largest commodity in the state, and ethanol is the corn producer's largest market, and

agriculture is the largest industry in the state, so this is very significant."

Another concern amid the pandemic is whether global supply chains will remain viable and allow for corn and corn products to be distributed to markets around the world, she said.

Consumers can easily see evidence of the reduced demand for gasoline by the lack of motorists on the roads, and by watching the gas price at the pump. Gasoline with 10% ethanol, labeled as "Plus" or "Premium," has fallen well below \$2 per gallon across South Dakota, with prices in the \$1.85 range now common in West River and in the \$1.60 range in East River for Plus gas.

Global gasoline demand is also way down amid the pandemic. In the United Kingdom, traffic has fallen to 1955 levels, as passenger-vehicle traffic is off 75% and bus mileage is down by 60%.

In Sioux Falls, local streets are seeing as much as 40% declines in vehicle travel, with many traffic counts down by 20% in the past month, according to street-department data reported by the Argus Leader.

South Dakota is the sixth-leading U.S. state in terms of ethanol production, with about 1.2 billion gallons

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 9 of 81

produced in 2019, according to the U.S. Renewable Fuels Association. Iowa is by far the largest producer, with about 4.5 billion gallons a year, followed by other Midwest states including Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota and Indiana.

South Dakota is home to 16 plants or related facilities, all in the eastern half of the state; depending on size and production capacity, most plants employ between 40 and 60 workers.

Sioux Falls is the corporate headquarters of one of the world's largest ethanol producers, POET biofuels, which has 27 refineries in seven states, including six plants in South Dakota. In total, POET facilities produced about 1.7 billion gallons of ethanol in 2019 and employed about 1,600 people, including 240 in its South Dakota plants and about 450 at its Sioux Falls headquarters. A spokeswoman for POET said company officials were too busy in early April to grant an interview.

The American ethanol industry arose in 2007 amid a movement to reduce consumption of fossil fuels and develop a renewable source of energy from corn. The United States requires that most petroleum producers blend ethanol into their fuel. Plants began production in South Dakota around that time.

Good times for ethanol gone bad

The industry has seen relatively good times since then, with slowdowns tied generally to dips in the American economy, including during the Great Recession in the years surrounding 2008.

The per-gallon price for ethanol hit a national high as recently as 2011, when it reached \$2.91 a gallon, according to federal data.

Despite some ups and downs, the demand and prices have generally stalled or fallen sharply in recent months.

In addition to the placement by China of tariffs on American ethanol exports, and the Russia-Saudi Arabia price war that sent prices haywire, the U.S. ethanol market was stung by waivers granted by the Trump administration and former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, Jennings said.

"2019 was a terrible year for the industry," Jennings said. "We had markets taken away with the China trade war and the price wars, and then domestic markets were taken away through the mismanagement of the Renewable Fuel Standard."

Pruitt granted scores of waivers to small oil refineries that allowed them to stop blending ethanol into their fuels as required by the Renewable Fuel Standard enacted by Congress in 2005.

"The candid and honest answer is that the Trump administration was looking to do favors to the oil refiners, who have long complained about the fact the Renewable Fuel Standard eroded their market share," Jennings said.

Jennings sent a letter to current EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on Friday, April 3, urging the agency to ensure that the full required level of ethanol to be used by American refiners remain intact despite the overall slowdown in demand and use of ethanol by consumers. He also argued against allowing any more



Ethanol-infused gasoline had fallen below \$1.90 a gallon in Meade County, S.D. on April 4, 2020, and per-gallon prices are in the \$1.60 range in East River. Low prices can be an indicator of low demand, in this case due to the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. Photo: Bart

Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch



Brian Jennings

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 10 of 81

waivers to be enacted.

Failure to uphold the required level, Jennings wrote, could cost U.S. ethanol producers \$2 billion in losses and cost corn growers \$1.35 billion in losses.

Siefkes-Lewis said Redfield Energy will do whatever it can to protect its workforce, which she said includes employees with a unique set of skills.

"We know that if we would lay off one employee, we would lose more than that," she said. "If we shut down the plant, [employees] would need a job and they would have to get a job elsewhere, and we don't think we'd ever get them back."

Siefkes-Lewis said ethanol producers are in the difficult spot of knowing that the only possible solution to the market woes — aside from an unexpected return to a high demand for gasoline — is that other producers shut down or reduce production.

"It's sort of a perfect storm where nothing is in balance," she said. "We hate to see other plants slow down or shut down, but that may be the only way we can succeed and bring supply and demand back into balance."

The market for ethanol and prices paid to producers may continue to fall as the pandemic worsens in the U.S., further damaging the industry, Jennings said. Gasoline use is down 40% to 50% in the U.S. already and could fall by as much as 70% in urban areas where quarantine orders are strictest, he said.

"There's this wishful thinking that there's going to be this pent-up demand for gas, that once we're over coronavirus, people are going to want to get out there and drive more and the economy will shoot back up," he said. "But it's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel right now. More shutdowns seem certain, and we're just going to have to wait and see how long this lasts."

Still, some producers are staying hopeful that the industry will bounce back once the pandemic passes.

"Summer driving season is close, though I don't know that people will be out driving this summer," said Siefkes-Lewis, who was the first employee hired at Redfield Energy in 2005. "But we've always been able to come out of it, and I don't have any doubt that we'll be able to come out of this one, too. I really believe that, and if I didn't, I wouldn't be able to tell our employees not to leave."



Not a single customer was in sight at the gas pumps at this station in Summerset, S.D., on a warm Saturday afternoon in early April. Low demand for gas amid the COVID-19 pandemic has caused ethanol prices to fall to record levels. Photo: Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch



ABOUT BART PFANKUCH

Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is the content director for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal and also worked at newspapers in Florida. Bart has spent more than 30 years as a reporter, editor and writing coach.

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

April 7, 2020 – 7:00pm
Groton Community Center

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Minutes
3. Bills
4. Authorize Clark Engineering to advertise water tower project bidding:
Begin advertising April 15, 2020
Bid opening May 12, 2020 at 2:00pm
5. Suspend summer recreation activities until further notice
6. Close the City Park and Camping area until further notice
7. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)
8. House Bill 1298 – Reschedule City Election Date to June 2, 2020
9. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
10. Adjournment

Coming up on GDILIVE.COM

City Council

Tuesday, April. 7, 2020

7 p.m.

Groton Community Center

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 12 of 81

AREA COVID-19 CASES

	Mar. 20	Mar. 21	Mar. 22	Mar. 23	Mar. 24	Mar. 25	Mar. 26	Mar. 27	Mar. 28
Minnesota	115	137	169	235	262	287	346	398	441
Nebraska	27	42	50	52	61	68	81	89	108
Montana	15	27	34	45	51	65	90	121	147
Colorado	277	475	591	720	912	1,086	1,430	1,734	2,061
Wyoming	18	24	26	28	33	49	56	73	84
North Dakota	26	28	30	32	36	45	58	68	94
South Dakota	14	14	21	28	30	41	46	58	68
United States		15,219	33,276	43,963	54,812	69,147	85,996	104,837	124,686
US Deaths		201	417	560	780	1,046	1,300	1,711	2,191
Minnesota	115	+22	+32	+66	+27	+25	+59	+52	+43
Nebraska	27	+15	+8	+2	+9	+7	+13	+8	+19
Montana	15	+12	+7	+11	+6	+14	+25	+31	+26
Colorado	277	+198	+116	+129	+192	+174	+344	+303	+327
Wyoming	18	+6	+2	+2	+5	+16	+7	+17	+11
North Dakota	26	+2	+2	+2	+4	+9	+13	+10	+26
South Dakota	14	0	+7	+7	+2	+11	+7	+12	+10
United States		15,219	+18,057	+10,687	+10,849	+14,335	+16,849	+18,841	+19,849
US Deaths		201	+216	+143	+220	+266	+254	+411	+480

	Mar. 29	Mar. 30	Mar. 31	Apr. 1	Apr. 2	Apr. 3	Apr. 4	Apr. 5	Apr. 6
Minnesota	503	576	629	689	742	789	865	935	986
Nebraska	120	153	177	214	255	285	323	367	412
Montana	161	177	198	217	241	263	281	298	319
Colorado	2,307	2,627	2,966	3,342	3,728	4,173	4,565	4,950	5,172
Wyoming	87	95	120	137	150	166	187	200	212
North Dakota	98	109	126	147	159	173	186	207	225
South Dakota	90	101	108	129	165	187	212	240	288
United States	143,055	164,610	189,633	216,722	245,573	278,458	312,245	337,933	368,079
US Deaths	2,513	3,170	4,081	5,137	6,058	7,159	8,503	9,653	10,923
Minnesota	+62	+73	+53	+60	+53	+47	+76	+70	+51
Nebraska	+12	+33	+24	+37	+41	+30	+38	+44	+45
Montana	+14	+16	+20	+19	+25	+22	+18	+17	+21
Colorado	+246	+320	+339	+376	+386	+445	+392	+385	+222
Wyoming	+3	+8	+25	+17	+13	+16	+21	+13	+12
North Dakota	+4	+11	+17	+21	+12	+14	+13	+21	+18
South Dakota	+22	+11	+7	+21	+36	+12	+25	+28	+48
United States	+18,369	+21,555	+25,023	+27,089	+28,851	+32,885	+33,787	+25,688	+30,146
US Deaths	+322	+657	+911	+1,056	+921	+1,101	1,344	+1,150	+1,270

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 13 of 81

Dakotas COVID-19 Update

Someone being recovered is considered when they have had no fever for at least 3 days, they they have an improvement in their respiratory system and they been in isolation for 7 days after their first symptoms have appeared.

South Dakota:

Positive Cases: +48

Total Hospitalized: +1

New Negative Tests: 379

Deaths: +2 (4 total) (1 in Beadle County, 1 in Minnehaha County)

Recovered: +7

County Changes:

Bon Homme: +1 positive, Brookings: +1 positive, Brown: +4 positive, Codrington: +1 positive, Lawrence: +1 recovered, Lincoln: +1 positive, Minnehaha: +36 positive, +5 recovered, Pennington: +1 recovered, Yankton: +4 positive

The ND DoH & private labs are reporting 426 total completed tests today for COVID-19, with 18 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 225.

State & private labs have conducted 7,213 total tests with 6,988 negative results.

74 ND patients are considered recovered.

County	Total Positive Cases	# Recovered
Aurora	1	1
Beadle	21	18
Bon Homme	2	1
Brookings	4	2
Brown	13	5
Charles Mix	2	1
Clark	1	1
Clay	3	2
Codrington	11	4
Davison	3	2
Deuel	1	0
Fall River	1	1
Faulk	1	1
Hamlin	1	0
Hughes	3	2
Hutchinson	2	2
Lake	1	0
Lawrence	9	6
Lincoln	24	4
Lyman	1	1
Marshall	1	1
McCook	2	1
Meade	1	1
Minnehaha	140	23
Pennington	6	3
Roberts	4	0
Spink	3	1
Todd	1	0
Turner	4	1
Union	3	1
Yankton	18	5

SOUTH DAKOTA CASE COUNTS	
Test Results	# of Cases
Positive*	288
Negative**	5732
Pending***	0

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA	
Number of Cases	288
Ever Hospitalized*	23
Deaths**	4
Recovered	91

Age Range	# of Cases
0 to 19 years	10
20 to 29 years	54
30 to 39 years	57
40 to 49 years	52
50 to 59 years	58
60 to 69 years	40
70 to 79 years	9
80+ years	8

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 14 of 81

Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller

I like the way things are looking, both overall and in the hard-hit areas. I need to do some looking at trends in states other than NY, NJ, and such; haven't had the time yet. Maybe if these states stay where they are, I'll be able to start tracking some of these interior states where the numbers are starting to get scary. We haven't peaked; nonetheless, the overall trend is toward leveling off and that feels pretty good. Our doubling time is down from like 3 days to 8 days. This is still awful, but less so.

We have 365,535 cases reported in 50 US states, DC, and 4 US territories, PR, GU, VI, and MP. The rate of increase was just 8.5%, although it should be noted we're a few hours short of 24 since yesterday's update. This is the territory we were hoping to see; now if we can continue downward, that would be good. Top ten states are NY – 130,689, NJ – 41,090, MI – 17,130, CA – 15,999, LA – 14,867, MA – 13,837, FL – 13,621, PA – 12,995, IL – 12,262, TX – 8109. NY and NJ together still have nearly half of cases at 47%, and these top 10 are still near that at 77%. NY and NJ's rates of increase were 6.3% and 9.5%, respectively, also part of a very good trend. There are another 4 states over 5000 cases, 11 more over 2000, 8 more + DC over 1000, 8 more + PR over 500, 9 more + GU over 100. There remain only VI and MP under 100 cases.

Over 10,000 people have died in the US; we're at 10,925 deaths now. NY reports 4758, NJ 1005, MI 727, LA 512, CA 379, WA 375, and IL 309. There are 9 more states over 100, 10 more over 50, 15 more + DC and PR over 10, and 8 + GU, VI, and MP under 10. VI reported its first death today, leaving only WY with none reported. That trend is finally showing the delayed effects of decreases we were seeing in case reports starting a couple of weeks ago.

I'm not throwing a wild party yet, but I do feel somewhat hopeful at what we're seeing. I'd feel better if I had a line on what's going on in WI and MO and some other places that appear to be blowing up a little. Because such a high proportion of cases are concentrated in just a few states, the trends in other states get buried in the data set. I'll try to find time to look at those in the next few days. Not sure whether it will happen, but it's a good goal.

So those are the numbers.

Now, on another front, yes. I heard about the tigers. And the lions. There have been four prior reports of infections in animals acquired through contact with humans, two dogs and two cats. I believe none of the pets even showed symptoms of any kind, although one dog (which was, to be fair, 17 years old) has since died from other causes. This, however, is the first report of animal infection in the US. Looks like these big cats are only mildly affected, and all are expected to make full recoveries.

Now let's get this out of the way: A test kit was not "wasted" on these cats. Only one animal was tested, and it was done using a veterinary kit not suitable for use in humans. And frankly, even if we had used a human kit on the cat, I think the case can be made that we need to understand this virus for our own benefit and so testing a big cat would be a good use of resources.

So what does this mean? Probably not much we didn't already know or suspect. If you were to go way back in this series of updates, you would find advice to avoid contact with your pet if you are infected, to let someone else care for the pet and, if this is not possible, to wash hands and use good precautions when caring for it as well as to avoid close contact, kissing, licking, etc. until you've fully recovered. This early advice was based on experience with SARS-CoV a few years ago when the random cat or dog showed up with that virus.

There are zero cases where an animal is suspected of being a source of infection to a human; it appears we're a source for them, but they don't pass it to humans. I wonder whether that's because the virus replicates poorly in those species, giving them little opportunity to shed virus. I'm guessing someone's trying to discover the answer to that right this minute.

I will note another vaccine's going into phase 1 testing. This one, if you want to consult my notes on vaccine from a week or so ago, is a DNA vaccine. The company is planning to have a million doses ready by the end of the year for clinical trials and emergency use. Remember, we're at least a year away from having one on the market, but this is a promising sign. It's good to have several candidates in the pipeline

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 15 of 81

because we know some of them won't pan out in the end.

The news from Japan isn't great. They'd managed to hold off the surge in cases seen elsewhere, especially in Asian countries nearest the origin, managing by quickly identifying clusters and tracing close contacts; but their limited testing has started to have consequences as cases surge in cities across the country. It pretty much always comes back to testing. Here too. Which is a concern because we still have not dealt with the issue.

And I know we've discussed this before, but because of the fluidity of our situation and the continued accumulation of new information, the "right" answers continue to evolve. So once more, what happens next? How do we know when it's safe to start a return to normal? A group of experts weighed in on this in the past couple of days, and here's what we're hearing:

(1) Before loosening restrictions, a state's hospitals need to be able to safely treat all patients without resorting to crisis standards of care. That's probably some weeks off in most places since we still haven't peaked.

(2) A state must be able to test at least everyone with symptoms with timely return of results. That's going to take a LOT more tests than we can now provide and, once things stabilize, is still expected to mean a need for around 750,000 tests per week with more needed when a surge develops. Additionally, serologic testing would be important in identifying those who have recovered from infection and would, therefore, be safe to come off restrictions sooner.

(3) A state must be able to conduct monitoring of confirmed cases and their close contacts. At the moment, even if we had the testing capacity, we do not currently have the public health personnel to do this kind of contact tracing. I am not seeing enough movement toward addressing this shortage at this time.

(4) A state must have a sustained reduction in cases for at least 14 days.

To add context to these ideas, there is a set of thoughts published in an op-ed in the Washington Post a few days ago by Bill Gates, who crafted it drawing on his knowledge base and experience in public health derived from his work with his foundation. He urged a consistent nationwide approach to this shutdown, citing travel across state lines as an issue when there is not consistency. He also pointed out that a failure to do this will extend the economic pain as we subject the economy to repeated shocks every time we have to move back to stringent restrictions when there's a new surge in cases, increase the odds of that resurgence, and increase the number of deaths. He also recommends stepping up testing (But who hasn't, really?) with clear priorities for who to test, as well as increased availability of masks and ventilators without states needing to compete with one another. And he is pushing for a data-based approach to vaccines and treatment, insuring that, as these become available, attention be given to insure they reach those most in need. He suggests we invest public money in advance of approval for production facilities for all promising vaccine candidates, even though some of this investment will be wasted. It certainly would be cheaper to throw money at a candidate vaccine that's never made than to endure more months of this shutdown because we can't ramp up vaccine manufacture fast enough to meet the need.

With that, I'll leave you with words I copied down a week or so ago. I neglected to note whose words they are, so with apologies to the now-anonymous author, here they are:

"Seemingly small social chains get large and complex with alarming speed.

"If your son visits his girlfriend, and you later sneak over for coffee with a neighbor, your neighbor is now connected to the infected office worker that your son's girlfriend's mother shook hands with.

"This sounds silly, it's not.

"This is not a joke or a hypothetical.

"We as epidemiologists see it borne out in the data time and time again and no one listens.

"Conversely, any break in that chain breaks disease transmission along that chain."

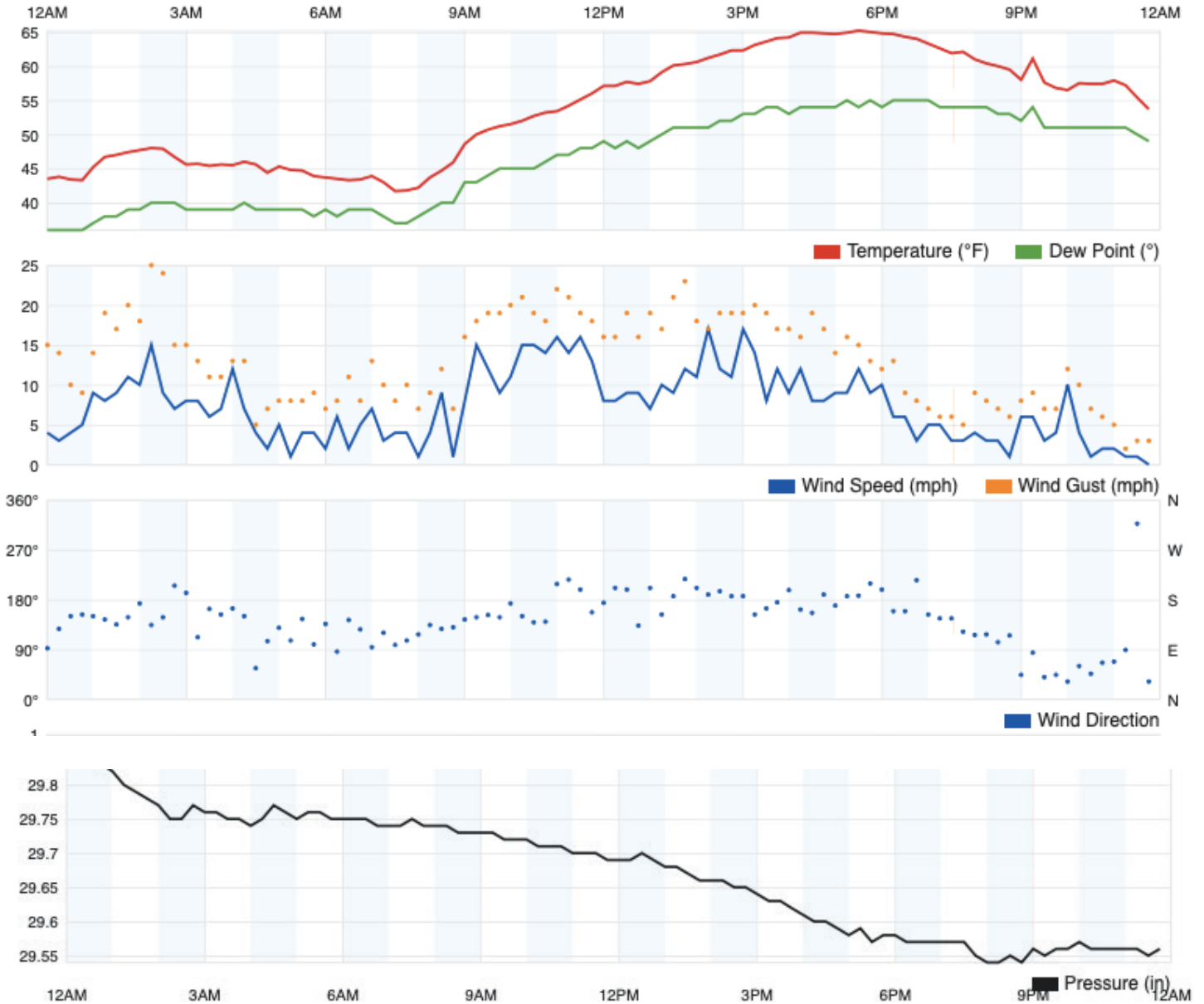
You know what to do with this. The model appears to be working; don't mess it up now. Take care of someone else who needs you before we talk tomorrow, OK?

And stay healthy.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 16 of 81

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 17 of 81

Today



Becoming
Sunny

High: 65 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
Showers

Low: 38 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny
and Breezy

High: 48 °F

Wednesday
Night



Mostly Clear
and Blustery
then Mostly
Clear

Low: 28 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny
and Breezy

High: 42 °F

Last Warm Day Before The Cool Down



Today: Mostly Clear. Highs: 60s to near 70



Wednesday: Mostly Cloudy.
Morning Showers & Windy. Highs: Mid 40s



Thursday: Mostly Cloudy. Breezy.
Highs: Low to Mid 40s

ISSUED: 3:07 AM - Tuesday, April 07, 2020, National Weather Service, Aberdeen SD

Another very warm day is on tap for the region, but a front comes through tonight and along with scattered showers, it will bring much cooler air. This will be the start of a period of cooler temperatures that will last into next week.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 18 of 81

Today in Weather History

March 7, 1998: A winter storm tracked across South Dakota, resulting in heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches across most of central South Dakota from the evening of the 6th into the afternoon of the 7th. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Fort Pierre and near Stephan, 7 inches at Blunt, Pierre, and Murdo, and 8 inches across far southern Jones and Lyman counties. Many activities were canceled, and travel was significantly disrupted, especially on Interstate-90.

1717: A series of snowstorms between February 27 and March 7 blanketed the New England colonies with five or more feet of snow.

1970: Last near-total eclipse of the sun in Washington, DC, in this century. Sun was 95% eclipsed.

1997: The worst was finally over for states hit hard by the flooding Ohio River. The river crested on the 6th at Louisville, Kentucky, at 15 feet above flood stage, after topping out at nearly 13 feet at Cincinnati, Ohio, and more than 7 feet at Huntington, West Virginia.

1857 - A late season freeze brought snow to every state in the Union. Even as far south as Houston TX the mercury plunged to 21 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1929 - Record heat prevailed across New England. Hartford CT reported an afternoon high of 90 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1935 - Amarillo, TX, reported dust obscuring visibility for twenty hours. Blowing dust was reported twenty-seven of thirty days in the month. On several days the visibility was reduced to near zero by the dust. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Severe thunderstorms spawned tornadoes which ripped through central Arkansas. The severe thunderstorms also produce high winds and baseball size hail. Five counties were declared disaster areas by President Carter. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - International Falls, MN, with record warm afternoon high of 71 degrees, was warmer than Miami FL, where the high was a record cool 66 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - High winds in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region gusted to 172 mph atop Grandfather Mountain NC. Twenty-nine cities in the southwest and north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Yankton SD with a reading of 91 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty-seven cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees in Downtown San Francisco and 104 degrees at Phoenix AZ established records for April. Highs of 78 degrees at Ely NV and 93 degrees at San Jose CA equalled April records. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Low pressure brought strong winds to the Alaska peninsula and the Aleutian Islands. Winds gusted to 68 mph at Port Heiden two days in a row. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across central Alaska. Yakutat reported a record high of 54 degrees. Unseasonably cold weather prevailed over central sections of the Lower Forty-eight states. A dozen cities from Kansas to Indiana and Alabama reported record low temperatures for the date. Evansville IN equalled their record for April with a morning low of 23 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - A temperature of 80 degrees is measured on Grandfather Mountain, NC, the warmest ever measured in April and three degrees short of the all-time record high for any month.

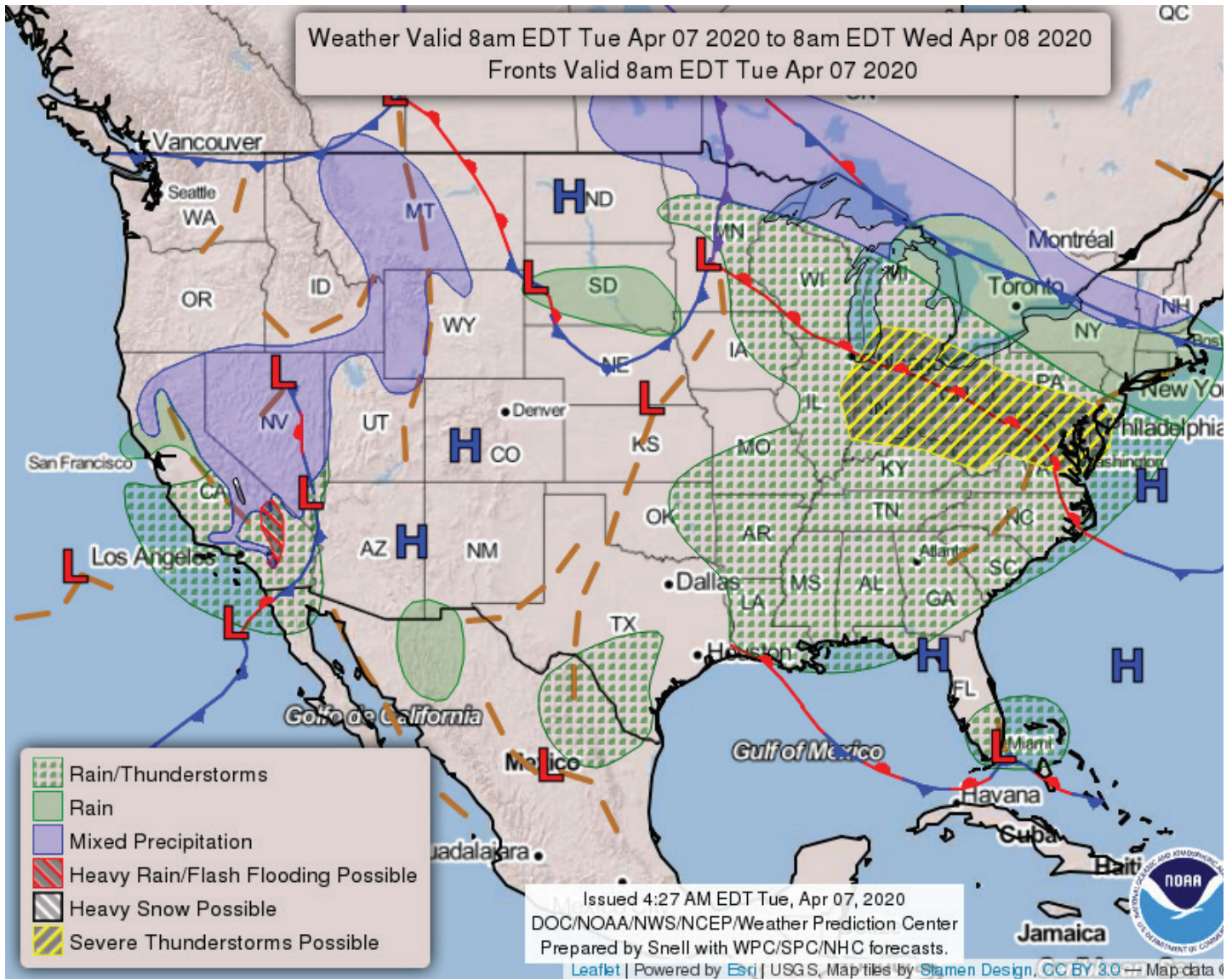
Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 19 of 81

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 65 °F at 5:26 PM
Low Temp: 42 °F at 7:31 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 2:06 AM
Snow

Record High: 86° in 1988
Record Low: 2° in 2018
Average High: 52°F
Average Low: 28°F
Average Precip in April.: 0.27
Precip to date in April.: 0.94
Average Precip to date: 2.45
Precip Year to Date: 1.29
Sunset Tonight: 8:10 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:00 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 20 of 81



THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB

The women which had come with Him out of Galilee followed and saw where His body was laid. There, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the Mother of Joses, sat in front of the tomb.

The others returned and prepared spices and ointments. But on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

On the morrow, the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came to Pilate saying, "Sir we remember that the deceiver said while still living, 'After three days I will rise again.' Give orders, therefore, to make the tomb secure until the three days, lest the disciples coming, steal Him and say to His people, 'He was risen from the dead' the last error would be worse than the first!"

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard, go and make it as secure as you know how."

They went therefore, and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to realize that Your presence and power can never be limited by any work of man. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Mark 16, Matthew 28, Luke 24 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard, go and make it as secure as you know how." They went therefore, and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 21 of 81

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
 - **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
 - 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
 - **CANCELLED** 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

Noem pushes businesses to limit groups amid calls for action

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — As mayors, nurses and doctors across South Dakota urged Gov. Kristi Noem to take action to restrict daily activity, the Republican governor on Monday dialed up the pressure on businesses and people to curb the spread of the coronavirus, but also doubled-down on allowing businesses to stay open.

Noem has stuck to an approach that errs on the side of limited government action, even as she's received letters and petitions asking for more action. On Monday she budged a little — issuing two executive orders that more forcefully tell businesses to limit group gatherings to 10 or fewer and urge people in the hardest-hit area of the state to stay home for the next three weeks if they are over 65 or have chronic health conditions. That order only applies to Minnehaha or Lincoln counties, where infections are spreading.

Noem also announced that schools would remain closed for the rest of the year.

When Noem was asked what consequences there would be for people that don't follow her orders, she did not go into specifics.

During her daily briefing, Noem focused attention on the global pandemic's ripple effects, having members of her cabinet address issues like mental health, massive layoffs and a drop in tourism revenue.

"It's all hands on deck to get through this," Noem said.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. Older adults and people with existing health problems are among those particularly susceptible to more severe illness, including pneumonia.

State health officials earlier in the day reported the highest day-to-day jump in confirmed coronavirus cases as 48 more people tested positive for the disease, bringing the state's tally to 288. Health officials reported two more people in the state have died, bringing the total to four.

Noem has pointed to the relatively low number of people who have tested positive as evidence her approach is working, saying that the state's rural geography justifies a different approach than the country's major cities.

But as the number of cases continues to climb, more South Dakotans are expressing frustration with Noem's limited action.

More than 160 city and county officials signed onto a letter from the South Dakota Municipal League urging the governor to have the Department of Health declare a public health emergency. The letter argues that declaring a public health emergency would allow them to take more action like ordering non-essential businesses to close.

Noem said she reviewed the letter, but did not commit to any action.

Many cities have already ordered businesses to close. Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken took the step of issuing a "safer-at-home" proclamation on Monday. The mayor said the proclamation is not legally enforceable, but hoped the recommendations would cut unnecessary group gatherings.

Noem is also receiving backlash from people online. A change.org petition asking the governor to issue a stay-at-home order has gained more than 25,000 signatures since it was started on Wednesday.

Amy Taylor, the Sioux Falls nurse who started the petition, said, "My fear is that we're going to wait until it's too late."

Work starts in Montana on disputed Canada-US oil pipeline

By **MATTHEW BROWN** Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A Canadian company said Monday that it's started construction on the long-stalled Keystone XL oil sands pipeline across the U.S.-Canada border, despite calls from tribal leaders and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 23 of 81

environmentalists to delay the \$8 billion project amid the coronavirus pandemic.

A spokesman for TC Energy said work began over the weekend at the border crossing in northern Montana, a remote area with sprawling cattle ranches and wheat fields. About 100 workers will be involved in the pipeline's early stages, but that number is expected to swell into the thousands in coming months as work proceeds, according to the company.

The 1,200 mile (1,930 kilometer) pipeline was proposed in 2008 and would carry up to 830,000 barrels (35 million gallons) of crude daily for transfer to refineries and export terminals on the Gulf of Mexico.

It's been tied up for years in legal battles and several court challenges are still pending, including one that's due before a judge next week.

TC Energy's surprise March 31 announcement that it intended to start construction came after the provincial government in Alberta invested \$1.1 billion to jump start work. Montana's Department of Environmental Quality on Friday issued the final state permits the company needed, agency spokeswoman Rebecca Harbage said.

Leaders of American Indian tribes and some residents of rural communities along the pipeline route worry that workers could spread the coronavirus. As many as 11 construction camps, some housing up to 1,000 people, were initially planned for the project, although TC Energy says those are under review because of the virus.

TC Energy says it plans to check everyone entering work sites for fever and ensure workers practice social distancing.

Work on the pipeline is allowed under an exemption to Gov. Steve Bullock's March 26 "stay at home" directive, which is intended to prevent the spread of the virus by discouraging many daily activities, according to state officials. But the directive did not address worker camps.

Bullock is concerned about potential risks from the virus associated with the camps, spokeswoman Marissa Perry said Monday. The Democratic governor "would want those concerns addressed prior to TC Energy and their contractors finalizing their plans of operations for those segments of construction," she said.

Opponents in January had asked Morris to block any work while the legal challenges are pending. They said clearing and tree felling along the route would destroy bird and wildlife habitat. Native American tribes along the pipeline route have said the pipeline could break and spill oil into waterways like the Missouri River.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough, that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

A hearing on the request to block work is scheduled for April 16 before U.S. District Judge Brian Morris in Great Falls.

Keystone XL was rejected twice under former President Barack Obama because of concerns it would make climate change worse. President Donald Trump revived the project and later pushed through approval after Morris issued an order to block construction in 2018.

Morris in December denied an initial request to block construction because TC Energy said at the time no work was immediately planned.

Stephan Volker, an attorney for the environmental groups asking Morris to again intervene, said the company's decision to "jump the gun" before next week's hearing was an insult to the judge.

"We are confident the court will not be bullied, and will overturn President Trump's second approval, just as he overturned President Trump's first approval, as unlawful," Volker said.

Follow Matthew Brown at <https://twitter.com/matthewbrownap>

The Latest: Spring South Dakota high school sports canceled

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Latest on the coronavirus outbreak in South Dakota (all times local): 4:50 p.m.

The South Dakota High School Activities Association said Monday that all spring sports and postponed

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 24 of 81

winter activities are canceled.

The association made the announcement after Gov. Kristi Noem announced in-person teaching will remain shut down for the rest of the school year.

The association calls it "an unprecedented time across our state and country," and says it does not make the decision lightly.

The cancellation will be formalized at the April 21 meeting of the SDHSAA Board of Directors. The association says it looks forward to resuming high school activities during the 2020-21 school year.

4:10 p.m.

The University of South Dakota will continue to deliver classes remotely through the summer term because of concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic.

The South Dakota Board of Regents made the announcement Monday. All South Dakota public universities already had gone to online instruction last month for the rest of the spring semester. Monday's announcement extends remote delivery through the universities' summer term.

"Our priority is ensuring continued instruction for the spring and summer terms for our students," USD Provost Kurt Hackemer said in a statement.

USD expects to return to a normal fall schedule.

Dakota State University also will offer summer courses online, but said the university traditionally holds very few on-campus courses during the summer.

12:30 p.m.

South Dakota health officials on Monday reported the highest day-to-day jump in confirmed coronavirus cases as 48 more people tested positive for the disease.

State epidemiologist Josh Clayton said that 288 people have tested positive in total, while confirming that two more people in the state have died. Clayton said he could not release details on those who died, but their county locations match deaths announced last week: the family of state Rep. Bob Glanzer said he died on Friday night, and Avera Health announced on Friday that a resident at the Prince of Peace Retirement Community died. Four people in total have died from the coronavirus in the state.

Clayton cautioned against reading too much into the uptick in confirmed infections, saying that the state would have to see several days of similar increases to count it as statistically important. He also said there has been an increase in testing at both the state lab and commercial labs.

The total number of people who have tested positive has doubled since Wednesday. Health officials reported 91 people who have tested positive have recovered so far, while 23 have required hospitalization.

11:20 a.m.

Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken said on Monday he is issuing a "safer-at-home" proclamation as the number of coronavirus infections continues to rise in the city.

The mayor made it clear the proclamation is not legally enforceable, but hoped the recommendations would cut unnecessary group gatherings. His proclamation asks people to limit grocery shopping to once a week and to have only one person per household do the shopping. He is also urging large stores to limit the number of people they allow into the store at a time.

Sioux Falls, the largest city in the state, has emerged as a hotbed of infections. Minnehaha and Lincoln counties, both which contain parts of Sioux Falls, account for over half the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in South Dakota.

The city council would have to enact an ordinance with fines for unnecessary group gatherings, TenHaken has said.

TenHaken raised the concern that people who temporarily migrate from warmer parts of the country may be returning this spring. He asked them to quarantine for 14 days after they return.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 25 of 81

10:40 a.m.

More than 160 city and county officials from across South Dakota on Monday urged Gov. Kristi Noem to have the Department of Health declare a public health emergency in response to the coronavirus.

The South Dakota Municipal League sent a letter signed by officials from 164 municipalities to the Republican governor, saying that without the declaration of a public health emergency, they don't have the power to take actions necessary for dealing with the pandemic. Noem has said she wants to leave it up to cities and counties to enforce restrictions on businesses.

The letter says that the authority of municipalities is "untested in this type of crisis" and argues that a public health emergency would allow them to take action and have possible access to federal funds for the disaster.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon has said that a public health emergency could be used to quarantine individuals, but that it is not designed for sweeping action.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Madison Daily Leader, April 1

Legislature's final day as intense as expected

We wrote Monday about how the final day of the 2020 South Dakota legislative session would be like no other in the state's history. It lived up to that distinction, and more.

The coronavirus outbreak drove virtually everything on the final day's agenda, which is normally a modestly quiet day to consider overriding any vetoes that the governor issued, or to consider small "style" changes in recently passed bills.

Instead, the legislature considered nearly a dozen new bills, all relating to the coronavirus pandemic.

Most legislators participated from a distance electronically, while some still met in person, trying to keep social distancing guidelines in place. So communication was harder, since a legislator couldn't walk a few feet to talk to a fellow legislator, or take a moment to visit in person with a constituent or state employee.

The topics and circumstances caused extra tension, even charges of personal misconduct, made only worse by extending past midnight. The session finally adjourned around 4 a.m. Tuesday morning.

In the end, most of the bills were passed, awaiting the governor's signature, including the postponement of local elections and waiving of instruction hours requirements for schools to get through the year. Bills to grant broader powers to counties and the secretary of health to shut down businesses and public places did not pass.

Expect more intense legislative action when the legislature will meet in a special session, currently scheduled for June. Very difficult budget decisions are on the agenda.

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, April 4

Facts, data and science. It's time for more action, Governor.

Governor Kristi Noem is digging in her heels. And so are we.

She has refused to put forth a statewide stay-at-home order for South Dakota, despite the knowledge that cases of COVID-19 are rising exponentially, just like everywhere else. There is nothing unique about our state when it comes to falling victim to a highly contagious and potentially fatal disease.

Rather than offer firm leadership to slow the rate of spread, allowing more time for testing and medical resources to meet increasing demand, Noem is placing the onus on individuals (and municipalities) to make good choices amid one of the worst public health emergencies in our nation's history.

Whether for political reasons or lack of understanding, she resists the notion that South Dakotans want a firm hand and consistent message in a crisis, which means closing non-essential businesses, ordering and enforcing stay-at-home measures and taking a hard look at travel restrictions and how they can be implemented.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 26 of 81

Passing the buck in any executive role is shaky. Doing it during a public health emergency is dangerous. When Noem talked Friday about people who “won’t get better,” she meant people who will die.

And so we’ll continue to push back, demanding that the governor look outside her bubble at what is happening around her. If she doesn’t want to listen to us, there are plenty of other voices.

Listen to governors and other officials from 45 states that have issued stay-at-home orders to protect citizens and buy more time for testing and hospital space. Or take the word of Anthony Fauci, the national face and voice of reliable information, who has directed the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institute of Health for 35 years. Or to Sanford Health Chief Medical Officer Allison Suttle, who said Friday “now more than ever is the time to double down on staying at home.”

Until testing is more efficient and broadly available, containment is impossible. It’s all about mitigation, and the notion that citizens will “self-police” themselves is both unrealistic and unfair to those they might endanger. Hourly inconvenience and lack of public gatherings are already part of our temporary world, so why not take action to make sure these changes are adopted in a clear and consistent manner?

It is only a matter of time before the facts, science and data force the governor’s hand in a more responsible direction, as it has in other states. Georgia governor Brian Kemp finally issued a stay-at-home order this week, explaining that it was “recently” discovered that the virus can be spread by people who are not exhibiting symptoms.

That information has been widely known for months, but it didn’t stop Florida governor Ron DeSantis from delaying a shutdown in his state until spring breakers had filled the beaches and moved on to all corners of the country. We’re still waiting on Noem, who has seen numbers rise while bickering back and forth with the mayors of Sioux Falls and Rapid City over what emergency powers are possessed by whom.

There has been too much focus on “peak,” as if anyone has any idea when that will be. The data remains flawed, which is obvious from the huge variance of projections for how many state residents will become infected – from 265,000 to 600,000. The idea that we string this thing out too far by taking stronger action sounds like a message-board talking point more than a science-based evaluation.

We need to try to stay ahead of the virus, if that’s possible, to allow for a time when testing allows health officials to identify carriers, isolate them and do contact tracing. That will allow a gradual easing of social restrictions, not merely the ebb and flow of a chart based on speculative numbers.

Even those who worship at the altar of “personal liberties” want to see strong leadership when lives are at stake. They want messages of hope, sure, but also admonitions of responsibility and sacrifice. They want to hear what the plan is.

It is too late to look back at preventative measures as a softening blow to our state. But it’s not yet too late to use every power at our disposal to fight back against an invisible enemy and win.

Data and science have made it clear that South Dakota is not unique in the way the virus infiltrates our borders. Let us at least be proud of the way we pulled together to fight back.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, April 2

This dark territory

In these days of the pandemic, I find social media filled with grim news and emotional, wrenching posts. Some people also make efforts to reach out from isolation — either mandated or self-imposed — to find friends, strangers ... anyone, in search of connection and/or a relief from their boredom. And some people post things that can be inspirational, funny or thoughtful.

But there are other posts. They’re from people — most of them strangers to me — who plainly admit to crying a lot, waking up from nightmares, worrying nonstop about what will happen to themselves and others, and feeling lost and terrified as this plague races across the world.

Their words often hit me hard because I know this territory.

When this pandemic finally ends, there will be many assessments regarding the cost in lives and capital, but its toll on mental health will be much tougher to measure. The matter covers invisible damages and countless faceless souls who currently can’t help but fear every cough, every invasion of their distancing

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 27 of 81

space and every cancerous thought that melts into despair.

One thing I guess I can say about the current situation is that it's slightly easier now for me to explain this mental territory to others. All I have to do is tell you to look around, to watch the dire news broadcasts, to feel what it's like when nothing is normal, to see the world as gray and hopeless, to wish through the tears that everything could go back to the way it was — but knowing it can't. All this shows you a little of something that's so hard to put into words. There are no models or stimulus plans for this.

Those social media posts also reveal another fixture of that dark territory: the suffocating feeling of loneliness, which many people are enduring as they cope with social distancing, isolation and a world brought to its knees.

If you're battling this, you aren't alone — which is a hard fact to embrace sometimes — and you need to know there is help. Sometimes, it can come from simple things that aren't really permanent fixes, but they might help get you through a day, or give you an escape for even a few moments.

You might be shocked at how much of a difference just talking to someone can make sometimes. Being able to let out whatever is squirming in your head can feel like you're pushing a weight off your soul, and it could help you find a better, calmer perspective on things.

One essential piece of advice is to restrict your diet of television news, especially the cable news channels that are covering this event so relentlessly. They are windows onto the worst of what's happening. A couple of these channels occasionally run numerical counters on the side of the screen telling viewers how many confirmed COVID-19 cases there are in the world and the U.S. — and how many of them have died. This just becomes too bleak to bear. Certainly, stay informed, but remember that too much of a bad thing can rip you apart. (As an aside, the Press & Dakotan staff is working to find some positive stories amid this pandemic, mostly because you can only endure the anxiety and fear for so long.)

Also, try reading a book. Long ago, I accidentally discovered that reading can pull your mind out of its rut for a while. Anxiety and depression often involve locking in on things and distorting them out of proportion. A diversion like reading can diffuse that mind lock.

Moving around helps, too. It's old advice, I know, but getting your blood flowing and the oxygen circulating can improve your mental outlook, which is also important to overall health.

Finally, try to find whatever comfort you can in the fact that you aren't alone — which circles back to the very first step: talk to someone, whether it's a friend or, if need be, a person trained to deal with such issues. There is always help, and seeking it out doesn't mean you've hit bottom; it means you're fighting back.

All these things may seem obvious, but the obvious can sometimes be the hardest thing to find when your perspective and your spirit are under siege.

These are difficult days and it's going to be a long haul before we see something we recognize as normal again. It will be a hard journey, but remember that you don't have to make it alone.

Person detained at Ellsworth Air Force Base main gate

RAPID CITY, S.D. undefined

Officials say a person who was acting erratically and approached security personnel at the Ellsworth Air Force Base was detained and turned over to police.

The main gate at the base was closed for about four hours Sunday after the individual showed up. Authorities were not specific about what the person was saying or doing.

He was detained and turned over to Box Elder police. Members of the 28th Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal team were called to inspect the suspect's vehicle. Nothing suspicious was found.

Traffic was redirected to the base's commercial gate while the scene was investigated. The main gate reopened about 8 p.m.

Cardinal Pell welcomes court's dismissal of abuse conviction

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) —

Cardinal George Pell welcomed Australia's highest court clearing him of child sex crimes Tuesday and said his trial had not been a referendum on the Catholic Church's handling of the clergy abuse crisis.

Pell, Pope Francis' former finance minister, had been the most senior Catholic found guilty of sexually abusing children and spent 13 months in prison before seven High Court judges unanimously dismissed his convictions.

"I have consistently maintained my innocence while suffering from a serious injustice," Pell said in his first public statement since he was convicted in December 2018. It was released before he left prison and was taken to the Carmelite Monastery in Melbourne, where he was greeted by a nun.

The Vatican welcomed the decision, while saying it reaffirmed its commitment "to pursuing all cases of abuse against minors."

Francis appeared to refer to Pell's acquittal in his morning homily, saying he was praying for all those unjustly persecuted.

Pell said, "I hold no ill will toward my accuser," a former choirboy whose testimony was at the core of the 78-year-old cleric's prosecution.

The High Court found there was reasonable doubt surrounding the testimony of the witness, now the father of a young family aged in his 30s, who said Pell had abused him and another 13-year-old choirboy at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne in the late 1990s.

"My trial was not a referendum on the Catholic Church; nor a referendum on how Church authorities in Australia dealt with the crime of pedophilia in the Church," Pell said.

"The point was whether I had committed these awful crimes, and I did not," he added.

A judge and lawyers had urged two juries in 2018 to try Pell on the evidence and not on his senior position in the church's flawed responses to clergy abuse in Australia. The first trial ended in a jury deadlock and the second unanimously convicted him on all charges.

The Survivors' Network of those Abused by Priests said in a statement they were "dismayed and heartbroken" by the decision.

Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher called for the ruling to end the pursuit of Pell in the courts.

"I am pleased that the Cardinal will now be released and I ask that the pursuit of him that brought us to this point now cease," Fisher said in a statement.

"The cardinal's vindication today invites broader reflection on our system of justice, our commitment to the presumption of innocence, and our treatment of high-profile figures accused of crimes," Fisher added.

But Pell's record on managing clergy abuse could come under further public scrutiny, with Australian Attorney General Christian Porter responding to the verdict by announcing he will consider releasing a redacted section of a report on institutional responses to child molesting.

Pell gave evidence by video link from Rome in 2016 to a royal commission, Australia's highest level of inquiry, about his time as a church leader in Melbourne and his hometown of Ballarat.

The royal commission found in its 2017 report that the Melbourne Archdiocese had ignored or covered up allegations of child abuse by seven priests to protect the church's reputation and avoid scandal.

The royal commission was critical of Pell's predecessor in Melbourne, Archbishop Frank Little, who died in 2008. It made no findings against Pell, saying then that it would not publish information that could "prejudice current or future criminal or civil proceedings."

Where Pell will go and whether he will return to Rome has not been announced. Melbourne residents have been told to stay home except for essentials due to the coronavirus pandemic. He had stayed at a Sydney seminary when he was free on bail awaiting trial.

He is no longer a member of Francis' Council of Cardinals or a Vatican official and will lose his right to vote for the next pope on his 80th birthday next year.

The Vatican has previously said Pell would face a canonical investigation after all his appeals had been

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 29 of 81

exhausted in Australia, but it is not known what effect his acquittal will have on any church investigation.

Many Australians had already accepted Pell was guilty before the High Court decision. Judge Peter Kidd had berated Pell in a nationally televised sentencing hearing last year for a breach of trust that had an element of brutality a sense of impunity.

"I see this as callus, brazen offending — blatant," Kidd said.

St. Patrick's College, where Pell was educated in Ballarat, removed his name from a building and from the school honor board.

But the Australian Catholic University kept its Pell Center on its Ballarat campus until the appeal process was completed, angering academic staff.

The university's president, Greg Craven, said Pell should never have been charged.

"This was a case that always had a reasonable doubt a mile wide," Craven said. "The High Court unanimously — seven-nil — said the Victorian justice system got it hopelessly wrong."

Pell had been serving a six-year sentence after he was convicted of sexually assaulting the two boys in December 1996 and convicted of indecently assaulting one of the boys by painfully squeezing his genitals after a Mass in early 1997.

Pell was regarded as the Vatican's third-highest ranking official when he voluntarily returned to Melbourne in 2017 determined to clear his name of dozens of decades-old child abuse allegations.

All the charges were dropped or dismissed over the years except the cathedral allegations.

He did not testify at either trial or at the subsequent appeals.

But the juries saw his emphatic denials in a police interview that was video recorded in a Rome airport hotel conference room in October 2016.

The complainant first went to police in 2015 after the second alleged victim died of a heroin overdose at the age of 31. Neither can be identified under state law.

Lawyers for the father of the dead man, who also cannot be identified, said the verdict left him "in utter disbelief."

Lawyers for the complainant said he was likely to make a statement on Wednesday.

Much of the hearing at the High Court last month had focused on whether the jury should have had a reasonable doubt about Pell's guilt and whether he could have time to molest the boys in five or six minutes immediately after a Mass.

The Victorian Court of Appeal found in a 2-1 majority in August that Pell had had enough time to abuse the boys and that the unanimous guilty verdicts were sound. But the High Court found the appeals court was incorrect.

Director of Public Prosecutions Kerri Judd told the High Court last month that the surviving choirboy's detailed knowledge of the layout of the priests' sacristy supported his accusation that the boys were molested there.

The High Court referred to the "unchallenged evidence" of witnesses in the trial to Pell's practice of talking to the congregation on the cathedral stairs after Mass, church practice that required him to be accompanied in the cathedral while robed and the "continuous traffic in and out of the priests' sacristy" as causes for reasonable doubt.

The High Court statement said, "There is a significant possibility that an innocent person has been convicted because the evidence did not establish guilt to the requisite standard of proof."

Associated Press writer Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this report.

UK's Johnson spends night in ICU; not on ventilator

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA undefined

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson spent the night in the intensive care unit of a London hospital with the new coronavirus, but is not on a ventilator, a senior government minister said Tuesday, as pressure grew on the government to release more details of Johnson's condition.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 30 of 81

Johnson was admitted to St. Thomas' Hospital late Sunday, 10 days after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, the first major world leader to be confirmed to have the virus. He was moved to the ICU Monday after his condition deteriorated.

Cabinet Office Minister Michael Gove said Johnson is being given oxygen but "the prime minister is not on a ventilator."

He said he did not know whether the prime minister had pneumonia, which often develops in patients hit hardest by the coronavirus.

Gove said Johnson is "receiving the very, very best care from the team at St Thomas' and our hopes and prayers are with him and with his family."

"We're desperately hoping that Boris can make the speediest possible recovery," said Gove, who is in isolation at home after a family member showed mild coronavirus symptoms.

Johnson's fiancée, Carrie Symonds, who is pregnant, is herself recovering from coronavirus symptoms.

Britain has no official post of deputy prime minister, but Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has been designated to take over temporarily.

"The government's business will continue," Raab said late Monday. He said Johnson had asked him "to deputize for him where needed in driving forward the government's plans to defeat coronavirus."

The deterioration of Johnson's health took many in Britain by surprise. On Monday afternoon he tweeted that he was in good spirits and thanked the National Health Service for taking care of him and others with the disease.

The government was facing calls Tuesday to be more transparent about Johnson's condition amid claims they had underplayed its seriousness.

It's not common for the health details of British prime ministers to be made public, except at times of crisis. Even then, information has sometimes been scanty. When Winston Churchill suffered a debilitating stroke in 1953, the government kept it secret until Churchill recovered.

Johnson had been quarantined in his Downing Street residence since being diagnosed with COVID-19 on March 26.

He continued to work throughout his illness, to the concern of some of his colleagues. With the U.K. still approaching the peak of the coronavirus outbreak, and the government facing accusations that it did not act soon enough to put the country into lockdown, Johnson and his ministers are under intense pressure.

Johnson chaired daily meetings on the outbreak until Sunday. He released several video messages during his 10 days in isolation urging Britons to stay home and observe social distancing measures to help slow the spread of the virus.

Concerns had been growing about Johnson's welfare ever since he posted a message Friday in which he appeared red-eyed and flushed, saying that he was feeling better, though was still feverish.

Johnson's former communications director, Will Walden, said the prime minister tended to try to soldier on through illness rather than taking a break.

"He's pretty stoic and can be a bit bloody-minded about that kind of thing," Walden told the BBC.

News that Johnson had been transferred to intensive care drew an outpouring of support from around the world.

U.S. President Donald Trump said "Americans are all praying for his recovery."

"He's been a really good friend," Trump said during a White House press briefing. "He's been really something very special — strong, resolute, doesn't quit, doesn't give up."

Trump said he asked two "leading companies" to contact officials in London about therapeutics that could be of help. He did not identify the companies, but said "we have contacted all of Boris's doctors, and we'll see what's going to take place, but they are ready to go."

French President Emmanuel Macron said in a tweet that he was sending his support to Johnson, his family and "the British people at this difficult time. I wish him well."

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a telegram wishing Johnson a full and quick recovery, the Kremlin said. "I'm positive that your energy, optimism and sense of humor will help combat the disease," Putin wrote.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 31 of 81

Buckingham Palace said Queen Elizabeth II was being kept informed about Johnson's condition.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most people, but for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia and lead to death.

The government said Monday that 51,608 people had been confirmed to have the coronavirus in Britain, 5,373 of whom have died.

Britain's unwritten constitution does not have a clear rule for what happens if a prime minister becomes incapacitated or dies. Seven prime ministers have died in office, but the most recent was in 1865.

Johnson delegating Raab to fill in for him clarifies things for now, but it does not mean Raab would automatically take over permanently should a new leader be needed. If it became clear Johnson could not return to his job, the Conservative Party could elect a new leader, who would become prime minister.

5 things to know today - that aren't about the virus

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. WISCONSIN PRIMARY MOVING FORWARD The state is asking voters to ignore a stay-at-home order during the coronavirus pandemic to participate in a presidential primary election.

2. PELL HAS CONVICTION OVERTURNED The father of one of the two choirboys says he's in "utter disbelief" after the cardinal is cleared of child sex crimes by Australia's highest court.

3. BODY OF KATHLEEN KENNEDY TOWNSEND'S DAUGHTER RECOVERED The body of Maeve Kennedy Townsend McKean, 40, was found in about 25 feet of water following a canoeing accident in Maryland last week.

4. THERE'S SOMETHING SUPER ABOUT THESE MOONS There's a string of supermoons this spring. So, if you miss the lunar show this week, catch the next one in May.

5. WHAT WAS THE 6TH GREATEST MASTERS In 1954, Sam Snead captures his third green jacket with an 18-hole playoff win over Ben Hogan, who was going for his fourth consecutive major, a panel of golf writers conclude.

The Latest: Spain reports rise in daily virus cases, deaths

The Associated Press undefined

The Latest on the coronavirus pandemic. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death.

TOP OF THE HOUR:

- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson remains in intensive care, Japan declares national emergency.
- Spain records rise in daily count of coronavirus cases and deaths.
- Cambodia's leader calls for ban on exports of fish and rice.
- Indonesia predicts 95,000 virus infections by the end of next month.

MADRID — Spain is recording again a rise of daily coronavirus infections and deaths for the first time in five days, a result consistent with previous Tuesdays when a weekend backlog of tests and fatalities are reported.

With 743 new deaths in the last 24 hours, some 100 more than the fatalities seen from Sunday to Monday, Spain's death toll neared 13,800 since the beginning of the pandemic, Health Ministry data showed. The total of confirmed infections rose over 140,000, with 5,478 new ones on Tuesday, 1,000 more than on Monday. Both figures had been declining since April 2.

Authorities have said that cementing the flattening of the contagion arc will be a long process but they have pinned hopes in how pressure is easing in hospitals, mostly in emergency wards.

As part of deescalating measures being debated for coming weeks, Spain's left-wing government wants to test 30,000 households to draw the national map of the outbreak. The goal is to measure how much

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 32 of 81

has the virus spread beyond hospitals and nursing homes, which had become big contagion clusters.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's Cabinet is expected to approve Tuesday new measures to cushion the economic and social impact of the pandemic, including subsidies for farmers and flexibility to temporarily hire migrant workers for harvesting vegetables and fruits.

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — Cambodia's leader says he is ordering a ban on exports of rice and fish to ensure there are no local shortages of the staple foods during the coronavirus crisis.

Prime Minister Hun Sen said he wanted to make sure there was a sufficient supply of salt and noodles as well. He appealed to Cambodians to plant vegetables and other crops to supply local markets "during this difficult time."

Expensive gourmet varieties of rice that Cambodia has contracts to sell abroad are exempted from the export ban.

Hun Sen, speaking Tuesday, also announced that the Lunar New Year holiday scheduled for April 13-16 has been canceled to reduce the risk of people spreading COVID-19.

"It's not going to be good at all for them if they are very joyful during the New Year's days, but start mourning after New Year's when they organize funeral ceremonies," he said.

Hun Sen in February had been skeptical that the coronavirus would impact Cambodia, but as cases mounted he has imposed restrictions on gatherings and travel and welcomed medical assistance and experts from China.

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Indonesian government has been forecasting the new coronavirus may infect about 95,000 people in the country by next month as the virus was spreading rapidly in the past month.

Indonesia marked the biggest daily increase in COVID-19 cases since the country announced its two first cases early last month: 247 people tested positive on Tuesday, bringing the country caseload to 2,738.

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati revealed the dire estimation during a hearing with the House's Commission XI which overseeing economic issue at the parliament on Monday to discuss strategic steps that are needed to curb the peak of the virus transmission.

She said the estimate was discussed at a cabinet meeting held by President Joko Widodo earlier based on a projection by the country's intelligence agency and academic experts.

Widodo has declared a national health emergency and ordered large scale social distancing to contain the spread of the new coronavirus in the archipelago nation, which is home for nearly 270 million.

While Indonesia's death toll from the new coronavirus outbreak at 221 on Tuesday, it marked the highest in Asia after China.

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Denmark says it is planning to reopen next week kindergartners and primary schools for pupils aged up to 11 in a gradual lifting of the country's coronavirus lockdown.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said late Monday that her government planned opening schools for younger students up until class five first because the requirement to care for them represented a greater burden on society. Reopening is planned for April 15.

She said restaurants, bars and cafes would remain closed for now. Also churches, libraries, sports venues and shopping centers would remain closed until at least May 10.

Denmark will keep in force border controls and ban gatherings of more than 10 people at least until May 10.

Frederiksen stressed the announced gradual easing of the lockdown would take place only if the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases remains stable and there is no major hike by Easter.

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The Dutch government says homeowners who are struggling to pay their mortgages because of the coronavirus crisis will not be evicted.

Banks, housing organizations and the ministry of environment and housing issued a statement Tuesday

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 33 of 81

pledging not to kick people out of their homes in the coming months as restrictions aimed at slowing the spread of the virus wreak a devastating economic toll.

If people whose income has been hammered by the measures are unable to make monthly repayments, "mortgage providers together with homeowners will seek solutions" and not force them to sell their home, the statement says.

The exception to the no-eviction pledge is if a person is found to be running illegal activities in their home, such as a drug lab.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's professional baseball league says it hopes to start practice games between teams on April 21 before possibly opening the season in early May.

The Korea Baseball Organization said Tuesday the plans were contingent on the country's coronavirus caseload continuing to slow.

The KBO will advise players to wear face masks in locker rooms and require them to download smartphone apps to report their daily health status to league officials.

South Korea reported 47 new cases for the second consecutive day on Tuesday, the smallest daily jumps since Feb. 20, as infections continued to wane in the worst-hit city of Daegu. The country was reporting around 500 new cases per day in early March.

The KBO announced last month that it was postponing the start of its season, but that it still hoped to maintain a 144-game regular-season schedule.

BEIJING — China and Russia are closing their land border and river port near Vladivostok following the discovery of 59 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus among Chinese citizens returning home via the crossing.

Beginning Tuesday, all Chinese citizens who arrive in the border region aboard Russian domestic flights will be forced to undergo a 14-day quarantine, according to a notice posted on the website of the Chinese consulate in Vladivostok.

Only those holding special passes will then be permitted to travel on the Russian side of the border area, the notice said. It wasn't clear whether pass holders would be able to cross into China.

In addition, all guesthouses, nursing homes, on the Russian side of the border area will also be closed to outsiders through June 1, the notice said.

"Here, the consulate general strongly recommends and reminds relevant Chinese citizens to fully take into consideration the above situation" and not seek to return to China through the border crossing, the notice said.

JOHANNESBURG — The African continent now has more than 10,000 coronavirus cases. That's according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Fifty-two of Africa's 54 countries now have the virus, with island nation Sao Tome e Principe the latest to confirm cases.

Only the small kingdom of Lesotho and the island nation of Comoros have not confirmed cases. South Africa has the most cases on the continent with more than 1,600.

The shortage of testing capabilities across the continent has raised concerns that the number of actual cases in Africa could be higher.

MOSCOW — Russian authorities registered more than 1,000 new coronavirus cases in 24 hours for the first time since the beginning of the outbreak.

The government coronavirus task force reported 1,154 new cases on Tuesday, bringing the country's total caseload to 7,497, with 58 deaths and 494 recoveries.

The epidemic in Russia picked up speed in March, with the number of cases growing exponentially and doubling every few days.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 34 of 81

In order to curb the outbreak, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered everyone to stay off work this month, with only essential businesses, such as grocery stores, pharmacies etc., operating. The vast majority of Russian regions are currently on lockdown, ordering residents to self-isolate at home and not go out, unless it's to buy groceries, medications, walk their dogs or take out trash.

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has spent the night in an intensive care unit of a London hospital after his coronavirus symptoms dramatically worsened.

Cabinet Minister Michael Gove told the BBC that Johnson was receiving oxygen but was not on a ventilator. Gove says that he's "receiving the very, very best care from the team at St Thomas' and our hopes and prayers are with him and with his family."

The 55-year-old Conservative leader was admitted to St. Thomas' Hospital late Sunday, 10 days after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, the first major world leader to be confirmed to have the virus.

He was moved to intensive care after his condition deteriorated Monday.

Britain has no official post of deputy prime minister, but Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has been designated to take over should Johnson become incapacitated.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea says it will soon announce a guideline for hospitals on experimental coronavirus treatments using donated blood from patients who survived.

Kwon Jun-wook, an official from South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Tuesday the guideline will draw from the country's experience with similar treatments on patients who contracted the MERS virus during an outbreak in 2015.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, discovered in 2012, is caused by a coronavirus in the same family as the common cold, SARS and the new virus that's causing the COVID-19 illness. The 2015 outbreak killed 36 people and sickened nearly 200 in South Korea.

Kwon said officials were examining recent recoveries of two elderly COVID-19 patients at a hospital in Seoul who had been infused with survivors' plasma — the liquid part of blood that contains antibodies — after other treatment attempts failed to improve their conditions.

He cautioned there's still no guarantee that plasma treatment will work, and that health authorities and civilian experts are continuing to debate its effectiveness.

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — New Zealand has decided there is some magic in the world after officially declaring children's favorites the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy are essential workers.

That means they can carry on with their work while others stay at home during a monthlong lockdown.

"You will be pleased to know that we do consider both the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny to be essential workers," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Monday. "But, as you can imagine at this time, of course, they are going to potentially be quite busy at home with their family as well and their own bunnies."

Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Pandemic politics: Wisconsin primary moving forward

By SCOTT BAUER and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin is asking hundreds of thousands of voters to ignore a stay-at-home order in the midst of a pandemic to participate in Tuesday's presidential primary election, becoming a test case for dozens of states struggling to balance public health concerns with a core pillar of democracy.

The National Guard will help run voting sites across the state after thousands of election workers stepped down fearing for their safety. Dozens of polling places will be closed, but those that are active will open at 7 a.m. CDT.

Results were not expected to be released election night. In the wake of a legal battle over whether to

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 35 of 81

conduct the election as scheduled, a court ruling appeared to prevent results from being made public earlier than April 13.

The Election Day chaos that loomed over Wisconsin, a premiere general-election battleground, underscored the lengths to which the coronavirus outbreak has upended politics as Democrats seek a nominee to take on President Donald Trump this fall.

Joe Biden hopes the state will help deliver a knockout blow against Bernie Sanders in the nomination fight, but the winner of Tuesday's contest may be less significant than Wisconsin's decision to allow voting at all. Its ability to host an election under the lash of a growing pandemic could have significant implications for upcoming primaries and even the fall general election.

"This is a warning sign for November and a problem that states need to take all steps to avoid," said Wendy Weiser, director of the Brennan Center for Justice's democracy program. "Americans should not have to choose between their health and their right to vote."

Democrats in and out of Wisconsin screamed for the low-profile contest to be postponed, yet Republicans — and the conservative-majority state Supreme Court — would not give in. The partisan split was colored by a state Supreme Court election in which a lower turnout was thought to benefit the conservative candidate.

While Trump's health advisers encouraged all Americans to stay home, Wisconsin Republican Party Chairman Andrew Hitt downplayed the health concerns. The state had reported nearly 2,500 coronavirus infections and 77 related deaths as of Monday night.

"Wisconsin voters are pretty determined," Hitt said, noting that Wisconsin residents are still going to the grocery store, the liquor store and even boating stores classified as essential businesses. "I can't really think of something more essential than voting."

Hitt said he would be among those voting in person on Tuesday, even though he did not have a mask to cover his nose and mouth. On Friday, Trump recommended that all Americans wear masks if they leave their homes.

"I don't have one. I'm sure most of Wisconsinites don't have masks," Hitt said. "This isn't New York City."

On the day before the election, it was unclear for hours whether polls would open at all.

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers issued an executive order Monday afternoon to postpone the election. Less than four hours later, the state Supreme Court sided with Republicans who said Evers didn't have the authority to reschedule the race on his own.

Conservative justices on the U.S. Supreme Court quickly followed with a 5-4 ruling that overturned a lower court's decision expanding absentee voting.

Evers himself had questioned whether he had the power to reschedule the election, but he said the worsening situation, including an increase in COVID-19 deaths, made clear there was no way to safely move forward. The first-term Democrat said he sought the delay because he was motivated by protecting public health, not politics.

"The people of Wisconsin, the majority of them, don't spend all their waking hours thinking about are Republicans or Democrats getting the upper hand here," Evers said. "They're saying they're scared. They're scared of going to the polls."

With the U.S. Supreme Court decision, voters found no extra time for absentee voting. The court said absentee ballots must be hand-delivered by Tuesday evening or postmarked by Tuesday, although they can arrive at clerks' offices as late as April 13. Wisconsin election officials said the high court's order left intact a provision of the lower-court order that no returns be reported until that day.

In dissent, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote that the coronavirus outbreak had caused a surge in absentee ballot requests and thousands of voters who requested them will not have received their ballots by Tuesday.

"The Court's order, I fear, will result in massive disenfranchisement," she wrote.

In response to the decisions by the Republican legislature and the state Supreme Court, Sanders called holding the election amid the virus outbreak "dangerous" and "may very well prove deadly." The Sanders campaign will not engage in traditional get-out-the-vote efforts, he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 36 of 81

Meanwhile, critics raised the prospect of major Election Day complications, particularly given that thousands of poll workers stepped down. That led the state's largest city, Milwaukee, to reduce its planned number of polling sites from 180 to just five.

More than 2,500 National Guard troops were dispatched to staff the polls, where they were expected to help perform the normal functions of poll workers while also distributing hand sanitizer. In Madison, city workers erected Plexiglas barriers to protect poll workers, and voters were encouraged to bring their own pens to mark the ballots.

Kat Devlin, a magazine editor who works from her home in Milwaukee, applied for an absentee ballot during the third week in March but never received it. She decided to vote early and on Friday afternoon ventured out to a downtown municipal building. The state should have postponed the election, she said.

"It's just dangerous to have so many people going to the polls," she said. "So many of these volunteers are older adults. I was so grateful they were there, continuing to work, because I'm sure it was a bit unnerving."

Peoples reported from Montclair, New Jersey.

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

Virus puts UK PM in intensive care; Japan declares emergency

By LORI HINNANT and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was in intensive care Tuesday fighting the coronavirus, while authorities in New York and elsewhere in Europe hoped that an apparent plateau of deaths and new hospitalizations signaled that key epicenters in the global pandemic had turned a corner.

The 55-year-old Johnson, the world's first known head of government to fall ill with the virus, was conscious in a London hospital and needed oxygen overnight but was not on a ventilator, Cabinet minister Michael Gove said Tuesday. Britain's foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, has been designated to take over with Johnson sidelined by an illness that can be debilitating even for those with access to the world's best medical care.

"We're desperately hoping that Boris can make the speediest possible recovery," Gove said.

Japan's prime minister on Tuesday declared a monthlong state of emergency for Tokyo and six other prefectures after a spike in infections there but it came in the form of a stay-at-home request — not an order — and violators will not be penalized. Japan has the world's oldest population, a worrying target for a virus that has been killing the elderly at much higher rates than other age groups.

In New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the first, faint signs the outbreak there may be nearing its peak but said it's not time yet to relax social distancing restrictions.

"The numbers look like it may be turning," Cuomo said.

The state has averaged just under 600 deaths daily for the past four days. Though horrific, the somewhat steady daily totals were seen as a positive sign. Cuomo also reported that the number of new people entering New York hospitals daily has dropped, as has the number of critically ill patients needing ventilators. But he said the strains on the state's health care workers were still at unsustainable levels.

The nation's top infectious disease specialist, Dr. Anthony Fauci, was cautiously optimistic, saying that in New York, "what we have been doing has been working."

China, the first country to go into lockdown and among the strictest, reported no new deaths over the past 24 hours for the first time since it began publishing statistics on the virus that emerged in December in the central city of Wuhan. Many infectious disease experts, however, have been skeptical of the figures coming out of China.

New coronavirus cases were also dropping in the European hotspots of Italy and Spain. In France, although daily deaths spiked to a record of 833, the rate of new intensive care hospitalizations has slowed dramatically.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 37 of 81

The final travel restrictions on residents in Wuhan are due to be lifted Wednesday and Denmark said it planned to reopen schools next week for students up to age 11 — a development that feels impossibly distant elsewhere in the world.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte promised residents that they will soon “reap the fruit of these sacrifices” in personal liberties, though he declined to say when a nationwide lockdown would be lifted. Italy has the world’s highest death toll — over 16,500 — but intensive care units in the north are no longer airlifting patients to other regions.

Worldwide, more than 1.3 million people have been confirmed infected and nearly 75,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. The true numbers are certainly much higher, because of limited testing, different ways nations count the dead and deliberate underreporting by some governments. Deaths in the U.S. neared 11,000, with more than 368,000 confirmed infections.

For most people, the virus causes mild to moderate symptoms such as fever and cough. But for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia and lead to death. More than 285,000 people have recovered worldwide.

Stocks jumped on Wall Street and around the world on hopes that the pandemic could be slowing. Global shares were up Tuesday, as well as Dow futures, after the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained more than 1,600 points, or nearly 8%, on Monday.

The latest data suggests social distancing appears to be working in some countries, and better than expected.

One of the main models on the outbreak, the University of Washington’s, is now projecting about 82,000 U.S. deaths through early August, or 12% fewer than previously forecast, with the highest number of daily deaths occurring on April 16. The model relies on much more robust data from Italy and Spain and from hospitals.

One unusual lockdown exception was Wisconsin, which was asking hundreds of thousands of voters on Tuesday to ignore a stay-at-home order in the midst of a pandemic to participate in its presidential primary.

South Korea said it will soon announce guidelines for hospitals on experimental coronavirus treatments using donated blood from patients who survived. Kwon Jun-wook from South Korea’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the guide will be drawn from the country’s experience with similar treatments on MERS virus patients in 2015.

In further restrictions, China and Russia decided to close their land border and river port near Vladivostok following the discovery of 59 confirmed cases.

But as effective as the lockdowns may be, they come at a steep toll, especially for the poor.

In a housing complex in the Moroccan city of Sale, over 900 people live in crowded rooms without running water or incomes. While the North African country entered total lockdown in mid-March, self-isolation and social distancing are a luxury that few families in this complex can afford.

In Sale, children hang around the communal courtyard and run through narrow alleyways. Families share one room where they wash clothes and fill buckets of water at public fountains. Warda, a mother of three at the complex, knows the risks but sees no alternatives.

“I am scared for my children. I have to lock them indoors and stay with them, but how am I supposed to feed them?” she asked.

In a move to boost spirits in New Zealand, the prime minister clarified the definition of who is considered essential workers.

“You will be pleased to know that we do consider both the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny to be essential workers,” Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said just a few days before Easter Sunday.

Hinnant reported from Paris. Associated Press writers around the world contributed.

Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Japan declares state of emergency, ramping up virus battle

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared a month-long state of emergency Tuesday for Tokyo and six other prefectures to ramp up defenses against the spread of the coronavirus as the number of infections surges.

But the move came in the form of a stay-at-home request — not an order — and violators will not be penalized.

The COVID-19 outbreak is now rampant and rapidly spreading, threatening people's health, their daily lives and the economy, Abe said. The state of emergency is until May 6.

The state of emergency will only permit Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike and heads of the six other prefectures to do more to reinforce calls for social distancing.

"The most important thing is for each one of us to change our activity," Abe told a government task force. He urged everyone to cut contacts with others by 70-80% for one month.

The announcement follows surges in new cases in Tokyo, including consecutive rises exceeding 100 over the weekend. By Monday there were 1,116 confirmed cases in the metropolitan region of 14 million people. Nationwide, Japan has reported 91 deaths from COVID-19 and 3,906 confirmed cases, plus another 712 from a cruise ship that was quarantined earlier at Yokohama port near Tokyo.

Abe has been under pressure to declare a state of emergency to get better compliance with calls for social distancing amid rising alarm over the number of cases without any known contact with other patients.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike welcomed the emergency measures, saying she expects they "will prevail widely and deeply among the people."

Japan's limits on official action during a state of emergency stem from its experience with repression and disasters stemming from fascist governments before and during World War II. The public is doubly wary due to the push by Abe's ultra-conservative ruling party and its supporters for a Constitutional amendment to include a state of emergency clause for disaster and wartime contingencies.

Abe's government is thought to have delayed declaring a state of emergency out of fear of how it might hurt the economy. But as fear of the pandemic has grown, the public and medical experts have increasingly supported taking more drastic action.

The state of emergency includes a stay-at-home request; guidance to schools on temporary closures and requests to close non-essential businesses and stores and to cancel or postpone events and exhibits. Violators cannot be penalized unless they fail to comply with orders on providing or storing emergency relief goods, such as surgical masks and medical equipment.

Still, the state of emergency could significantly limit movement of people around and out of the city. Takahide Kiuchi, an economist at Nomura Research Institute, said in a recent report that a state of emergency could cause consumer spending to fall nearly 2.5 trillion yen (\$23 billion), leading to a 0.4% drop in Japan's annual GDP.

The government overcame controversy over risks to civil rights to gain approval of a special law last Month enabling Abe to declare a state of emergency.

Earlier, Japan sought to curb infections by closely monitoring clusters of cases and keeping them under control, rather than conducting massive testing as was done in neighboring South Korea. That strategy appears to be failing given the sharp rise in cases not linked to previous known infections.

As is true in many places, there are fears over shortages of beds and ICU units for patients with severe symptoms.

Osamu Nishida, chairman of the Japanese Society of Intensive Care Medicine, noted that Japan has only five ICU beds per 100,000 people, compared to 12 in Italy and about 30 in Germany.

Abe has said the central government has secured 25,000 beds and 8,000 ventilators. The health ministry also eased hospitalization requirements for patients with no symptoms or only slight illnesses, allowing their transfer to hotels and other designated lodgings where they can be monitored by medical workers.

That should free up beds for the severely ill, helping ease the strain on the medical system.

Follow Mari Yamaguchi on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/mariyamaguchi>

Mideastern burial traditions clash with fears of contagion

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Mohammed al-Dulfi's 67-year-old father died on March 21 after a brief struggle against the new coronavirus, but it would take nine days for his body to find a final resting place in the Shiite holy city of Najaf in southern Iraq.

On two occasions, the family rejected remote burial plots proposed by the government outside Baghdad for him and seven other coronavirus victims, al-Dulfi said. A fight broke out between the families and the Health Ministry's team. His father's corpse waited in a hospital morgue for days.

"We were suffering immensely, knowing my father was deceased but we could not bury him," said the 26-year-old.

Across the Middle East and parts of South Asia, bereaved families have faced traumatic restrictions on burying their dead amid the pandemic. Religion and customs that require speedy burials in the largely Muslim region have clashed with fears of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, and government-mandated lockdowns.

As the regional death toll surpasses 4,500, ancient rituals — bodies solemnly washed by relatives, wrapped in white shrouds and buried as quickly as possible with large crowds of mourners in attendance — are being disrupted by the growing outbreak.

In Egypt, where funerals were once an affair bringing dozens of families together in prayer, strict limits have put a cap on attendees. With faces covered in masks, they now bid farewell to loved ones interred in bags stamped "Danger!"

Religious customs are also being upended in Iran, Pakistan and majority-Jewish Israel, where swift burials and large crowds of mourners are also a tradition.

The World Health Organization says in guidelines similar to those issued during the Ebola epidemic that handling of the dead should be minimal and that trained medical teams should perform burials, according to Adham Rashad Ismail, the agency's head of mission in Iraq.

In the Middle East, this often means religious rites must be modified or canceled.

In Iran, Health Ministry guidelines starkly show how concerned the Islamic Republic remains about the virus, even from the dead. The country has the highest death toll in the region with over 3,700 deaths among over 60,500 confirmed cases.

Once disinfected, the corpse is wrapped in a plastic bag, then carried to a grave site with pallbearers wearing protective gear. The body is interred in a grave sprinkled with lime and buried in concrete. Iran's state TV recently showed images of clerics wearing special protective suits while performing Islamic burial rituals for victims.

"We want to make sure that our fellow countrymen are not buried without bathing and being wrapped in shrouds," said a volunteer at one of these televised funerals describing widely-observed practices.

In Egypt, no one is allowed to attend the washing rite except health workers, and those present must wear protective gear and keep at a one-meter distance from the body, according to an internal document obtained by The Associated Press.

The funeral of Attiyat Ibrahim, the country's first coronavirus victim, was held amid tight security. Only family members were allowed to come to the service in the Nile Delta province of Daqahlia, said Ramadan Mohammed, a village driver.

"There was no funeral prayer call," Mohammed said. "Police were everywhere, watching and urging people not to stay in groups."

Further east, in Pakistan, families are allowed to take the bodies to graveyards in their villages but not inside their homes, which is a tradition in the South Asian country.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 40 of 81

In Iraq, where over 60 people have died from the virus, some bodies waited several weeks for interment as government epidemic protocols sparked public vitriol.

Baghdad and other provinces initially identified remote burial plots on the peripheries of cities. But families argued that burying their loved ones in such sites was undignified; most Iraqis inter their dead in cemeteries near holy shrines where they can return to pay homage.

Some families spurned the government's rules entirely. In one instance, relatives snatched two corpses from an unwitting medical team near Baghdad ahead of burial and sped off, according to a police report on March 28. The bodies were later recovered.

In the southern province of Muthana, one family falsified documents of a dead virus victim to say he had died of heart disease, then exhumed the body from the government-designated zone and brought it to Najaf for burial, a government official in the province said.

The official was flummoxed when he learned of the forgery after the second burial. "I don't know whether to remove the body or not," he said, requesting anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the case.

In the case of al-Dulfi, the family argued with health officials until mobilizing support from Iraq's top Shiite cleric. He decreed that all eight bodies could be buried in a plot near Najaf's Wadi as-Salam cemetery, the final resting place of choice for pious Shiites.

Ismail, the WHO head of mission, said "cultural attitudes" had posed a challenge for the government. By early April, the government rescinded the protocols and burials went ahead in Wadi as-Salam "or in any cemetery the family wants," Ismail said.

For those with loved ones lost, like al-Dulfi, the victory was bitter-sweet.

"Which Islam is this that prohibits a burial, even during a pandemic? Where is the religion in that?" he said.

Associated Press writers Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Ebrahim Noroozi in Tehran, Iran; Sam Magdy in Cairo; Aron Heller in Jerusalem and Mohammed Riaz in Peshawar, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

Celebrities reveal new sides during virus, but face backlash

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

Portia de Rossi has been teaching herself how to cook during the coronavirus lockdown. It's been an eye-opening experience for the actress — and for her fans.

She's cut herself and been burned, yes. She's also discovered she doesn't like some Indian flavors and that her longtime wife, talk show host Ellen Degeneres, isn't a fan of curry and garbanzo beans.

"We're learning a lot about each other in quarantine!" she admits on Instagram.

We are indeed learning a lot about each other these days, and that's especially true with our celebrities. Social distancing has meant they have no army of publicists or glam squad. They're bored and unfiltered — and often incredibly relatable.

Cardi B recently inexplicably ran headfirst into a massive Jenga tower and a daffy Madonna sang her hit "Vogue" into a hairbrush but changed the lyrics to include fried fish. Hillary Swank learned to crochet — and now has a new knit hat to prove it. Ariana Grande showed off her natural hair and Marlee Matlin put on her old wedding dress. "I'm losing my mind but what else is there to do?" she wrote.

Stuck inside, Justin Bieber reverted to a childhood objective. Clad in a onesie and a winter hat, the singer attempted a round of "The Floor Is Lava" in his massive living room, leaping onto cushions, chairs, foot stools, two skateboards and a roller. The video has been seen over 9 million times.

"I think now people need the human touch even more, and I think celebrities really understand that," says Neal Schaffer, a social media strategy consultant whose new book is "The Age of Influence." "People want to relate to real things, real people."

While some influencers and stars continue to post a flood of flattering, carefully stage-managed images with every hair in place, others are indeed mirroring us — unshaven, unwashed and not ashamed.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 41 of 81

"When I drink, I get really, really brilliant ideas," the singer Pink confessed recently. "And last night, I got an idea — I can cut hair." She then reveals some choppy, shaved spots on her head.

Celebrities, it turns out, really are just like us: They get drunk and do stupid stuff, too. And they're like us in another way, too: Pink later announced that she also had contracted the virus.

The coronavirus has also unlocked places we never expected to go, like Selena Gomez's bathroom and inside Broadway star Adrienne Warren's bathtub. We've gotten to inspect Rosie O'Donnell's messy garage/art studio.

Theater icon Patti LuPone was taking part in a livestreamed benefit led by O'Donnell when theater fans grew enchanted by something they'd never seen before: Lupone's cool basement. They could see a colorful, light-up vintage jukebox and a wall rack stacked with cassette tapes.

So LuPone leaned into the interest, later making little video tours on Twitter that include her subterranean one-armed bandit, a massage table, mementos, her desk and a pinball machine. "I have so much to show you," she says.

Yuval Ben-Itzhak, the CEO of Socialbakers, a social media marketing company, has noticed the trend and encourages it. He suspects fans will reward the more honest of celebrities at the other end of this crisis.

"By giving their audience a glimpse into their lives — from showing their homes, their families or themselves looking casual, like people typically do at home — celebrities are likely to actually increase their engagement," Ben-Itzhak says. "Users seem to really engage with natural, authentic-looking content, especially right now. It gives a feeling of 'We're all in this together.'"

We may be all in this together, but we're not equal. After all, celebs may be just like us, except they're usually much richer. The new intimate view we have of the famous reveals a chasm: Bieber's living room is large enough to fit several regular living rooms. Not everyone can self-isolate on a yacht.

A few weeks into the virus' onslaught in America, some commentators had soured on the shenanigans of celebrities. "I don't care what celebs are doing in their mansions," one wrote on Instagram. Another posted a warning: "Funny how irrelevant they become when real problems curse us."

The first real sign that celebrity exposure was curdling was when "Wonder Woman" star Gal Gadot led a sing-along of "Imagine" with such stars as James Marsden, Zoe Kravitz, Amy Adams and Mark Ruffalo. Pushback came quickly, with some commentators calling it "cringeworthy" and "out of touch." They asked for donations, not songs.

Akshaya Sreenivasan, a social media marketing expert at Texas A&M University's Mays Business School, says as the COVID-19 crisis drags on, celebrities are bound to face more online hate.

"Even Oprah is not going to be immune," she says. "The big guys in Hollywood are going to be shredded to pieces, especially if they continue to post on Instagram, 'Oh my God, I'm so bored. I'm drinking martinis in my private pool.'"

Sreenivasan anticipates some celebs will lose followers if they continue posting without sensitivity to the losses outside their mansions. And she thinks many will open their wallets to compensate for all the years of Instagram glam. "They need to do something to protect that brand," she says.

There's also danger if celebrities unartfully choose to profit off the virus. Social media experts warn that this may not be the time to be pushing products for gain.

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson walks toward that line when he relentlessly floods his Instagram account to highlight and hype the brand of tequila he owns.

"You really need to be sensitive to your audience, and you need to be very careful if you want to walk that line," says Schaffer. "It is a dangerous subject. A celebrity is only as good as their community. It can work against them as quickly as it works for them."

Despite this new and unvarnished look at celebs and the pushback it has triggered, Sreenivasan is skeptical that anything will really change once normal life resumes.

"We've had this conversation forever," she says. "We're going to move on until the next problem comes, and we'll have this inequality conversation again."

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>

Hackers' new target during pandemic: video conference calls

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and AARON MORRISON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ceri Weber had just begun to defend her dissertation when the chaos began: Echoes and voices interrupted her. Someone parroted her words. Then Britney Spears music came on, and someone told Weber to shut up. Someone threatened to rape her.

Hackers had targeted the meeting on the video conference platform Zoom while Weber was completing the final step of her doctoral degree at Duke University. The harassment lasted 10 minutes — the result of an increasingly common form of cyber attack known as "Zoom bombing."

As tens of millions of people turn to video conferencing to stay connected during the coronavirus pandemic, many have reported uninvited guests who make threats, interject racist, anti-gay or anti-Semitic messages, or show pornographic images. The attacks have drawn the attention of the FBI and other law enforcement agencies.

"It seemed like someone was just being silly," but then the intrusions "started to get more serious and threatening," Weber recalled. "I was really in the zone and kept presenting." She said she was more concerned about others in the chat who could have been scared. She was interrupted despite having selected "mute all" in the settings for the meeting she conducted from her home in Durham, North Carolina.

A Massachusetts high school reported that someone interrupted a virtual class on Zoom, yelled profanity and revealed the teacher's home address. Another school in that state reported a person who accessed a meeting and showed swastika tattoos, according to the FBI.

The agency's field office in Boston recommended that users of video-teleconference platforms prioritize their security by ensuring that hosts have sole control over screen-sharing features and meeting invitations.

In New York, Attorney General Letitia James sent a letter to Zoom with questions about how users' privacy and security are being protected. In a separate letter, Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut sought information about how the company handles users' personal data and guards against security threats and abuse.

Zoom has referred to trolls as "party crashers," which some critics have taken as a sign the company is downplaying the attacks.

In a statement issued last week, the company told The Associated Press it takes the security of meetings seriously and encourages users to report any incidents directly to Zoom. The company suggested that people hosting large, public meetings confirm that they are the only ones who can share their screen and use features like mute controls.

"For those hosting private meetings, password protections are on by default, and we recommend that users keep those protections on to prevent uninvited users from joining," the company said. Zoom recently updated the default screen-sharing settings for education users so that teachers are by default the only ones who can share content.

Despite the update, Nevada's Clark County School District, which includes all public schools in Las Vegas, and the New York City Department of Education, which is responsible for the largest school district in the U.S., have told teachers to stop using Zoom.

Zoom-bombing was always a threat given how the video conferencing app was configured — geared more toward user-friendliness than privacy, said Justin Brookman, director of privacy and technology policy at Consumer Reports.

When shelter-at-home mandates suddenly converted Zoom into a lifeline for tens of millions of families, it became a juicy target for mischief, he said.

For years, "the usability issues outweighed the potential security issues because society was less reliant on them. Obviously, that has changed dramatically over the last month," Brookman added.

Some Zoom-bombers have been able to randomly guess meeting IDs and crash conferences not configured to keep out interlopers, he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 43 of 81

In other cases, inexperienced users have exposed meeting IDs online, including U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who tweeted a screenshot of a Zoom Cabinet meeting that showed the ID and everyone's screen name.

Brookman said Zoom can do more to boost privacy protections for a massive user base that now ranges from elementary school children to senior citizens discussing their wills with attorneys.

"A lot of people, including us, are critical of how they enable hosts to surveil users to make sure they are paying attention to the screen, or reading DMs or recording the call when it's not entirely clear," Brookman said.

A mother in Georgia told a local TV station that her son was "embarrassed and a little hysterical" after someone hacked into his online class and showed pornography to the children and teacher.

The Rev. Jason Wells was holding a publicly advertised forum recently on Zoom when a troll entered and used the chat box to post a racial slur so many times that it made the feature unusable for other participants.

"I would not say this was a random vandal hoping to interrupt somebody," said Wells, who is executive director of the New Hampshire Council of Churches in Concord and co-chair of a state chapter of the Poor People's Campaign, part of a movement pioneered by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. The intruder was eventually removed and blocked.

As the Rev. Laura Everett delivered a sermon via Zoom for Boston's First Baptist Church, a user who had seen the church service advertised entered the video conferencing session and shouted homophobic and racist slurs. Everett said she had tweeted the link to the sermon because she wanted "the doors of the church to be open to every weary soul who is looking for a word of comfort."

"This was, for all intents and purposes, a house of worship that was violated," she said. "Zoom and every other business bears the primary responsibility for users' safety."

In Oakland, California, Malachi Garza reported an attack on a Zoom conference she hosted for roughly 200 participants, including formerly incarcerated people who have experience with solitary confinement and are struggling with the pandemic's stay-home orders.

The conference organized by the philanthropic Solidare Network was interrupted by racist, anti-transgender language, and pornographic images were flashed on a shared screen.

Zoom needs to "tell the truth and call this what it really is," Garza said. "It's racial terror, not party crashers."

Morrison reported from New York. Associated Press Technology Writer Frank Bajak in Boston also contributed to this report.

Lives Lost: A mismatched pair's love story ends with virus

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

He was a by-the-book, buttoned-up conservative whose opinions could be quick and blunt. She was a free-thinking, authority-snubbing liberal who would draw stories out in meandering conversation.

In the pain of broken marriages, Edward Porco and Joan Powers found new life in each other, however mismatched they might seem. And as the coronavirus pandemic consumed the world, they both fell victim to it.

"This was such a unique love," says Julia Chachere, the daughter of Joan, who was 90, and stepdaughter of Ed, who was 89. "And it nurtured and fed them both so well right up until the end."

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people around the world who have died during the new coronavirus pandemic.

The pair met on New Year's Eve in 1959, at a party with pulsating Latin music and an Episcopal priest at the drums. They found themselves in a heated political discussion that bared the truth to Joan.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 44 of 81

"No doubt about it," she would later write, "the man was both Republican and conservative, anathema to me."

Whatever political distance between them, Joan and her then-husband and Edward and his then-wife became friends in the years that followed. When those marriages eventually unraveled, they had in one another a listening ear. And, in time, they were taken aback when it grew to something more.

"It was a surprise to both of them," says Matthew Chachere, another child of Joan and stepson of Ed.

Here she was, a Brooklyn-born Jewish girl who saw an idol in FDR and a home in protests, a methodical, thoughtful teacher-turned-reporter-turned-therapist who never let a rule get in her way.

Here he was, a Bronx-born Italian boy, a commodities broker and Republican committeeman who'd cheer the likes of Richard Nixon, who prized punctuality and planning and order.

And they were in love.

"There was so much mutual respect for their differences," Julia says of the couple, who spent their final years in Greenport, New York, a village on Long Island. "They didn't try to change the essence of who the other was."

They wed in a simple ceremony on Nov. 18, 1977, at the Nassau County Courthouse, but the marriage brought no immediate end to their differences. She could be messy; he made sure even his tackle box was picture-perfect. She would drape herself in bright splashes from thrift store racks; he was colorblind and sometimes plain. She would wander wherever she pleased — be it a stranger's yard or an abandoned home or Bernie Madoff's estate — while he would shudder at the thought.

Sixteen months into their marriage, Joan summed up where things stood in her poetry, a passion she began turning to after a daughter's suicide. She titled it: "To Edward, In Celebration."

It went: "We are so different, you and I / But there is that part of us / Where the I and the Thou can meet / And by this convergence / Provide the manna / To feed our unique selves."

To the end, they savored their individuality, but some things that separated them faded. Ed even was coaxed from his staunch Republican roots to be found beside his wife volunteering at campaign phone banks for candidates whose party affiliations would've made him gasp decades earlier.

They traveled voraciously on hiking trips, returning to Montauk, Long Island, which they adored and worked to protect. They hung a driftwood sign outside their home with the name they gave it: "Gaudemus," Latin for "Let us rejoice."

He sang Italian songs in the shower; she'd concoct a silly dance for a grandchild. He went back to school to study history; she took up a new instrument, the hammered dulcimer.

He called her "baby," and stared at her like he was a smitten teenager. When a reporter for the local news website Patch visited with them four years ago for a Valentine's Day feature, she found them finishing one another's sentences, holding hands, laughing and hugging.

"He's the most important part of my life," Joan said as Ed took her hand and said: "She completes me."

They moved to a retirement community apartment and Alzheimer's began to rob Joan of the words she so effortlessly put to paper or pursed lips. Ed diligently tended to her every need. Time brought another level of patience in him, and a new dose of sweetness in her. Six months ago, she moved to a nursing home in the same complex. Ed visited every day, reading her poetry or the newspaper.

No one expected the end the way it came, a blur of rising fevers and careening ambulances and whooshing ventilators. Ed died on March 24 and Joan four days later, each of them alone in different hospitals. Neither knew the other's fate. Julia thinks it was better that way.

Matt Sedensky can be reached at msedensky@ap.org or, on Twitter, at [@sedensky](https://twitter.com/sedensky).

Congress, White House reach high for next virus bill

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional leaders are jolting ahead with another coronavirus rescue package as President Donald Trump indicated that Americans will need more aid during the stark pandemic and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 45 of 81

economic shutdown.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said another \$1 trillion is needed, beyond the just-passed \$2.2 trillion effort. She wants another round of direct payments to Americans and more money for companies to keep making payroll. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said in recent days that health care should top the list, signaling his intent to get to work on a new bill.

"We're going to take good care of our people," Trump said Monday at his daily White House briefing. "It was not their fault."

It's a rare sign of emerging consensus as Washington responds to the public health emergency and severe economic fallout that is ransacking communities nationwide, a crisis on par with a war effort or the Great Depression.

The contours of the package are still being debated and any votes in Congress remain a logistical conundrum. The House and Senate adjourned for most of the month, as part of strict stay-at-home orders from public health officials to prevent the spread of the highly contagious virus.

On an afternoon conference call with House Democrats, Pelosi told lawmakers at least another \$1 trillion would be needed, according to a person unauthorized to discuss the call and granted anonymity.

The California Democrat has vowed to put the next package together in time for a House vote this month. Former Federal Reserve chief Janet Yellen joined the private call and warned Democrats the economic fallout will depend on the public health response to the pandemic, the person said. As businesses shutter to stop the virus' spread, it has hurled the U.S. economy toward a recession.

Yellen said it was impossible to know how deep and long the recession would be, and added that it would depend on the health response.

The former Fed chair also told them the nation's unemployment rate is now at least 13% and this week's jobless report will show higher numbers than last week's.

Yellen said she expects a 30 percent contraction of GDP this year, but has seen models as high as 50 percent, according to a Democratic aide unauthorized to discuss the call and granted anonymity.

The earlier relief package, approved in late March, included one-time \$1,200 direct payments to Americans, along with forgivable small business loans for companies to keep making payroll. It also included a boost of unemployment pay, money for hospitals and a \$500 billion fund for bigger corporations and industries.

Pelosi told Democrats said the \$1,200 direct payments to Americans and the paycheck protection program for small businesses are not enough and more needs to be done, the person said.

She also said there needs to be more aid through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps.

Trump has favored direct checks to Americans, and gave a nod to another round in the next package. "It is absolutely under serious consideration," he said.

The shifts from the political leaders are stark amid what officials warn could be one of the toughest weeks for the country, as the number of confirmed cases and deaths climbs.

McConnell told The Associated Press on Friday that there will be another package and health care must be at the "top of the list."

McConnell, R-Ky., said Congress should focus on correcting any shortcomings in the earlier \$2.2 trillion aid bill and rely on health care experts for solutions to "wipe out" the virus.

Pelosi, D-Calif., last week also backed off her more sweeping proposals for an infrastructure package to put people back to work, focusing on the more immediate health care and economic needs.

As governors plead for federal intervention to provide hard-hit hospitals in New York and elsewhere with vital medical ventilators, equipment and supplies, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer called for a better-coordinated effort to care for the many sick people.

Schumer told reporters on a conference call Monday that he's urging the White House to appoint a single, well-qualified "czar" to handle both the production and distribution of medical supplies and equipment to fight the pandemic.

Right now, Schumer said, governors and other officials have no choice but to search out materials helter-skelter.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 46 of 81

"Everyone's hunting and pecking for the equipment and the supplies they need," he said. "It's just not working. It's like a scavenger hunt for their lives."

Schumer, D-N.Y., said he spoke to both Vice President Mike Pence and new White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and suggested three potential candidates for the job: two former vice chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, retired Air Force Gen. Paul Selva and retired Adm. James A. Winnefield, and retired Vice Adm. Mark Harnitchek, former director of the Defense Logistics Agency.

Trump, displeased with Schumer's effort, accused the senator of being overtly political.

This would be the fourth package from Congress since the start of the virus outbreak. Two initial efforts were followed by the third last month, which was by far the largest, the most ambitious of its kind in U.S. history. With so much federal aid expected to be pushed so quickly to the public, Congress is also trying to swiftly stand up oversight panels.

Pelosi late last week announced the formation of a House select committee with subpoena power to monitor the decision-making and cash flow.

A broader oversight board is being formed to track the Treasury Department's dispersal of the aid to businesses, particularly the more than \$500 billion in corporate and industry aid under Secretary Steven Mnuchin's discretion.

Schumer named a top economic adviser to Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Bharat Ramamurti, as his choice for the pandemic response accountability committee established by recently passed legislation.

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Laurie Kellman contributed to this report.

Navy leader calls fired carrier captain 'naive' or 'stupid'

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an extraordinary broadside punctuated with profanity, the Navy's top leader accused the fired commander of the coronavirus-stricken USS Theodore Roosevelt of being "too naive or too stupid" to be in charge of an aircraft carrier. He delivered the criticism to sailors who had cheered the departing skipper last week.

Hours after the remark was widely reported in the news media, acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly issued a written public apology, saying he does not believe Capt. Brett E. Crozier is stupid or naive.

"I apologize for any confusion this choice of words may have caused," Modly wrote late Monday evening, referring to his speech aboard the Roosevelt on Sunday. "I also want to apologize directly to Captain Crozier, his family, and the entire crew of the Theodore Roosevelt for any pain my remarks may have caused."

According to a person familiar with the conversation, Defense Secretary Mark Esper's staff told Modly he must apologize. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a private conversation.

Modly had flown to Guam over the weekend and went aboard the carrier to deliver a lengthy and passionate speech. Crew members are being taken off the ship to be tested for the coronavirus. At least 173 sailors aboard the ship have tested positive, as of Monday, and about 2,000 of the 4,865 crew members had been taken off. The Navy has offered no estimate of when the ship might return to duty.

While skewering Crozier, Modly also admonished the crew. He suggested that by cheering Crozier when he departed the carrier last week, they were overlooking their most basic duty to defend U.S. interests.

"So think about that when you cheer the man off the ship who exposed you to that," he said. "I understand you love the guy. It's good that you love him. But you're not required to love him."

President Donald Trump on Monday said he may get involved, agreeing that Modly's criticism of Crozier was "a rough statement." He said Crozier made a mistake when he sent a memo to several people laying out his concerns about the crew and the virus. The memo was leaked to the media.

Trump said Crozier had a good career prior to this incident, adding, "I don't want to destroy somebody for having a bad day."

Modly relieved Crozier of command of the ship last week, saying he had lost confidence in him for having shown "extremely poor judgment" in widely distributing the memo pleading for an accelerated evacuation

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 47 of 81

of the crew to protect their health. The dismissal quickly turned into a hot political issue, with Democrats saying Crozier was wrongly fired for defending his sailors, and Trump denouncing Crozier and backing Modly.

In his apology Monday night, Modly said he believes Crozier is "smart and passionate."

"I believe, precisely because he is not naive and stupid, that he sent his alarming email with the intention of getting it into the public domain in an effort to draw public attention to the situation on his ship," Modly wrote.

Speaking on the ship, Modly urged the crew to stop complaining about their predicament, which he said made the Navy look weak. He suggested that some aboard the Roosevelt, including Crozier, had forgotten what matters most.

"It is the mission of the ship that matters," he said. "You all know this, but in my view your Captain lost sight of this and he compromised critical information about your status intentionally to draw greater attention to your situation."

U.S. officials said Navy leaders, including Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, argued that an investigation should be done before taking action. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

The Sunday comments by Modly added fuel to the political fire, with at least one member of Congress urging he be fired.

An unofficial transcript of Modly's remarks, as well as an audio recording, circulated widely on the internet Monday — demonstrating the slippery landscape that Modly accused Crozier of failing to navigate.

Modly, a 1983 Naval Academy graduate, became the acting Navy secretary last November after Richard Spencer was ousted from the position. Trump last month nominated retired Rear Adm. Kenneth Braithwaite, the current ambassador to Norway, to be the next Navy secretary.

In his remarks aboard the Roosevelt, Modly raised issues likely to please Trump. He accused the news media, for example, of manipulating a political agenda to divide the country and embarrass the Navy. He said China "was not forthcoming" about coronavirus when it began spreading there months ago, echoing Trump's oft-repeated statement that China could have done more to prevent a pandemic.

And Modly invoked the name of Trump's chief Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, noting that the former vice president had said Modly's decision to fire Crozier was almost criminal. "I assure you it was not," Modly said.

Modly said Crozier should have known his letter would leak to the media, allowing information about the ship's compromised condition to be published. If Crozier didn't think this would be the result, he was "too naive or too stupid to be a commanding officer of a ship like this."

He also accused Crozier of betraying his duty as an officer. "And I can tell you one other thing, because he did that he put it in the public's forum and it's now become a big controversy in Washington D.C., and across the country," Modly said.

Shortly after reports of Modly's accusations against Crozier began circulating in the news media Monday morning, some Democrats fired back.

"Based on the transcript I've read, Secretary Modly's comments were completely inappropriate and beneath the office of the Secretary of the Navy," Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia said in a statement. "It's deeply disappointing that he would deliver a speech on board a U.S. aircraft carrier suggesting that Captain Crozier might be 'stupid' and bashing the media for trying to report the truth. These dedicated sailors deserve better from their leadership."

Rep. Elaine Luria, a Virginia Democrat and Navy veteran, called for Modly to be fired, saying his remarks show he is "in no way fit" to lead the Navy.

Asked Monday afternoon whether Esper still had full confidence in Modly, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman declined to discuss the matter.

Gilday has ordered an investigation into the matter, and the report by Adm. Robert Burke, the vice chief of naval operations, was initially expected Monday. Gilday has approved an extension and the report is now expected by week's end.

Modeling coronavirus: 'Uncertainty is the only certainty'

By **SETH BORENSTEIN** and **CARLA K. JOHNSON** Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A statistical model cited by the White House generated a slightly less grim figure Monday for a first wave of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. — a projection designed to help officials plan for the worst, including having enough hospital staff, beds and ventilators.

The only problem with this bit of relatively good news? It's almost certainly wrong. All models are wrong. Some are just less wrong than others — and those are the ones that public health officials rely on.

Welcome to the grimace-and-bear-it world of modeling.

"The key thing is that you want to know what's happening in the future," said NASA top climate modeler Gavin Schmidt. "Absent a time machine you're going to have to use a model."

Weather forecasters use models. Climate scientists use them. Supermarkets use them.

As leaders try to get a handle on the coronavirus outbreak, they are turning to numerous mathematical models to help them figure out what might — key word, might — happen next and what they should try to do now to contain and prepare for the spread.

The model updated this week by the University of Washington — the one most often mentioned by U.S. health officials at White House briefings — predicts daily deaths in the U.S. will hit a peak in mid-April then decline through the summer.

Their latest projection shows that anywhere from 49,431 to 136,401 Americans will die in the first wave, which will last into the summer. That's a huge range of 87,000. But only a few days earlier the same team had a range of nearly 138,000, with 177,866 as the top number of deaths. Officials credit social distancing.

The latest calculations are based on better data on how the virus acts, more information on how people act and more cities as examples. For example, new data from Italy and Spain suggest social distancing is working even better than expected to stop the spread of the virus.

The time it took for the epidemic to peak — that is, for those deaths to start declining — was shorter in those Italian and Spanish cities than it was Wuhan, China, said Dr. Christopher Murray of the University of Washington, who developed the model.

So how does modeling work? Take everything we know about how the coronavirus is spreading, when it's deadly and when it's not, when symptoms show and when they don't.

Then factor in everything we know about how people are reacting, social distancing, stay-at-home orders and other squishy human factors.

Now add everything we know about testing, treating the disease and equipment shortages. Finally, mix in large dollops of uncertainty at every level.

Squeeze all those thousands of data points into incredibly complex mathematical equations and voila, here's what's going to happen next with the pandemic. Except, remember, there's a huge margin of error: For the prediction of U.S. deaths, the range is larger than the population of Wilmington, Delaware.

"No model is perfect, but most models are somewhat useful," said John Allen Paulos, a professor of math at Temple University and author of several books about math and everyday life. "But we can't confuse the model with reality."

One challenge for modelers is dealing with seesawing death totals from overburdened public health departments. A state's data might show big swings in deaths — but only because a backlog of reports showed up all at once. The tremendous leaps in deaths in a single day could throw off predictions.

Another problem, said University of Texas disease modeler Lauren Meyer, is that most of the pandemic models, including hers, are based on how influenza acts, and that is different from this new coronavirus.

Most models use calculus to factor in "things you can't predict," Meyer said. To her, they are simple equations, ones that a person who knows advanced calculus can figure out. To the rest of the world, it's Greek. Literally full of sigmas, phis, omegas and other symbols.

Even with all of the uncertainty, "it's much better than shooting from the hip," said Meyer, who is churning out iterations of what she calls a "workhorse model" of COVID-19 for the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention. "Data-driven models are the best evidence we have."

Because of the large fudge factor, it's smart not to look at one single number — the minimum number of deaths, or the maximum for that matter — but instead at the range of confidence, where there's a 95% chance reality will fall, mathematician Paulos said. For the University of Washington model, that's from 50,000 to 136,000 deaths.

Uncertainty will shrink with time, but never really go away — just like in hurricane forecasts, when the cone of uncertainty shrinks as the storm gets closer to making landfall, but remains large.

"Uncertainty is the only certainty there is," Paulos said. "And knowing how to live with insecurity is the only security."

Borenstein reported from Kensington, Maryland.

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.

Asian shares rise, echoing Wall St optimism on virus battle

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares rose Tuesday, echoing the rally on Wall Street, amid a few glimmers of hope that the coronavirus pandemic could be slowing.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 1.3% to 18,808.53 while South Korea's Kospi gained 1.2% to 1,812.87. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.7% to 23,907.52, while the Shanghai Composite jumped 1.7% to 2,814.09.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged 0.3% lower to 5,297.90. Shares rose in Taiwan and most of Southeast Asia, but fell 0.9% in Indonesia.

China on Tuesday reported no new deaths from the coronavirus over the past 24 hours and had 32 new cases, all from people who returned from overseas. The country that gave rise to the global pandemic has recorded 3,331 deaths and 81,740 total cases. Numbers of daily new deaths have been hovering in the single digits for weeks, hitting just one on several occasions.

The number of new coronavirus cases is dropping in the European hotspots of Italy and Spain. The center of the U.S. outbreak, New York, also reported its number of daily deaths has been effectively flat for two days. Even though the U.S. is still bracing for a surge of deaths due to COVID-19 and New York's governor said restrictions should stay in place to slow its spread, the encouraging signs were enough to launch the S&P 500 to its best day in nearly two weeks.

"We're running on raw optimism, maybe that's the best way to put it," said Randy Frederick, vice president of trading and derivatives at Schwab Center for Financial Research.

Investors have been waiting anxiously for signs that the rate of new infections may be hitting its peak, which would give some clarity about how long the upcoming recession will last and how deep it will be. Without that, markets have been guessing about how long businesses will remain shut down, companies will lay off workers and flights remain canceled due to measures meant to slow the speed of the outbreak.

"The virus is not everything, it's the only thing, and nothing else really matters" to the markets, Frederick said, particularly in a week that is relatively light on economic reports.

The S&P 500 climbed 175.03, or 7%, to 2,663.68, and nearly all the stocks in the index were higher. It more than recovered all its losses from the prior week, when the government reported a record number of layoffs sweeping the economy.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average shot up 1,627.46 points, or 7.7%, to 22,679.99, and the Nasdaq rose 540.15, or 7.3%, to 7,913.24.

The latest gains are not likely to have much staying power, given how much uncertainty remains about when the pandemic will subside significantly and how much harm will have been inflicted to the economy, said Nela Richardson, investment strategist at Edward Jones.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 50 of 81

"It's not unusual, if you look back historically, within bear markets to have rallies," Richardson said. "I wouldn't take the uptick over the last two weeks as a sign of a bottoming or a sign of upside recovery from here on out. There's still a lot of uncertainty to get through even as we're hopefully nearing the peak in terms of new coronavirus cases."

The S&P 500 is still down more than 21% since its record set in February, but the losses have been slowing since Washington promised massive amounts of aid to prop up the economy.

"Since this is a public health crisis, the response has been extreme," Morgan Stanley strategists wrote in a report. "There are literally no governors on the amount of monetary or fiscal stimulus that will be used in this fight."

Japan is set to announce a 108 trillion yen (\$1 trillion) package to support the world's third-largest economy, including cash handouts to needy families and help for small businesses. The plan is due to be outlined Tuesday, when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is expected to announce a state of emergency that will ramp up precautions meant to curb the rapid spread of the virus.

ENERGY: Expectations have risen that Saudi Arabia and Russia may cut back on some of their production. Demand for oil has plummeted due to the weakening economy, and any cutback in production would help prop up its price. A meeting between OPEC, Russia and other producers initially planned for Monday was reportedly pushed back to Thursday.

Benchmark U.S. crude added 88 cents to \$26.96 a barrel. It fell \$2.26, or 8%, to settle as \$26.08 a barrel after surging nearly \$7 last week. It started the year above \$60 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 90 cents \$33.95 a barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 108.94 yen from 109.24 yen Monday. The euro rose to \$1.0808 from \$1.0792.

AP Business Writers Stan Choe and Alex Veiga contributed.

Wisconsin moves forward with election despite virus concerns

By **SCOTT BAUER** and **STEVE PEOPLES** Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Voters in Wisconsin will face a choice Tuesday of participating in a presidential primary election or heeding warnings from public health officials to stay away from large crowds during the coronavirus pandemic.

Hours after Democratic Gov. Tony Evers issued an order postponing the election for two months, the conservative-controlled Wisconsin Supreme Court on Monday sided with Republicans who said he didn't have the authority to reschedule the race on his own. Conservative justices on the U.S. Supreme Court quickly followed with a ruling blocking Democratic efforts to extend absentee voting.

The decisions leave Wisconsin as the only state with an election scheduled in April that is proceeding as planned. As other states prepare to vote in May or June, Wisconsin will be closely watched for signs that fears of the coronavirus may depress turnout or cause other problems at the polls.

Evers said he had no other options after the state court ruled against him.

"There's not a Plan B. There's not a Plan C," Evers said earlier Monday.

Joe Biden already has a commanding delegate lead over Bernie Sanders and the Wisconsin results aren't likely to slow his march to the Democratic presidential nomination. But the tumult in one of the most critical general election battlegrounds was a reminder of how the coronavirus has upended politics during an election year. Beyond the shifts in the primary calendar, Biden and President Donald Trump have not been able to hold in-person campaign events and have moved most of their operations online. Sanders called Tuesday's election "dangerous" and said his campaign will not engage in any traditional get-out-the-vote efforts.

The tension in Wisconsin over whether and how to proceed with the election has been building for weeks. Evers and Republicans initially agreed it was imperative for the election to proceed because thousands of local offices are on the ballot Tuesday for terms that begin in two weeks. There is also a state Supreme

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 51 of 81

Court election.

Evers himself had questioned whether he had the power to reschedule the election, but said the worsening situation, including an increase in COVID-19 deaths from 56 on Friday to 77 on Monday, made clear there was no way to safely move forward. Evers said he sought the delay because he was motivated by protecting public health, not politics.

"The people of Wisconsin, the majority of them, don't spend all their waking hours thinking about are Republicans or Democrats getting the upper hand here," Evers said earlier Monday. "They're saying they're scared. They're scared of going to the polls."

He was thwarted by conservatives on two courts. The Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled 4-2, with four conservatives in support and two liberals against, that Evers lacked the authority to move the election on his own.

The U.S. Supreme Court split 5-4, with the five Republican-appointed justices siding with the national and state party to overturn a lower court ruling that expanded absentee voting. In an unsigned opinion, the court said absentee ballots must be hand-delivered by Tuesday evening or postmarked by Tuesday, although they can arrive at clerks' offices as late as April 13.

In dissent, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote for her liberal colleagues that the lower court acted amid the virus outbreak "to safeguard the availability of absentee voting in Wisconsin's spring election. This Court now intervenes at the eleventh hour to prevent voters who have timely requested absentee ballots from casting their votes."

Ginsburg said the coronavirus outbreak had caused a surge in absentee ballot requests and thousands of voters who requested them will not have received their ballots by Tuesday. "The Court's order, I fear, will result in massive disenfranchisement," she wrote.

As of Monday, nearly 1.3 million absentee ballots had been requested but only about 57% of those had been returned. It's unclear how many of the outstanding 539,000 ballots will be in voters' hands by Tuesday to meet the April 7 postmark deadline.

The conservatives said "the dissent's rhetoric is entirely misplaced and completely overlooks the fact that the deadline for receiving ballots was already extended to accommodate Wisconsin voters, from April 7 to April 13."

Wisconsin Democratic state Sen. Jon Erpenbach said Republicans fought efforts to delay the election because they want to suppress turnout, particularly in Democrat-heavy Milwaukee, because that will benefit Republicans.

"Democrats have always been good about getting out the vote on the day of," Erpenbach said. "If you're looking at the newspapers, watching TV, you know right now it's dangerous."

Democratic U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan said the U.S. Supreme Court's was "brazenly suppressing thousands of voters in Wisconsin."

"This is NOT how democracy works," Pocan tweeted.

Ohio saw a similar eleventh-hour flurry the day before its primary last month. After the Republican governor and secretary of state failed to persuade a judge to shift the election date, the state health director stepped in and ordered voting shut down. Legislators set a new, almost all-mail primary for April 28, sparking new legal challenges from voting rights groups, but a federal judge on Friday said the election could go forward.

Ahead of the Wisconsin primary, thousands of poll workers said they wouldn't work, leading Milwaukee to reduce its planned number of polling sites from 180 to just five. More than 2,500 National Guard troops were dispatched to staff the polls. They were also distributing supplies, including hand sanitizer, to polling sites across the state. In Madison, city workers were erecting Plexiglas barriers to protect poll workers, and voters were encouraged to bring their own pens to mark the ballots.

George Dunst, 76, of Madison, who has volunteered at his local polling site for nearly every election since he retired, said he's not going Tuesday amid fears of contracting COVID-19.

"No matter what safety precautions you take, there's going to be exposure," he said. "Who knows who

comes into the polling place?"

Peoples reported from New York. Associated Press writers Todd Richmond from Madison, Wis., Julie Carr Smyth from Columbus, Ohio, and Mark Sherman from Washington contributed to this report.

Virus deaths slow in places, but British premier gets worse

By COLLEEN LONG, JENNIFER PELTZ and LORI HINNANT Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The steep rise in coronavirus deaths appeared to be leveling off Monday in hard-hit New York, echoing a trend underway in Italy and Spain, while the crisis escalated alarmingly in Britain, where Prime Minister Boris Johnson was moved to intensive care after his condition deteriorated.

Johnson, 55, was conscious and did not immediately need to be put on a ventilator, his office said. The prime minister is the world's first known head of government to fall ill with the virus.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he asked "leading companies" to contact officials in London about therapies that could help Johnson, calling them complex treatments recently developed by the unnamed firms.

"We have contacted all of Boris' doctors, and we'll see what's going to take place, but they are ready to go," Trump told reporters.

The president said mitigation efforts are showing signs of slowing the spread of the virus. The nation's top infectious disease specialist, Dr. Anthony Fauci, was cautiously optimistic, saying that in New York, "what we have been doing has been working."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced the first, faint signs the outbreak in New York might be at or near its peak, while warning that it's no time to relax social distancing restrictions. He ordered schools and nonessential businesses to remain closed until the end of the month and doubled fines for rule breakers to \$1,000.

"The numbers look like it may be turning. 'Yay, it's over!' No, it's not. And other places have made that mistake," Cuomo said as deaths in the U.S. neared 11,000, with over 365,000 confirmed infections.

Stocks rallied on Wall Street and around the world on the news out of the U.S. and places like Italy and Spain. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained more than 1,600 points, or nearly 8%.

Outbreaks in other places moved in the opposite direction: France recorded its highest 24-hour death toll since the epidemic began — 833. Japan considered a state of emergency for Tokyo and other areas because of soaring infections in the country with the world's third-largest economy and its oldest population.

Worldwide, more than 1.3 million people have been confirmed infected and over 74,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins University. The true numbers are certainly much higher, because of limited testing, different ways nations count the dead and deliberate underreporting by some governments.

The latest data suggests social distancing appears to be working in some countries, and better than expected.

One of the main models on the outbreak, the University of Washington's, is now projecting about 82,000 U.S. deaths through early August, or 12 percent fewer than previously forecast, with the highest number of daily deaths occurring April 16. The model relies on much more robust data from Italy and Spain and from hospitals.

The number of dead in New York state rose past 4,700, and the death toll in New York City closed in on the 2,753 lives lost at the World Trade Center on 9/11.

The state has averaged just under 600 deaths daily for the past four days. Though horrific, the somewhat steady daily totals were seen as a positive sign. Cuomo also reported that the number of new people entering hospitals daily has dropped, as has the number of critically ill patients needing ventilators.

But the health care system is still strained. To help, Trump said a military hospital ship sent to New York City can now accept COVID-19 patients. Cuomo tweeted that the USNS Comfort would add 1,000 beds staffed by federal personnel, providing "much-needed relief."

Elsewhere, China, where the outbreak began, reported no new deaths over 24 hours for the first time since it started releasing nationwide numbers in late January. Austria and the Czech Republic began discussing

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 53 of 81

how to ease some restrictions, starting with reopening some small shops and garden centers next week. But deaths in Britain climbed by more than 400 Monday, for a total of nearly 5,400. Sunday was especially bleak, with more than 600 deaths — more than Italy recorded.

Italy, ravaged by the virus, had its smallest one-day increase of new COVID-19 cases in early three weeks. It also saw a drop for the third straight day in intensive care beds occupied by infected patients.

Premier Giuseppe Conte promised Italians that they will soon “reap the fruit of these sacrifices” in personal liberties, though he declined to say when the lockdown would be lifted.

Italy has the world’s highest death toll — over 16,500 — but the pressure on intensive care units in the north has eased so much that it’s no longer airlifting patients to other regions.

Nursing coordinator Maria Berardelli at the hard-hit Pope John XXIII hospital in Bergamo said that while the numbers of new patients had eased a bit, hospital staffers were still pulling long, difficult shifts.

“There has been no reduction in the work,” Berardelli said. “There have been fewer admissions to the emergency room, but our intensive care units are still full, so the activity hasn’t been reduced.”

In Spain, deaths and new infections dropped again. The health ministry reported 637 new deaths, the lowest toll in 13 days, for a total of over 13,000 dead. New infections were also the lowest in two weeks.

It shows Spain is entering “a new phase of the battle,” said Transport, Mobility and Urban Affairs Minister José Luis Ábalos. But “this new phase does not mean we can let down our guard.”

It was a message repeated worldwide: Any gains could be reversed if people don’t keep following lockdown rules.

A report from a federal watchdog agency found that three out of four U.S. hospitals surveyed are already treating patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Some places, like Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., are predicting the peak won’t come until May or well into summer.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, reported the death of a girl born prematurely after her mother contracted the disease and was put on a ventilator. Louisiana, where millions of tourists visit New Orleans yearly, had over 500 deaths.

However, Gov. John Bel Edwards says the state’s death and hospital admission rates could suggest infections are slowing.

“We are starting to see real signs that these mitigation measures that we put into place weeks ago are starting to bear real results,” he said.

For most people, the virus causes mild to moderate symptoms such as fever and cough. But for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia. Over 270,000 people have recovered worldwide.

Long reported from Washington. Hinnant reported from Paris. Associated Press writers around the world contributed.

Follow AP news coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Trump, Biden spoke by phone about coronavirus outbreak

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said he had a “really wonderful, warm conversation” with Joe Biden on Monday about the coronavirus outbreak.

“He gave me his point of view, and I fully understood that, and we just had a very friendly conversation,” Trump said at his daily press briefing.

The president said he and Biden agreed not to share the details of their conversation, but confirmed an earlier statement from the Biden campaign that the Democrat offered “suggestions” on how to address the pandemic. Biden had previously said he’d like to share with Trump some lessons he learned from dealing with similar crises during the Obama administration.

But Trump added: "It doesn't mean that I agree with those suggestions."

Kate Bedingfield, Biden's deputy campaign manager, said in a statement that the two had a "good call" where Biden gave Trump some advice and "expressed his appreciation for the spirit of the American people in meeting the challenges facing the nation."

The conversation was the culmination of a dayslong effort by aides to get the two on the phone, after White House adviser Kellyanne Conway called on the former vice president to "offer some support" to Trump. Biden, the prospective Democratic presidential nominee, has in recent weeks released a series of proposals for responding to the pandemic and has criticized the Trump administration for acting too slowly to halt the virus' spread.

Biden said last week that he would "love" to speak to Trump and wanted to share with him his experiences from the Obama administration.

"We've been through this in a slightly different way in the past, and I hope they can learn some lessons from what we did right and maybe what we did wrong," Biden said during a virtual press briefing.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was moved to the intensive care unit of a London hospital after his coronavirus symptoms worsened Monday. In New York, there are faint glimmers of hope as deaths from the new coronavirus appear to be leveling off.

New York City remains the epicenter of the pandemic in the U.S., and New Orleans and Detroit still face worrying days ahead. Infectious disease specialist Dr. Anthony Fauci expressed careful optimism that new cases may be starting to slow down.

Here are some of AP's top stories Monday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow [APNews.com/VirusOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/VirusOutbreak) for updates through the day and [APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak](https://www.apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak) for stories explaining some of its complexities.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— President Donald Trump said at an afternoon news briefing that he'd called New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo earlier Monday to let him know that the Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort can now be used for COVID-19 patients from New York and New Jersey.

— Coronavirus patients around the world are rushing to join studies of an experimental drug that showed promise against some similar viruses in the past. Interest in the drug remdesivir has been so great that the U.S. National Institutes of Health is boosting the size of its study.

— Investors grabbed hold of a few glimmers of hope Monday that the coronavirus pandemic could be slowing and sent stocks surging in a worldwide rally, capped by a 7% leap for the U.S. market. The encouraging signs were enough to launch the S&P 500 to its best day in nearly two weeks.

— The first national data on COVID-19 in U.S. children suggest that while the illness usually isn't severe in kids, some do get sick enough to require hospital treatment. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report shows fever, cough and shortness of breath were the most common symptoms in kids, but they occurred less often than in adults.

— Hugs, visits and holding hands are being added to the lengthy, sorrowful list of losses from the coronavirus pandemic. Just when many people feel they need it the most, the comfort of physical closeness is being denied.

AP FACT CHECK:

Trump is repeating his misleading suggestion that COVID-19 patients should try using hydroxychloroquine, even though the federal government has not approved the anti-malaria drug as a treatment. Trump's own health experts say more studies are needed to know whether it's safe and effective to use.

Have tips for the AP Fact Check team? Contact FactCheck@ap.org

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death. 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.

TRACKING THE VIRUS: Drill down and zoom in at the individual county level, and you can access numbers that will show you the situation where you are, and where loved ones or people you're worried about live.

ONE NUMBER:

— 94%: A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 94% of Americans say they are staying away from large groups, up from 68% in mid-March.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— AP PHOTOS: A week of images from the coronavirus pandemic.

— DANCING ALONE: A senior center keeps clients up and moving with recorded exercise classes.

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

Beloved Tigers star, Hall of Famer Al Kaline dies at 85

By **JIM IRWIN** and **NOAH TRISTER** Associated Press Writers

DETROIT (AP) — Fresh off the train and only 18 years old, Al Kaline ran into an immediate roadblock trying to join the Detroit Tigers. Called up to the majors, he couldn't get past the security guards at Briggs Stadium.

"I finally convinced them I was the guy who just signed a bonus contract for the enormous sum of \$15,000. That was a lot back then," Kaline recalled in a 1999 documentary.

His anonymity was short-lived.

Kaline, the Hall of Fame outfielder who played his entire 22-season career for Detroit, died Monday at his home in Michigan. "Mr. Tiger" — as he was affectionately known — was 85.

John Morad, a friend of Kaline's, confirmed his death, and the Tigers did so as well in a statement. No cause of death was given.

Kaline was the youngest player to win the American League batting title, in 1955 at age 20 with a .340 average. He was an All-Star in 15 seasons and won 10 Gold Gloves. The beloved No. 6 later sat behind a microphone as a Tigers broadcaster and was a special assistant to the general manager.

Kaline was elected into the Hall of Fame in 1980 in his first year of eligibility.

"There's a reason why he was Mr. Tiger," said Dave Dombrowski, Detroit's team president from 2001-2015. "First-class person, he was humble, he always played hard. He's the type of guy that everybody could latch onto."

Houston Astros star Justin Verlander, who pitched for the Tigers from 2005-2017, tweeted his appreciation Monday.

"Such a kind and generous man who meant so much to so many," Verlander said. "I hope you knew how much I enjoyed our conversations about baseball, life, or just giving each other a hard time. I am honored to have been able to call you my friend for all these years."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 56 of 81

Kaline came straight out of Baltimore's Southern High School to the majors, making his debut on June 25, 1953. He took over as Detroit's everyday right fielder in 1954, and quickly became a fan favorite at Briggs Stadium, later renamed Tiger Stadium.

Kaline never hit 30 home runs in a season and topped the 100-RBI mark only three times, but his overall consistency at the plate and his exceptional fielding and throwing put him among the top AL outfielders.

"There have been a lot of great defensive players. The fella who could do everything is Al Kaline," Baltimore Orioles Hall of Famer Brooks Robinson once said. "He was just the epitome of what a great outfielder is all about — great speed, catches the ball and throws the ball well."

Kaline finished his career with 3,007 hits and 399 home runs. He scored 1,622 runs and had 1,582 RBIs. He got his 3,000th hit back in Baltimore, slicing a double down the right field line in September 1974, his final season.

In his only World Series, Kaline hit .379 with two home runs and eight RBIs as the Tigers overcame a 3-1 deficit to beat St. Louis for the 1968 championship.

"If there is one accomplishment for which I am particularly proud it is that I've always served baseball to the best of my ability," Kaline said during his Hall of Fame induction speech. "Never have I deliberately done anything to discredit the game, the Tigers or my family.

"By far, being inducted into the Hall of Fame is the proudest moment of my life. You can be sure that I will make every effort to live up to the obligation associated with this honor," he said.

That same year, his No. 6 became the first uniform number retired by the Tigers.

"Many of us who are fortunate enough to work in baseball have our short lists of the players who mean the most to us. Al Kaline was one of those players for me and countless others, making this a very sad day for our sport," Commissioner Rob Manfred said.

Kaline and Willie Horton — another beloved ex-Tiger — were named in 2001 as members of the new Tigers Baseball Committee, joining team owner and president Mike Ilitch, general manager Randy Smith and manager Phil Garner. Ilitch disbanded the committee at the end of that season, but both Kaline and Horton remained as special assistants to Dombrowski after his arrival.

Jim Leyland managed the Tigers for much of Dombrowski's tenure, but Leyland also spent time in the Detroit organization as a minor leaguer in the 1960s and had known Kaline since then.

Leyland had his own name for Kaline: "I always called him Mr. Gentleman."

Major League Baseball presented Kaline in 1973 with the Roberto Clemente Award honoring the player who best exemplifies sportsmanship, community involvement and contribution to his team.

Hall of Famers Alan Trammell and Jack Morris, teammates on Detroit's 1984 championship team, praised Kaline's influence.

"Today we lost one of our treasures. Al Kaline was an icon, not only to the Tigers organization, but to all of baseball. Mr. Tiger was not just a great player, but was also a classy person who I held in high esteem," Trammell said in a statement released by the Hall.

Said Morris: "If you were a Tiger, you followed his lead. Whether he was a player or broadcaster, he was around the field, around the clubhouse, and available to have a conversation if you needed some advice. That's what the Tigers players cherished."

The Tigers' spring training complex in Lakeland, Florida, is on Al Kaline Drive.

Larry Herndon was a Tigers outfielder from 1982-88, when Kaline would work with the big leaguers as a spring training instructor.

"He was a golden person, along with being a great ballplayer. Gentle, kind, giving," Herndon said. "Every good thing you ever heard about Al Kaline, it's all true."

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

AP Baseball Writer Ben Walker contributed to this report.

'Modern Family' cast shares memories as series finale nears

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The group crying began after the final scene of the last episode of ABC's "Modern Family" was taped — with the notable exception of Ed O'Neill, who plays patriarch Jay Pritchett.

"I said, 'No tears?'" recalled his co-star, Jesse Tyler Ferguson. "He said, you know what? Things hit me in a really weird way. I'll be getting a facial in two weeks and, all of a sudden, I'll burst into tears.' And the only thing I took from that is, Ed gets facials?"

After 11 seasons, the "Modern Family" actors who've come to know each other well — maybe minus spa treatments — compare saying goodbye to leaving high school. They marvel at the friction-free years they worked together and make plans to stay in touch, relying for now on digital group chats during the pandemic-imposed isolation.

In recent interviews, the cast and creators Steve Levitan and Christopher Lloyd shared favorite series moments, souvenirs they claimed, and what's next for them. The hourlong finale airs at 9 p.m. EDT Wednesday, preceded at 8 p.m. by the retrospective special, "A Modern Farewell."

GREAT JOB, GREAT MEMORIES

— Whether high school seniors believe it or not, there's more and better relationships and experiences ahead of them, said Eric Stonestreet, who plays Cameron Tucker. But Stonestreet finds it hard to believe that's the case after graduating from "Modern Family": "We had a full-blown utopia, where we had a great group of people. We worked with professionals at the top of their game. And it's going to be hard to recreate that."

— Jesse Tyler Ferguson, who plays Cam's partner and eventually husband Mitchell Pritchett, said it was the convergence of reality and fiction that resounded for him. In a "Modern Family" scene, Mitch is seen watching news footage that included his real-life spouse (actor-producer Justin Mikita) demonstrating for legalized same-sex marriage in California. "It felt very like a circle moment. ... I couldn't believe that I got to be married in real life, and then later I got to get married again on TV in front of millions and millions of people. It felt very important."

—"It was the combination of being critically acclaimed as well as popular that made for a heady mix," Lloyd said. "There's crazy milestones, like when Mitt Romney was running against (President Barack Obama) and they both stated it was their favorite TV show. That doesn't happen very often."

— Ariel Winter (Alex Dunphy) says what she gained from the show includes her relationship with Nolan Gould, who played her sibling Luke. Winter calls Gould "one of my best friends. He really is the little brother that I never had and that I love so much."

SOUVENIRS, ANYONE?

— Julie Bowen (Claire Dunphy) spent a fair amount of off-camera time in a hallway that mostly served as a waiting area for scenes shot elsewhere in the Dunphy house. Cast photos decorated the walls, along with paintings of birds that Bowen requested as a keepsake. The artwork had "so much to do with that set, and being there and feeling at home," she said.

— Winter says she may be the only cast member that didn't request any set decorations. "I know it sounds weird, but for me, nothing stuck out as something I needed" as a memento, she said. Having spent half her life on the series, from age 11 to 22, "it's ingrained in my mind. ... I have the memories, and I'm good with that."

NEXT CHAPTER

— Bowen had planned to focus on producing and directing, but then she got a call for a new series, "Raised by Wolves," from "Will & Grace" creators David Kohan and Max Mutchnick, "an offer I could not turn down." With the industry's coronavirus-caused production shutdown, "we're in a holding pattern. ... I'm assuming there's going to be life again. It's really hard in this moment to know what's what."

— Ty Burrell, who played opposite Bowen as her husband, Phil, is in the voice cast of the animated comedy "Duncanville" and also has an eye on producing. "I was planning on taking time to be with my family over the course of this year," he said, a plan sealed by the health crisis. Being home with his young

children is the silver lining.

— Rico Rodriguez, who played son Manny to Sofia Vergara's Gloria Delgado-Pritchett, is a young man with big dreams. He and his sister started a production company to "write, produce, direct our own stuff," and he's open to outside opportunities to act as well. "I'm down for anything," Rodriguez said.

A FOND FAREWELL

— The last episode includes familiar comic moments of "Phil being Phil, Cam being Cam, Sofia being Sofia" said Lloyd, who wrote the second half-hour. But it also includes a "sweet emotional hug in there, which is another thing that audiences have come to expect from the show, and I think it's a good balance."

— Levitan, who wrote part one, says "Modern Family" has tried to bring "a little joy and happiness into people's lives. ... I would say that now more than ever, if people can tune in for an hour and forget about all the dark things going on in our world today that would be wonderful."

Lynn Elber can be reached on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/lynnelber>.

Rate of deaths, illness among black residents alarms cities

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago's mayor pledged an aggressive public health campaign aimed at the city's black and brown communities Monday amid alarm that an overwhelming number of African American residents were among the people to die of COVID-19 in early data.

Black residents accounted for 72% of deaths from COVID-19 complications in the city and 52% of positive tests for the coronavirus, despite making up only 30% of the city's population, according to the city's public health agency.

Public health experts in Chicago said the trend was unsurprising to anyone familiar with decades-old barriers to health care in the geographically divided city; residents of the city's South and West sides historically have poorer access to health care, higher poverty rates and jobs that require them to keep showing up while others are able to work from home.

Similar conditions mark other large cities with large black populations that are considered hot spots for the coronavirus, including New York, Detroit, Milwaukee and New Orleans. Figures released Monday by Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services showed African Americans, who make up 14% of the state population, make up about 33% of cases statewide and 41% of deaths.

Still, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said the disparities in Chicago "take your breath away" and required an immediate response from the city, community activists and healthcare providers.

A new team of city and community representatives will focus on contacting residents who are older than 50 and those considered vulnerable to the virus because of other health conditions to share information about prevention and resources for those who do become ill.

The city's transit system will increase monitoring on its buses and add vehicles to lines still being heavily used, and city inspectors will visit grocery or corner stores to enforce social distancing limits there too, she said.

"We can't simply stand by and let this disease wreak havoc in our communities," Lightfoot said. "Lives are truly at stake."

The city's public health commissioner also ordered all healthcare providers in the city to collect data on COVID-19 patients' race and ethnicity, seeking to address existing gaps. The department's leader, Dr. Allison Arwady, said one-quarter of testing results sent to her agency so far have not included that critical information.

A national civil rights group on Monday said that's a problem across the country and demanded more transparency on race and ethnicity among the COVID-19 testing results, cases and patient outcomes reported by federal health authorities and state health agencies.

"Equal access to healthcare is a critical civil rights issue, and during this novel pandemic, the public deserves nothing less than full transparency from this administration and state public health officials,"

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 59 of 81

Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said in a statement.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker told reporters at his daily COVID-19 briefing that the state is responding to the disease's impact on minorities by "reopening hospitals that are in those communities" and by targeting "directly into the African American community" social media messages promoting social-distancing.

Pritzker was apparently referencing temporarily using three shuttered hospitals in suburban Chicago for bed space, a project he never before linked to any racial demographic and he did not elaborate on how is administration was targeting the community with virus-prevention messages.

Democratic members of Congress had previously called on Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar to ensure race and ethnic data is collected by health agencies across the country during the outbreak.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

Detroit, which is about 80% black, has recorded 5,032 confirmed cases with 196 people dead from complications due to the COVID-19 virus.

Coronavirus data specific to black residents was not available from the city, but Detroit and its surrounding suburbs account for about 80% of the state's confirmed cases.

"It's clear that what COVID-19 is doing is exacerbating the racial disparity in health in this country," said Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, who led the Detroit Medical Center before taking office.

White residents account for about 23% of the confirmed cases in Michigan, and 28% of the deaths, according to state health officials. The race of about 38% of the confirmed cases and 26% of the deaths in Michigan were not known.

"Part of what we're seeing in Detroit is that there's such a high number of individuals who have those underlying conditions, who have the diabetes and the heart disease, who may have obesity," Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, Michigan's chief medical executive who previously led Detroit's health department, said earlier this month.

The plan announced in Chicago followed a report by WBEZ Chicago highlighting the disproportionate number of black residents among those who have died of COVID-19 complications in the city.

Lightfoot noted that unequal access to health care in Chicago's black and brown communities has persisted for decades. Medical conditions including diabetes and heart disease also remain more prevalent among black adults in the U.S.

Rev. Marshall Hatch, pastor of a Baptist church on Chicago's West Side, said he wanted to offer a "human face" to the maps and charts surrounding him at Monday's news conference. Within the last week, Hatch said he lost his oldest sister, a friend of 45 years and a parishioner to complications of COVID-19.

"Poverty is not just about quality of life," he said. "It is about literally life and death."

Associated Press reporters Ed White in Detroit, Corey Williams in West Bloomfield, Michigan, and John O'Connor in Springfield, Illinois, contributed to this story.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson moved to intensive care

By **DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS** Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was moved to the intensive care unit of a London hospital after his coronavirus symptoms dramatically worsened Monday, just a day after he was admitted for what were said to be routine tests.

Johnson was admitted to St. Thomas' Hospital late Sunday, 10 days after he was diagnosed with COVID-19, the first major world leader to be confirmed to have the virus.

The 55-year-old Conservative was conscious and did not require ventilation, but he was moved into intensive care in case he needs it later, his office said in a statement.

Britain has no official post of deputy prime minister, but Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has been des-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 60 of 81

ignated to take over should Johnson become incapacitated.

A grave-looking Raab said Johnson was "in safe hands" at the hospital, which is treating many virus patients.

"The government's business will continue," Raab said. He said Johnson had asked him "to deputize for him where needed in driving forward the government's plans to defeat coronavirus."

The deterioration of Johnson's health took many in Britain by surprise. Hours earlier, he had tweeted that he was in good spirits and thanked the National Health Service for taking care of him and others with the disease.

"On the advice of my doctor, I went into hospital for some routine tests as I'm still experiencing coronavirus symptoms," Johnson said in the tweet. He said he was keeping in touch with his team "as we work together to fight this virus and keep everyone safe."

The prime minister's spokesman said earlier Monday that Johnson had spent a comfortable night and remained in charge of government after being admitted to the hospital because his cough and fever persisted.

Speaking earlier at the government's daily coronavirus press briefing, Raab said Johnson was being "regularly updated," but said he had not spoken to him since Saturday.

Johnson had been quarantined in his Downing Street residence since being diagnosed with COVID-19 on March 26. He continued to preside at daily meetings on the outbreak until Sunday. He released several video messages during his 10 days in isolation urging Britons to stay home and observe social distancing measures to help slow the spread of the virus.

News that Johnson had been transferred to intensive care drew an outpouring of support from around the world.

U.S. President Donald Trump said "Americans are all praying for his recovery."

"He's been a really good friend," Trump said during a White House press briefing. "He's been really something very special — strong, resolute, doesn't quit, doesn't give up."

Trump said he asked two "leading companies" to contact officials in London about therapeutics that could be of help. He did not identify the companies, but said "we have contacted all of Boris's doctors, and we'll see what's going to take place, but they are ready to go."

French President Emmanuel Macron said in a tweet that he was sending his support to Johnson, his family and "the British people at this difficult time. I wish him well."

Former Prime Minister David Cameron who went to school with Johnson, said in a tweet that he was thinking of Johnson and his family and that he was "in great hands, and we all want you safe, well and back in @10DowningStreet."

The new leader of the main opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, said on Twitter: "Terribly sad news. All the country's thoughts are with the Prime Minister and his family during this incredibly difficult time."

Johnson's fiancée, Carrie Symonds, who is pregnant, is herself recovering from coronavirus symptoms.

Johnson was admitted to the hospital as a message to the nation from Queen Elizabeth II was being broadcast Sunday evening. The 93-year-old monarch urged the public to show resolve and follow advice to stay inside.

Buckingham Palace said the queen was being kept informed about Johnson's condition.

Concerns had been growing about Johnson's welfare ever since he posted a message Friday in which he appeared red-eyed and flushed, saying that he was feeling better, though was still feverish.

Johnson has continued to work throughout his illness, to the concern of some of his colleagues. With the U.K. still approaching the peak of the coronavirus outbreak, both he and his government are under intense pressure.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most people, but for some, especially older adults and the infirm, it can cause pneumonia and lead to death.

The government said Monday that 51,608 people had been confirmed to have the coronavirus in Britain, 5,373 of whom have died.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 61 of 81

Johnson is visibly overweight but is not known to have any underlying health conditions, though prime ministers do not usually make their health status public.

Britain's unwritten constitution does not have a clear rule for what happens if a prime minister becomes incapacitated or dies. Seven prime ministers have died in office, but the most recent was in 1865.

Johnson delegating Raab to fill in for him clarifies things for now, but it does not mean Raab would automatically take over permanently should a new leader be needed.

Jill Rutter of political think-tank U.K. in a Changing Europe, said Johnson's illness should spur rival Cabinet ministers to unite and show that "they don't require him there to actually be a functioning government."

Derek Hill, a professor of medical imaging science at University College London, said it seemed that the prime minister needs help breathing, although he had no particular information on Johnson's case.

There are multiple ways for doctors to support a patient's breathing, he said, including having oxygen on demand or being connected to a ventilator.

"It is quite common for people with COVID-19 to decline quite rapidly, and they may need to progress to invasive ventilators," Hill said in statement.

Dr. James Gill, a family doctor and lecturer at Warwick Medical School, said Johnson's condition "must underscore for everyone, across the world, how indiscriminate this virus is, ignoring, class, character, wealth and position."

"For some people, the coronavirus outbreak just became real," he said.

Pan Pylas in London contributed to this story.

Beloved 'Schitt's Creek' ending at its peak

By AMANDA LEE MYERS Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After five years on TV, it seemed like "Schitt's Creek" was just starting to hit its stride.

The critically acclaimed comedy — about a shallow, filthy rich family who lose their fortune and are forced to live in a small town they bought as a joke — debuted in Canada in 2015, and soon after on Pop TV in the United States.

Its popularity exploded when it became widely available on Netflix in 2017, and it received its first Emmy nominations last year, including one for best comedy series. Now it's firmly fixed in TV culture and its success is at its peak.

Yet co-creator Dan Levy decided it was time for it to come to an end, just as everything was truly coming up roses for "Schitt's Creek." The last episode of the show's six seasons airs Tuesday night on Pop TV.

"It was important for me that this show remains something that people cherish and that people go back to and revisit year after year or put on when they're feeling blue," Levy said. "And in order to do that, you really need to be aware of when is the right time to say goodbye."

It might be the right time, but it was still an emotional roller-coaster for the "Schitt's Creek" cast, which includes its other creator, veteran actor (and Dan Levy's real-life father) Eugene Levy, and Catherine O'Hara, who was wearing her character Moira Rose's heavy mascara and eyeliner during the show's final table reads.

She said she cried so much "our makeup artist was calling me Alice Cooper."

"That last table read of the last two episodes was killer," said O'Hara, whose character is an outrageously accented, wacky wig-wearing former soap star who can't wait to ditch the town of Schitt's Creek.

Eugene Levy, O'Hara's longtime colleague in comedy, plays Moira's dapper husband Johnny Rose, an optimistic entrepreneur who seems almost as mystified by his own family as he is by the townsfolk.

He said of his tenure on the show: "This has been six of the most incredible years of my life, and I've had a kind of a chunky career."

Part of what's been so gratifying for the cast is how it's connected so deeply with its audience.

"I think when the show started out, it was kind of this quirky little Canadian thing," said Annie Murphy,

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 62 of 81

who plays Alexis, the Roses' Paris Hilton-esque daughter. "And then as it gained momentum and we got added to Netflix it reached a much, much wider audience and the responses went from like, 'Oh it's the dad from 'American Pie' and the mom from 'Home Alone' and the creepy, creepy guy from 'Scary Movie,' to 'Oh, my God, this show just got my mom through her chemotherapy treatments,' or 'This show allowed me to summon up the courage to come out to my family.'"

Dan Levy purposefully chose to avoid stereotypes and portray a small, rural town as comfortable with all sexuality (Levy's character has had relationships with both a woman and a man during the show, with not a single eyebrow raised).

"To show bigotry and homophobia only emboldens people who have those beliefs," he said. "It was an unintentional message. But I guess in removing the negativity from the town, the message was just that: Look at the world without hatred and see how much better it is. That was really the goal."

As for the Roses, Dan Levy says the aim was to show "a family of people who used money to bandage problems" finally getting to know and appreciate one another. "The thesis of the whole show was, 'Watch this family realize that money can't buy love.'"

As O'Hara put it, "he wrote a world that he wants to live in."

There's been talk of a possible movie spin-off, in the vein of "Downton Abbey," but Dan Levy says that's premature.

Murphy remains hopeful.

"Oh God, I've been sending Dan edible arrangement baskets for years now to convince him," she said, adding some advice for fans. "Join me in writing letters and sending gifts to him."

For now, the show's admirers will have to be OK with the series finale, which will be followed by an hour-long documentary showing behind-the-scenes footage of auditions, outtakes and the tearful last table reads.

Emily Hampshire, who plays the sarcastic and plaid-cloaked Stevie Budd, joked that she "can't wait 'til I can release that footage."

"We were all bawling ... It was tough because you're also not only saying goodbye to each other, but these characters are saying goodbye," she said. "It is an ending on both in real life and in the show."

It won't all be tears, she promised: "I think people are going to laugh and be very satisfied."

The Last Responder: A day with an NYC funeral director

By JAKE SEINER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Tom Cheeseman's phone rang at 3 a.m. Friday, soon after returning home from one of the worst days he's seen in 30 years as a Brooklyn funeral director.

He just chauffeured the deceased for 12 hours — some coronavirus victims, some not — between houses, hospitals and funeral homes. But the call came: Another death. Another pick up. And so out he went, determined to help another person reach their final resting place with as much dignity as the situation would allow.

"We took a sworn oath to protect the dead, this is what we do," he said. "We're the last responders. Our job is just as important as the first responders."

He pulled into Daniel J. Schaefer funeral home around 8:20 a.m. on about three hours of sleep. His first act, he thought, would be to resolve unfinished business from the day before.

Twice on Thursday, he had been called to hospitals, only to be told by staff that the remains he sought couldn't be found in the refrigerated trailers serving as makeshift morgues — that's in addition to the 10 bodies he did pick up. The coronavirus pandemic has crunched New York City's medical system, and that has left a mighty weight on the 52-year-old's broad shoulders.

"This is terrible," he said. "I had tears in my eyes."

He walked into the funeral home office — a room with five desks buried in paperwork, phones ringing ceaselessly — and realized immediately the hospitals would have to wait. House calls take precedent — bodies can't be left there too long. And a long list was already building.

"Our plans that were laid out, they're all changed," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 63 of 81

9:20 A.M.

Cheeseman parked near the apartment building in his Dodge minivan, which has tinted windows to keep his cargo private. EMTs were on site and had already pronounced the death, but he had to wait for a colleague.

He placed a sign on his dashboard — “Emergency Funeral Service Vehicle” — and stepped out of the van. A burly, imposing figure at 6-foot-5, Cheeseman is dressed like an early Tarantino character. White shirt, black tie, black suit, black trench, and as always, black sunglasses.

He wears the shades for every call, even when it’s gray and rainy. He likes that light seeps into his peripheral vision, no matter how dreary.

“I see sun every day,” he said.

His associate arrived around 9:45 a.m. and pulled a gurney from the Dodge. Cheeseman put on an N95 facemask and gloves, tucked a plastic-wrapped white sheet under his arm, and helped wheel the gurney toward the apartment entrance.

They emerged 15 minutes later and loaded the body into the Dodge. Cheeseman removed the mask and gloves, sanitized his hands and set off for a Jewish funeral home requested by the widow.

10:15 A.M.

Another director called during Cheeseman’s drive, a longtime friend. They commiserated about the past week, when the pandemic began to put the funeral industry into crisis, and looked forward to beers on the beach later in the summer.

Cheeseman has been at this for nearly his entire adult life.

He had some affinity for funerals as a child — “Everybody in the room is dressed as if it’s a party, including the person in the box,” he said. His father, a homicide detective, let him watch an autopsy as a teen, and the dead body didn’t make him nervous or nauseous.

So when a family friend offered him a job at his funeral home a few years later, he gave it a try.

“This is God’s plan for me,” he said.

The Dodge pulled into the Jewish funeral home in Brooklyn at 10:35 a.m. The director met Cheeseman in the driveway.

“Is this one COVID?” he asks off the bat.

No, Cheeseman answers. Died peacefully in the night.

10:45 A.M.

Three pickups follow in similar fashion — two from homes, one from a rehab facility.

Those who die at home are less likely to have been tested for the new coronavirus, and many death certificates are listing the cause as pneumonia, with a note for “possible COVID-19.” It reminds Cheeseman of the AIDS crisis, when the deceased were listed with similarly uncertain causes.

“I’m treating everybody like it’s a virus case,” he said.

2:15 P.M.

The next stop is Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center, where Cheeseman spent an hour and 20 minutes Thursday waiting for hospital police to locate a body. He left empty handed.

Remains had been piled into a refrigerated trailer — Cheeseman estimated at least 40 bodies in each — and the mounds of corpses had become difficult to navigate. Cheeseman said he became enraged and made a scene.

“This guy’s in there climbing over people,” he said. “They pointed to the trailer, and I said, ‘I’m not a mountain lion. I don’t climb in there.’”

Kingsbrook called him Friday morning and said they were changing protocols. He could call two hours before each pick up and someone would relocate the needed remains to the hospital morgue.

Pulling into Kingsbrook, he wasn’t immediately encouraged. The giant coolers could still be seen from the street. One body sat on a gurney outside, wrapped in a white body bag. More were easily visible on the trailer floor, hospital staff stepping over them.

Cheeseman went in a side door, confirmed paperwork with administrative staff and headed to the morgue. The body was there as promised, held in a traditional silver cooler.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 64 of 81

The experience, he said, was "like night and day."

"At least now we can call the family back and let them know, put their mind to ease that they are in our care," he said. "So that's our gratification today."

4:40 P.M.

Cheeseman made one more pickup — the sixth of eight on Friday — at a senior housing facility and headed back to the Schaefer home. He wheeled the bodies inside, then lumbered exhausted into the office.

For the moment, he stood amid the frantic staff and thumbed through the paperwork.

"Just look at everybody in their eyes and you'll see how mentally exhausted they truly are," he said.

"There is no catching up."

Follow Jake Seiner: https://twitter.com/Jake_Seiner

Sportsbooks are dark and odds are long in Las Vegas

By **TIM DAHLBERG AP Sports Writer**

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Nobody would have given odds on this.

Inside the glittering casinos that line the Las Vegas Strip, the slot machines were turned off and the sportsbooks were dark. On what would have been the biggest Monday of the year for bookies, not a dollar changed hands.

No big national championship game bets, no wagers on Tiger Woods to win the Masters. No sports means no action, even for the most hardcore gamblers.

About the only thing degenerate sports bettors could do was go online and find a Russian table tennis match to put their money on.

"Russian pingpong has stolen the show," said Nick Bogdanovich of the William Hill betting chain. "You can't even find it streaming anywhere to watch, but people are betting on it."

It was only weeks ago that sportsbooks were looking forward to their biggest March Madness ever. With sports betting exploding across the country, records would likely have been set at the betting windows and Monday's scheduled title game would have drawn tens of millions of dollars on both sides, no matter which teams were playing.

Odds maker Jay Kornegay would be in the middle of it all at the Westgate Las Vegas, one of the most popular sportsbooks to watch March Madness. But the massive hotel, like all others in Las Vegas, is closed because of the new coronavirus and the huge televisions in the sportsbook are dark.

"It's very eerie, something you would never think you would see in your lifetime," Kornegay said. "Sometimes it hits you real hard when you're walking through the hotel and you don't see a soul. I can walk through the entire property and not see one human being."

Just how much is bet on the NCAA Tournament is not clear because Nevada gambling authorities don't break the figure out. But bettors wagered \$495 million on basketball in March last year in Nevada alone, and the Final Four weekend itself draws big action.

"The Super Bowl is the biggest single-day event we have, but March Madness is the biggest using different measuring sticks," Kornegay said. "We handle more people, we handle more tickets. The money, if you take the first four days of the tournament, will surpass the handle on the Super Bowl."

While all the city's sportsbooks are closed, a few like William Hill are still taking bets online. That means searching for sports that are still going on and might tempt bettors to make a wager or two.

Russian table tennis is the surprise hit, but sumo wrestling has been getting some action, too. There's also virtual NASCAR racing, with William Hill taking about 400 bets on Sunday's race at virtual Bristol Motor Speedway, won by William Byron.

"We lost a little on that, but at least we wrote some tickets," Bogdanovich said. "It helped me get through an hour and a half of the day, for sure."

At the South Point hotel, they're not even bothering with that. Odds maker Jimmy Vaccaro said it didn't make much sense to offer betting online when only obscure sports in faraway places are available to

wager on.

Instead, Vaccaro is hunkering down at home, running an occasional errand, and waiting for the day when bettors with handfuls of cash stand in line again and debate with the person behind them on whether to lay the points in the national title game.

For now, though, there isn't much to talk about, even for the normally voluble bookie.

"It's no good," Vaccaro said. "That's all I can tell you."

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

After virus fades, service industries may be changed forever

By PAUL WISEMAN and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — For years, personal trainer Amanda Tikalsky didn't have to worry much about her job. The U.S. economy's record-breaking 11-year expansion offered security to service workers like her.

Then came the coronavirus, which closed the Milwaukee athletic club where she worked for 15 years. She scrambled to organize online exercise sessions to keep money coming in. About 25% of her clients made the jump with her.

"It's an adjustment for everybody," she said. "We are used to being face to face."

But even when the virus threat is gone, Tikalsky predicts that many customers will continue to exercise from home. The shutdown is also likely to change her own shopping habits. She has a new appreciation for the ease of buying groceries online.

The pandemic is almost sure to leave a mark on the way people work, shop and socialize, perhaps permanently shifting the way many service industries operate. Consumers will think harder about the health implications of squeezing into crowded restaurants and movie theaters. More businesses will accept the effectiveness of employees who work from home, and the move to online shopping will accelerate.

"We've never had a crisis where we couldn't socially gather with people," said John Gordon, founder of Pacific Management Consulting Group in San Diego, which advises restaurants.

Until March, service workers — from dishwashers to real estate agents — had been enjoying a record winning streak in the job market. U.S. service jobs had risen for a decade.

The sector appeared almost immune to blips in the economy. Not even low-wage competition overseas or automation seemed to threaten service jobs that require direct contact with customers.

Then the virus arrived. It upended the service economy, which accounts for 84% of U.S. private-sector employment. It wiped out 659,000 service jobs in March — 94% of the jobs that vanished last month as the U.S. economy plunged into recession.

It is sure to claim many more. In an interview Monday on CNBC, former Fed Chair Janet Yellen predicted that unemployment rates could climb to Great Depression levels. But because the economy was in solid shape before the outbreak, she added, the return to normal employment could happen much faster than during the Depression or after the 2007-2009 Great Recession.

When the economy goes into a nosedive, manufacturers, not services providers, are usually hit first and hardest.

Not this time. The virus has been a gut punch to businesses that depend on social gatherings — restaurants, cinemas, theaters, hotels, airlines, gyms, shopping centers. More than 250,000 stores are now temporarily closed, accounting for nearly 60% of retail square footage, according to Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, a research firm.

The situation is similar in many other countries. In Wuhan, China, where the viral outbreak began, consumers are still reluctant to go out shopping as conditions slowly head back to normal.

Josh Rivas is among the millions of job casualties in the U.S. He works at a Subway at a rest stop in Connecticut where he and co-workers were laid off because of the virus amid dwindling traffic at the plaza. "We can't afford for us to miss a day of pay because we have families that we need to take care of and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 66 of 81

bills we need to pay," he said.

In recessions, factories are often the first to slash jobs, and they don't always bring them back. American manufacturers still employ 918,000 fewer workers than they did before the Great Recession. Over the same period, service employment is up by nearly 14 million.

Economists are divided over whether service employees will face the kind of economic disruption factory workers have endured.

Much depends on the rescue efforts being put together by the U.S. government and the Federal Reserve. Congress and the White House are throwing at least \$2.2 trillion at American businesses and households in a desperate attempt to keep them from going under before the health crisis is over.

"As long as we do the policy right, we should get a pretty strong recovery," said Heidi Shierholz, senior economist at the liberal Economic Policy Institute and former chief economist at the Labor Department. "When the lockdown is over, I think we'll get a pretty decent bounce back."

Shierholz does not expect a "transformative" change to service sector jobs.

Still, some effects of the outbreak are likely to linger, analysts say.

Cooped up in their homes, Americans have discovered anew the convenience of shopping online — something that is likely to accelerate the decline of traditional retail stores, said Diane Swonk, chief economist at the accounting and consulting firm Grant Thornton.

Restaurants have closed their dining rooms and reduced service to takeout, delivery and curbside pickup. Swonk expects the trend toward grab-and-go dining to continue after the health crisis.

Restaurant consultant Gordon predicts that local governments will reduce restaurant seating capacity to keep diners from being on top of each other. "Some of the places we used to go were just armpit to armpit. Can you see us doing that now?" he said.

Millions of Americans have spent weeks working from home, and the experience has been eye-opening for many, and for their bosses. Meetings and even virtual after-hours cocktail parties can be organized on Zoom, WhatsApp or other programs.

"We're just discovering that we can have amazing seminars and conferences online much easier. We don't have to travel anywhere," said Arindrajit Dube, economist at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. That's troubling for airlines and hotels that depend on business travel, sometimes to subsidize discounts for leisure travelers.

The enhanced appeal of home offices could also have implications for real estate markets, giving more workers expanded housing options because they won't need to travel to their jobs.

But there may be limits to Americans' enthusiasm for isolating themselves at home.

Becky Ahlgren Bedics, 49, of Fishers, Indiana, has been working out via Zoom since her fitness club closed temporarily in mid-March. But she plans to trek over to the club when it reopens. She misses the camaraderie. "There's such a connection that you have with people," she added.

D'Innocenzio reported from New York. Associated Press writers Christopher Rugaber in Washington and Josh Hoffner in Phoenix, Arizona, contributed to this story.

New phone-only Quibi aims for bite of digital entertainment

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Want to see Chance the Rapper prank Hollywood stars? Catch a new action thriller starring Liam Hemsworth and Christoph Waltz? How about a six-minute edition of "60 Minutes"? There's an app for that, and more.

Quibi — a snappy amalgam of "quick" and "bite" — is a mobile phone-only platform that will release its snack-sized installments of movies and TV shows each weekday. There will be seven-day-a-week dollops of news, sports and weather, gathered under the umbrella name Daily Essentials, all adding up to a mind-boggling 175-plus programs planned for this year.

It launches Monday in the U.S. and Canada with a 90-day free trial and 50 programs, all in segments no

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 67 of 81

longer than 10 minutes. They include "Punk'd," with Chance the Rapper as host and executive producer; the Hemsworth-Waltz movie "Most Dangerous Game," and "Chrissy's Court," with Chrissy Teigen administering justice in small claims cases a la Judge Judy.

Others who have signed on to either produce or appear (or both) in Quibi content include Reese Witherspoon, Joe Jonas, Jennifer Lopez, Lena Waithe and Sophie Turner.

But the biggest names attached to the project are its executives: entertainment industry heavyweight Jeffrey Katzenberg and former Hewlett-Packard CEO Meg Whitman. In the 1980s, Katzenberg revived the Walt Disney Co.'s movie studio and its animation division with hits including "The Little Mermaid," and in 1994 co-founded DreamWorks SGK with Steven Spielberg and David Geffen. Quibi is Katzenberg's brainchild, and he picked Whitman, also a onetime Disney executive, as the new platform's CEO.

For Katzenberg, it's the product that will make Quibi a winner.

"In all my years, there is one rule that has never failed, ever," he said. "Which is, when I had my hands on great content, whether it was an animation and movies, ... whether it was TV shows, a Broadway show, a novel, anything that I had ever had in my orbit that was really good, it's never not worked."

There are serious believers. Quibi raised \$1 billion in funding in 2018 from investors including Disney, NBCUniversal and Viacom, and announced another \$750 million in a second fundraising round that closed earlier this month.

After the initial free window (the company's response to the coronavirus crisis) Quibi will cost \$4.99 a month with advertising or \$7.99 for an ad-free version.

Because the company ramped up production in light of a possible writers strike last summer, Katzenberg said, it got ahead of the pandemic-caused shutdown of TV and film production. Quibi is on track for new releases through October or November under current circumstances.

It enters a marketplace crowded with new and existing streamers also vying for consumer dollars, including the upcoming HBO Max. And then, of course, there's YouTube, awash with short-form programming minus a price tag and with a hold on the same young-adult audience that Quibi is after.

Quibi's core business model "faces some headwinds given its focus on short-form videos, with the Goliath YouTube front and center," said analyst Dan Ives of Wedbush Securities. "Betting against Katzenberg has not worked out well for skeptics over his career," he added, but he sees an uphill battle for the new platform to succeed.

Katzenberg pushes back at the idea that Quibi, with its A-list talent and the big screen-worthy quality of its movies, can be undercut by YouTube.

"Please name me a single widely distributed, widely consumed product, that when somebody came along and offered a better version, a more convenient version, or a premium version or a luxury version, that there wasn't some group of people that went, 'Yeah,'" he said.

It was the rise of YouTube and smartphone-streamed video that prompted Katzenberg's interest in the creative and business opportunities they represented. He also drew inspiration from contemporary novels with chapters as brief as a few pages so that, as one bestselling writer put it, readers with just a few minutes to spare would still enjoy a complete experience.

"We're doing movies the way Dan Brown did "The Da Vinci Code," Katzenberg said.

Quibi's unique selling point is its Turnstyle technology, developed under Whitman's direction, which allows users to switch between portrait and landscape viewing and always get a full-screen image minus the annoying black bar. The patented Turnstyle's payoff for creators is how it can enhance storytelling — for instance, viewers can be given the option to shift a movie scene to the character's perspective by flipping from horizontal to a vertical display.

"I'm confident we're going to give people something they've never seen before," Katzenberg said. "They will decide if they're going to value that enough to want to pay for it."

Lynn Elber can be reached at lelber@ap.org or on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/lynnelber>.

Desperate hunt for food by Peru's poor amid virus quarantine

By FRANKLIN BRICENO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Pushing a shopping cart with two children, César Alegre emerges from the large, deteriorated house near Peru's presidential palace that is shared by 45 families to search for food. Sometimes he begs in markets. Sometimes he sells candies.

It is a task that was hard at the best of times, but with a month-long quarantine that has forced 32 million Peruvians to stay home and closed restaurants and food kitchens, it has become much harder.

"We eat once or twice a day," said the 52-year-old, who says he has spent time in six different prisons for theft. Many among the 100 or so residents of the three-story house are ex-convicts who can't find work. The old building is opposite Lima's San Lazaro church, which was founded in 1650 as a hospital for refugees from a leprosy outbreak.

Alegre and his children, accompanied by a handful of neighbors, normally start out by walking about 2 miles (3 kilometers) to a market where they ask for food. The merchants give them potatoes, meat bones and overripe fruit that nobody wants to buy.

But these days the merchants are refusing to give them as much food, if any at all, because their sales have fallen amid the pandemic and strict measures that have kept people at home and shuttered the restaurants that would buy their goods.

"They're vagrants," said a meat vendor of the inhabitants of Alegre's building, which has earned the nickname "Luriganchito," or "Little Luriganchito," after Peru's most-populous prison, for the number of ex-convicts who reside there. The vendor said two weeks ago a young man from the building stole a bag of fish.

Besides begging in markets, Alegre also sells candy on buses. Nowadays, passengers wear face masks and don't like strangers coming near them.

"The virus has highlighted the selfishness that man carries inside," he said.

The pandemic has spotlighted the wide gap between rich and poor in Peru and elsewhere in Latin America, and economists say a looming recession worse than any since World War II could push the continent's long-suffering poor into even more dire circumstances.

"The economic impact of what is happening is unprecedented," said Peru's economy minister, María Alva.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

As of Monday, Peru had 2,561 confirmed coronavirus cases, with 92 deaths. The government has steadily tightened bans and lock-downs to slow the spread of the virus. This past week it ordered that only men can leave the house on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while only women can go out on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The trips can only be to the market, pharmacy or bank.

To try to address the humanitarian disaster, Peru has begun distributing about \$400 million to feed 12 million poor people for one month.

But the money doesn't seem to be reaching most of the families in Alegre's sprawling shared house. The building in Lima's Rimac district is a relic from the area's historic era and still has balconies from its better days. But inside its now-cracked walls is a warren of narrow, dark passageways that smell of damp clothing and marijuana. Children run through them barefoot as cockroaches scatter to avoid being crushed.

Its residents have stories of hard luck and tough living.

Santos Escobar, a 68-year-old former mug seller, ended up living in "Luriganchito" after his house burned down twice. In the first fire, two of his six daughters died. In the second, both his legs were burned.

Nélida Rojas, 59, had a stroke two years ago that partially paralyzed her. She now uses crutches and begs for alms.

Nilú Asca is a 24-year-old single mother with two daughters. The youngest is 2 and has some type of hip dislocation or problem that forces her to wear a plaster cast.

Eating with his children in their small room, Alegre watches the news on an old television set. He believes what is preventing looting is the deployment of 140,000 uniformed officers to guard food markets

and banks.

But his long-term outlook is not optimistic.

"There are a lot of desperate people. They could rise up if they don't get help," said Alegre.

'Old school' technique helps expert ID remains from 1969

By **HOLLY RAMER Associated Press**

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Thanks to an old-fashioned fingerprint-matching technique, the remains of a shooting victim found alongside a New Hampshire highway 50 years ago have been identified as a Vermont man who had been released from prison three months earlier, authorities said Monday.

The body of Winston "Skip" Morris was discovered by a work crew in a water-filled pit off Interstate 93 in Salem on Aug. 7, 1969. Morris, 30, of Barre, Vermont, had been shot at least six times in the head. Fingerprints were taken at the time, but there were no state or national databases to search.

After exhuming the body in 2012, investigators obtained new fingerprints and submitted them to regional databases and to FBI system multiple times, most recently in July. But they didn't get a match until a criminalist at the New Hampshire State Police Forensic Lab manually plotted the characteristics from one of Morris's fingers.

"I chose to play old school, I'm not a youngster, so I went back to plotting the minutiae or individual characteristics myself," said Timothy Jackson, who is scheduled to retire in June.

"When you're looking at a finger that's been in the ground since 1969, the epidermal layer of skin is gone. What we're truly looking at is the inner layer," he said in a phone interview Monday. "It was off enough that the system couldn't make the correct comparison. When I did it myself, I knew what I was looking at."

The attorney general's Cold Case Unit had been trying to identify the remains for years. Those efforts included an examination by University of Maine anthropologist Marcella Sorg, who provided a fuller picture of the man's appearance, including his over-sized lower jaw and buck teeth. She also noted that he had a broken leg that had been repaired with a surgical plate and screws.

A forensic artist later created a facial reconstruction of the man's skull, and a DNA profile was submitted to a database of profiles developed from people looking for missing relatives.

Morris' family, who declined to comment through investigators, told authorities they had contacted law enforcement, the Salvation Army and the Unsolved Mysteries television show over the years as they searched for him. They told investigators Morris had been released from the Vermont State Prison on May 9, 1969, and spent time in Boston the following month and in Glastonbury, Connecticut, that July. He was last seen alive in Burlington, Vermont, on July 25, 1969.

Jackson said finally identifying the remains felt good for a number of reasons.

"We realize now maybe the family's going to get some closure," he said. "It definitely gave our Cold Case Unit at the attorney general's office help in their investigation and hopefully solving this someday."

The Cold Case Unit was created in 2009. In 2019, it solved its oldest crime, the 52-year-old shooting death of an auto repair shop worker in Andover. Investigators said Thomas Cass, 67, of Orleans, Vermont, killed Everett Delano, 49. Cass killed himself in 2014, four days after authorities told him that evidence linked him to the murder.

Hopeful birdsong, foreboding sirens: A pandemic in sound

By **LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — Hopeful birdsong and foreboding sirens. Chiming church bells and bleating ferry horns. The coronavirus crisis has drastically transformed the world in sound. The routine cacophony of daily life has calmed, lending more weight to the noises left behind. And in those mundane sounds, now so unexpectedly bared, many have found comfort, hope and dread.

Here in the U.S., in the grind of the pandemic, sound has become a shared experience, in joy and sadness. The eyes may be windows to the soul, but these days, as isolation persists, the ears feel tethered to our hearts.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 70 of 81

"After 9/11, I remember we actually wanted to hear the sound of ambulances on our quiet streets because that meant there were survivors, but we didn't hear those sounds and it was heartbreaking. Today, I hear an ambulance on my strangely quiet street and my heart breaks, too," said 61-year-old Meg Gifford, a former Wall Streeter who lives on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

In European hot spots, there's balcony singing. In New York, at 7 p.m. for the duration, the city ignites for a few moments in whoops and claps as the home bound lean out their windows making noise together.

It's not the sounds but the silence that has made us master eavesdroppers, with an eerie recognition of overheard snippets in New York streets and parks as the sheltered venture out, if just for a little while:

"It looks good long," a woman reassures.

"Don't touch buddy. You can't touch anything, remember," a father warns.

"Yeah but we're not making any money right now, so," a businessman explains.

"Look, mama, the birds," a small girl notices, looking up into trees.

In another hard-hit city, San Francisco, 58-year-old Markus Hawkins is a visually impaired musician and massage therapist who lives alone in the Tenderloin district above a bakery, still open, and next to a restaurant, ordered shut.

His life is guided by aural cues, and they've changed dramatically. With the city largely silent, his world feels intensely louder.

"Oh my God, it's been difficult," Hawkins said.

There's the constant door slamming from the bakery, and an industrial compressor for a freezer or refrigerator that clicks on every two to three minutes, 24 hours a day, creating "this horrible buzz." Pre-lockdown, they went ignored.

At night, he lost his soothing white noise: an exhaust fan from the restaurant. And he hears conversations. Lots of conversations, because "nothing is drowning them out."

Kamil Spagnoli, a 42-year-old single mom of two grade-schoolers, is also visually impaired. She uses a cane to get around Stony Brook, where she lives east of Manhattan near a hospital with a high-level trauma center. When the virus first struck the city in a big way, sending her and her kids into isolation as well, she heard an unusually high number of medical helicopters overhead — four or five a day.

"Did it mean people were getting treated?" Spagnoli wondered. "Now, there's nothing."

She, too, is doing without familiar sounds that help with routine things. She listens for traffic flow to cross streets. The silence feels dangerous.

"Now there's no traffic. I'm not going anywhere," Spagnoli said. "I can't get a sense of what's around me visually and I need that sound feedback."

In Seattle, another early U.S. hot spot, fewer ferries means fewer familiar horns that normally punctuate each day like an extra clock. There are worries there as well playing out in sound and silence.

Is that fire truck in the distance rushing to help someone who can't breathe? Will the noisy weekend crowds return to the city's popular, now empty Space Needle?

Early in the American outbreak, the Life Care Center in the Seattle suburb of Kirkland saw more than 129 people sickened and more than three dozen die from the virus, making it the epicenter before the insidious spread.

The sounds of sirens as ambulances turned up a hill to the nursing home brought on immediate dread for loved ones and others gathered outside. Weeks later, after the threat moved on, fewer ambulances made that turn, continuing to other destinations.

But where? The emergency is too big to know exactly.

Other sounds now soothe. As spring descends, birdsong is prevalent.

There's the quirky squeak of the American goldfinch, owl-like coos of mourning doves and the whinnying of the downy woodpecker as Central Park offers avid urban birders some respite.

There are no services to announce or ceremonies to mark in locked down areas, yet church bells ring on, uplifting many of all faiths who barely took notice in happier — and noisier — times. It's a phenomenon Isaac Weiner finds historically ironic.

The associate professor at Ohio State University researched centuries of church bell ringing and con-

trovsky for his 2013 book, "Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space, and American Pluralism."
"There are traditions that during times of plague and epidemic, many churches would often voluntarily refrain from ringing bells," Weiner said. "There was fear that the bells might exacerbate people's illnesses in their time of convalescence."

As the sick and dying multiply, the bells of today serve as a steadfast call to action: Keep listening.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Honor Blackman, who played Bond's Pussy Galore, dies at 94

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Honor Blackman, the potent British actress who took James Bond's breath away as Pussy Galore in "Goldfinger" and who starred as the leather-clad, judo-flipping Cathy Gale in "The Avengers," has died. She was 94.

Blackman's family said in a statement Monday that she died peacefully of natural causes at her home in Lewes, in southeastern England.

The honey-voiced Blackman first became a household name in the 1960s spy TV series "The Avengers." She joined the show in the second season as Cathy Gale, the leather-wearing anthropologist with martial arts skills. Blackman departed the show for Bond before "The Avengers" was exported to America, but her performance solving cases opposite Patrick Macnee caught the eye of Bond producer, Albert R. Broccoli. She and Macnee also recorded the hit song, "Kinky Boots," together.

But just as "The Avengers" was growing in popularity, Blackman departed it for the third James Bond film, playing Pussy Galore in 1964's "Goldfinger." In it, she makes an impression from the start, memorably introducing herself to Sean Connery's just awoken James Bond.

"Who are you?" Bond asks.

"My name is Pussy Galore."

"I must be dreaming," he responds, smiling to himself.

Blackman was 39 and five years older than Connery when she landed the role of Bond's love interest, and she long maintained the term of "Bond girl" didn't apply to her. In the film, Pussy Galore is the leader of a group of women aviators enlisted by the villain Auric Goldfinger. She uses judo (a skill carried over from "The Avengers") to attack Bond and their foreplay is physical and combative. After they each flip one another into piles of hay, Bond holds her down to kiss her. Eventually, she relents.

Blackman considered Pussy Galore — a lesbian in Ian Fleming's book — a kind of early feminist, and a different breed than the average Bond woman.

"In so many of the films, the girls just looked at James and fell flat on their backs," Blackman told the magazine TV Times in 2014. "Yet Pussy Galore was a career woman — a pilot who had her own air force, which was very impressive. She was never a bimbo."

The character's double-entendre name was one producers said they had to convince censors to permit. But Pussy Galore has regularly ranked as among the most popular "Bond women."

"She was an extraordinary talent and a beloved member of the Bond family. Our thoughts are with her family at this time," said Bond producers Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli.

Honor Blackman was born in East London on Aug. 22, 1925. Her father, Frederick Blackman, was a civil servant clerk. She recalled her father giving her the choice, as a teenager, of taking biking or elocution lessons. She chose the lessons, and went to attend the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and acting in the West End.

Acting in film, television and theater for seven decades, Blackman amassed more than 100 screen credits, including the Titanic drama "A Night to Remember"; the fantasy "Jason and the Argonauts" (as the goddess Hera); "Lola," with Charles Bronson; and a cameo in "Bridget Jones's Diary."

Blackman was married twice, first to Bill Sankey, from 1948-1956, and then to actor Maurice Kaufman, with whom she adopted two children. She is survived by their children, Lottie and Barnaby, and four grandchildren.

Virus is mostly mild and rarely fatal for US kids, data show

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

The first national data on COVID-19 in U.S. children suggest that while the illness usually isn't severe in kids, some do get sick enough to require hospital treatment.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report released Monday shows that fever, cough and shortness of breath were the most common symptoms in kids, but they occurred less often than in adults. The findings mostly echo reports from China about how the new coronavirus affects children.

The report included nearly 150,000 laboratory-confirmed U.S. cases in adults and children from Feb. 12 through April 2. About 2,500 of them, or almost 2%, were children. While most kids didn't become severely ill, three youngsters died.

About 1 in 5 infected children were hospitalized versus 1 in 3 adults. Cases were more common in older children and teens but serious illness appeared to be more common in infants. Cases were slightly more common in boys than girls.

The authors cautioned that many details were missing from pediatric cases, so the report should be considered preliminary.

For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms that clear up in a few weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including life-threatening pneumonia.

Confirmed U.S. cases top 340,000 with more than 10,000 reported deaths. Globally, there have been more than 1.3 million confirmed cases, and more than 70,000 reported deaths.

The report authors stressed that because people without symptoms, including children, are likely playing a role in transmitting the virus, "social distancing and everyday preventive measures" are recommended for all ages.

Dr. Larry Kocielek, an infectious disease specialist at Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago, said the report should reassure parents and health care workers that children are less likely than adults to get very sick from the new virus. But that can pose a challenge, he said, because "patients with milder illness are less likely to quarantine themselves and may be at similar risk of transmitting."

Authorities need to take that into account when considering when to lift social distancing policies and reopen schools, Kocielek said.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at @LindseyTanner.

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.

Catch this week's supermoon, biggest and brightest of year

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A supermoon rises in the sky this week, looking to be the biggest and brightest of the year.

Not only will the moon be closer to Earth than usual, it will also be a full moon. Scientists call this cosmic combo a supermoon. The moon will be 221,855 miles (357,042 kilometers) away at its fullest Tuesday night, making it appear larger and more brilliant.

NASA is encouraging everyone to look skyward, whether it's outside or through a living room window. Scientist Noah Petro of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland said the important thing is to

stay safe while moon-gazing during the pandemic.

"If you can't get out safely ... then fine," Petro said. "Go out next month or whenever it's safe again. Use the full moon as an excuse to get out and start looking at the moon."

He added: "Use this as an opportunity to not physically distance yourself, but emotionally connect with something that is physically far from us."

There's a string of supermoons this spring. So if you miss the upcoming lunar show, catch the next one May 7.

In mid-April, the waning moon will pass by Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, clustered in the southeastern sky before dawn.

All this comes after a brilliant Venus passed a few days ago in front of the Pleiades, the so-called Seven Sisters star cluster.

"We've really been fortunate to have some good astronomy — backyard astronomy or living room astronomy," Petro said.

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

US 'wasted' months before preparing for coronavirus pandemic

By MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After the first alarms sounded in early January that an outbreak of a novel coronavirus in China might ignite a global pandemic, the Trump administration squandered nearly two months that could have been used to bolster the federal stockpile of critically needed medical supplies and equipment.

A review of federal purchasing contracts by The Associated Press shows federal agencies largely waited until mid-March to begin placing bulk orders of N95 respirator masks, mechanical ventilators and other equipment needed by front-line health care workers.

By that time, hospitals in several states were treating thousands of infected patients without adequate equipment and were pleading for shipments from the Strategic National Stockpile. That federal cache of supplies was created more than 20 years ago to help bridge gaps in the medical and pharmaceutical supply chains during a national emergency.

Now, three months into the crisis, that stockpile is nearly drained just as the numbers of patients needing critical care is surging. Some state and local officials report receiving broken ventilators and decade-old dry-rotted masks.

"We basically wasted two months," Kathleen Sebelius, health and human services secretary during the Obama administration, told the AP.

As early as mid-January, U.S. officials could see that hospitals in China's Hubei province were overwhelmed with infected patients, with many left dependent on ventilator machines to breathe. Italy soon followed, with hospitals scrambling for doctors, beds and equipment.

HHS did not respond to questions about why federal officials waited to order medical supplies until stocks were running critically low. But President Donald Trump has asserted that the federal government should take a back seat to states when it comes to dealing with the pandemic.

When an AP reporter attempted to ask Trump about the issue on Sunday, the president cut off the question.

"FEMA, the military, what they've done is a miracle," Trump said with a flash of anger. "What they've done is a miracle in getting all of this stuff. What they have done for states is incredible."

Trump then ended the briefing and walked off the podium.

Trump and his appointees have urged state and local governments, and hospitals, to buy their own masks and breathing machines, saying requests to the dwindling national stockpile should be a last resort.

"The notion of the federal stockpile was it's supposed to be our stockpile," Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and adviser, said at a White House briefing Thursday. "It's not supposed to be state stockpiles

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 74 of 81

that they then use.”

Experts in emergency preparedness and response have expressed dismay at such statements, saying the federal government must take the lead in ensuring medical supplies are available and distributed where they are needed most.

“States do not have the purchasing power of the federal government. They do not have the ability to run a deficit like the federal government. They do not have the logistical power of the federal government,” said Sebelius, who served as governor of Kansas before running the nation’s health care system.

Because of the fractured federal response to COVID-19, state governors say they’re now bidding against federal agencies and one another for scarce supplies, driving up prices.

“You now literally will have a company call you up and say, ‘Well, California just outbid you,’” Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, D-N.Y., said Tuesday. “It’s like being on eBay with 50 other states, bidding on a ventilator.”

For nearly a month, Trump rebuffed calls from Cuomo and others to use his authority under the Defense Production Act to order companies to increase production of ventilators and personal protective equipment. He suggested the private sector was acting sufficiently on its own.

More than three months after China revealed the first COVID-19 cases, Trump finally relented last week, saying he will order companies to ramp up production of critical supplies. By then, confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the United States had surged to the highest in the world. Now, the number of people infected in the U.S. has climbed to more than 338,000, with nearly 10,000 deaths.

Trump spent January and February playing down the threat from the new virus. He derided warnings of a pandemic reaching the U.S. as a hoax perpetrated by Democrats and the media. As the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a global public health emergency on Jan. 30, Trump assured the American people that the virus was “very well under control,” and he predicted “a very good ending.”

His administration was so confident that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Feb. 7 that the government had airlifted nearly 18 tons of donated respirator masks, surgical masks, gowns and other medical supplies to China.

On Feb. 24, the White House sent Congress an initial \$2.5 billion funding request to address the coronavirus outbreak. The next day, federal health experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that the virus was spreading quickly in the U.S. and predicted that disruptions to daily life could be “severe,” including school and business closures.

Unfazed, HHS Secretary Alex Azar told lawmakers on Feb. 27 that “the immediate risk to the American public remains low.”

During those crucial early weeks when the U.S. could have been tracking the spread of the disease and containing it, hardly anyone was being tested after a series of federal blunders led to a shortage of tests and testing capacity, as the AP reported last month.

Without data showing how widespread the disease was, federal and state governments failed to prepare.

By the middle of March, hospitals in New York, Seattle and New Orleans were reporting a surge in sick patients. Doctors and nurses took to social media to express their alarm at dwindling supplies of such basic equipment as masks and gowns.

Trump accused some Democratic governors of exaggerating the need and derided those who criticized the federal response as complainers and snakes.

“I want them to be appreciative,” Trump said on March 27.

At the start of the crisis, an HHS spokeswoman said the Strategic National Stockpile had about 13 million N95 respirator masks, which filter out about 95% of all liquid or airborne particles and are critical to prevent health care workers from becoming infected. That’s just a small fraction of what hospitals need to protect their workers, who normally would wear a new mask for each patient, but who now are often issued only one to last for days.

Trump, during a White House briefing on March 26, claimed that he had inherited an “empty shelf” from the Obama administration, but added that “we’re really filling it up, and we fill it up rapidly.”

Federal purchasing records, however, show the Trump administration delayed making big orders for

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 75 of 81

additional supplies until the virus had taken root and was spreading.

HHS first announced its intent to purchase 500 million N95 masks on March 4, with plans to distribute them over the next 18 months. The following day, Congress passed an \$8.3 billion coronavirus spending bill, more than three times what the White House had originally asked for.

Eight days later, on March 13, Trump declared the outbreak a national emergency. That was almost six weeks after the WHO's action. By then, thousands of U.S. schools had closed, the National Basketball Association had put its season on temporary hiatus and there were 1,700 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country.

The government had already sent tens of thousands of masks, gloves and gowns from the stockpile to Washington state, which was hit early with a coronavirus outbreak. But state officials even then said the supplies weren't enough.

Federal contracting records show that HHS had made an initial order March 12 for \$4.8 million of N95 masks from 3M, the largest U.S.-based manufacturer, which had ramped up production weeks earlier in response to the pandemic. HHS followed up with a larger, \$173 million order on March 21, but those contracts don't require 3M to start making deliveries to the national stockpile until the end of April. That's after the White House has projected the pandemic will reach its peak.

On Thursday, Trump threatened in a tweet to "hit 3M hard" through a Defense Production Act order, saying the company "will have a big price to pay!" He gave no specifics.

HHS declined this past week to say how many N95 masks it has on hand. But as of March 31, the White House said more than 11.6 million had been distributed to state and local governments from the national stockpile — about 90% of what was available at the start of the year.

Dr. Robert Kadlec, the assistant secretary for preparedness and response at HHS, testified before Congress last month that the country would need roughly 3.5 billion N95 respirators to get through the pandemic, but the national supply chain then had just about 1% of that amount.

Greg Burel, director of the Strategic National Stockpile from 2007 until his retirement at the start of this year, said the cache was only ever intended to serve as a short-term "bridge-stock."

The stockpile was created in 1999 to prevent supply-chain disruptions for the predicted Y2K computer problems. It expanded after 9/11 to prepare for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks. Congress provided money in 2006 to prepare for a potential influenza pandemic, though Burel said much of that stock was used during the H1N1 flu outbreak three years later.

"There's never enough money to buy everything that we want to see on those shelves," said Burel, who stressed the stockpile uses its annual funding to prepare for a wide array of potential threats.

"Most of the time, commercially available products like masks can be bought in quantity at the time of an event."

This time, it hasn't worked out that way. As the AP reported last month, much of the world's supply of N95 masks and other basic medical supplies is made in China, the first nation hit by COVID-19. As a result, the Chinese government required its producers to reserve N95 respirators for domestic use. China resumed exports of the masks only in recent days.

Experts are now worried the U.S. will also soon exhaust its supply of ventilators, which can cost upward of \$12,000 each.

The White House said Tuesday that it had already distributed nearly half the breathing machines in the stockpile, which at the beginning of March had 16,660; some of them dated back to the flurry of post-9/11 purchasing. An additional 2,425 were out for maintenance.

Cuomo said New York may need as many as 40,000 ventilators to deal with the outbreak that is already overwhelming hospitals there.

Throughout March, governors and mayors of big cities urged Trump to use his authority under the Defense Production Act to direct private companies to ramp up production of ventilators. It wasn't until last week that Trump finally said he would use that power to order General Motors to begin manufacturing ventilators — work the company had already announced was underway.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 76 of 81

The federal government had made an effort to prepare for a surge in the need for ventilators, but it was allowed to languish. Since 2014, HHS has paid a private company, Respiroics Inc., \$13.8 million to develop a cheaper, less complicated ventilator that could be bought in bulk to replenish the national stockpile. In September, HHS placed a \$32.8 million order with the Dutch-owned company for 10,000 of the new model, set for delivery by 2022, federal contracts show.

Respiroics' parent company, Royal Philips, said it's planning to double U.S. production of ventilators to 2,000 a week by the end of May.

Steve Klink, a spokesman for Royal Philips in Amsterdam, said the company is now focused on producing its other commercial models and will deliver the first ventilators to the national stockpile by August, long after the White House projects COVID-19 cases will peak.

Trump, who pledged on March 27 that his administration would ensure that 100,000 additional ventilators would be made available "within 100 days," said on Thursday that he'll use the Defense Production Act to order Respiroics and other ventilator makers to step up production.

It's not clear that Trump's order would translate into the 100,000 new ventilators he promised. In a House Oversight and Reform Committee briefing last week, top Federal Emergency Management Agency officials hedged, saying 100,000 ventilators would be available by late June "at the earliest."

Cuomo predicted on Friday that New York would run out within days. With coronavirus deaths in his state surging, the governor vowed to use his authority to seize ventilators, masks and protective gear from private hospitals that aren't utilizing them.

Meanwhile, federal health authorities are lowering standards.

New guidance from the Food and Drug Administration allows hospitals to use emergency ventilators typically used in ambulances and anesthesia gas machines in place of standard ventilators. The agency also said nightstand CPAP machines used to treat sleep apnea and snoring could also be used to keep coronavirus patients breathing, as a last resort.

The CDC advised health care workers last month to use homemade masks or bandanas if they run out of proper gear. Across the country, hospitals have issued urgent pleas for volunteers who know how to sew.

Trump provided his own input, suggesting that Americans without access to factory-produced masks could cover their faces with scarves.

"A scarf is highly recommended by the professionals," Trump said during a White House briefing Wednesday. "And I think, in a certain way, depending on the fabric — I think, in a certain way, a scarf is better. It's actually better."

Associated Press writers John Hanna in Topeka, Kan., and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow AP Investigative Reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

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

This story has been updated to correct that Trump declared a national emergency on March 13, not March 14.

Hugs and kisses, deferred: Pandemic cuts physical contact

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

To the lengthy, sorrowful list of losses from the pandemic, add these: hugs unexchanged, visits unmade, hands unheld.

Just when many feel they need it the most, the comfort of physical closeness is being denied.

Dr. Loren Olson, 77, a psychiatrist in Urbandale, Iowa, misses the hugs and kisses from friends who gathered for potlucks and dominoes and movies, before they all holed up only to emerge for grocery runs.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 77 of 81

He thinks of the clients whose final appointments are approaching, the ones he'll never get to send off with a handshake despite months of wrenching therapy together. The embraces he would have gotten on visits to his daughters and grandchildren are deferred, and no one quite knows how long.

"I didn't know how important that was to me until now that I don't have it," Olson says of those lost touches.

Then there is the thing in the back of his mind — how those who contract the virus have often been robbed of final moments with the people they love because hospitals desperate to stop the spread have had to isolate patients and bar visitors. Olson and his husband have talked about how they would want to die in one another's arms. Conjuring it any other way seems too painful.

"To think that people are dying without that," Olson says, "is tragic."

Terrorist attacks, natural disasters and mass shootings have been followed by survivors clutched in the arms of loved ones — people collectively gathering to mourn, hands of neighbors grasped in prayer. But the pandemic has rewritten the script of tragedy. Final goodbyes may come by phone or not at all, travel to familiar places and faces is nixed, and people already living isolated lives are more cut off than ever.

One of those friends Olson has been physically cut off from is Ryan Weidner, a 41-year-old financial planner, who now gives "air high-fives" to his assistant and "air hugs" to his teenage children. His 63-year-old father was diagnosed with COVID-19 and, though Weidner is certain he'll recover, his underlying chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a concern.

Normally, he'd rush to drive eight hours to Michigan and wrap his father in a hug. But at a time that's anything but normal, he's left to think of the last time they saw each other, parting ways after a Thanksgiving trip to Mexico.

"You always think to yourself, what happens if you don't see them again?" he says.

Some have been sustained by a video call, a palm pressed to a window or a blown kiss. But it's not the same. Not really.

"There's something still to be said about the human touch and being there in person," said Aliza Sherman, 55, of Anchorage, Alaska, who sees her 13-year-old daughter on Zoom but is prevented from visiting her at the mental health facility where she's being treated. "I just want to give her a hug."

Graciela Tiscareño-Sato, 53, of Castro Valley, California, thinks of those who are blind like her daughter, who rely so much on their sense of touch to connect. When they go to the store now, she warns her daughter not to extend a hand to the cashier as she normally would. And when her mother-in-law's 79th birthday came, the family left a strawberry-rhubarb pie outside the door, then backed up and sang from across the lawn.

"Imagine now trying to explain to your child why she can't hug her grandmother," she says. "You're very much missing the human contact when you're standing 30 feet away."

For April Kahgee, 37, of Petoskey, Michigan, it means there's no certainty when she'll be able to greet her fiancé, who lives in Australia, with her usual "flying tackle hug" — charging at him full speed, then launching into his arms. Their plans to narrow the 9,000-plus miles between their homes are on hold and their wedding is canceled.

For Jarrod Holland, 45, of Wilmington, North Carolina, it means his long-awaited first date with a woman he met online will most definitely not end with a first kiss. They planned to eat takeout in a park, then take a walk, all at recommended "social distancing" guidelines.

And for Frida Yufa, 77, of West Hollywood, California, it means visits from her daughter are executed with surgical precision — a quick call alerting her arrival, bags of groceries left on the balcony and nothing more than a smile exchanged.

"No hugs, she says. "I don't touch her, she doesn't touch me."

Dr. Anne Peterson, who runs global programs for AmeriCares, has been overseeing shipments of tons of protective equipment and other supplies to health workers around the world. Over the years, her work has involved responding to outbreaks of cholera, plague and Ebola, and the lessons of safe distancing ingrained her mind.

At home in Seattle, though, it's more of a struggle as she tries to care for her 90-year-old father. He laments her sitting across the room. She worries that if he loses his balance, she might not be able to catch him.

"I'm done with this," he told her. "I don't care if you have coronavirus. I need you here beside me."

Matt Sedensky can be reached at msedensky@ap.org or, on Twitter, at @sedensky.

Pandemic, border crackdown hamper Catholics' aid to migrants

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NOGALES, Mexico (AP) — For years, Catholic-led, U.S.-based nonprofits have been at the forefront of efforts to support migrants and asylum seekers along the Mexican border. Tough new border policies, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, have drastically changed their work, much of which now takes place in Mexico.

The once heavy flow of undocumented border-crossers has dwindled as the Trump administration enforces a new virus-related ban on top of its Migration Protection Protocols that already had forced thousands of asylum seekers to wait in Mexico.

The virus outbreak has prompted one migrant support agency, the Kino Border Initiative, to temporarily close its office in Nogales, Arizona. But it is committed to maintaining operations across the border, where it aids asylum seekers congregating in Nogales, Mexico, after being barred from the U.S.

"There is some resistance to this ministry of migrants and refugees," said Jesuit priest Sean Carroll, who heads the agency. "But our sense of the common good doesn't stop at the border. We're all human beings."

Earlier this year, before the coronavirus gained global attention, Carroll's agency opened a spacious new migrant outreach center just inside the Mexican border. Carroll — who works full-time in Mexico — hoped to expand a twice-daily meal service that had been offered to hundreds of asylum seekers at a deteriorating cafeteria across the street from the center.

Now, amid worries about COVID-19, neither venue is being used as a dining hall. Instead, migrants line up outside the two buildings and approach the doors one at a time to get a meal served into a cup and bowl.

Carroll also has cancelled the Masses that formerly were held in the cafeteria and has asked his long-term volunteers to stop reporting for duty, leaving only a small permanent staff in place. He recently appealed for donors to send hospital masks, rubber gloves, anti-bacterial gel and other medical supplies.

"We are serving with great courage and diligence in the face of very difficult circumstances," he wrote in that appeal.

There are some similar circumstances for the Hope Border Institute, based in El Paso, Texas, and run by Catholic activist Dylan Corbett.

Across the border in Juárez, Mexico, thousands of asylum-seekers have been living in shelters and squalid camps, waiting for a chance to enter the U.S.

Corbett says his agency is trying to find the best ways of supporting those migrants, including some being denied accommodation at shelters now quarantined due to COVID-19.

"The burden of need has shifted dramatically over to Juárez, yet for a lot of people it's out of sight, out of mind," he said. "There's so much suffering on the other side, but when the eyes of the nation are no longer on the border, it's incredibly difficult."

The Trump administration has justified the new border policy as necessary to minimize the risk of coronavirus exposure in dealings between undocumented migrants and U.S. government personnel.

"We're trying to limit the amount of contact we have with these individuals," said Chad Wolf, the acting secretary of homeland security.

One of the most prominent Catholic migrant-rights activists along the border is Sister Norma Pimentel, who runs a respite center for beleaguered migrants in McAllen, Texas.

At a time when many Roman Catholic dioceses were distracted by financial problems, school closures and ripple effects of the clergy sex-abuse crisis, she became widely known for her passionate advocacy

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 79 of 81

and often traveled to far-flung speaking engagements.

The respite center, which she operates on behalf of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Brownsville, is far less busy than it used to be,

"Most of the problem has been swept under the rug," said Pimentel, interviewed in the near-empty reception room. "It hasn't been solved -- just pushed to the other side of the border."

While Pimentel and Carroll are supported by some high-ranking Catholics, they're frustrated that some people in the church give a higher priority to anti-abortion activism than to the migrants' plight.

"We talk about being pro-life, and we're OK returning families to places where they could be killed?" Pimentel said. "We need to hold our fellow Catholics more accountable."

Perhaps the most outspoken bishop along the border has been Mark Seitz of El Paso. Last year, he ventured into Juárez, prayed for migrants' well-being, then accompanied a family of Honduran asylum seekers to the U.S. entry point.

"Standing here at the U.S.-Mexico border, how do we begin to diagnose the soul of our country?" Seitz said at the time. "A government and society which view fleeing children and families as threats. A government which treats children in U.S. custody worse than animals."

Many Hispanic Catholics in the U.S. are deeply invested in the immigration debate because they belong to mixed-status families — some relatives have legal immigration status while others do not.

Even in heavily Hispanic dioceses, views on immigration are not monolithic. Some priests and bishops rarely evoke the migrants' plight; some parishioners resent the resources directed toward them by the church.

"We know our house of faith is divided," said Gerald Kicanas, the bishop emeritus of Tucson, Arizona. "The vast majority who are struggling with this issue are just frightened. They feel they're being overwhelmed."

In Brownsville, Texas, a few parishes are issuing photo ID cards to undocumented immigrants verifying their parish membership. Local law enforcement agencies have agreed to recognize the IDs, potentially sparing some immigrants from being jailed and deported.

St. Eugene de Mazenod Church, which serves a parish of low- to moderate-income Hispanics, is spearheading the ID program. But its Spanish-speaking Anglo pastor, Kevin Collins, says most Brownsville parishes aren't interested.

"They don't want anything to do with that kind of social justice," he said.

In Nogales, Sean Carroll is determined to speak out – he recently assailed the Trump administration's move to immediately send asylum-seekers and other undocumented migrants back to Mexico.

"The administration has been continually focused on ways to stoke fear of migrants," Carroll wrote. "The latest announcement uses the pandemic as a pretext to advance its dangerous goals."

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, April 7, the 98th day of 2020. There are 268 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 7, 1862, Union forces led by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant defeated the Confederates at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee.

On this date:

In 1798, the Mississippi Territory was created by an act of Congress, with Natchez as the capital.

In 1915, jazz singer-songwriter Billie Holiday, also known as "Lady Day," was born in Philadelphia.

In 1927, the image and voice of Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover were transmitted live from Washington to New York in the first successful long-distance demonstration of television.

In 1947, auto pioneer Henry Ford died in Dearborn, Michigan, at age 83.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 80 of 81

In 1953, the U.N. General Assembly ratified Dag Hammarskjold (dahg HAWM'-ahr-shoold) of Sweden as the new secretary-general, succeeding Trygve Lie (TRIHG'-vuh lee) of Norway.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower held a news conference in which he spoke of the importance of containing the spread of communism in Indochina, saying, "You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly." (This became known as the "domino theory," although Eisenhower did not use that term.)

In 1962, nearly 1,200 Cuban exiles tried by Cuba for their roles in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion were convicted of treason.

In 1964, IBM introduced its System/360, the company's first line of compatible mainframe computers that gave customers the option of upgrading from lower-cost models to more powerful ones.

In 1966, the U.S. Navy recovered a hydrogen bomb that the U.S. Air Force had lost in the Mediterranean Sea off Spain following a B-52 crash.

In 1983, space shuttle astronauts Story Musgrave and Don Peterson went on the first U.S. spacewalk in almost a decade as they worked in the open cargo bay of Challenger for nearly four hours.

In 1994, civil war erupted in Rwanda, a day after a mysterious plane crash claimed the lives of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi; in the months that followed, hundreds of thousands of minority Tutsi and Hutu moderates were slaughtered by Hutu extremists.

In 2006, a British judge ruled that author Dan Brown did not steal ideas for "The Da Vinci Code" from a nonfiction work.

Ten years ago: North Korea said it had convicted and sentenced an American man to eight years in a labor prison for entering the country illegally and unspecified hostile acts. (Aijalon Mahli Gomes was freed in August 2010 after former U.S. President Jimmy Carter secured his release.) Opponents seized Kyrgyzstan's government headquarters after clashes between protesters and security forces that had left dozens of people dead. Space shuttle Discovery docked at the International Space Station, its astronauts overcoming a rare antenna breakdown that had knocked out radar tracking.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, speaking at Howard University Medical School, announced commitments from Google, Microsoft and others to help the nation's health system prepare for a warmer, more erratic climate. Republican Sen. Rand Paul launched his 2016 presidential campaign in his home state of Kentucky (he suspended his campaign in February 2016). Michael Thomas Slager, a white South Carolina police officer, was charged with murder in the shooting death of black motorist Walter Lamer Scott after law enforcement officials saw a cellphone video taken by a bystander. (Slager pleaded guilty to federal civil rights charges and was sentenced to 20 years in prison; prosecutors agreed to drop state murder charges that remained after a jury couldn't agree whether he had committed a crime.) The University of Connecticut's women's basketball team beat Notre Dame 63-53 for its 10th NCAA championship. Stan Freberg, 88, the spirited comic genius who was hailed as the father of the funny commercial, died in Santa Monica, California.

One year ago: Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen resigned amid President Donald Trump's frustration and bitterness over the number of Central American families crossing the southern border; Trump tweeted that U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan would take over as acting head of Homeland Security. White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, on "Fox News Sunday," declared that Democrats would "never" see President Donald Trump's tax returns. Baylor won the NCAA women's basketball championship game, 82-81 over Notre Dame, after Chloe Jackson drove for a tiebreaking layup with 3.9 seconds left.

Today's Birthdays: Media commentator Hodding Carter III is 85. Country singer Bobby Bare is 85. Rhythm-and-blues singer Charlie Thomas (The Drifters) is 83. Former California Gov. Jerry Brown is 82. Movie director Francis Ford Coppola is 81. Actress Roberta Shore is 77. Singer Patricia Bennett (The Chiffons) is 73. Singer John Oates is 72. Former Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels is 71. Singer Janis Ian is 69. Country musician John Dittrich is 69. Actor Jackie Chan is 66. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Tony Dorsett is 66. Actor Russell Crowe is 56. Christian/jazz singer Mark Kibble (Take 6) is 56. Actor Bill Bellamy is 55. Rock musician Dave "Yorkie" Palmer (Space) is 55. Rock musician Charlie Hall (The War on Drugs) is 46.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, April 07, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 269 ~ 81 of 81

Former football player-turned-analyst Tiki Barber is 45. Actress Heather Burns is 45. Christian rock singer-musician John Cooper (Skillet) is 45. Actor Kevin Alejandro is 44. Retired baseball infielder Adrian Beltre is 41. Actress Sian Clifford is 38. Rock musician Ben McKee (Imagine Dragons) is 35. Christian rock singer Tauren Wells is 34. Actor Ed Speleers is 32. Actor Conner Rayburn is 21.

Thought for Today: "Money is in some respects life's fire: it is a very excellent servant, but a terrible master." — P.T. Barnum, American showman (born 1810, died this date in 1891).

Copyright 2020, The Associated Press. All rights reserved