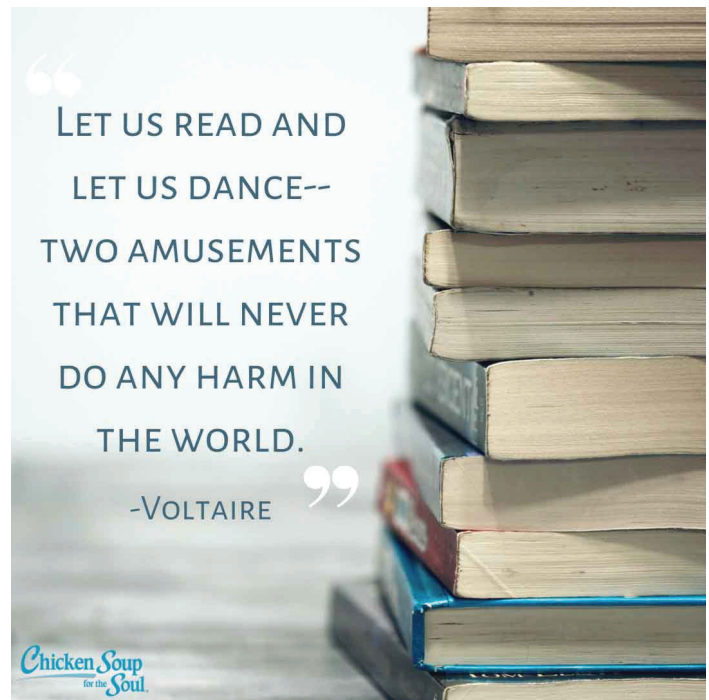


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- [20- SEAS Fundraiser](#)
- [21- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
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- [23- Dakotas COVID-19 Update](#)
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Church Services on-line

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/215332349572015/>)

Groton Christian & Missinary Alliance Church (<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonCMA/>)

St. John's Lutheran Church (<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsgroton/>)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church:

(<https://www.facebook.com/Emmanuel-Lutheran-Church-GrotonSD-ELCA-636505039852208/>)

United Methodist Church: (<https://www.facebook.com/grotonsdumc>)

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden, has resumed services at 10:30 a.m. People will stay in their vehicles and listen to the service on their FM radio.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont / Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden - will have a podcast posted. <https://anchor.fm/paul-irvin-kosel>

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Sunday Extras



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

...Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

MATTHEW 22:18-21 



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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. As found in Exodus 4:6-7, what ailment/disease was Moses healed from? *Slurred speech, Leprosy, Roaring fever, Multiple seizures*

3. From Exodus 28, who was the first person given priestly robes to wear? *Aaron, Abraham, Adam, Abel*

4. From Deuteronomy 33, to whom did Moses give a blessing? *Micah, Children of Israel, Joshua, Ruth*

5. What did the people of Lystra call Barnabas? *Pluto, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars*

6. Whose two sisters were Mary and Martha? *Andrew, David, Thomas, Lazarus*

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Leprosy; 3) Aaron; 4) Children of Israel; 5) Jupiter; 6) Lazarus

Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com

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Comfort foods

Made fast
and
healthy



by Healthy Exchanges

Macho Burritos

The name says it all — meaty and spicy, hearty and hot as you like it. Real he-man food!

- 8 ounces ground extra-lean sirloin or turkey breast
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons chili seasoning
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 4 (6-inch) flour tortillas
- 1/2 cup chunky salsa (mild, medium or hot)
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomatoes, finely chopped and undrained
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- 1/3 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese

1. Heat oven to 350 F. In a large skillet sprayed with olive oil-flavored cooking spray, brown meat and onion. Add chili seasoning and tomato sauce. Bring mixture to boil. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes.

2. Spoon about 3 tablespoons of the mixture on each tortilla. Roll up tortillas and place on a cookie sheet, seam side down. Lightly spray tops with olive oil-flavored cooking spray.

3. In a medium bowl, combine salsa, undrained tomatoes and parsley flakes. Evenly spoon mixture over tortillas. Bake 10 minutes. Sprinkle 2 teaspoons Cheddar cheese over top of each. Continue baking for 3 minutes or until cheese starts to melt. Serves 4.

• Each serving equals: 232 calories, 8g fat, 17g protein, 23g carb., 944mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 Meat, 1 Vegetable, 1 Starch.

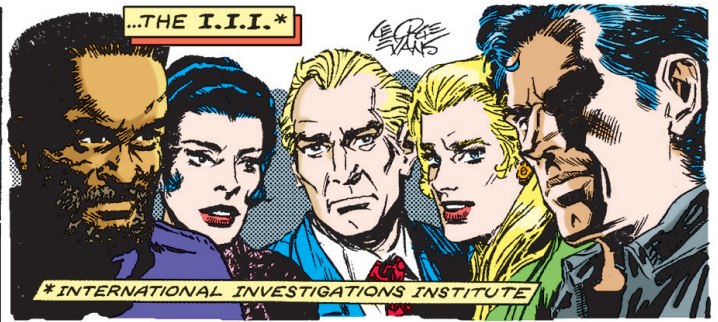
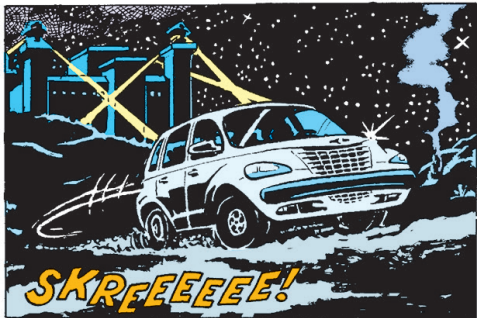
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Our Story So Far...

TRANSPORTED BACK TO EARTH--- HELD CAPTIVE IN A TOP-SECRET GOVERNMENT INSTALLATION--- DALE ARDEN IS FREED BY MEMBERS OF AN ELITE ORGANIZATION...



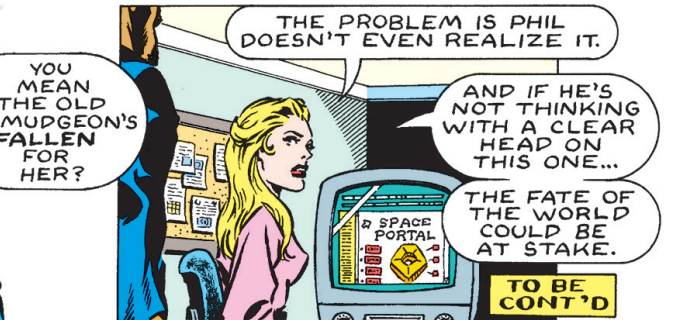
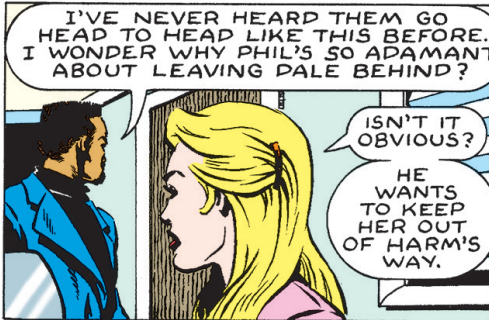
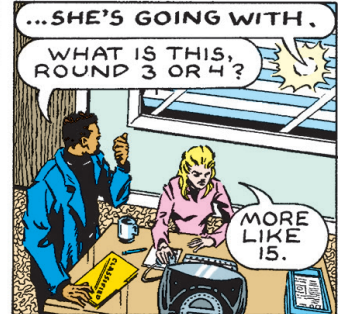
4-19 BY JIM KEEFE

MISS ARDEN HAS FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE WITH THE SPACE PORTAL. IT'S IMPERATIVE SHE ACCOMPANY YOU.

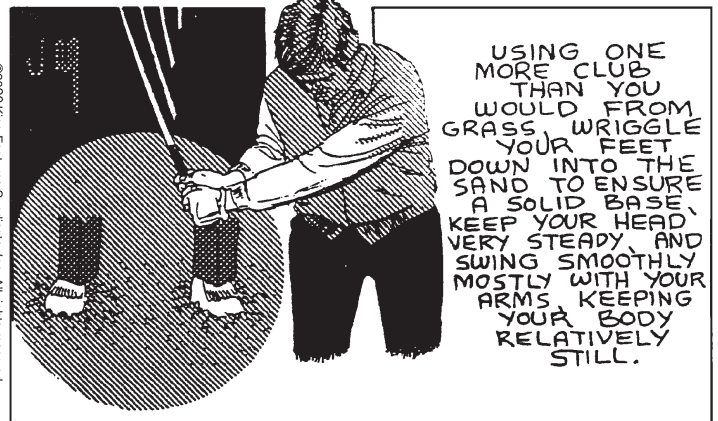
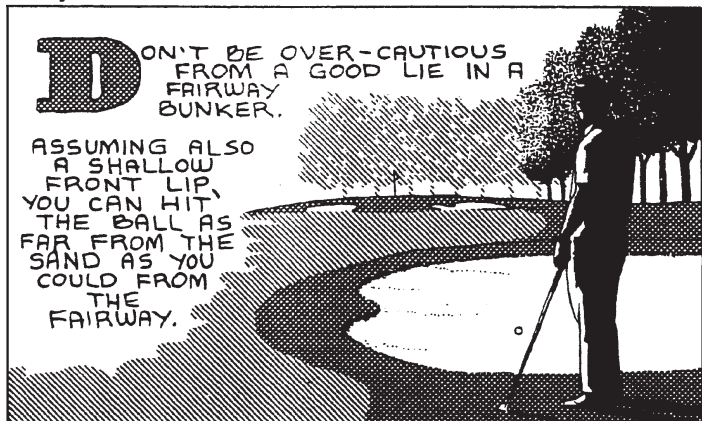
IT'S A MISTAKE, TOM...



BACK ON EARTH: TENSIONS RUN HIGH AT I.I.I. HEADQUARTERS



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Off-the-Charts Pain

DEAR DR. ROACH: Why is pain measured by numbers? I have severe pain, and doctors do not know what to do when I say it is an 11 on a scale of 1-10. My pain can't be measured by numbers. It depends on the time of day, what I have done during the day and the weather.

I have arthritis in most of my joints, specifically my spine and hips. Having had five spine surgeries, epidurals and hip shots, I have pain every day. There is not much more that can be done but to take opioids. It can be hard to make the decision either to take an opioid and go out shopping or for coffee feeling like I am in a vacuum, or to go out in pain.

There is no chronic pain support group in my area, and no one can understand how I feel, even the professionals, unless they have gone through it. So when asked how I am, I say "fine." Other people don't want to hear about my pain.

Why is there not another way the doctor can measure your pain? I have given up everything I love to do in life because of pain. There's no way to get "better" from pain. — *M.L.D.*

ANSWER: I am very sorry to hear your story, as it is similar to those I have heard before from people with chronic pain due to many different causes. It is disappointing for me to hear that you haven't found a pain specialist in your area who seems to care about helping you.

Although the 1-10 pain scale is thoroughly entrenched, it has its flaws. The biggest one is that what one person might consider a two, another person might consider a nine. I've seen people with horrifying injuries gritting their teeth and saying their pain is a 3 while other people claim their pain from what seems to be a minor condition is a 10 (I had one person tell me the pain from getting his blood pressure taken was a 10). Because pain is subjective, there is no way of standardizing what a person means with their pain rating. However, a 10 on a scale of 1-10 is supposed to be the worst pain imaginable.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My father, 90, has neuropathy in his feet and legs, and it is very painful. He recently talked to a clinic that is offering stem cell treatment to relieve the pain. The clinic says it helps 85% of those who get the treatment; however, because of HIPAA laws, they don't provide any referrals.

The treatments are very expensive (\$16,000), and results are seen in six weeks to six months. Are you familiar with this treatment, and is it effective for most people? Is this something you can recommend? — *D.B.*

ANSWER: I also have seen advertisements for stem cell treatments for many conditions. For neuropathy in particular, there are no good studies that give an estimate of effectiveness. It may be the case that 85% of people treated at the clinic report improvement. But the risk of a placebo effect is very high with this kind of procedure, and I could not recommend stem cell treatments for neuropathy without better information about the risks, the benefits and how long those benefits might last.

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

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1. Bob Dylan walked out of rehearsals of The Ed Sullivan show because of a dispute over which song?

2. Which two artists cut "Ebony and Ivory"?

3. Canadian rockers Bachman-Turner Overdrive (aka BTO) had one No. 1 hit in the U.S. What was it? What was on the flip side of the single?

4. Which group released "Once in a Lifetime"?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Did you think I could hate you or raise my hands to you, Now come on, you know me too well."

Answers

1. "Talkin' John Birch Paranoid Blues." The show's censors said the song was possibly libelous. In later years, it was realized the song is satire.

2. Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder, in 1982.

3. "You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet," in 1974. The b-side was "Free Wheelin'."

4. Talking Heads, in 1980. The song was used in the 1986 film "Down and Out in Beverly Hills."

5. "At This Moment," by Billy Vera, in 1981. Vera's song didn't get much notice until it was used on episodes of "Family Ties" during 1985-86. Then it rocketed up the charts to No. 1 as "Family Ties" fans called radio stations demanding to know the name of the song.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



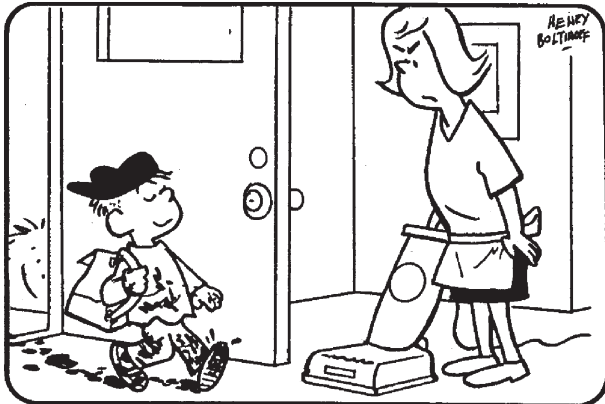
GRIN and BEAR IT



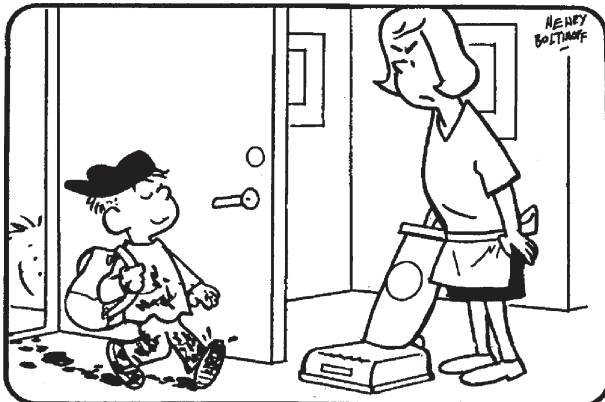
"History was first re-written on this spot."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTIHOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Doorknob is different. 2. Door window is missing. 3. Picture is added. 4. Backpack is different. 5. Cord is missing. 6. Woman's hair is different.

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- Free up space on your smartphone by setting text messages to auto delete after a certain amount of time, like 30 or 60 days. If you have a friend who loves to send you gifs or endless bitmojis, you might want to have your chuckle, then delete. These image files take up much more space than a text message.

- “Baking soda can have a whitening effect on some fabrics and is a good alternative for items that might be sensitive to the harshness of bleach in the washing machine. It’s fantastic for musty items as well. Add a cup of baking soda to a load of towels, then add a cup of vinegar to the rinse water.” — *T.H. in Kansas*

- Periodically take down curtains and run them through the clothes dryer to dust. If they are not delicate, you can add a couple wool dryer balls to help loosen the dust. Rehang as soon as they are fin-

ished to avoid unsightly wrinkles.

- “Drop a small item in a hard to reach place? Slip a sock over the end of a vacuum hose attachment and hold to secure. Turn on the vacuum and “suck up” the small item. The suction will hold it in place, but it will not go into the vacuum. Rather, it will be held captive in the sock, which you can simply slip off for retrieval.” — *A.F. in New York*

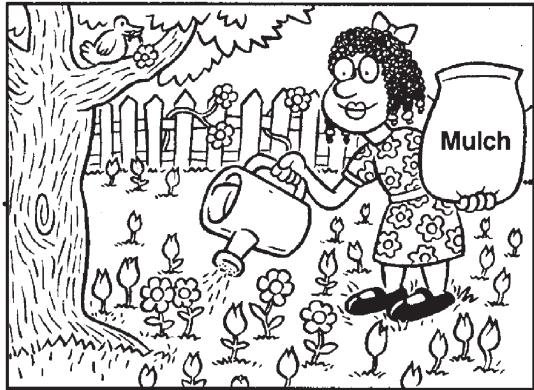
- Pet treats for fish? Sure! If you have lettuce in your vegetable crisper, most varieties of fish would enjoy a nibble on a floating piece. Just make sure that you remove any uneaten bits after a day.

- “Tired of waiting for that frothy head on your beer or root beer to go down? Stick your finger in it and watch it disappear like magic.” — *K.E. in Idaho*

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

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APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS!
How many flowers are pictured in Mary's garden? (Count them with a friend and see if you both get the same total.)

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

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

Illustrated by David Coulson

A SUNDAY SPELLING BEE!

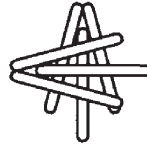
Let's see if you can make your vocabulary grow by spelling these six "SUN" words correctly. Hints to the meaning of each word are given below.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Gave evidence against (gangster slang).
2. Type of disposition.
3. Cool and sweet.
4. It's useless at night.
5. Miscellaneous items.
6. A neck protector.

A BETCHA PUZZLE! Place six ice-cream sticks on the table and challenge your friends to arrange them so that each stick touches all the other sticks!

SECRET: The solution is pictured to the right.



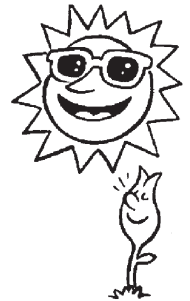
END OF MONTH STUMPER! At right is a word square. Find the four five-letter words that match the definitions below. All words used must read the same both across and down.

1. A serious narrative work.
2. What they do to tires.
3. Found in a theater.
4. Native of New Zealand
5. A rainy month (APRIL, in place).

1	2	3	4	5	A
2					P
3					R
4					I
5	A	P	R	I	L

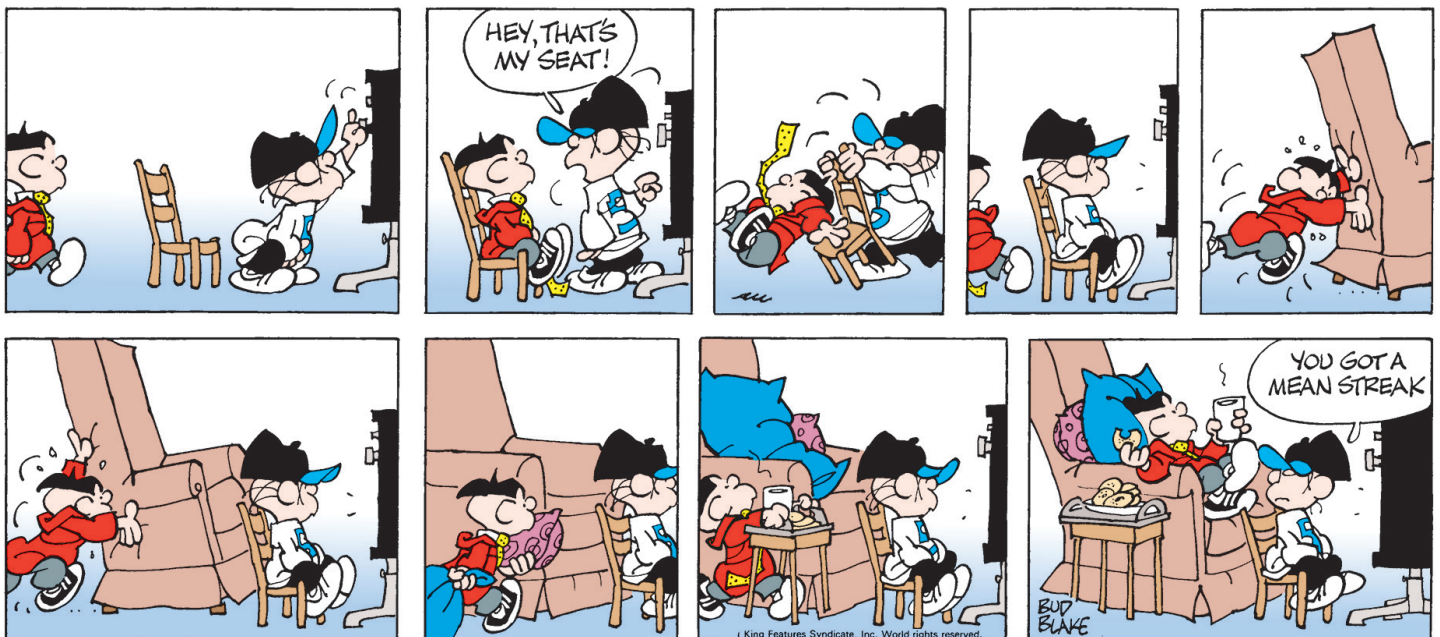
Answers: 1. Drama. 2. Recap. 3. Actor. 4. Maori. 5. April.

- Answers:
1. Sung
 2. Sunny
 3. Sundae
 4. Sundial
 5. Sundries
 6. Sunbonnet



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Easter treat
- 4 Wager
- 7 Retain
- 11 Metric measure
- 13 Rowboat need
- 14 Sleeping
- 15 Flow like molasses
- 16 Chum, nowadays
- 17 Actor Brad
- 18 Grassland
- 20 Opening course, often
- 22 Erstwhile garment
- 24 Hitchcock classic
- 28 Spotted insect
- 32 Radiant

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	
11			12		13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19		20		21				
			22		23		24			25	26	27
28	29	30				31		32				
33					34		35		36			
37				38		39		40				
41					42		43					
			44			45		46		47	48	49
50	51	52			53		54		55			
56					57				58			
59					60					61		

- 33 Champing at the bit
- 34 Bathroom fixture
- 36 Yorkshire river
- 37 Narc's measures
- 39 Croquet equipment
- 41 Catch
- 43 Second person
- 44 Related to 5-Down
- 46 Use a Brillo pad
- 50 Ballerina's frill
- 53 Cauldron
- 55 Japanese zither
- 56 Press
- 57 Flightless bird
- 58 Calendar
- 59 Trudge
- 60 Kenny G's instrument
- 61 That girl
- 6 Army unit
- 7 Carefree
- 8 Sapporo sash
- 9 Allow
- 10 Banned insecticide
- 12 Carousel
- 19 Light touch
- 21 Portion of N.A.
- 23 Eviscerate
- 25 Hint
- 26 Emcee
- 27 Hasn't paid yet
- 28 Michigan, for one
- 29 Not "fer"
- 30 Nincompoop
- 31 Wrigley product
- 35 Reddish-brown horse
- 38 Perched
- 40 — Angeles
- 42 They're calling Danny Boy
- 45 Prolonged sleep
- 47 Fawns' mothers
- 48 Hexagonal state
- 49 Induce ennui
- 50 Gratuity
- 51 Web address
- 52 Excessively
- 54 Monkey suit

DOWN

- 1 Ids' counterparts
- 2 Get bigger
- 3 Middle East strip
- 4 Go up and down
- 5 Listeners

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

E	G	G		B	E	T		H	O	L	D
G	R	A	M	O	A	R		A	B	E	D
O	O	Z	E	B	R	O		P	I	T	T
S	W	A	R	D		S	O	U	P		
			R	A	G			P	S	Y	C
L	A	D	Y	B	U	G		A	G	L	O
A	G	O	G		T	U	B		O	U	S
K	I	L	O	S		M	A	L	L	E	T
E	N	T	R	A	P		Y	O	U		
			O	T	I	C		S	C	R	U
T	T	U		P	O	T		K	O	T	O
I	R	O	N		E	M	U		Y	E	A
P	L	O	D		S	A	X		S	H	E

LAFF - A - DAY



"Ms. Jones, my official title is 'Chief Administrator of Neighborhood Coordination'— not 'The Block Head'."

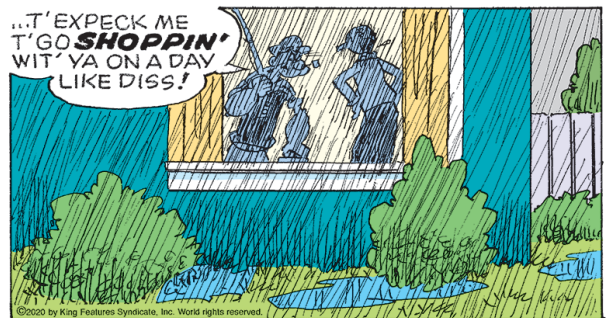
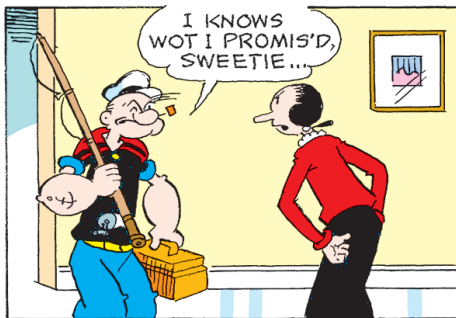
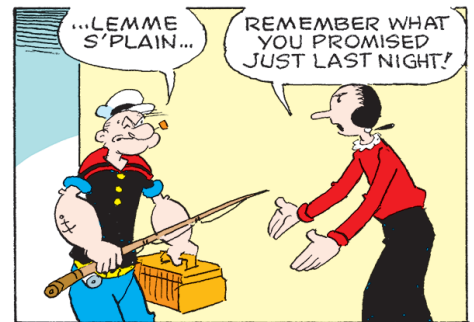
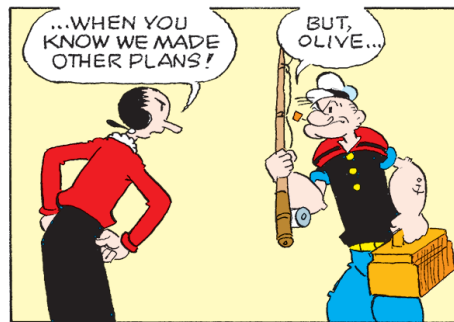
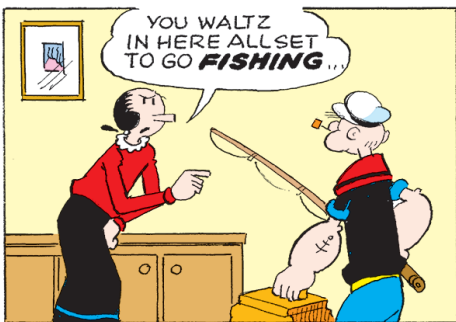
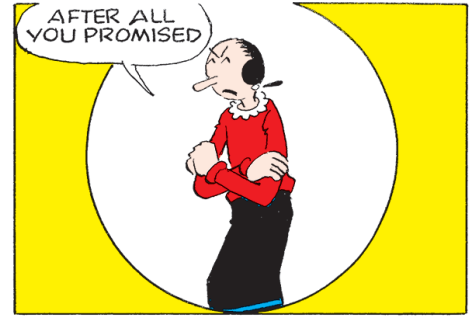
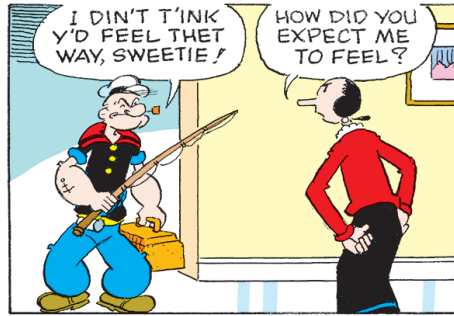
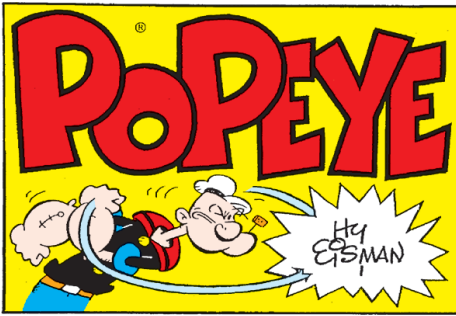
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



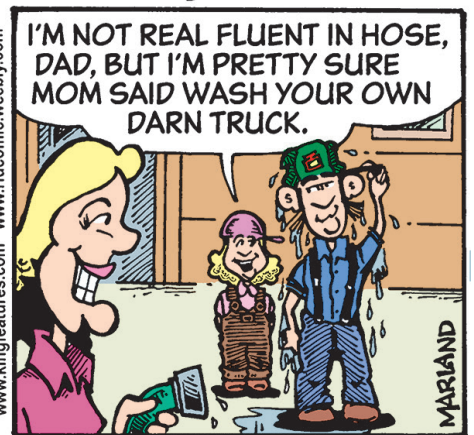
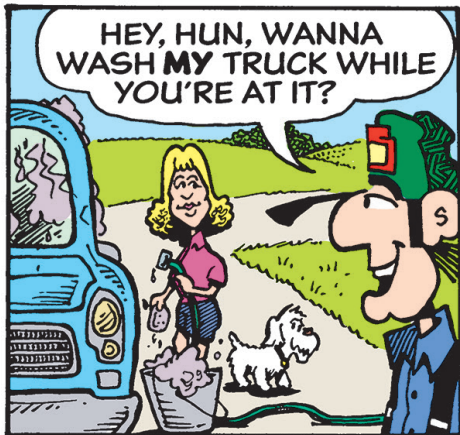
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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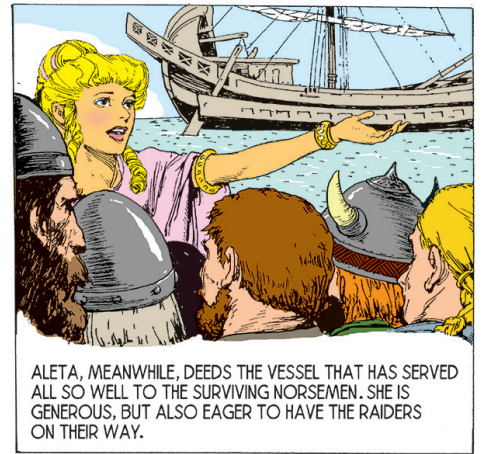
Our Story:

VAL AND HIS COMPANY ARE RETURNED TO BRITAIN - AND WHAT OF THEIR NEWFOUND CHARGES? NUDDER, BUP AND IG-FOR SO THEY ARE NAMED - HAVE PROVEN APT PUPILS UNDER NATHAN'S TUTELAGE ...

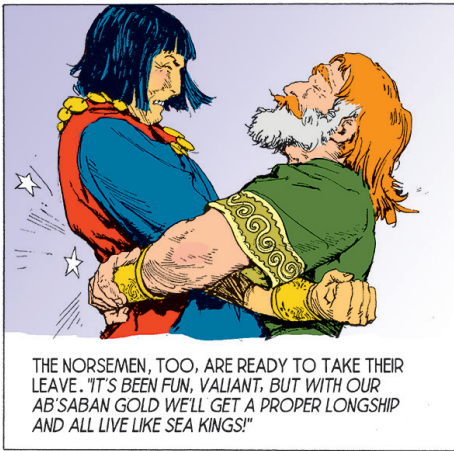


... BUT IT IS EVIDENT THAT THEY NEED POLISH BEFORE ARRIVING IN COURT, AND THIS BIG, NEW WORLD IS A MIGHTY DISTRACTION.

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ALETA, MEANWHILE, DEEDS THE VESSEL THAT HAS SERVED ALL SO WELL TO THE SURVIVING NORSEMEN. SHE IS GENEROUS, BUT ALSO EAGER TO HAVE THE RAIDERS ON THEIR WAY.



THE NORSEMEN, TOO, ARE READY TO TAKE THEIR LEAVE. "IT'S BEEN FUN, VALIANT, BUT WITH OUR AB'SABAN GOLD WE'LL GET A PROPER LONGSHIP AND ALL LIVE LIKE SEA KINGS!"



THEY PUSH OFF, MUCH TO NATHAN'S CHAGRIN. "THEY ONCE TRIED TO KILL YOU, FATHER! WHY LET THEM FREE?"



"YOU HEARD THE MAN," VAL GRINS. "THEY WOULD ALL BE SEA KINGS! NO DOUBT THEY WILL THROTTLE EACH OTHER WITHIN THE YEAR."

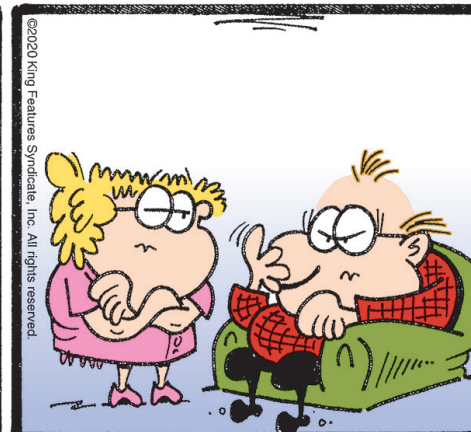
NEXT : Faux pas

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



IT'S TIME TO DO THE SPRING CLEANING.



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BUT I'M NOT DONE DOING THE WINTER MESSING.

PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Marigold Seeds

How are you doing with your time-filling activities now that so many of us are locked up inside and told not to go out? Have you been able to complete any of your projects?

Part of my plan to fill some of the hours in my stay-at-home time was to get a start on flowers for this summer. I planned to get a small seed starter kit and a packet of marigold seeds. I looked forward to seeing the little greenery coming up, a sign of life. My plan went nowhere.

Where are all the marigold seeds?

While I almost understand why the stores are out of bread and canned beans, who is buying all the flower seeds from nurseries and gardening centers? Granted, I only tried to order from locations in my growing zone, but still ... how can they all be out of stock?

Learning how to solve the Rubik's cube didn't go well either, even with the help of multiple YouTube videos

that promised to teach how to solve within 30 seconds.

Not all my plans have failed so miserably, however. I did manage to finish three French lessons on Duolingo.com. Encouraged by how fast it came to me, I decided to read children's books in French as a way to learn more. The French Experiment (www.thefrenchexperiment.com) offers not only books in French but lessons.

As I write this, there are still a handful of states where the governor has not issued mandatory stay at home orders. If you're in one of those states, pretend that you are under restrictions. Your job is to keep yourself healthy. To do that you need to stay at home. Imagine that every other person outside has the virus, because there's a chance that they do and no one knows it yet.

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1. What former University of Connecticut standout was the first player selected by the expansion Charlotte Bobcats in the 2004 NBA Draft?

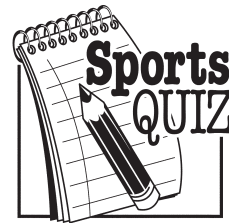
2. In 2018, the NHL's Philadelphia Flyers introduced an orange-furred, googly-eyed creature as their official mascot. What's its name?

3. In what league do the Chesapeake Bayhawks, New York Lizards, Boston Cannons and Connecticut Hammerheads compete?

4. The 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" heavyweight title fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman took place in what African country?

5. In 1994, basketball great Michael Jordan played for what Minor League Baseball team?

6. What former NFL running back livened up his press conferences by appearing in costume as Southeast Jerome, Sheriff Gonna Getcha, Bro Sweets and other characters while a member of the 2005 Washington Redskins?



by Ryan A. Berenz

7. What actor, who died in 2018, played football at Florida State University and ran for 134 yards and two touchdowns in his 1954 freshman season?

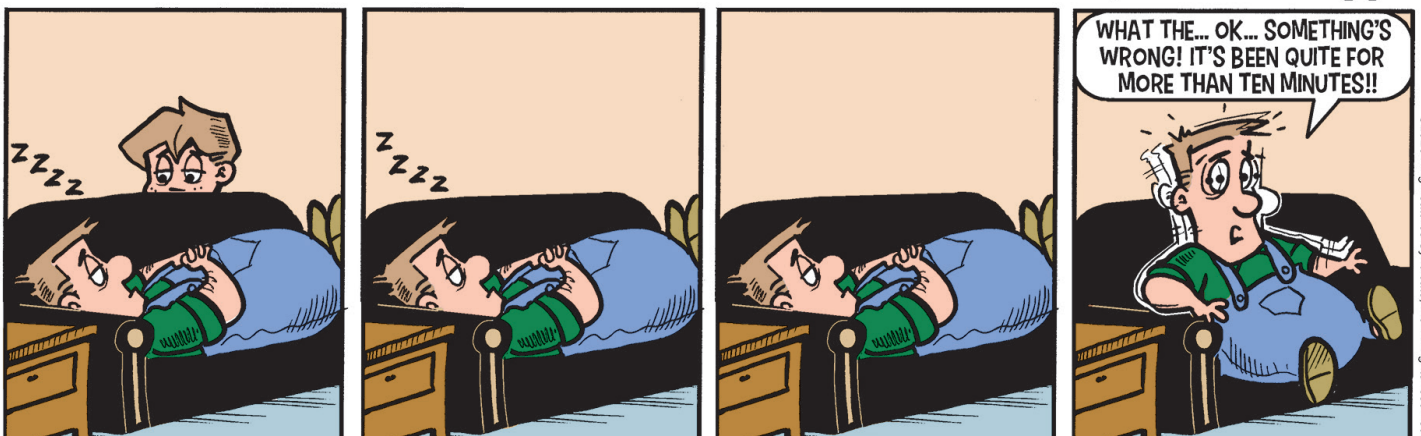
Answers

1. Emeka Okafor.
2. Gritty.
3. Major League Lacrosse.
4. Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo).
5. The Birmingham Barons.
6. Clinton Portis.
7. Burt Reynolds.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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



Bringing Home the Bacon, Again

Over the past weeks and months, we have stress-tested our economy, our health care system, and the resilience of the American people. This pandemic has also tested our food supply systems. While we fully expect grocery store shelves to remain stocked, it does not mean there won't be impacts further up the chain, especially for South Dakota farmers and ranchers.

All of agriculture is struggling right now, but the situation is particularly dire for our South Dakota pork producers. For context, 70% of U.S. bacon is consumed in restaurants. As that demand evaporated, prices started to nosedive. The pork industry estimates that losses are projected at \$37.50/head and counting.

The indefinite closure of the Sioux Falls Smithfield plant has placed an even greater strain on producers. Since then, our region has seen similar-sized plants close in Minnesota and Iowa, resulting in over 100,000 pigs per day with no place to go – that's roughly thirty percent of our nation's processing capacity. The Center for Disease Control recently issued a report on the Smithfield plant, I'm hopeful the necessary steps will be taken so they can re-open – sooner rather than later.

Safely reopening these essential processing plants is necessary for food security, but this temporary shutdown will have far greater and longer lasting impacts on our pork producers than it will Smithfield. Pigs grow fast. Hogs gain an average of 1.7 pounds a day – it's also important to know that pork producers have certain barns designed for certain size and age pigs. As they outgrow one barn, they move on to the next barn. This system allows for quality animal welfare practices and efficiency.

When things back up at the processing plant, it has a trickle-down effect. They back up in the finishing barn, the nursery, the farrowing barn where baby pigs are born, and eventually it will impact pregnant sows. With an indefinite shut down, pork producers are faced with limited options. We can all understand the impacts of a market in decline, but the financial and emotional toll of this situation is unimaginable.

The actions we take over the next few weeks will impact the livelihoods of hundreds of independent family farms, the future of pork production, and the variety of options in the grocery store. Over the past month, I've had countless calls with producers, Administration officials and my colleagues in Congress. We've urged USDA to deliver real, temporary assistance to livestock producers across the board. The situation needs stitches, not a band-aid. I will also continue to push the federal government to provide the resources and expertise needed to return to a normal supply chain. Our supply chain infrastructure has allowed us to have the world's safest, most abundant and highest quality food around. For most, the term "bringing home the bacon" is colloquial, for our producers, it's literally a way of life.

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More Relief on its way for South Dakota Businesses

We're now in the end of April and COVID-19 is continuing to impact our daily lives. Around two thousand cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in South Dakota, and social distancing continues throughout the state. While we hope the end of this period of uncertainty is coming soon, Congress continues to pass legislation to address the crisis and provide much-needed relief.

Recently, Congress passed and President Trump signed into law a \$480 billion dollar package that provides more funding for hospitals, nationwide testing, and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) so more small businesses can now participate. The PPP is a loan program administered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) for businesses with 500 employees or fewer, as well as self-employed individuals. As of Friday, April 24, casinos with 500 or fewer employees are now eligible for PPP loans. I've been urging the SBA to make sure tribally-owned casinos and gaming operations in Deadwood are able to receive financial assistance during these times, so I'm glad the administration has now modified their rules. The PPP provides up to \$10 million in loans to businesses to help cover payroll costs for employees, as well as pay for rent, interest on mortgages and utilities. Businesses who use PPP loans to keep employees on the payroll can have most of the loan forgiven.

The PPP was originally allocated \$350 billion in the CARES Act, but that money ran out in less than two weeks. This is a sign that the program is working, and businesses are able to keep their staff on the payroll for the time being. However, because of the high demand for the program, our recent legislation provided an additional \$320 billion for the PPP so even more businesses can receive these partially-forgivable loans. The Small Business Administration estimates that more than 80 percent of our small businesses in South Dakota have utilized the PPP so far. If you're interested in participating in the program, your local lender will be able to assist you in applying for a loan.

The bill we passed also clarifies that agricultural enterprises are eligible for the SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), a program that got a funding boost in our legislation. These loans will provide up to \$10,000 of economic grants to businesses hurting because of COVID-19. Our ag community has been struggling for years due to low commodity prices, ongoing trade negotiations and, now, the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is finalizing a proposal to provide a relief package to farmers and ranchers whose businesses have been impacted by COVID-19. As a vital component of our nation's food supply chain, we must do everything we can to make sure they can continue to put food on the tables of America's families.

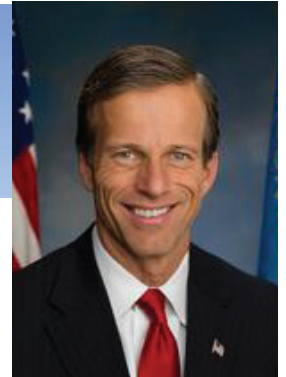
The proposal isn't final yet and needs to go through the official approval process in the federal government, but USDA's goal is to begin taking applications in May and for farmers and ranchers to begin receiving their relief packages in June. What we've learned about the proposal so far is that USDA will issue a single payment determined using two calculations: for price losses that occurred between January 1 and April 15, 2020, producers will be compensated for 85 percent of the price lost during that period. The second part of the payment will help to cover 30 percent of expected losses from April 15 through the next two quarters. USDA's proposal sets the payment limit at \$125,000 per commodity with an overall limit of \$250,000 per individual or entity. We will continue reviewing the proposal to assess its impact on South Dakota's farmers and ranchers. We'd also welcome input from the ag community in our state so we can share it with USDA.

We know businesses and families are struggling right now, and we hope that we'll be able to safely re-open the country in the near future. In the meantime, we're working to provide aid for those who need it during this crisis. Stay safe, and don't hesitate to contact my office if there's anything we can do to help.

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John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



The American Spirit is Stronger Than Ever Before

The American people have faced adversity before, and if history has taught us anything, we likely will again. While the challenges are never the same, the strength and determination with which America faces them is as predictable as the sun rising in the east. Look around, and there are examples in every corner of the country that prove it's true. Kindness, generosity, and gratitude – hallmarks of the American spirit – are stronger than ever before, and people are rising to the occasion, whether they're rushing to the frontline or social distancing and spending more time at home.

"Thank you." We say it a lot, but it seems to carry more weight these days. Especially when we see doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals in South Dakota and around the country unexpectedly finding themselves at the forefront of America's borderless battle with an enemy that attacks with indiscriminate force. Given the talent and dedication of our nation's medical community, we shouldn't be surprised by their willingness to serve during times like these, but the challenges they're confronting still seem unimaginable to a lot of people.

While doctors and nurses are often recognized for their heroism, and rightfully so, the coronavirus crisis has shown that heroes walk among us in what many would have considered the unlikeliest of places. Just a few months ago, many Americans probably wouldn't have given a second thought to seeing a fully stocked grocery store shelf, having their mail or packages arrive on time, or getting food delivered to a front door. Grocery store workers, delivery drivers, maintenance workers, cleaners, and garbage collectors, just to name a few, are helping provide the goods and services we need, but perhaps never thought we'd require quite like we do today.

We also owe a big thank you to the hardworking men and women who, even in the midst of a global pandemic, are still producing the food on which we rely. South Dakota's farmers and ranchers are the best of the best, and despite plenty of obstacles, they're still doing everything they can to help feed and support their communities, state, nation, and world, for that matter.

The list of those to thank is long – police officers, fire fighters, first responders, teachers, and, honestly, everyone who calls South Dakota home. We're in this fight together, and together, we're all learning what it takes to battle this pandemic in our new, yet temporary, daily lives. And I'd be remiss if I didn't thank everyone who has reached out to me to offer their advice and suggestions, especially as Congress continues to respond to this crisis. Despite the hurdles the last few weeks have presented, we've been finding innovative ways to stay connected through virtual events, like tele-town halls, Skype meetings, Facebook Live, and other digital communication platforms.

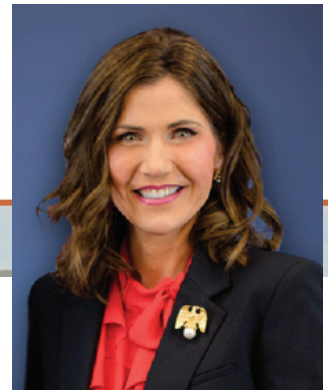
No one likes adversity. No one likes to be inconvenienced. No one likes to feel like they're not in control of the situation. In challenging times like these, I find that my faith is strengthened, and I have a greater appreciation for my friends and family. I hope my fellow South Dakotans can find similar bright spots in what's an otherwise difficult situation. Pessimism is easy, but optimism can win if we let it.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



Looking Out for Each Other

COVID-19 is challenging our state and our people in ways that we've never seen before. It's been 45 days since our first positive case was reported in South Dakota. Since that time, South Dakotans have followed medical advice, drastically changed their daily routines, and as a result, flattened the state's projected curve by 75 percent. I want to thank South Dakotans for their diligence, but I also want everyone to remember that we're not out of the woods yet. I need folks to continue to follow guidance and be smart about protecting themselves, their families, and – in turn – their communities.

Earlier this week, I took a minute to draw specific attention to a community that is near and dear to my heart, farmers and ranchers. As a fourth-generation farmer, I know what it's like to watch your land be flooded out by the weather, livestock struggle through a storm, and to have tens of thousands of dollars of losses in a year for things totally beyond your control. But this virus is a totally new challenge.

South Dakotans are strong-willed, independent-minded, people, and this is especially true in the agriculture industry. But now more than ever, I'm asking people to please look out for each other.

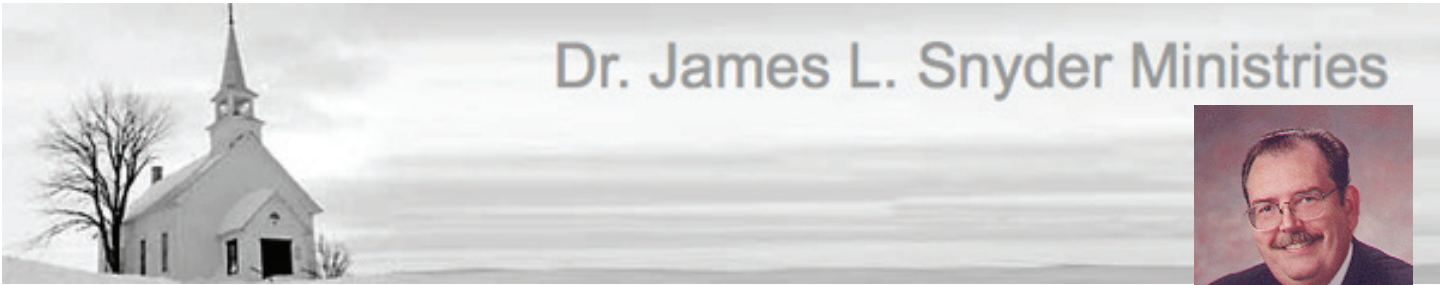
Beyond the very real health concerns we are facing, South Dakotans also are under considerable financial strain and mental stress. Life is unfair at times. It can be incredibly tough. Right now, you may feel like you're playing with a losing hand. Too often, there is a stigma surrounding mental health. That's wrong. We have resources available on [COVID.sd.gov](https://www.covid.sd.gov) if you need help.

South Dakotans have stepped up and done what is necessary to flatten the curve so far; there's more work to do. If we continue to be diligent about practicing social distancing, if we continue to exercise personal responsibility to keep ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities safe, and if we look out for our fellow South Dakotans and care for each other's well-being, then we will emerge from this challenge stronger than ever.

The good news for all South Dakotans is that you are not alone. Together, we will get through this.

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Not Everything Is As It Seems

For the last five days, I have not been able to sleep nor close my eyes at night. It's been a nightmare.

During the last four weeks, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and Yours Truly have been sequestered in our home and loving it.

I cannot remember a time in our marriage that we have spent so much time together with no serious obligations needing attention. It is marvelous to spend 24/7 together. If this is what senior retirement is like, I'm giving it some earnest consideration. Nobody ever told me this could be so wonderful.

Spending time together is great; my wife spends time in her craft room, doing what she does in that craft room. For obvious reasons, I am not allowed in that room, which is okay with me. She has been making all sorts of things and loving it. I think she made a bunch of masks and then some signs that said, Faith/Fear to give to some friends.

I have been catching up on some reading and writing projects that I was behind on. I did not realize how much I had to do until I sat down to do it. From the time I sat down to do it, I was exhausted and had to take a nap.

Never in my life have I been able to take a nap whenever I want to, and nobody harasses me. I do not even feel guilty about taking a nap in the afternoon. Where in the world did this come from?

One great blessing of all this time together is our eating schedule. My wife is a marvelous cook, and I am a marvelous eater. We make a beautiful pair, and it looks like we were made for each other.

Spending time together has been very therapeutic for both of us. Too often, we're busy doing this and that to help this person or that person. We don't mind doing that, but sometimes we can get all caught up just doing.

Now, all we have is each other.

Then, much to my surprise, something changed.

We were watching the news and some newscasters, supposedly from their home, had not shaved in quite a while, which was noticeable.

I turned to my wife and said, "I know how I can save a lot of money!"

"How's that?" She asked.

"I can save money," I said as seriously as I could muster at the time, "by not purchasing any toiletry items like aftershave and shaving cream."

She just looked at me as though I was a little bit crazy, but I think she thought I was a whole lot crazier.

"In fact," I said with a sarcastic attitude, "I don't have to shave, I'll just grow a beard." Then I laughed.

I glanced over at my wife, and she was smiling one of those smiles I have not seen in a long time. I could not quite figure out the nature of that smile, but I knew it was not one of her best smiles.

"Would you care to repeat that?" She asked.

With her strange smile and question, I was completely knocked off my guard. I did not know how to interpret this.

"I don't need to shave," I repeated, "I'll just grow a beard like everybody else."

As I was saying that, I was giggling and having a wonderful time. I did not know at that time that I might be in trouble. That is the problem with husbands. They never know when they are in trouble.

They may be in trouble when the wife is scowling or when she is smiling. There is no way to tell the

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difference. I was in that position.

"So," she said rather slowly, "you're not going to shave? Is that what I'm hearing?"

I knew I was joking, but I did not know if she knew that I was joking, and therefore I did not know if I was joking.

I was backed in a corner and needed to play this forward. "Yes, I'm not going to shave until all of this is over. I'll grow a nice beard." Then I let out a hearty laugh.

She then laughed. "This is how it will go," she explained, "if you don't shave during the day, I will shave you at night when you're sleeping."

In the middle of one of my laughs, I stopped and started to process what she said.

I looked at her, she looked at me, and I did not know what in the world to think. Would she shave me while I was sleeping?

All she did was smile one of "those smiles," and started back watching TV.

I have lived long enough to know that there are many things I do not know, and I was in a position where I did not know if what she was telling me was what she was going to do.

In the following silence, I could not help but think of two Bible verses by King Solomon. "Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids" (Proverbs 6:4). And, "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread" (Proverbs 20:13).

One thing I have learned in life is never take anything for granted. When you do, things never seem to come out right.



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church held a fundraiser Saturday to help families in need during the COVID-19 outbreak. The following was posted on the SEAS Facebook Page: "What an amazing day at the cookout, we had a great group working together, got to see so many people. Thanks for all the positive feedback.

"Together we had almost \$4900.00 in donations and with expenses taken out, we made over \$4200.00 to help families in need.

"If you know someone in need of assistance, please call SEAS church or email us. Thanks again, it's awesome working together as the body of Christ."

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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Another short update. Thinking tomorrow I'll be back in fighting form with more information. I always like to caution that weekend reporting is not always as on-the-spot as it is during the week, but things do look marginally better tonight.

We're at 938,133 cases in the US. The increase, both in raw number and percentage declined slightly today; that's what we're looking for. NY leads with 282,174 cases, day 4 of growth in both number and percentage increase. You will remember NJ did not report in yesterday, so what we're seeing tonight can be attributed to two days' reporting, and here the news is better. They're at 105,523, and that rate of growth over two days is lower than things had been running. Remaining states are as follows: MA – 53,348, CA – 42,373, IL – 41,777, PA – 41,626, MI – 37,184, FL – 30,831, LA – 26,512, and CT – 24,582. These ten states account for 73% of US cases. 2 more states have over 20,000 cases, 6 more have over 10,000, 10 more over 5000, 15 more + DC and PR over 1000, 7 more + GU over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

There have been 48,303 deaths in the US. While the growth in percentage increase held steady, the growth in raw numbers is up slightly from yesterday. NY has 16,599, NJ has 5863, MI has 3273, MA has 2730, IL has 1884, CT has 1862, PA has 1842, CA has 1684 and LA has 1644. There is 1 more state over 1000 deaths, 7 more over 500, 17 more + DC over 100, 5 more + PR over 50, 8 more over 10, and 2 + GU, VI, and MP under 10.

That's it for tonight. I've read a lot of stories in the past couple of days about things people are doing to cheer themselves up and to keep occupied during this long retreat from "normal" life, and I wonder how normal life will be after this thing passes, as it surely will. I see one thing changing from the old normal. It looks to me like most of us will have developed excellent coping skills, and I view that as a good thing. I've also been reading stories about ways people are offering a hand to others who aren't coping as well. I hope this means we're also exercising compassion; like muscles that get stronger the more they're used, so does compassion. I would view this as a good thing too. Tomorrow's a day many are accustomed to taking as a day of rest. Let me suggest you devote at least part of it to activity, to showing compassion for someone who's nothing like you, whose life bears little resemblance to yours, whose choices you don't fully understand, but who needs understanding, caring, and to know someone sees them. One of the great gifts we can give someone is just that: to see them. It's hard to be someone when you're invisible.

Take care, and stay healthy. With luck, I'll have more for you tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Apr. 8	Apr. 9	Apr. 10	Apr. 11	Apr. 12	Apr. 13	Apr. 14	Apr. 15	Apr. 16	Apr. 17
Minnesota	1,154	1,242	1,336	1,427	1,621	1,650	1,695	1,809	1,912	2,071
Nebraska	523	577	648	704	814	871	901	952	1,066	1,138
Montana	332	354	377	---	387	394	399	404	415	422
Colorado	5,655	6202	6,510	6,893	7,303	7,691	7,941	8,280	8,675	
Wyoming	230	239	253	261	270	275	282	288	296	
North Dakota	251	269	278	293	308	331	341	365	393	439
South Dakota	393	447	536	626	730	868	988	1168	1,311	1,411
United States	431,838	466,396	501,701	530,006	557,590	582,619	609,685	639,664	671,425	706,779
US Deaths	14,768	16,703	18,781	20,608	22,109	23,529	26,059	30,985	33,286	37,079

Minnesota	+85	+88	+94	+91	+194	+29	+45	+114	+103	+159
Nebraska	+45	+54	+71	+56	+110	+57	+30	+51	+114	+72
Montana	+13	+22	+23	---	+10	+7	+5	+5	+11	+7
Colorado	+226	+547	+308	+383	+410	+388	+250	+339	+395	
Wyoming	+9	+9	+14	+8	+9	+5	+7	+6	+8	
North Dakota	+14	+18	+9	+15	+15	+23	+10	+24	+28	+46
South Dakota	+73	+54	+89	+90	+104	+138	+120	+180	+143	+100
United States	+31,909	+34,558	+35,305	+28,305	+27,584	+25,029	+27,066	+29,979	+31,761	+35,354
US Deaths	+1,857	+1,935	+2,078	1,827	+1,501	+1,420	+2,530	+4,926	+2,301	+3,793

	Apr. 18	Apr. 19	Apr. 20	Apr. 21	Apr. 22	Apr. 23	Apr. 24	Apr. 25
Minnesota	2,213	2,356	2,470	2,567	2,721	2,942	3,185	3,446
Nebraska	1,287	1,474	1,648	1,722	1813	2,124	2,421	2,732
Montana	426	433	433	437	439	442	444	445
Colorado	9,433	9,730	10,106	10,447	10,878	11,262	12,256	12,968
Wyoming	309	313	317	322	326	332	349	362
North Dakota	528	585	627	644	679	709	748	803
South Dakota	1542	1635	1685	1755	1858	1,956	2,040	2,147
United States	735,287	758,720	786,638	824,438	842,624	867,459	905,364	938,154
US Deaths	39,090	40,666	42,295	45,039	46,785	49,804	51,956	53,755

Minnesota	+142	+143	+114	+97	+154	+221	+243	+261
Nebraska	+149	+187	+174	+74	+91	+311	+297	+311
Montana	+4	+7	0	+4	+2	+3	+2	+1
Colorado	+379	+297	+376	+341	+431	+384	+994	+712
Wyoming	+7	+4	+4	+5	+4	+6	+7	+13
North Dakota	+89	+57	+42	+17	+35	+30	+39	+55
South Dakota	+131	+93	+50	+70	+103	+98	+84	+107
United States	+28,508	+23,433	+27,918	+37,800	+18,186	+24,835	+37,905	+32,790
US Deaths	+2,011	+1,576	+1,629	+2,744	+1,746	+3,019	+2,152	+1,799

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April 25th COVID-19 UPDATE

South Dakota:

Positive: +107 (2040 total) 23 more than yesterday

Negative: +665 (13,449 total)

Hospitalized: +4 (128 total) - 61 currently hospitalized (no change from yesterday)

Deaths: 10 total (no change)

Recovered: +33 (1223 total)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett +1 (13), Brule +5 (46), Buffalo 9, Butte +8 (23), Campbell 7, Custer +2 (16), Day +3 (54), Dewey +2 (23), Douglas 23, Edmunds 19, Grant +1 (34), Gregory +1 (32), Haakon +4 (15), Hand 19, Hanson +1 (21), Harding 1, Jackson +4 (8), Jones 4, Kingsbury 62, Mellette 11, Perkins +1 (5), Potter +2 (31), Tripp 52, Ziebach 3, unassigned -309 (1111).

Brookings: +2 positive (11 total)

Brown: +2 positive (28 total, 15 recovered, 522 negative)

Lincoln: +9 positive, +3 recovered (70 of 125 recovered)

McPherson: First positive case

Minehaha: +89 positive, +29 recovered (983 of 1796 recovered)

Turner: +2 positive (15 total)

Union: +1 positive (12 total)

Fully recovered from positive cases: Aurora, Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Calrk, Corson, Deuel, Fall River, Faulk, Hamlin, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lawrence, Lyman, Marshall, Meade, Oglala Lakota, Roberts, Spink, Sully, Todd, Walworth.

The N.D. DoH & private labs are reporting 1,901 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 56 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 803. NDDoH reports one new death.

State & private labs have reported 19,350 total tests & 18,547 negatives.

310 ND patients are recovered.

Note: one case previously under investigation was reassigned out of state.

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Total Positive Cases*	2147
Total Negative Cases*	13449
Recovered	1223
Ever Hospitalized**	128
Deaths***	10

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	128	0
20-29 years	407	0
30-39 years	498	0
40-49 years	428	0
50-59 years	386	3
60-69 years	199	3
70-79 years	48	1
80+ years	53	3

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	1	1	37
Beadle	21	19	173
Bennett	0	0	13
Bon Homme	4	4	99
Brookings	11	9	325
Brown	30	15	543
Brule	0	0	46
Buffalo	0	0	9
Butte	0	0	23
Campbell	0	0	7
Charles Mix	4	4	77
Clark	1	1	51
Clay	5	4	118
Codington	14	13	442
Corson	1	1	16
Custer	0	0	16
Davison	5	3	284
Day	0	0	54
Deuel	1	1	70
Dewey	0	0	23
Douglas	0	0	23
Edmunds	0	0	19
Fall River	1	1	39
Faulk	1	1	16
Grant	0	0	34
Gregory	0	0	32
Haakon	0	0	15
Hamlin	2	2	56
Hand	0	0	19
Hanson	0	0	21
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	7	6	214
Hutchinson	2	2	87

Hyde	1	1	11
Jackson	0	0	8
Jerauld	6	4	32
Jones	0	0	4
Kingsbury	0	0	62
Lake	4	2	115
Lawrence	9	9	145
Lincoln	125	70	1279
Lyman	2	2	24
Marshall	1	1	35
McCook	4	3	85
McPherson	1	0	15
Meade	1	1	111
Mellette	0	0	11
Miner	1	0	20
Minnehaha	1796	983	5693
Moody	2	1	84
Oglala Lakota	1	1	29
Pennington	11	10	488
Perkins	0	0	5
Potter	0	0	31
Roberts	4	4	87
Sanborn	3	2	35
Spink	3	3	86
Stanley	1	0	33
Sully	1	1	13
Todd	1	1	42
Tripp	0	0	52
Turner	15	5	131
Union	12	6	127
Walworth	5	5	41
Yankton	26	21	399
Ziebach	0	0	3
Unassigned****	0	0	1111

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1011	2
Male	1136	8

COVID-19 DEATHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	2
Jerauld	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	5
Pennington	1

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COVID-19 Prom

The GHS Prom was supposed to have been held last night; however, with the COVID-19 outbreak, nearly everything is at a stand still. That, however, did not stop Madeline Schuelke and her prom date, Steven Paulson, from dressing up, maintaining appropriate social distance and getting a few photos taken. It will be like no other prom in GHS history.

Madeline Schuelke and Steven Paulson at the appropriate social distance.

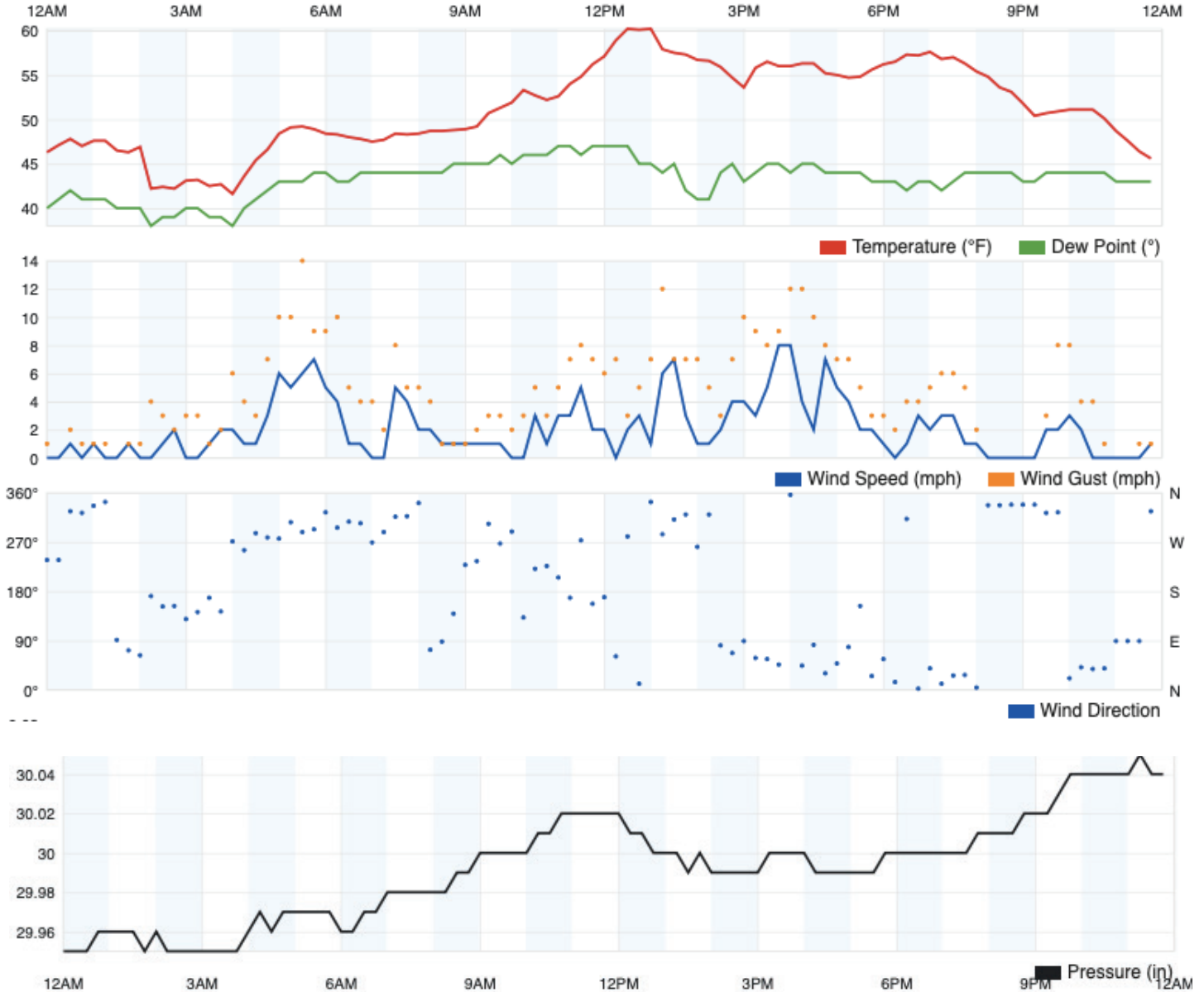
(Courtesy Photo)



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Increasing
Clouds

High: 72 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance
T-storms then
Partly Cloudy

Low: 45 °F

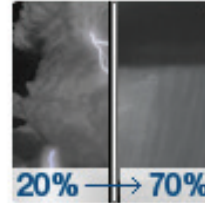
Monday



Sunny

High: 72 °F

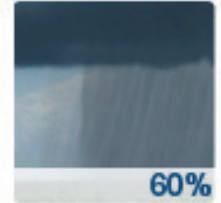
Monday
Night



Slight Chance
T-storms then
Showers
Likely

Low: 49 °F

Tuesday



Showers
Likely

High: 67 °F

Sunday

- Partly Sunny and mild.
- Highs 66-78°F

Tonight

- Showers/Tstorms early. Late night fog possible.
- Lows 34-42°F

Monday

- Partly Cloudy and mild.
- Highs 64-78°F

ISSUED: 1:41 PM - Saturday, April 25, 2020, NWS Aberdeen SD

Scattered showers and thunderstorms will end this evening, with clearing thereafter. Sunday and Monday should be mostly dry, and mild with above normal temperatures.

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Today in Weather History

April 26, 1986: Intense thunderstorms swept across southeast South Dakota, southwest Minnesota, and northwest Iowa. Baseball size hail fell in a 15-mile wide swath from near Pickstown to Scotland, South Dakota. The large hail caused extensive damage to windows, roofs, siding, and vehicles in the path of the storm. Wind gusts of 70 to 80 mph and rain amounts of 2 or more inches in a short period (including 5 inches at Centerville) were reported in southeast South Dakota. Several tornadoes moved across northwest Iowa including one that ran across part of Lyon County destroying several farmsteads. Another tornado moved through Lyon County, Iowa into Nobles County, Minnesota damaging, at least, 16 separate farms. Another tornado touched down briefly on the south side of Okebena in Jackson County destroying or damaging several houses.

April 26, 1991: During a severe thunderstorm event, large hail fell over parts of Brown, Spink, Hand, and Buffalo Counties. Both Brown and Hand Counties received hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter.

April 26, 2008: An area of low-pressure brought widespread heavy snow of 6 to 20 inches to most of northeast South Dakota for much of the 25th and into the early morning hours of the 26th. The precipitation began as light freezing rain in the early morning across parts of the area before changing to all snow by mid-morning. As the low-pressure area intensified, snowfall rates and the north winds also increased. The heavy snow combined with the high winds created widespread visibility problems along with large snowdrifts. Snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Andover, Britton, Gann Valley, and 15 miles south of Miller, 8 inches at Roy Lake, 9 inches at Clark, Big Stone City, Hillside Colony, and Sisseton, 10 inches 7 miles south of Bristol, and 11 inches at Hayti. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included 12 inches at Wilmot, Webster, and Waubay, 13 inches at Milbank, 15 inches at Castlewood, 16 inches near Victor, and near Summit, 17 inches at Clear Lake, 19 inches at Watertown, and 20 inches at Bryant.

Some automobiles went into the ditch along with many other vehicles damaged in accidents. Many stranded motorists had to abandon their cars in the hardest hit areas. Travel was not advised across the entire region. A school bus slid into a ditch east of Castlewood with no injuries occurring. Interstate-29 was closed from 3 pm the 25th until 3 pm on the 26th from Brookings north to the North Dakota border. Also, South Dakota State Highway 12 was closed from Webster to the Minnesota line from the afternoon of the 25th until the late morning of the 26th. Most counties affected by the storm opened emergency shelters when Interstate 29 was closed to house stranded motorists. Also, many schools were closed across the area.

The very heavy snow set several records across the area. The 19 inches at Watertown broke its all-time 24-hour snowfall record of 16 inches. Both Victor and Clear Lake had their second-highest snowfall ever recorded in a 24 hour period. Watertown, along with several other locations in northeast South Dakota, received near-record or record snowfall for April. In fact, Watertown's 29.5 inches of snow for April was almost their average seasonal snowfall.

1884: Tornadoes were hard to capture on old cameras with their hard to use glass plate negatives. The first recorded photograph of a tornado was taken on this date by A.A. Adams near Garnett, Kansas.

1978: An unusually strong occluded front swept out of the Gulf of Alaska and produced the first April thunderstorm of record at Fairbanks. Pea-size hail fell northeast of Fairbanks from thunderstorms whose tops were less than 8000 feet.

1986: The Chernobyl nuclear power station in Kiev Ukraine suffered a massive explosion. The radioactive cloud of particles and gas carried westward and northwestward, contaminating large areas of Europe in the following week.

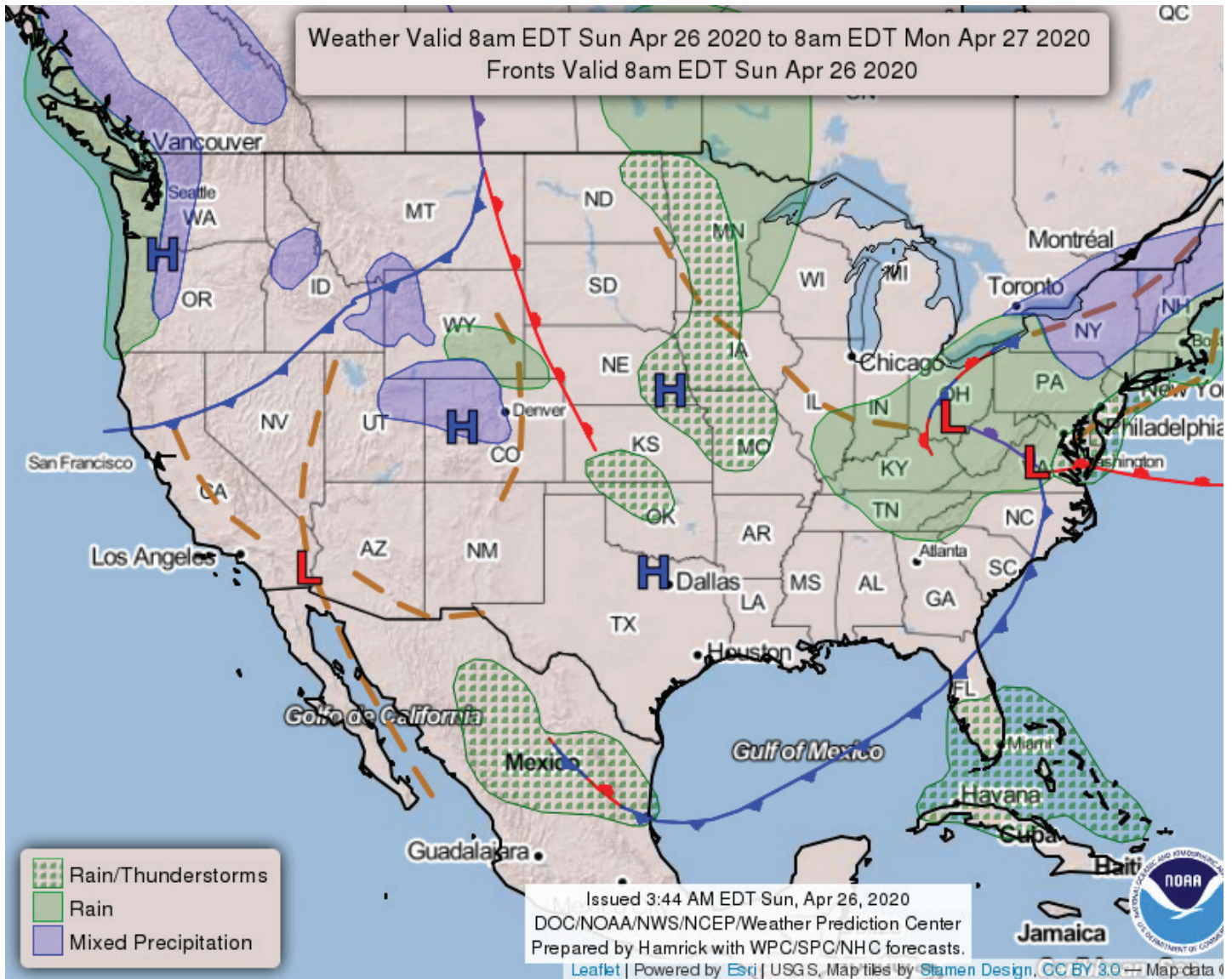
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 60.2
Low Temp: 41.6
Wind: 14
Precip: .02

Record High: 86° in 1952, 1899
Record Low: 20° in 1931
Average High: 63°F
Average Low: 36°F
Average Precip in April: 1.42
Precip to date in April: 0.97
Average Precip to date: 3.60
Precip Year to Date: 1.32
Sunset Tonight: 8:35 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:27 a.m.



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THE GENERAL'S LAST REQUEST

As General Grant lay dying, his heart was troubled, and he desired to make things right with God. Turning to someone nearby he asked for a minister to come to visit him.

"General," said the minister, "'The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.' If you'll sincerely call upon Him from your heart, you'll receive mercy from Him and abundant pardon."

The minister then fell to his knees and prayed for the general, and General Grant received Jesus as His Savior. At that moment, he was wonderfully converted.

Thrilled, the minister said, "God's Kingdom has received a great acquisition in your conversion, General."

General Grant, thinking for a moment responded, "God doesn't need great men, but great men need God."

On the cross of Christ, God leveled the playing field. No one stands above the crowd. Each time we are reminded of the death of Jesus, we must also remind ourselves that the "Son of man has come to seek and to save those who are lost."

No one is saved as a result of a great heritage or popularity contest. Our background or previous lifestyle does not matter. God saves us by "His special favor when we believe...in Him...because salvation is a gift from God." But, we must accept His gift to be saved!

Prayer: We thank You, Lord, for making it possible for everyone, everywhere and anywhere, to have equal access to Your grace and salvation. Thank You for loving us! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Ephesians 2:8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

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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
 - **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
 - **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - **CANCELLED** 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

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

09-19-24-33-34

(nine, nineteen, twenty-four, thirty-three, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$41,000

Lotto America

16-28-39-42-44, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 3

(sixteen, twenty-eight, thirty-nine, forty-two, forty-four; Star Ball: five; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.3 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$186 million

Powerball

01-03-21-47-57, Powerball: 18, Power Play: 2

(one, three, twenty-one, forty-seven, fifty-seven; Powerball: eighteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$37 million

Minneapolis puts recreation on hold as virus cases rise

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minneapolis officials are putting an end to pickup basketball games and other outdoor recreation because people continue to gather in city parks and fields as the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths continues to rise.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board announced Friday it will close courts, athletic fields, playgrounds and skate parks by May 1, the Star Tribune reported. The decision includes removing or blocking basketball rims, removing tennis and volleyball nets, and posting signs notifying park visitors that soccer fields, playgrounds and skate parks are closed.

The city has received more than 125 complaints of large groups at parks, many playing sports such as soccer and basketball, officials said.

"This is an issue that we're consistently seeing. The fact is that some park spaces have been built to provide for congregating," Park Board President Jono Cowgill said. "We need to take steps now to ensure that people are staying safe as best they can."

Minnesota health officials on Saturday confirmed 261 news cases of the coronavirus, raising the total statewide to nearly 3,500.

The updated report includes 23 deaths from COVID-19, for a statewide total of 244. All but one of the victims were in long-term care facilities and one was at least 100 years old, the state Department of Health said.

"We continue our work along with many partners around the state to protect Minnesotans and prevent additional deaths," state Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm said. "It is very important for all Minnesotans to do their part in that effort by following social distancing guidelines and other public health recommendations."

A total of 797 people have required hospitalization. Of those, 288 remain in those facilities, with 109 in intensive care.

Most of the cases have been recorded in the populous southeastern part of the state. Clay County, which includes the Moorhead and Fargo, North Dakota, metropolitan area, went over the 100 mark with 14 new cases recorded, including three deaths. There are 325 cases in Nobles County, located near the

South Dakota and Iowa borders, many of which are attributed to the recently shuttered JBS pork plant in Worthington.

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.

Smithfield idles western Illinois pork plant over virus

MONMOUTH, Ill. (AP) — A western Illinois pork-processing plant is suspending operations after some of its employees contracted COVID-19.

Smithfield Foods Inc. announced Friday that it will shutter operations at its Monmouth, Illinois, plant beginning Monday and until further notice.

A “small portion” of the plant’s 1,700 employees tested positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, Virginia-based Smithfield announced Friday. The Monmouth plant represents about 3 percent of U.S. fresh pork supplies and also produces bacon. Employees will be paid during the closure, the company said.

Smithfield also has closed meatpacking plants in Cudahy, Wisconsin; Martin City, Missouri; and Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Employers have struggled to contain the virus in meatpacking plants, where workers toil side by side on production lines and often share crowded locker rooms, cafeterias and rides to work.

Smithfield said it will continue to provide its workers with personal protective equipment such as masks. Smithfield also has implemented thermal scanning companywide and installed plexiglass and other physical barriers on production floors and in break rooms, it said.

Rapid City businesses could reopen, including restaurants

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City bars and restaurants are among the businesses that could reopen under a plan that would require social distancing precautions to guard against spreading the coronavirus.

The City Council is scheduled to vote Monday on Mayor Steve Allender’s proposal, the Rapid City Journal reported. It would require bars and restaurants to maintain a minimum of six feet between tables, chairs and bar stools. Establishments would be allowed to have a maximum of 10 people, or for larger buildings, one customer for every 125 square feet of space.

Food service employees would also be required to wear masks.

Tony Demaro, owner of Murphy’s Pub & Grill and Kol, said he’s been working with his staff to practice social distancing at the pub and is excited about the possibility of reopening next week.

“I want to get rid of the fear that keeps people paralyzed at home. I want people to get outside and have drinks with friends safely,” he said.

Takeout and delivery at his two businesses haven’t generated enough revenue to sustain being closed much longer, Demaro said.

Justin Henrichsen, owner of Independent Ale House, said it would be difficult to make money under the mayor’s proposed capacity restrictions.

“I don’t know if we’ll reopen,” he said. “We’re taking it a week at a time.”

State health officials reported more than 100 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, although none of them were in western South Dakota. Ten of the 11 cases in Pennington County, where Rapid City is located, were marked as recovered. The other case was a death reported in March.

About 1,800 of the state’s nearly 2,150 coronavirus cases have been reported in Minnehaha County, which is South Dakota’s most populous county and the location of a large outbreak at a pork processing plant. More than 1,000 COVID-19 cases have been tied to the Smithfield Foods plant in Sioux Falls.

No new deaths were reported Saturday, leaving the South Dakota total at 10. There were no new reports of hospitalizations, keeping that figure at 61.

The actual number of infections is thought to be far higher because many people have not been tested and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

Check out more of the AP's coronavirus coverage at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Berg promoted to warden at South Dakota Women's Prison

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Darren Berg has been named warden of the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre, corrections officials announced Friday.

Berg has served as interim warden at the prison for the last month. He is an 18-year veteran of the state Department of Corrections, starting as a corrections officer. He has served as a manager, deputy warden and data systems manager.

"Darren's leadership has been invaluable to the facility and the department," said Secretary of Corrections Mike Leidholt. "His experience and knowledge of everything from programming to policies to best practices with an emphasis on safety and security will continue to benefit the team he is leading and the inmates they supervise."

The prison encompasses all security levels and includes the nearby Pierre Community Work Center. There are about 440 inmates housed at the facility.

Virus lockdown raises tensions in France's poorest areas

By ELAINE GANLEY and NICOLAS GARRIGA Associated Press

CLICHY-SOUS-BOIS, France (AP) — Joining more than 1,000 others, Djemba Diatite stood for hours in line to feed her growing family, grateful for handouts of fruits, vegetables and soap. It was her first time accepting charity, but she had no choice. The coronavirus pandemic has turned her small world upside down.

With open air markets closed, supermarket prices skyrocketing, an out-of-work husband, two children to feed and another on the way, Diatite said even tomatoes are now too expensive.

"This is my only solution," she said, relieved that a local group in her Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois stepped in with help.

Clichy-sous-Bois — where fiery nationwide riots started in 2005 — is just 23 kilometers (14 miles) northeast of the French capital, but with its rows of housing projects, restless youth and residents teetering on the poverty line, it feels light years away.

The town mayor, seeing a looming crisis triggered by food shortages,



FILE - In this April 22, 2020, file photo, residents arrive to collect soap, vegetables, fruits and other staples distributed by volunteers from community organizations of ACLE-FEU in Clichy-sous-Bois, a suburb north of Paris. Open-air markets are closed, supermarket prices are skyrocketing and people are out of jobs. Putting food on the table is yet another challenge for the disenfranchised residents of France's housing projects, where the fallout of the national lockdown over the coronavirus is raising concerns about social unrest. (AP Photo/Francois Mori, File)

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sounded the alarm, and with scattered unrest simmering in impoverished suburbs, the French government announced a plan for urgent food assistance of 39 million euros (nearly \$42.1 million) for communities in need.

Providing food aid might be the most fixable of the longstanding problems in the heavily immigrant housing projects ringing France's large cities. Leader after leader has tried and failed to find remedies for often-dilapidated and cramped housing, chronic delinquency, a thriving drug trade and, above all, the entrenched discrimination against minority communities that limits their job prospects in France.

Some residents say they felt confined years before the strict coronavirus lockdown measures imposed March 17.

"I feel the social crisis is growing with confinement," said Clichy-Sous-Bois Mayor Olivier Klein.

"We see numerous people in need, urgently, in a way we've never seen," he told France Info radio. "In these tense neighborhoods, the smallest spark can trigger still more tension."

Alongside the food crisis, there has been scattered violence, with youths targeting French police in confrontations that end in clouds of tear gas but no known injuries, including in Clichy-sous-Bois. The town is where filmmaker Ladj Ly shot his Oscar-nominated modern police drama "Les Misérables."

A call for calm came from an unlikely person, a 30-year-old man with a long criminal record who crashed his motorcycle into the open door of a police car in Villeneuve-la-Garenne, northwest of Paris. Claims that police were at fault spread across the internet. From his hospital bed, he implored gangs to "go home," in a video released by his lawyer.

Clichy-sous-Bois was the takeoff point of nationwide rioting 15 years ago. Nightly TV images of the destruction awakened many in France to large swaths of a population they barely knew existed. The lockdown is again shining a spotlight on the still mostly invisible lives of those who struggle even in the best of times.

The town is in the poorest region of mainland France, Seine-Saint-Denis, where the overall mortality rate has more than doubled since March 1, when the country began counting virus deaths, according to national statistics agency Insee. Experts have blamed the density of the population, the difficulty to enact social distancing in often large families and the fact that those in poorer areas often have jobs with a higher risk of infection. Statistics were not available to show whether the virus was solely responsible for the higher mortality rates.

"This crisis is simply making (the problems) much more visible," said Mohamed Mehmache, who heads the association ACLeFeu, or Enough Fire, which grew out of the riots and is distributing food in Clichy-sous-Bois. Thousands now line up twice a week for the distribution, organized after the lockdown began.

Diatite is typical of many in her predicament. Her husband drives a bus at Paris' Orly Airport, which closed last month due to the lull in air traffic, putting him out of work. The growing family lives in a 26-square-meter (less than 280-square foot) apartment.

"There is a very large accumulation of inequalities that often increase" in a crisis, said sociologist Marie-Helene Bacque who worked with Mehmache in 2013 on political participation in housing projects. About 70% of the population of Clichy-sous-Bois is of immigrant origin, she noted, typical of similar suburban towns.

Economic, social and race factors bind the suburbs in an interlocking grip of inequality, though France does not keep statistics on ethnic origins, in line with its ideal of a melting pot.

"We're moving toward a large social crisis," Bacque said.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said since the start of the lockdown, police have carried out checks on 220,000 people in the Seine-Saint-Denis region alone to ensure confinement rules are respected, more than double the national average.

Some police attribute scattered violence in some neighborhoods to the squeeze on drug dealers during the lockdown. "Traffickers want to eliminate all police presence," tweeted Linda Kebbab, an official of the police union SGP-FO.

Bachir Ghouinem, who helps ACLeFeu distribute food, dismissed the violence as just "another problem" among the many facing poor suburbs. But he is one of the rare individuals willing to speak of a worst-case

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scenario should food distributions stop.

"Rioting and pillaging. We're afraid of that," he said. "If it happens here, it happens everywhere."

Mechmache, the leader of the ACLeFeu, takes a longer view.

"I dare to hope that there will be an awareness at the end of this lockdown to tackle the problems of inequality, which have existed for more than 30 years," he told The Associated Press.

For Bacque, the sociologist, "It's the moment to return to the fundamental challenge, more equality."

She said she doubts that kind of political investment will come to pass, but said "an explosion is not to be excluded."

A tram that allows residents to connect more easily with Paris — and jobs — opened in December in Clichy-sous-Bois. In the nearby housing project known as Les Bosquets, dilapidated high rises and other buildings used by drug dealers were razed several years ago, fulfilling a promise made by the government after the 2005 riots.

"But you don't transform the social dimension by fixing ... architectural problems," Bacque said.

Ganley reported from Paris.

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

Some nations inch toward reopening as virus deaths rise

By KEN MORITSUGU and SARA BURNETT Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to return to work after recovering from the coronavirus, his office said Sunday, as U.S. states and nations around the world took divergent paths on when to reopen their economies and communities.

The 55-year-old U.K. leader, who was hospitalized for a week, will return to the office Monday. Opposition politicians are calling for more clarity on when the government will ease a nationwide lockdown that runs at least through May 7.

The number of deaths officially attributed to the new coronavirus has topped 200,000 globally, a figure widely believed to understate the actual total. A second U.S. Navy ship, a destroyer off the coast of South America, reported an outbreak on board.

While some U.S. states eased restrictions, Hawaii extended its stay-at-home order until the end of May, and California police closed a park because it got too crowded.

Even as aides develop plans to shift President Donald Trump's public emphasis from the virus to addressing the economic crisis it has caused, Dr. Anthony Fauci at the U.S. National Institutes of Health warned against moving too quickly.

"You hear a lot about the need and the desire to get back to normal. That's understandable," he said. "If we don't get control of it we will never get back to normal. I know we will, but we've got to do it correctly."

Societies are navigating an uncertain path between preventing a resurgence of the virus and providing economic and psychological relief for people cooped up at home. Millions have lost jobs, with migrant workers and the poor particularly hard hit in many places. Protests have broken out from Berlin to Texas over the restrictions.

India allowed neighborhood stores to reopen this weekend, though not in the places that have been hit hardest. Neighboring Sri Lanka reimposed a nationwide lockdown until Monday after partially lifting it.

The Chinese city of Wuhan, where the pandemic began, said that all major construction projects have resumed in a push to restart factory production and other economic activity after a 2 1/2 month lockdown. The outbreak has largely subsided in China, which reported 11 new confirmed cases Sunday and no additional deaths.

South Korea, which recently relaxed some of its social distancing rules, saw a ninth straight day with fewer than 20 new cases. The small city-state of Singapore, though, reported 931 new cases as it battles

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an outbreak among foreign workers living in dormitories.

In Europe, Spain has joined Italy and France in preparing to loosen restrictions in early May, but the United Kingdom is holding off. Britain's death toll has topped 20,000, not including nursing home deaths, which are believed to be in the thousands.

Hawaii Gov. David Ige extended both the stay-at-home order and a mandatory quarantine for visitors through May 31. He warned of undoing progress if public places open up too early.

"This was not an easy decision. I know this has been difficult for everyone. Businesses need to reopen. People want to end this self-isolation and we want to return to normal," he said in a statement.

A spring heat wave drove an uptick of people to California beaches, golf courses and trails. Police in Pacific Grove, about 85 miles (135 kilometers) south of San Francisco, said they had to close the picturesque Lovers Point Park and Beach because of a lack of social distancing.

Officers on horseback patrolled closed Los Angeles beaches, trails and playgrounds to enforce distancing rules.

Georgia and Oklahoma allowed salons, spas and barbershops to reopen, while Alaska cleared the way for restaurants to resume dine-in service and retail shops and other businesses to open their doors, all with limitations. Some Alaska municipalities chose to keep stricter rules.

Russ Anderson, who owns four tattoo studios in south Georgia, said he "couldn't get up out of my chair quick enough" when restrictions were lifted. His main shop served 50 or 60 customers Friday when it reopened, with customers and tattoo artists wearing masks, he said.

But Shawn Gingrich, CEO and founder of Lion's Den Fitness, decided his Atlanta gym would remain closed for now. "We've sacrificed so much already," he said. "I feel like if we do this too soon, we'll see a spike in cases and we're back to square one."

In Texas, Allison Scott said most customers of her women's clothing store in a Dallas shopping mall seem to feel more comfortable having their purchases shipped.

"I want to be open more than anything but I don't think that society is ready to come out either," she said.

A survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found Americans overwhelmingly support stay-at-home measures and other efforts to prevent the spread of the virus.

Burnett reported from Chicago. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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



A woman who identified herself as a registered nurse in a local emergency room counterprotests in front of a demonstration to open up the state from the restrictions in place due to the new coronavirus, organized by the 3% United Patriots group, outside the Governor's Mansion, Saturday, April 25, 2020, in St. Paul, Minn. (Aaron Lavinsky/Star

Tribune via AP)

Satellite imagery finds likely Kim train amid health rumors

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A train likely belonging to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been parked at his compound on the country's east coast since last week, satellite imagery showed, amid speculation about his health that has been caused, in part, by a long period out of the public eye.

The satellite photos released by 38 North, a website specializing in North Korea studies, don't say anything about Kim's potential health problems, and they echo South Korean government intelligence that Kim is staying outside of the capital, Pyongyang. Seoul has also repeatedly indicated that there have been no unusual signs that could indicate health problems for Kim.

That hasn't stopped growing unconfirmed rumors and media reports about Kim's health that have emerged since he missed an April 15 commemoration of the 108th birthday of his grandfather, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung.

Kim Jong Un is the third generation of his family to rule North Korea, and he hadn't missed the April 15 event, one of the year's most important for the North, since assuming power after his father Kim Jong Il's death in late 2011.

Kim's health is of crucial importance because of worries that the serious illness or death of a leader venerated with near godlike passion by millions of North Koreans could cause instability in the impoverished, nuclear-armed country.

Many experts in South Korea downplayed speculation that Kim is seriously ill. They also said North Korea won't likely face a serious immediate turmoil even if Kim is incapacitated or dies because someone else like his influential sister Kim Yo Jong will quickly step in, though the prospect for the North's long-term political future would be unclear.

Kim Jong Un's train has been parked at the Leadership Railway Station servicing his Wonsan compound since at least April 21, the website 38 North said Saturday, citing an analysis of recent satellite photos of the area. The website said that the approximately 250-meter (820-foot) -long train wasn't present on April 15 but was present on both April 21 and 23.

"The train's presence does not prove the whereabouts of the North Korean leader or indicate anything about his health, but it does lend weight to reports that Kim is staying at an elite area on the country's eastern coast," it said.

The photos indicate the train arrived before April 21 and was still present on April 23, when it appeared to be repositioned for departure. However, there was no indication when that departure might take place, 38 North said.



This Wednesday, April 15, 2020, satellite image provided by Airbus Defence & Space and annotated by 38 North, a website specializing in North Korea studies, shows overview of Wonsan complex in Wonsan, North Korea. Recent satellite photos show a train probably belonging to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been spotted on the country's east coast amid mounting speculation about his health. (Airbus Defence & Space and 38 North, Pleiades©CNES 2020, Distribution Airbus DS via AP)

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North Korea exerts extremely tight control on information about its leadership, making it virtually impossible for outsiders to find out what's going on at those senior levels. Even South Korea's main spy agency has a mixed record on confirming developments in North Korea. When Kim Jong Il died in December 2011, for instance, few outsiders knew it until it was reported by North Korea's state media two days later.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the media, said the latest rumors about Kim's health had not changed the U.S. assessment of the information as "speculation."

Danny Russel, a former National Security Council director and assistant secretary of state for Asia who has dealt with North Korea in the past, cautioned that rumors have abounded for years about Kim, his father, Kim Jong Il, and his grandfather, Kim Il Sung, and most turned out to have been false.

"While serving in government I was on the receiving end of multiple intelligence reports about alleged accidents, illnesses and assassination attempts against North Korean leaders — only to have them reappear in public," he said.

South Korea's presidential office said last week that Kim appeared to be handling state affairs normally and that there had been no suspicious activities, such as an emergency readiness order issued by the North's military or the ruling Workers' Party. The South Korean government has since maintained its assessment that Kim's health remains the same. Some South Korean media outlets, citing unidentified government officials, have reported that Kim was staying at Wonsan.

North Korea's state media still remain silent about the outside speculation on Kim's health. On Saturday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim had received a message of greeting from the chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation on the occasion of the first anniversary of Kim's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The message wished Kim "good health and happiness," KCNA said.

It's not the first time that Kim has vanished from the public eye, and past absences in state media dispatches have also triggered speculation about his health. In 2014, state media didn't report any public activities for Kim for about six weeks, before he reappeared with a cane. South Korea's spy agency said later that he had a cyst removed from his ankle.

AP Diplomatic Writer Matt Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

Perfect storm: Lombardy's virus disaster is lesson for world

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — As Italy prepares to emerge from the West's first and most extensive coronavirus lockdown, it is increasingly clear that something went terribly wrong in Lombardy, the hardest-hit region in Europe's hardest-hit country.

Italy had the bad luck of being the first Western country to be slammed by the outbreak, and its official total of 26,000 fatalities lags behind only the U.S. in the global death toll. Italy's first homegrown case was recorded Feb. 21, at a time when the World Health Organization was still insisting the virus was "containable" and not nearly as infectious as the flu.

But there also is evidence that demographics and health care deficiencies collided with political and business interests to expose Lombardy's 10 million people to COVID-19 in ways unseen anywhere else, particularly the most vulnerable in nursing homes.

Virologists and epidemiologists say what went wrong there will be studied for years, given how the outbreak overwhelmed a medical system long considered one of Europe's best, while in neighboring Veneto, the impact was significantly more controlled.

Prosecutors, meanwhile, are deciding whether to lay any criminal blame for the hundreds of dead in nursing homes, many of whom don't even figure into Lombardy's official death toll of 13,269, half of Italy's total.

By contrast, Lombardy's front-line doctors and nurses are being hailed as heroes for risking their lives to treat the sick under extraordinary levels of stress, exhaustion, isolation and fear. One WHO official said

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it was a "miracle" they saved as many as they did.

Here's a look at the perfect storm of what went wrong in Lombardy, based on interviews with doctors, union representatives, mayors and virologists, as well as reports from the Superior Institute of Health, national statistics agency ISTAT and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which advises developed economies on policy.

CAUGHT UNPREPARED

Italy was the first European country to halt all air traffic with China on Jan. 31, and even put scanners in airports to check arrivals for fever. But by Jan. 31, it was already too late. Epidemiologists now say the virus had been circulating widely in Lombardy since early January, if not before.

Doctors treating pneumonia in January and February didn't know it was the coronavirus, since the symptoms were so similar and the virus was still believed to be largely confined to China. Even after Italy registered its first homegrown case Feb. 21, doctors didn't understand the unusual way COVID-19 could present itself, with some patients experiencing a rapid decline in their ability to breathe.

"After a phase of stabilization, many deteriorated quickly. This was clinical information we didn't have," said Dr. Maurizio Marvisi, a pneumologist at a private clinic in hard-hit Cremona. "There was practically nothing in the medical literature."

Because Lombardy's intensive care units were already filling up within days of Italy's first cases, many primary care physicians tried to treat and monitor patients at home. Some put them on supplemental oxygen, commonly used for home cases in Italy.

That strategy proved deadly, and many died at home or soon after hospitalization, having waited too long to call an ambulance.

Reliance on home care "will probably be the determining factor of why we have such a high mortality rate in Italy," Marivi said.

Italy was forced to use home care in part because of its low ICU capacity: After years of budget cuts, Italy entered the crisis with 8.6 ICU beds per 100,000 people, well below the OECD average of 15.9 and a fraction of Germany's 33.9, the group said.

As a result, primary care physicians became the front-line filter of virus patients, an army of mostly self-employed practitioners who work outside Italy's regional hospital system.

Since only those with strong symptoms were being tested because Lombardy's labs couldn't process more, these family doctors didn't know if they themselves were infected, much less their patients.

With so little clinical information available, doctors also had no guidelines on when to admit patients



FILE - In this April 16, 2020 file photo, medical staff tend to a patient in the emergency COVID-19 ward at the San Carlo Hospital in Milan, Italy. As Italy prepares to emerge from the West's first and most extensive coronavirus lockdown, it is increasingly clear that something went terribly wrong in Lombardy, the hardest-hit region in Europe's hardest-hit country. By contrast, Lombardy's front-line doctors and nurses are being hailed as heroes for risking their lives to treat the sick under extraordinary levels of stress, exhaustion, isolation and fear. (AP Photo/Antonio Calanni, file)

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or refer them to specialists. And being outside the hospital system, they didn't have the same access to protective masks and equipment.

"The region was extremely behind in giving us protective equipment and it was inadequate, because the first time, they gave us 10 surgical masks and gloves," said Dr. Laura Turetta in the city of Varese. "Obviously for our close contact with patients, it wasn't the correct way to protect ourselves."

The Lombardy doctors' association issued a blistering letter April 7 to regional authorities listing seven "errors" in their handling of the crisis, key among them the lack of testing for medical personnel, the lack of protective equipment and the lack of data about the contagion.

The regional government and civil protection agency defended its efforts, but acknowledged that Italy was dependent on imports and donations of protective equipment and simply didn't have enough to go around.

Some 20,000 Italian medical personnel have been infected and 150 doctors have died.

LOST WEEKS

Two days after registering Italy's first case in the province of Lodi, sparking a quarantine in 10 towns, another positive case was registered more than an hour's drive away in Alzano in Bergamo province. Whereas the emergency room of the Lodi-area hospital was closed, the Alzano ER reopened after a few hours of cleaning, becoming a main source of contagion.

Internal documents cited by Italian newspapers indicate the handful of serious pneumonia cases the Alzano hospital saw as early as Feb. 12 were likely COVID-19. At the time, Italy's health ministry recommended tests only for people who had been to China or been in contact with a suspected or confirmed positive case.

By March 2, the Superior Institute of Health recommended Alzano and nearby Nembro be sealed off as the towns in Lodi had been. But political authorities never implemented the quarantine recommendation there, allowing the infection to spread for a second week until all the Lombardy region was locked down March 7.

"The army was there, prepared to do a total closure, and if it had been done immediately maybe they could have stopped the contagion in the rest of Lombardy," said Dr. Guido Marinoni, head of the association of doctors in Bergamo. "This wasn't done, and they took softer measures in all of Lombardy, and this allowed for the spread."

Asked why he didn't seal off Bergamo sooner, Premier Giuseppe Conte argued the regional government could have done so on its own. Lombardy's governor, Attilio Fontana, shot back that any mistake "was made by both. I don't think that there was blame in this situation."

Lombardy has one-sixth of Italy's 60 million people and is the most densely populated region, home to the business capital in Milan and the country's industrial heartland. Lombardy also has more people over 65 than any other Italian region, as well as 20% of Italy's nursing homes, a demographic time bomb for COVID-19 infections.

"Clearly, with the benefit of hindsight, we should have done a total shutdown in Lombardy, everyone at home and no one moves," said Andrea Crisanti, a microbiologist and virologist advising the Veneto regional government. But he acknowledged how hard that was, given Lombardy's outsize role in the Italian economy, which even before the pandemic was heading toward a recession.

"Probably for political reasons, it wasn't done," he told reporters.

INDUSTRIAL LOBBYING

Unions and mayors of some of Lombardy's hardest hit cities now say the country's main industrial lobby group, Confindustria, exerted enormous pressure to resist lockdowns and production shutdowns because the economic cost would be too great in a region responsible for 21% of Italy's GDP.

On Feb. 28, a week into the outbreak and well after more than 100 cases were registered in Bergamo, the province's branch of Confindustria' launched an English-language social media campaign #Bergamois-running, to reassure clients. It insisted the outbreak was no worse than elsewhere, that the "misleading sensation" of its high number of infections was due to aggressive testing, and that production in steel mills and other industries was unaffected.

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Cofindustria launched its own campaign in the larger Lombardy region, echoing that message, #Yeswe-work. Milan's mayor proclaimed that "Milan doesn't stop."

At the time, Confindustria Lombardy chief Marco Bonometti acknowledged the "drastic measures" needed in Lodi but sought to lower the sense of alarm.

"We have to let people know they can go back to life as it was, while safeguarding their health," he said.

Even after Rome locked down all of Lombardy March 7, it allowed factories to stay open, sparking strikes from workers worried their health was being sacrificed to keep Italy's industrial engine rolling.

"It was a huge error. They should have taken the example where the first cluster was found," said Giambattista Morali of the metalworkers' union in the Bergamo town of Dalmine. "Keeping factories open didn't help the situation; obviously it worsened it."

Eventually, all but essential production was shut down March 26. Confindustria's national president, Carlo Bonomi, has been urging that industry be reopened, but in safe way.

"The paradigm has changed," Bonomi said on RAI state television. "We can't make Italians secure if we don't reopen factories. But how do we make factories safe to secure Italians?"

It's a tough sell, given Lombardy is still adding an average of 950 infections daily, while other regions add from a few dozen to 500 apiece, with most new infections registered in nursing homes. Italy is set to begin a gradual reopening May 4, leading with regions farther south where the outbreak is more under control.

Lombardy probably will be last to fully open, with its 72,000 confirmed cases, 70% of Italy's total, and estimates that the real number could be 10 times that.

A COSTLY FIELD HOSPITAL

Perhaps no initiative better illustrates Italy's confused coronavirus response than the 200-bed field hospital built in less than two weeks on the grounds of Milan's convention center.

The hospital was unveiled to great fanfare on March 31, the fruit of a 21 million euro (\$23 million) fundraising campaign headed by Lombardy's governor, a member of the right-wing League party, to try to ease pressure on regional ICUs, which on that date were near capacity at 1,324 patients.

The national civil protection agency opposed the plan, arguing it could never equip it with ventilators or personnel in time. Instead, the agency, which reports to the rival 5-Star-Democratic government in Rome, preferred smaller field units set up outside hospitals and a program to move critical patients elsewhere.

In the end, the Milan field hospital was barely used, treating only a few dozen patients. Since it opened, Lombardy has seen pressure on its ICUs fall considerably, with just over 700 people needing intensive care today.

Fontana, the governor, defended the decision and said he would do it again, telling Radio 24: "We had to ... prepare a dam in case the epidemic overcame the embankment."

NURSING HOME 'MASSACRE'

While the regional government was focused on the field hospital and scrambling to find ICU beds, its testing capacity lagged and Lombardy's nursing homes were in many ways left to fend for themselves.

Hundreds of elderly have died in Lombardy and across Italy in what one WHO official has termed a "massacre" of those most vulnerable to the virus. Prosecutors are investigating dozens of nursing homes, as well as measures taken by local health authorities and the regional governments that may have worsened the problem.

Lombardy has more nursing homes than any other region, housing at least 24,000 elderly, and it registered more dead at those facilities than others too. Of the 3,045 deaths from Feb. 1 to April 15 in the region, 1,625 were either positive for the virus or showed its symptoms, according to preliminary results from a survey by the Superior Institute of Health.

Of particular attention to prosecutors was the March 8 decision by the regional government to allow recovering COVID-19 patients to be put in nursing homes to free up hospital beds. The region says it required the homes guarantee the patients would be isolated, but it's not clear who was responsible to ensure that or whether anyone checked.

Even before that, staff at some homes said management prevented them from wearing masks for fear

of scaring residents.

A March 30 regional decree, again aimed at easing pressure on Lombardy's ICUs, told nursing home directors to not hospitalize sick residents over 75 if they had other health problems. The decree said it was "opportune to treat them in the same facility to avoid further risks of decline in transport or during the wait in the emergency room."

For the elderly at a nursing home in Nembro, one of the hardest-hit towns in Bergamo province, the decree amounted to a death warrant. But it wasn't the first or only one that gave the home's managers the sense that they were being abandoned.

When management proactively barred visitors on Feb. 24 to try to guard residents and staff from infection, local health authorities responded by threatening sanctions and a loss of accreditation for cutting off family visits, said the facility's new director, Valerio Poloni.

In the end, 37 of the 87 residents died in February and March. Its doctor, as well as Poloni's predecessor as director, also tested positive, were hospitalized and died. A nursing home resident couldn't get admitted to the hospital in late February because the ER was too crowded.

The nursing home's health director, Barbara Codalli, said she was told to use her existing resources. "The patient returned a few hours later, and a few days later the patient died," she told La7 television.

To date, none of the surviving residents has been tested. Poloni said tests were expected to begin in a few days. Two more residents died so far in April, but the situation seems under control.

"We are tranquil," he said.

Colleen Barry in Soave, Italy, contributed.

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

Low-tech Japan challenged in working from home amid pandemic

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — When the Japanese government declared an emergency to curb the spread of the coronavirus earlier this month and asked people to work from home, crowds rushed to electronics stores.

So much for social distancing.

Many Japanese lack the basic tools needed to work from home. Contrary to the ultramodern image of Japan Inc. with its robots, design finesse and gadgetry galore, in many respects the country is technologically challenged.

But the bigger obstacle is Japanese corporate culture, experts say. Offices still often rely on faxes instead of email. Many homes lack high-speed internet connections, and documents often must be stamped in-person with carved seals called "hanko," which serve as signatures. So many Japanese really cannot work remotely, at least not all the time.

A survey by YouGov, a British market researcher, found only 18% of those recently surveyed were able to avoid commuting to school or work, even though a relatively high 80% of people in Japan are afraid of catching the virus.

In India, nearly 70% of those surveyed were staying home. In the U.S., it was about 30%, according to YouGov.

One factor, says Yuri Tazawa, a pioneer in Japan of "teleworking," or working from home, is that Japanese workers often do not have clearly defined jobs like Americans do, so companies expect their staff to be in constant communication with each other, working as teams.

"But this is a matter of life and death for the workers and their families," said Tazawa, president of Telework Management Inc. "We need to do immediately what we can do now."

Tazawa is offering an online crash course on how to immediately start working from home, using just mobile phones, if a personal computer is not available. She calls the approach a "hypothetical cloud office."

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Unlike regular Zoom meetings, in which workers check in and out for discussions, she is proposing using Zoom for just voice connections, keeping it on throughout the work day so that employees who would normally share an office can feel as if they're in the same room.

"Teleworking is so important in the fight against the coronavirus," said Tazawa.

Some of Japan's biggest companies, like Toyota Motor Corp. and Sony Corp., already have announced work-from-home policies. The main problem is with the small and medium-sized businesses which make up about 70% of the economy.

Nicholas Benes, a corporate governance expert who has been offering a free webinar on teleworking for Japanese, said interest was surprisingly low.

A lack of up-to-date IT systems means Japan lags in nurturing flexible work practices, office rules, management methods and even attitudes toward remote work. It's one factor contributing to relatively low labor productivity.

"Telework requires that managers trust and delegate much more decision-making to employees because it takes too much time in email or Skype to check with the boss," said Benes, who heads the Board Director Training Institute of Japan, a non-profit that offers management and governance training.

Japanese companies still rely on nuances of face-to-face interaction, or being able to "smell the air," or "read the air," Benes said, using common vernacular expressions.

And then, there's the fax machine.

A third of Japanese households have faxes, according to a government study.

It's rare to find an office that doesn't have one, unless it's a futuristic company like SoftBank that frowns on such old-fashioned practices. Many respectable institutions shun emails and insist on receiving requests for information or other documentation by fax only.

So as the number of coronavirus infections grows, urban commuter trains are only slightly less crowded than their usual jam-packed state.

Futoshi Takami, a "salaryman," as Japanese workers are called, says he had to work from the office until mid-April, when he was finally told he could work from home. But so far, he's gotten few directions about what he's supposed to be doing. He might soon be assigned to take some online classes, he said.

Takami, who asked that his employer not be identified, said he has been doing some soul-searching about workplaces that seem to value rules over human life.

"I am going to devote my time to think about what it is I really want to do with my life," he said.

___ Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>



FILE - In this March 2, 2020, file photo, commuters wearing masks stand in a packed train at the Shinagawa Station in Tokyo. When the Japanese government declared an emergency to curb the spread of the coronavirus earlier April and asked people to work from home, crowds rushed to electronics stores. Many Japanese lack the basic tools needed to work from home. Contrary to the ultramodern image of Japan Inc. with its robots, design finesse and gadgetry galore, in many respects the country is technologically challenged. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File)

US church faces neglect allegations after Haiti child deaths

By MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN and BEN FOX Associated Press

KENSCOFF, Haiti (AP) — For a limestone mantel from the Waldorf Astoria, the church that owns the Olde Good Things antique stores asks for \$8,500.

But for the death of each child in a fire at a home it ran in Haiti, parents said the same church offered to pay just \$50 to \$100 in family compensation — along with \$150 for funeral-related costs such as new clothes and transportation.

The wealth of the Church of Bible Understanding in the United States has long stood in contrast with the shoddiness of its two children's homes in Haiti, which have faced years of infractions and failed two state inspections. But the gap came into even sharper focus on Feb. 13, when the fire killed 13 children and two adult caretakers described by the church's lawyer as disabled. Authorities suspect the fire started because the home used candles instead of a functioning generator or battery in a country where power failures are frequent.

The deaths have devastated parents like Eustache Arismé, 33, who put his two daughters in the home shortly after they were born because he has a withered left arm and cannot find work. His daughters Nedjie, 4, and Vanise, 3, died in the fire at the home, which is known as an orphanage in Haiti although many children have at least one living parent.

Like Arismé's daughters, the children in such "orphanages" are usually handed over, often as babies, by parents who struggle to support them and want them to at least get food and shelter. Parents generally keep custody and are allowed to visit.

"At first, I was happy to see the children growing up in the orphanage. But now I profoundly regret my decision," Arismé said. "When we put our children in the orphanage, the owners welcomed us. Now, after this tragedy, they send a lawyer to deal with us."

The lawyer for the church, Osner Fevry, said it is being unfairly singled out by critics in Haiti and overseas. The church may send less money to Haiti than some people would like, he said. But many other U.S. groups solicit donations in the name of needy Haitians and only send a fraction to the country after staff salaries and overhead, he added.

"It happens to hundreds and thousands of American organizations working in Haiti, raising millions of dollars in the names of churches and NGOs in Haiti," he said.

Fevry said the church members running the homes left for the U.S. a few days after the fire not to avoid prosecution, but because they were hounded by police and local media. Along with compensation and spending money for the parents, the church is assuming the costs of funerals for the 15 victims.

"I don't think the church can endorse legal responsibility, but moral responsibility, yes," Fevry acknowl-



FILE - In this Feb. 14, 2020 file photo, orphans sit inside a social services bus after police removed them from a children's home run by the Orphanage of the Church of Bible Understanding (COBU), following a fire at one of the organization's other homes in Kenscoff, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. The fire on Feb. 13 killed 13 children and two adult caretakers described as disabled by authorities and the church's lawyer. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery, File)

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edged. "Morally, how come there was a candle to get light for those kids?"

The homes have run into problems before. A series of inspections beginning in November 2012 found they didn't meet minimum health and safety standards, with overcrowding, unsanitary conditions and insufficient trained staff. Haitian authorities stripped them of accreditation.

When the church members brought in outside experts, one declared them "completely clueless about what is needed to take care of that many babies."

"I'm shocked," she said. "That no one has died."

The orphanages failed another round of state inspections in 2017 but hired Fevry to fight closure, according to Haitian child welfare authorities. They said closing an orphanage can take months or years, particularly if the management has money or influence.

Through its U.S.-based spokeswoman, the church declined to comment on specific allegations of neglect and mistreatment at its children's homes in Haiti.

"We are devastated by the tragic fire that took the life of our children at our Haitian orphanage. Words would fail to express our immense grief and heartbreak," the church said in a written statement. "We are taking this very seriously and are moving forward to help all of those affected by this horrific accident."

I CRIED BITTERLY

On the night of Feb. 13, 61 children were sleeping inside the church's two-story home in the town of Kenscoff in the mountains above the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, according to the Institute of Social Welfare. A 16-year-old boy living there told authorities that he and a caretaker went out to buy candles, which they lit in each of the rooms filled with children, then went to bed.

A short time later, around 9 p.m., the smell of smoke filled the orphanage. Thirteen children, ages 3 to 18, died, along with a 39-year-old woman and a 34-year-old man.

Among them was Tania Caristan's 6-year-old son, Ricardo.

Caristan makes a living selling items on the street and washing neighbors' clothes. She moved back in with her parents, and said she had to leave Ricardo with her estranged husband.

It was only two months later that she learned her former husband had put the boy in a Church of Bible Understanding home. Shocked, she went there with a copy of the birth certificate to get her baby back.

But a white man told her through an interpreter that she couldn't take him because she was not one of the people who had given him to the orphanage, she said.

"I tried everything I could to convince the person in charge at the orphanage," she said quietly, as she watched her younger daughter play outside their shack. "I cried bitterly."

A security guard opened the gate and asked her to leave. One of her sisters later tried to get the boy back but also failed.

But Caristan never lost hope. She always thought she would see her son again one day.

She never did.

The day after the fire, the boy's father told Caristan's sister he was dead. Caristan rushed to the hospital to see her son's face for the last time, but he had already been taken to the morgue. She said no one from the orphanage or state had contacted her since.

"Whatever my situation, it would have been better to have my son with me," she said. "He would have eaten crumbs from my bit of bread ... If I'd known his father was going to take him to an orphanage, I would have kept my child."

Through its spokeswoman, the church declined to comment on Caristan's story.

Haitian prosecutors have begun a criminal investigation into the church's homes, which held 154 children at the time of the fire, according to the national child-welfare institute. The institute finally shut down the homes after the fire, and took 28 children into custody to be reunited with parents or family members. More than 100 other children have fled.

Some children raised in the orphanages say they were generally treated kindly. Others describe conditions as mentally and physically abusive, including social isolation and beatings.

Anaika Francois, 19, told The Associated Press that she entered the homes at six because her parents

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were too poor to take care of her and her little sister. She said children with bed-wetting issues from about that age were physically punished. In bad cases, they were stretched across a table and spanked by the monitor or head of the orphanage, she said.

"That would often produce marks, in which case the monitor would give you a bath with warm salt water," she said. "The marks would disappear in two or three days."

Fedania Charles, 20, said that when she lived with the church, children were hit on the buttocks for wetting their beds and then washed with salty warm water.

"You could see the bruises for at least 24 hours," she said.

James Dindin, 36, said he was given to the orphanage at around 9 months old. He said that as a teenager, he would be put in a "punishment room" with a single window along with about a dozen other children for two or three weeks, and escorted to the bathroom by an employee. At times, he said, rebellious children were expelled and forced to sleep on the streets.

He said the trauma remains for him and other children he grew up with in the homes.

"Every time I see one of the kids that I grew up with on the streets begging for money....it would trigger back everything," he said. "Almost every day."

The church declined to comment specifically on the former residents' allegations.

Haiti has more than 700 "orphanages" housing more than 25,000 children, and only about 35 of the homes meet the standards of the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children, according to the Haitian child welfare institute and the UN children's fund, UNICEF.

Defenders of Haitian orphanages say despite any defects, the homes help children who would otherwise be in far worse conditions with desperately poor parents unable to feed or clothe them. But child welfare advocates say the orphanages harm children by creating incentives to separate them from their parents. By one estimate, Haitian orphanages receive more than \$100 million a year in donations, but another study has shown that just a single grant of \$220 can help a poor Haitian family maintain a child in acceptable conditions at home.

"No child should be placed in an orphanage," said Maria Luisa Fornara, UNICEF's representative in Haiti. "I would ask to any of these organizations coming in and supporting orphanages, would they want their children to be in those places?....I don't think so."

THE FOREVER FAMILY

The Church of Bible Understanding was founded as the "Forever Family" in the early 1970s by Stewart Traill, a former vacuum cleaner salesman. In his mid-30s, he started preaching on the streets of Philadelphia and New York, creating a string of communal houses around the Northeast that drew young people and runaways.

It wasn't a comfortable life. Former members said they were crammed into tightly packed rooms, slept on mats on the floor and discouraged from dating, attending school or doing anything outside of church activities. Members worked for church businesses, and, in turn, received small allowances.

In September 1982, four members of the church were convicted in Philadelphia for beating Traill's then 13-year-old son with a belt and a board, seriously enough that he was hospitalized.

The Forever Family had 10,000 members at its peak in the mid-1970s, according to the Encyclopedia of Cults, Sects and New Religions. Traill, who died in 2018 at age 82, rechristened it as the Church of Bible Understanding in 1976, and the church is now believed to have 30 to 50 members.

Over the years, the church ran a string of enterprises, including a carpet-cleaning company lampooned on a TV episode of "Seinfeld" about a sect-linked business hired by one of the main characters. Contracts to demolish old buildings evolved into a business selling vintage architectural features.

That became Olde Good Things, which has a thriving online business and retail shops in New York, Los Angeles and at the headquarters in Scranton, Pennsylvania. They offer antique and vintage home décor such as crystal chandeliers for as much as \$22,000. One of the least expensive items for sale this week is a pair of antique bronze door hinges for \$55.

Olde Good Things, which says on its website that it donates half of its profits to the church's mission

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work in Haiti, announced plans last year to open a new flagship store on West 52nd Street in Manhattan this year.

Public tax documents depict a church and business with considerable overlap. In its most recent filing, the church reported revenue of \$6.6 million and expenses of \$2.2 million. It reported a net loss of \$125,537 from Olde Good Things, and the church loaned \$3.7 million to the business.

The church listed \$19 million in assets. Those assets included a 12,000-square foot house in Coral Springs, Florida where Traill lived with his wife, exempt from state property taxes on religious grounds, according to public records.

The church says in its tax records that "a large part of our operation is to fund our missionary work," operating the two homes in Haiti's capital and distributing food in the countryside. The Olde Good Things website says, "We appreciate our patrons and want them to understand that profits from their purchase go directly to supporting this worthy work."

The church also received food grants worth more than \$579,000 from the U.S. Agency for International Development between 2003 and 2012. USAID rejected their grant application as "non-competitive" in 2013, the same year the Haitian government said their homes for children did not meet minimum standards. It has not been renewed.

Former members and employees say the work in Haiti was always a central focus of the church and the business.

Church members would frequently talk at Olde Good Things about their work in Haiti and would bring children from the homes to the U.S. for medical treatment, said Rashida Lovely, who worked as an accounting clerk and supervisor for the company and said they treated her well. She recalled using a check from the business to buy toiletries and medical supplies for the children's homes, which were then sent to the Caribbean country on a church-owned plane.

Any problems at the homes, Lovely said, were likely a result of business revenues being strained or because most of the work in Haiti was done by older church members.

"They did the best they can do up until now and there are not enough young people to support it," she said. "They are too old to be doing it anymore."

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Fox reported from Washington. Evens Sanon contributed to this story from Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

Some governments have begun easing their coronavirus restrictions, with India reopening neighborhood stores that serve many of its 1.3 billion people. In the U.S., Georgia, Oklahoma and Alaska have also begun loosening restrictions despite warnings from health officials that it may be too soon.

The role of the U.S. Congress is being visibly diminished despite approving record sums of virus aid. But changing the rules to allow lawmakers to cast votes or hold hearings from home would be unprecedented in House and Senate history — the Constitution requires lawmakers be "present" for most action.

The coronavirus lockdown is proving a particularly trying ordeal in France for children with disabilities and their families who are struggling to care for them at home now that special schools and support programs have been shut down.

The global death toll from COVID-19 stands at more than 200,000.

Here are some of AP's top stories Saturday on the world's coronavirus pandemic. Follow APNews.com/VirusOutbreak for updates through the day and APNews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak for stories explaining some of its complexities.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

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— Nearly two months after an embarrassing end to his presidential campaign, Mike Bloomberg is again deploying his massive personal fortune — this time to combat the coronavirus.

— Nashville has a vibrant music industry and is known as the home of country music. But many musicians have been unable to collect unemployment benefits during the pandemic.

— Anzac Day, which marks the landing of New Zealand and Australian soldiers on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915, is observed in a muted way.

— Criticism of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government mounts as the U.K. becomes the fifth country in the world to report 20,000 virus-related deaths.

— The Navy says the number of sailors aboard the USS Kidd confirmed to be infected with the virus has nearly doubled, rising from 18 to 33.

— A spring heat wave drove an uptick of people to California beaches, golf courses and trails.



This photo provided by the Australian Embassy in Paris, shows Australian Defense Attache to France Colonel Joel Dooley and ADF members paying their respects at the tomb of the unknown soldier beneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, Saturday April 25, 2020, on the occasion of Anzac Day. With France in coronavirus lockdown, there were no crowds to mark ANZAC Day, a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand for those who served in all wars. (Simon Patching/Australian Embassy in France via AP)

AP FACT CHECK:

Sunlight may be a disinfectant for the spirit, but there's no proof it will make the pandemic go away. Without declaring that it would, President Donald Trump is again giving traction to a theory that could prompt people to let down their guard around others outside.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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. 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 to wash one's 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.

Phones should also be washed. 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:

— **TWO TRILLION:** The dollar amount that Congress has committed to sustain the U.S. economy during the outbreak.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **OFT-MALIGNED ACCENT GETS RESPECT:** The New York accent gets some respect during the coronavirus crisis.

— **GAZA FACTORIES:** For the first time in years, sewing factories in the Gaza Strip are back to working at full capacity, producing masks, gloves and protective gowns.

— **SHOW STOOPER:** Brooklyn accordionist entertains neighbors from the stoop of his apartment building.

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

Yemen's southern separatists claim sole control of Aden

By **AHMED AL-HAJ** Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Yemen's southern separatists on Sunday broke a peace deal with the country's internationally recognized government and claimed sole control of the regional capital of Aden, threatening to resume fighting between the two ostensible allies.

In a statement, the separatists' Southern Transitional Council, which is backed by the United Arab Emirates, declared a state of emergency and said it would "self-govern" the key southern port city and other southern provinces. The separatists accused Yemen's government, which is supported by Saudi Arabia, of corruption and mismanagement.

The government dismissed the separatists' move. Foreign Minister Mohammed Abdullah al-Hadrami called for Saudi Arabia to have a "clear position" and take "decisive measures against the continuing rebellion of the so-called Transitional Council."

The division between the two supposed allies is another facet of the country's complicated civil war. On one side are the separatists and on the other are forces loyal to former President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. Both have fought together in the Saudi-led coalition's war against Yemen's Shiite Houthi rebels.

The Houthis in 2014 overran major parts of northern Yemen, including the capital, Sanaa, pushing out the internationally recognized government and ushering in a war that has killed tens of thousands of people. Hadi fled first to Aden and then to Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi-led coalition intervened in the conflict in 2015 and has since waged war against the Houthis in an effort to restore Hadi's government to power. The fighting in the Arab world's poorest country has also left millions suffering from food and medical care shortages and pushed the country to the brink of famine.

In August, heavy fighting broke out between Hadi's forces and the southern separatists when the latter took Aden, the temporary seat of Hadi's government, and key southern provinces. The fighting stopped when the two groups reached a deal in November.

The deal however has yet to be implemented with both sides traded accusations on halting its implementation.

Saturday's move came amid protests in Aden against Hadi's government and the separatists following devastating torrential rains and floods earlier this week. The rains plunged swaths of the country under water, causing extensive damage to homes and leaving dozens of people missing, homeless or dead. It forced Hadi's government to declare a state of emergency in Aden, which was hit hard.

Sunday's announcement by the separatists raises concerns that Yemen could slide further into chaos amid the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. Yemen so far has only one confirmed case, in the southern province of Hadramawt, but experts and health workers have warned that the disease could wreak havoc there due to the dilapidated health system and damaged infrastructure.

Global death toll tops 200,000 as some virus lockdowns eased

By SARA BURNETT and KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As the global death toll from the coronavirus surpassed 200,000 on Saturday, countries took cautious steps toward easing lockdowns imposed amid the pandemic, but fears of a surge in infections made even some outbreak-wounded businesses reluctant to reopen.

The states of Georgia, Oklahoma and Alaska started loosening restrictions on businesses despite warnings from experts that such steps might be premature.

Shawn Gingrich, CEO and founder of Lion's Den Fitness, decided after the Georgia governor's announcement that his Atlanta gym would remain closed for now.

"We've sacrificed so much already," Gingrich said. "I feel like if we do this too soon, we'll see a spike in cases and we're back to square one."

Others were eager to get back to business, with precautions. Russ Anderson, who owns four tattoo studios in south Georgia, said he "couldn't get up out of my chair quick enough"

when restrictions were lifted. His main shop served 50 or 60 customers Friday when it reopened, with customers and tattoo artists wearing masks, he said.

The worldwide death toll was over 202,000, according to a count by John Hopkins University from government figures. The actual death toll is believed to be far higher.

India reopened neighborhood stores that many of the country's 1.3 billion people rely on for everything from beverages to mobile phone data cards. But the loosening didn't apply to hundreds of quarantined towns and other places hit hardest by the outbreak that has killed at least 775 people in the country where many poor live in slums too crowded for social distancing.

Shopping malls also stayed closed nationwide. Still, for owners of small stores, being allowed to open again brought relief.

"This is a good decision," said Amit Sharma, an architect. "We have to open a few things and let the economy start moving. The poor people should have some source of income. This virus is going to be a long-term problem."

India also allowed manufacturing and farming to resume in rural areas last week to ease the economic plight of millions left jobless by the March 24 lockdown. The restrictions have allowed people out of their homes only to buy food, medicine or other essentials.

Elsewhere in Asia, authorities reported no new deaths Saturday for the 10th straight day in China, where the virus originated. South Korea reported just 10 fresh cases, the eighth day in a row its daily increase was under 20. There were no new deaths for the second straight day.

Underscoring the unknowns about the virus, the World Health Organization said "there is currently no



A woman sleeps on Brighton Beach in the Brooklyn borough of New York as seagulls flutter around her, on Saturday, April 25, 2020. With the weather warming up, more people wearing personal protective equipment are venturing out to the parks and streets, though most are still respecting the social distancing guidelines for the COVID-19 coronavirus. (AP Photo/Wong Maye-E)

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evidence" that people who have recovered from COVID-19 cannot fall sick again.

Some countries extended or tightened restrictions, confirming a pattern of caution.

Sri Lanka had partially lifted a monthlong daytime curfew in more than two thirds of the country. But it reimposed a 24-hour lockdown countrywide until Monday after a surge of 46 new infections, its highest daily increase.

Norway extended until at least Sept. 1 its ban on events with more than 500 participants.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced that Spaniards will be allowed to leave their homes for short walks and exercise starting May 2 after seven weeks of strict home confinement, though he said "maximum caution will be our guideline."

"We must be very prudent because there is no manual, no roadmap to follow," he said.

Kids in Spain will get their first fresh air in weeks when a ban on letting them outside is relaxed starting Sunday. After 44 days indoors, they'll be allowed out for adult-supervised one-hour excursions but not permitted to play with others.

"I really want to get outside, and Ema does as well," Madrid resident Eva Novilo said of her 7-year-old daughter. But Novilo predicted "difficult situations" if they see her friends and have to stay apart. "I don't know if we will be able to maintain control."

In Italy, where restrictions will be eased May 4, authorities warned against abandoning social distancing practices when millions return to work. Free masks will be distributed to nursing homes, police, public officials and transportation workers. Workers painted blue circles on Rome's subway platforms to remind commuters to keep their distance.

The country continues to have Europe's highest death toll, with 26,384. The 415 deaths registered in the 24-hour period that ended Saturday evening was the lowest toll since Italy registered 345 on March 17, but only five fewer than Friday.

Italians celebrated the 75th anniversary of their liberation from occupation forces in World War II by emerging on balconies or rooftops at the same time to sing a folk song linked to resistance fighters.

Britain held off on changes to its lockdown as the virus death toll in hospitals topped 20,000. The figure doesn't include nursing home deaths, likely to be in the thousands.

France prepared to ease one of Europe's strictest lockdowns from May 11. The health minister detailed plans to scale up testing to help contain any new flare-ups.

Testing shortages are a problem in Brazil, Latin America's largest nation, which is veering closer to becoming a pandemic hot spot.

Officials in Rio de Janeiro and four other major cities warned that their hospital systems are on the verge of collapse or already overwhelmed. In Manaus, the biggest city in the Amazon, officials said they have been forced to dig mass graves in a cemetery. Workers have been burying 100 corpses a day — triple the pre-virus average.

Along with Georgia, Oklahoma allowed salons, spas and barbershops to reopen, while Alaska cleared the way for restaurants to resume dine-in service and retail shops and other businesses to open their doors, all with limitations. Some Alaska municipalities chose to keep stricter rules.

Though limited in scope, and subject to social-distancing restrictions, the reopenings marked a symbolic milestone in the debate raging in the United States and beyond about how quickly to ease economically devastating lockdowns.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, infectious diseases chief at the National Institutes of Health, on Saturday stressed a step-wise approach, with restrictions gradually lifted as areas reach certain milestones.

"Any attempt to leapfrog over these almost certainly will result in a rebound, and then we can set ourselves back," Fauci told an online meeting of the National Academy of Sciences.

President Donald Trump skipped conducting a press briefing on the coronavirus response and later tweeted that the near-daily briefings were "not worth the time & effort" because of what he claimed was negative and erroneous media coverage. Trump lashed out at the media two days after using a briefing to muse about the injection of chemical disinfectants, which drew warnings from manufacturers and the nation's top medical professionals.

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A survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found Americans overwhelmingly support stay-at-home measures and other efforts to prevent the spread of the virus.

In Texas, where retailers are allowed to sell items for curbside pickup, Allison Scott said most customers of her women's clothing store in a Dallas shopping mall seem to feel more comfortable having their purchases shipped.

"I want to be open more than anything but I don't think that society is ready to come out either," she said.

This story has been corrected to show that Russ Anderson owns four tattoo studios in south Georgia, not one.

Burnett reported from Chicago. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed.

Follow AP pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/Understand-ingtheOutbreak>

Led by LSU, Alabama, SEC players dominate remote NFL draft

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

Maybe the Southeastern Conference should simply hold onto its players and become part of the NFL.

The home of national champion LSU and perennial contenders Alabama, Georgia and Auburn, the SEC dominated the first four rounds of the NFL draft before the flow of talent slowed to a trickle. Or the conference finally began running out of top prospects.

The top four rounds are where the vast majority of pro starters are found. So beginning with LSU quarterback Joe Burrow, who went first overall to the Bengals, the SEC provided the mother lode. And by the time this virtual/remote/digital draft — make your own choice — was over, 63 players had come from its 14 teams — well, 13, because Ole Miss was ignored. LSU sent 14, tying the most in a seven-round draft, followed by Alabama with nine. Not quite a record, because the SEC had 64 selectees a year ago. But this grab bag was further proof of its place atop college football.

"I think it's really easy to see NFL players when you watch as many players get drafted from the SEC and from that conference," Titans coach Mike Vrabel said after his team grabbed Georgia tackle Isaiah Wilson and LSU cornerback Kristian Fulton. "But there's great players in every conference. It's just you don't have to look too far to see them play against some really talented players."

The Lions noticed. They took Georgia running back D'Andre Swift and Kentucky guard Logan Stenberg. "The SEC, I would argue, is one of the top one or two conferences in college football. I think a lot of people say it is the best conference," Detroit general manager Bob Quinn said. "The competition that's in that conference — from LSU to Alabama to Auburn to Georgia to all those schools — and some of the



In this still image from video provided by the NFL, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell during the NFL football draft, Saturday, April 25, 2020. (NFL via AP)

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other teams have really, really good players. So the level of competition, they get the high recruits, they really do.”

Nearly every NFL club will have an LSU Tiger or member of the Crimson Tide on its roster by next week.

As the third day of this unusual draft concluded, it became clear that concerns about communication problems cropping up were vastly overblown. Clunky at times, poignant at others, and exceptionally entertaining in spots, the draft has done what Commissioner Roger Goodell hoped.

Sure, there were awkward moments, but those come even when the draft is a mega-event drawing hundreds of thousands of fans to the “Rocky Steps” in Philadelphia or lower Broadway in Nashville.

Goodell has insisted the sporting world needed the draft to be held on time. And the amount of eyeballs watching has been, well, an eye-opening number. Late in Saturday’s final round, the league said it had gone over \$100 million in total funds raised in all its efforts to battle the coronavirus. The telethon accompanying the draft raised more than \$6.6 million for six organizations involved in coronavirus relief.

NFL general managers also put together donations, initiated by the Eagles’ Howie Roseman, with each giving at least \$8,000 for every selection in this draft.

The NFL matched every telethon donation on Friday and Saturday.

“We’re forced to adapt here and change and do this differently, but it’s actually been a lot of great learning,” Goodell said. “We’ve seen some things that we’ve maybe called ‘stumbled on’ that really, I think, will be elements of drafts going into the future. The ability to use the virtual platforms in a way that we really didn’t think about until we were forced to.

“And so I think we’re really going to be able to make future drafts even better because we’re going to be able to combine it with the core elements that we’ve had. But I think that’s one of the things about the draft, it just keeps evolving and it keeps getting better because we keep learning.”

The league even awarded the 2022 draft to Las Vegas after all events on the Strip for this year were canceled due to the nationwide shutdown of large gatherings to curb the spread of the virus.

To open Saturday, Appalachian State had its second player chosen, linebacker Akeem Davis-Gaither, who went to Cincinnati. The Sun Belt’s defensive player of the year was a standout at the Senior Bowl — a game the Bengals coaching staff worked.

The Redskins dealt their unhappy veteran tackle Trent Williams to San Francisco on Saturday morning, and then chose LSU’s Saadiq Charles, who has been plagued by off-field issues and served a six-game suspension.

The Niners, who later announced the retirement of longtime standout left tackle Joe Staley, sent a fifth-round pick in this year’s draft and a 2021 third-rounder to acquire Williams. The deal reunites him with 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan, who was the offensive coordinator in Washington when Williams was drafted fourth overall in 2010.

San Francisco made two other trades, first sending Matt Breida, who was the Niners’ starting running back for part of their NFC title season, to Miami. The Dolphins dealt a fifth-rounder to San Francisco.

Then the 49ers traded wideout Marquise Goodwin to Philadelphia for a swap of sixth-round spots.

The first quarterback chosen on Day 3 was Washington’s Jacob Eason, who went to Indianapolis. The Colts, of course, signed Philip Rivers as a free agent and still have incumbent Jacoby Brissett. Both have contracts only through 2020, though.

Eason lost out to Jake Fromm at Georgia, then transferred to Washington. Fromm finally went 167th overall to Buffalo, which has a young QB in Josh Allen. Fromm likely was hurt by a mediocre combine performance. He was taken well after the Jets got Florida International QB James Morgan at 125th.

Carolina pulled off a new one by choosing nothing but defensive players, seven in all. Including, naturally, the seventh overall choice, DT Derrick Brown of Auburn. Of the SEC.

Wide receiver was considered the deepest position in this crop, and 37 were taken.

Meanwhile, the list of Power Five schools without players taken wound up at nine: Duke, Illinois, Northwestern, Rutgers, Iowa State, Kansas State, Oklahoma State, Arizona and Mississippi.

AP Pro Football Writers Josh Dubow, Mark Long and Rob Maaddi, and Sports Writer Jay Cohen contributed.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Despite risks, auto workers step up to make medical gear

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Cindy Parkhurst could have stayed home collecting most of her pay while the Ford plant where she normally works remains closed due to coronavirus fears.

Instead, she along with hundreds of workers at Ford, General Motors, Toyota and other companies has gone back to work to make face shields, surgical masks and ventilators in a wartime-like effort to stem shortages of protective gear and equipment.

"I didn't give it a second thought," said Parkhurst, 55, a tow motor driver who is now helping Ford and its partner 3M manufacture and ship respirators. "It's a neat thing to do for the community, for the first responders who definitely need this kind of protective gear."

All over the country, blue-collar and salaried workers have raised their hands to make medical equipment as companies repurpose factories to answer calls for help from beleaguered nurses, doctors and paramedics who are treating patients with the highly contagious virus. Workers also are making soap and hand sanitizer, which early in the crisis were in short supply.

At Ford, over 800 people returned to work at four Detroit-area sites. General Motors, which President Donald Trump had alternately criticized and praised for its work, has about 400 at a now-closed transmission plant in suburban Detroit and an electronics factory in Kokomo, Indiana, working on shields and ventilators. About 60 Toyota workers, both salaried and blue-collar, are making protective equipment in Kentucky, Texas, Michigan and Alabama.

Most automakers in the U.S. temporarily stopped making vehicles about a month ago after workers complained about the risks of infection at the factories. Many white-collar workers are being paid to work remotely but members of the United Auto Workers who don't have that option are still collecting pay and unemployment benefits that equal about 95% of regular take-home wages.

Those workers making medical gear will get their full base pay, but that's not what's motivating them to keep coming to the factories. Many simply want to help.

Jody Barrowman has been making face masks at a repurposed former General Motors transmission factory near Detroit since early April.



Bill Merkle works on making protective masks in Warren, Mich., Thursday, April 23, 2020. General Motors has about 400 workers at the now-closed transmission plant in suburban Detroit. All over the country, blue-collar and salaried workers have raised their hands to make medical equipment as companies repurpose factories to answer calls for help from beleaguered nurses, doctors and paramedics who are treating patients with the highly contagious new coronavirus COVID-19. (AP Photo/Paul Sancya)

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"Instead of being home and not helpful, I thought I'd be productive here," she said.

She jumped at the chance to work because GM is donating the masks to hospitals and first responders "which is where it needs to go," she said.

Barrowman said that the operation has been so efficient that workers have been allowed to take masks home for family members.

"I dropped some off at my grandparents. My parents took a full packet of masks at my house. So, it's not just helping the first responders. It's helping me and my family feel safe," she said.

Inside a building on Toyota's giant factory complex in Georgetown, Kentucky, mechanical engineer Kirk Barber helps to ship thousands of face shields that workers are making while plants are shut down. Sometimes he personally delivers boxes to hospitals or the state government, which is distributing them.

All of the workers, he said, had to undergo a cultural change to make sure they stay more than 6 feet apart to protect themselves from possible contagion.

"It's a hard habit to break when you're typically up and talking to someone, pointing to a document," Barber said. "People are very quick to point out 'hey, you guys need to keep your distance.'"

Twenty-four UAW members have already died from COVID-19 but it's unclear when or where they contracted the disease. Ford, GM and Toyota said they aren't aware of any infections among workers who returned to make medical gear. Still, there's no denying the risks are likely higher at the factories than in the safety of one's home.

Joseph Holt, associate professor at Notre Dame's business school who specializes in ethics and leadership, said the workers and their companies are examples of business doing its best to quickly fill a critical unmet need.

"Courage is doing what you think is right even when it might cost you," Holt said. "Those workers being willing to go in to work to produce the medical equipment and personal protective gear, even at personal risk — that is moral courage in action."

The Detroit automakers are trying to restart production on their vehicles, perhaps as soon as early May, but both Ford and GM say medical gear production will continue. Ford says it has enough workers to do both while GM says it won't need all factory workers right away because it plans a gradual restart.

Back at the Ford complex in Flat Rock, Michigan, where Parkhurst works, she's hoping the respirators she's helping to ship make their way to the hospital in nearby Dearborn, where nurses treated her mother with compassion before she died of a stroke about a year ago. She knows they must be "going through hell" now because the Detroit area one of the national hotspots for the virus.

"When I compared that to taking maybe a small risk and going in and making respirators, I feel all right," she said.

AP Video Journalist Mike Householder contributed to this report from Warren, Michigan. This story has been corrected to show that Cindy Parkhurst's mother died about one year ago, not 15 years ago.

"I just can't do this." Harried parents forgo home school

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

Frustration is mounting as more families across the U.S. enter their second or even third week of distance learning — and some overwhelmed parents say it will be their last.

Amid the barrage of learning apps, video meet-ups and e-mailed assignments that pass as pandemic home school, some frustrated and exhausted parents are choosing to disconnect entirely for the rest of the academic year. Others are cramming all their children's school work into the weekend or taking days off work to help their kids with a week's worth of assignments in one day.

"We tried to make it work the first week. We put together a schedule, and what we found is that forcing a child who is that young into a fake teaching situation is really, really hard," said Alexandra Nicholson, whose son is in kindergarten in a town outside Boston.

"I'd rather have him watch classic Godzilla movies and play in the yard and pretend to be a Jedi rather

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than figure out basic math.”

That stress is only compounded for families with multiple children in different grades, or when parents work long hours outside the home. In some cases, older siblings must watch younger ones during the day, leaving no time for school work.

“I think the pressure is on and I think it’s on even more for some of our low-income families. It’s totally overwhelming,” said Rachel Pearl, chief program officer for Friends of the Children-Portland. The Portland, Oregon-based national nonprofit pairs paid mentors with at-risk children.

“A lot of our families already feel they’re not doing enough when they are working so hard and I fear they will fear they are failing at it.”

Parents are concerned their kids are falling behind, especially in lower income families. In households where

the parents earn less than \$50,000 total annually, 72% are at least somewhat concerned about their child falling behind academically, compared with 56% of parents in high-income households, according to a late-March poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Meghan Perrone, a nurse, can’t even begin to help her 8-year-old daughter with her schoolwork until after she gets home from work and has cleaned up from dinner. Her husband is working from home but spends most of the week holed up in the basement because his job is mainly done by phone. That leaves the couple’s second-grade daughter to supervise her 2-year-old sister.

As a result, the family has pushed the weekly load of schoolwork to weekends and tries to cram as much into two days as they can. One recent Saturday, Perrone’s husband and daughter finished a science project at 10 p.m.

“We don’t have the luxury right now to not be working. Some people aren’t working at all and they can make time to do this stuff, but that for us is just not an option,” said Perrone, who lives in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Those with older children may be faring better, but parents still must keep track of timing for video chats with teachers and make sure all the assignments are completed.

Sarah Karpanty, 44, a mother of two middle schoolers in Roanoke, Virginia, said the reality kicked in last week when spring break ended and home learning began.

“I wanted to get into a fetal position and hide out,” said Karpanty, a professor of wildlife biology at Virginia Tech who is also teaching her own students online.

Her boys, aged 12 and 13, are independent but still need guidance navigating the new technology. Their classes involve recorded video from teachers, online quizzes and the occasional interactive Zoom call.

“When this all started we were all like, ‘Thank God kids aren’t affected,’” she said, referring to the coronavirus itself. “But we have to be honest, the kids are not OK.”

Many school districts are emphasizing to parents that the learning curve is steep, and some teachers try to avoid daily deadlines, instead allowing students to go at their own pace.



This April 9, 2020, photo released by Kara Illig shows her son, Eli Illig, 10, on his computer in Ebensburg, Pa. The frustration of parents is mounting as more families across the U.S. enter their second or even third week of total distance learning, and some say it will be their last. (Kara Illig via AP)

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California high school teacher Susan Binder said the technology can be frustrating and imperfect. Many of the apps elementary schools must now rely on -- with names like Seesaw, Epic and IXL -- were only intended as a tool to enhance classroom learning or share students' work with parents.

"This is a very crude bandage we're putting on a very big wound. We're just doing the best we can," said Binder, who is using Zoom and Google classroom to teach economics, AP history and government at El Cerrito High School, near San Francisco.

"A video can't look at your child's face and see the confusion. A teacher can do that," she said.

She worries this generation of students may end up suffering academically, socially and emotionally.

Around the world, parents and schools are facing similar challenges.

In Italy, the virus' first epicenter in Europe, schools have tried to adapt to online learning with a spotty success rate. In some parts of Italy's hard-hit north, many schools went weeks without assigning lessons, and one parent said her high school aged daughter went two months without a math lesson.

In France, many parents with young children are taking advantage of a national initiative that pays 84% of salaries of parents needing to take time off to care full-time for kids. The country's centralized school system has helped streamline teaching, with standardized online programs but there have been wide disparities and concerns about equality and low-income families who don't have internet access and devices.

Kara Illig, a mother of three in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, finally broke down one day last week.

Her fourth-grade son had six English assignments all due at the end of the day. Her second-grade daughter had to build a table that would support a dictionary using only printer paper, cardboard and duct tape. She could barely keep track of their assignments, four different school email accounts, 12 Google livestreams, and her own worries as she transitioned to a new job while working from home.

"I was feeling like a failure. I thought, 'I just can't do this,'" she said.

She posted a message on a private Parent Teacher Organization group on Facebook, asking: "Is anyone else having a hard time keeping up with all of this?"

She added: "My entire Facebook feed is nothing but photos of happy, organized families, sitting together at the kitchen table doing classwork and I can NOT relate." The post immediately got more than 70 replies, most of them supportive, and earned her a call from a slightly irritated school principal, she said. Within days, the district told teachers to no longer assign work with a daily deadline.

Illig believes she ruffled some feathers, but she doesn't regret it.

"It's just a terrible situation and we're all trying to adapt to and survive."

Associated Press writers Nicole Winfield in Rome, Colleen Barry in Milan, Angela Charlton in Paris and Jamey Keaten in Geneva contributed to this report.

Thousands demonstrate against Israeli coalition deal

By SHLOMO MOR Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Several thousand Israelis rallied Saturday to demonstrate against a unity government deal reached last week that leaves Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in power as he prepares to go on trial for corruption charges.

The protesters oppose having Netanyahu as prime minister as long as he is a criminal suspect. The protesters say the unity government agreement, which gives Netanyahu influence over the appointment of judges and legal officials, "crushes democracy" and is meant to rescue Netanyahu from his legal troubles.

Netanyahu is scheduled to face trial next month on charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes. He denies the charges.

The protest filled central Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, although demonstrators maintained distance from each other in line with health regulations in place for weeks meant to halt the spread of the coronavirus. Protesters, wearing face masks, waved Israeli flags and signs calling out Netanyahu for corruption.

Netanyahu and former military chief Benny Gantz, leader of the Blue and White party, signed the power-sharing agreement after weeks of negotiations for what they termed a "national emergency" government

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meant to steer the country through the coronavirus outbreak.

The agreement delivered Netanyahu a significant boost as he fought to hold on to power while fending off the corruption charges. His party will gain influence over judicial appointments, which could help Netanyahu if his case reaches the Supreme Court.

The deal requires the approval of both parties on key appointments, including the attorney general and the state prosecutor, granting Netanyahu veto power over the officials who hold sway over his legal fate.



People keep social distance amid concerns over the country's coronavirus outbreak, during "Black Flag" protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and government corruption, at Rabin square in Tel Aviv, Israel, Saturday, April 25, 2020. Several thousand Israelis on Saturday demonstrated against a unity government deal reached last week that leaves Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in power as he prepares to go on trial for corruption charges. (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)

AP FACT CHECK: Trump's errant virus theories, testing boast

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lysol is for toilet bowls and countertops, not human consumption. The company that manufactures it felt compelled to emphasize the danger of ingesting it after President Donald Trump's musings about heat, light and disinfectant in the time of coronavirus.

Trump's thinking-out-loud theories took a turn toward hazmat territory this past week when he said it would be interesting to see whether people's innards could get "almost a cleaning" from disinfectants. Doctors tweeted their alarm, worried that people will take Trump's comment as a cue and swallow chemicals that will harm or kill them.

Trump also gave weight through his bully pulpit to an unproved theory that heat and humidity might hasten the destruction of the coronavirus, suggesting people could be safer around each other in the outdoors.

Research pointing to that possibility is preliminary, other research has found otherwise, and this pandemic has spread in the tropics and Southeast Asia as well as through the northern hemisphere.

Trump followed up Saturday with a baseless boast about testing.

Meantime, Trump's veterans affairs secretary went even farther than the president in talking up potential benefits of a malaria drug against COVID-19. It's an area of speculation that his own agency says "displays a dangerous lack of expertise" by amateurs.

A review:

DISINFECTANT

TRUMP, on the virus: "I see the disinfectant that knocks it out in a minute, one minute. And is there a

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way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning? Because you see it gets in the lungs and it does a tremendous number on the lungs. So it would be interesting to check that ... you're going to have to use medical doctors ... but it sounds -- it sounds interesting to me." — briefing Thursday.

THE FACTS: No.

The fact Trump would even flirt with the idea prompted a statement from Reckitt Benckiser, parent company of the maker of Lysol and Dettol, that "under no circumstance should our disinfectant products be administered into the human body (through injection, ingestion or any other route)."

Clorox echoed that bleach and other disinfectants "are not suitable for consumption or injection under any circumstances."

The U.S. surgeon general's office moved to discourage people from thinking they can self-medicate from something in the house: "PLEASE always talk to your health provider first before administering any treatment/medication to yourself or a loved one."

As the blowback unfolded, Trump said Friday he was being sarcastic the day before.

SUNLIGHT & HEAT

TRUMP, on an unproved theory that sunlight, heat and humidity can destroy the virus faster than inside the house: "I hope people enjoy the sun. And if it has an impact, that's great. ... And if heat is good, and if sunlight is good, that's a great thing as far as I'm concerned."

THE FACTS: Sunlight may be a disinfectant for the spirit and outdoor exercise is recommended in today's social isolation, but there's no proof it will make the pandemic go away. Without declaring that it would, Trump is again giving traction to a theory that could prompt people to let down their guard around others outside.

William Bryan, who leads the Homeland Security Department's science and technology directorate, told the briefing about incomplete, "emerging results" from research that suggest solar light, heat and humidity might be effective at neutralizing the virus. Past studies have not found good evidence of that.

Dr. Michael Ryan, the World Health Organization's emergencies chief, said in March that "it's a false hope to say yes, it will just disappear in the summertime like influenza." Trump said early in the outbreak he expected it to end with the warmer weather of April.

TESTING

TRUMP: "We have now Tested more than 5 Million People. That is more than any other country in the World, and even more than all major countries combined!" — tweet Saturday.



FILE - This March 13, 2020, file photo shows a package of Lysol disinfectant wipes on a shelf at a store in Athens, Ga. Lysol is for toilet bowls and countertops, not human consumption. The company that manufacturers it felt compelled to emphasize the danger of ingesting it after President Donald Trump's musings about heat, light and disinfectant in the time of coronavirus. (Joshua L. Jones/Athens

Banner-Herald via AP)

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THE FACTS: Actually, the U.S. has tested far fewer people than “major countries combined” and lags dozens of countries in testing its population proportionally.

Together, just three major countries -- Russia, Germany and Italy -- have tested about 6.5 million people, compared with over 5 million in the U.S. And the United States is easily outdistanced when testing in other Group of Seven countries is added to the mix, as well as powers such as India. Moreover, the count does not include China, which has more than four times the population of the U.S. but has not published national testing numbers.

More than 30 other countries have tested a larger share of the population than has been done in the U.S., which was slow to make COVID-19 diagnoses available and still can't offer it to everyone who might be infected.

ROUND 2

TRUMP, on the chances of the virus returning in the fall: “If it does come back — it's not going to come back — and I've spoken to 10 different people, it's not going to be like it was. ... If we have embers of corona coupled with the flu, that's not going to be pleasant, but it's not going to be what we've gone through in any way, shape, or form. ... You may not even have corona coming back, just so you understand.” — briefing Wednesday.

THE FACTS: His public health officials refuted his statement on the spot that the coronavirus won't be coming back. As for his statement that it won't be as bad in a second round, that's more complicated.

“There will be coronavirus in the fall,” Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, said at the briefing. “I am convinced of that because of the degree of transmissibility that it has, the global nature.”

“Next fall and winter, we're going to have two viruses circulating, and we're going to have to distinguish between which is flu and which is the coronavirus,” said Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

How bad that will be will be determined by a range of factors that can't be predicted with precision. Redfield said the situation may be more difficult than now because the coronavirus and the flu will be circulating at the same time, unlike during the bulk of the current pandemic. Or it may be less difficult if preparations and containment are better than now.

MALARIA DRUG

VA SECRETARY ROBERT WILKIE, asked whether it's safe to encourage people to take hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19 treatment: “Oh, I think so.” — interview Wednesday on MSNBC.

THE FACTS: That's not what the government's top health experts have said for weeks, nor what his own agency has suggested. A new alert Friday from the Food and Drug Administration further underscored why the drug cannot be considered generally safe in this pandemic and why it has not been approved by the FDA for treatment of COVID-19.

Last month, the FDA authorized the narrow emergency use of the malaria drugs for hospitalized patients with COVID-19 who aren't enrolled in ongoing clinical trials. But regulators said they are investigating life-threatening side effects reported to poison control centers and other health authorities.

In one such report, doctors at a New York hospital said that heart rhythm abnormalities developed in most of the 84 coronavirus patients treated with hydroxychloroquine and the antibiotic azithromycin, a combination Trump has promoted as part of his persistent and inaccurate portrayal of the malaria drug as a game-changer.

The drug has long been used to treat malaria, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. A few, very small preliminary studies suggested it might help prevent the coronavirus from entering cells and possibly help patients clear the virus sooner.

Wilkie, as VA secretary, leads the nation's largest health system. His agency's own health care arm has criticized premature assessments on the effectiveness of the drug for the coronavirus. In an unsigned

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response to an audit report last month examining whether the VA had adequate stocks of the drug, top VA health officials called it "inaccurate and irresponsible" to assume hydroxychloroquine would benefit veterans for COVID-19.

"There are active investigations into these drugs and many others, as discussed by Dr. Anthony Fauci," according to the unsigned VA response to the agency's inspector general. "Yet no conclusions have been made on their effectiveness. To insist that a 14 days' supply of these drugs is appropriate or not appropriate displays this dangerous lack of expertise on COVID-19 and Pandemic response."

WILKIE, on a nationwide study finding that a malaria drug had no benefit for treating COVID-19 among veterans: "That's an observational study. It's not a clinical study. It was done on a small number of veterans. Sadly, those of whom were in the last stages of life. And the drug was given to them. And I have to also say that the drug — we know the drug has been working on middle-age and younger veterans ... working in stopping the progression of the disease." — interview Wednesday on MSNBC.

THE FACTS: He mischaracterized the study's finding.

Wilkie rejected a study that relies on his department's own hospital data and finds no benefit from hydroxychloroquine. His claim that it helps younger or middle-aged veterans with COVID-19 is also unsubstantiated.

It's true that the study, done by independent researchers at two universities with VA approval, was not a rigorous experiment. Yet with 368 patients, it's the largest look so far at hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19, based on VA hospital data.

Researchers analyzed medical records of male veterans hospitalized with confirmed coronavirus infection at Veterans Health Administration medical centers who died or were discharged by April 11.

About 28% who were given hydroxychloroquine plus usual care died, versus 11% of those getting routine care alone.

Even though people given the drug tended to be sicker than the comparison group, researchers statistically adjusted for that and still saw no benefit from the drug.

There is no other published evidence that the drug is safe or effective for younger veterans with COVID-19.

Associated Press writers Marilyn Marchione in Milwaukee and Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

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

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Out of pandemic crisis, what could a new New Deal look like?

By MICHAEL TACKETT and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The New Deal was really a series of new deals, spread out over more than six years during the Great Depression — a menu of nationally scaled projects that were one part make-work and many parts lasting impact. They delivered a broad-shouldered expression of presidential authority whose overall benefits were both economic and psychological.

Not all of them worked. Some failed badly. But it was a try-anything moment by Franklin D. Roosevelt at a time of national despair. And it remade the role of the federal government in American life.

Men were hired to plant trees in Oklahoma after the Dust Bowl and to build roads, bridges and schools. Writers and artists were dispatched to chronicle the hardship, employing authors like Saul Bellow and Ralph Ellison. In most every state, you can still see murals or read local histories or walk into enduring projects like LaGuardia Airport and Dealey Plaza in Dallas.

These programs were designed to provide get-by wages in exchange for work. But others were crafted

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to remake society. Social Security was instituted to save the elderly from poverty, federal insurance on banks to renew trust in the financial system, minimum wage and labor rights to redistribute the balance of power between employer and employee.

Now, nearly 90 years later, the United States is fighting a disease that presents the country with wrenching life-and-death challenges. Yet at the same time, it has served up something else as well: a rare opportunity to galvanize Americans for change.

And as the U.S. confronts its most profound financial crisis since the Depression, brought on by the most deadly pandemic in a century, there are early soundings of a larger question: What would a "new" New Deal look like?

For the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, whose latest book is "Leadership in Turbulent Times," the very act of discussing such a possibility is productive in itself. "It at least allows you to think of something that could come out of this that could be positive."

The New Deal's legacy still provides support today. Unemployment insurance. Retirement and disability income. Transparency in the stock markets. Infrastructure that ensures a steady flow of electricity and supply of water.

Yet the coronavirus outbreak has also revealed how ill-equipped the government was to address the rapidly escalating fallout of 26 million job losses, overwhelmed hospitals and millions of shuttered businesses only weeks away from failure.

"We basically have a 21st-century economy wobbling on a 20th-century foundation," said Rahm Emanuel, the former mayor of Chicago and chief of staff to President Barack Obama. "We need to upgrade the system to have a 21st-century economy in all respects."

Among the questions at hand:

—How can Americans have greater access to savings for retirement and financial emergencies? There are fewer workers than a generation ago, and many face higher costs for housing and school.

—How can the government ensure greater resources for medical care in a crisis? This would mean that mission-critical workers, from nurses to grocery-store clerks, have stockpiles of equipment to stay safe. It would mean people could get tested and treated without crippling hospital bills. And it would mean researchers have incentives to develop vaccines and bring them to market faster.

President Donald Trump has talked up infrastructure programs and affordable healthcare but offered few details. Democratic lawmakers must work with a president their base of voters distrusts and despises. The likely consequence: Any mandate for change will come from the ballot boxes this November.

Just this past week, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), leaned hard on programs of the New Deal to offer legislation to create a federal "health force" to employ workers "for



FILE - In this March 1933, file photo, President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivers his first radio "fireside chat" in Washington. The New Deal was a try-anything moment during the Great Depression that remade the role of the federal government in American life. (AP Photo)

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future public health care needs, and build skills for new workers to enter the public health and health care workforce." It is unlikely the Republican-controlled Senate would consider such legislation, but it also shows what Democrats might have in mind as voters contemplate upcoming elections.

Both parties have an uneasy relationship with how states and the federal government should share their power, and any reprise of the New Deal would likely enhance Washington's authority.

Trump has yet to offer a systemic solution to the crisis, though he has approved record levels of direct assistance to businesses and individuals. Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, has talked more about combating the pandemic than he has about reimagining what kind of country might emerge from it.

So far, Congress has committed more than \$2 trillion to sustaining the economy during the outbreak. But most economists see that unprecedented sum as relief, not recovery or reform — just one of the "three Rs" of the New Deal.

Any recovery will rely on government programs to catalyze the economy so that hiring and commerce can flow again. The public will also expect reforms that make the nation more resilient against future emergencies, so people feel comfortable enough to take the risks that lead to innovation and prosperity.

Investing in infrastructure holds bipartisan appeal. Trump has repeatedly called for upgrades to roads, bridges and pipelines. Democrats would like to ensure that internet connectivity, including next-generation 5G, exists in rural and poorer communities.

But other options have existed mainly in the white papers of think tanks, academics and advocacy groups. There is a newfound appetite for them, which could overpower even the highly polarized politics of this moment.

"The question people always ask is, what would it take to break through that extreme partisanship?" Goodwin said. "It takes a crisis. This is what happens during wars."

A WILLINGNESS TO WORK TOGETHER?

After 9/11, much of the criticism of the federal government focused on a collective "failure of imagination."

Nineteen years later, that phrase has a new context as Washington tries to fashion a response to the coronavirus. It's a challenge at a scale the nation has not seen since 1932, when Roosevelt, a Democrat, defeated Republican President Herbert Hoover with a promise of better days ahead — a "new deal" for the "forgotten man."

When New Deal programs were unveiled, no one definitively knew what had caused the U.S. economy to collapse, unlike now, when the culprit and the vulnerabilities are clearer.

The political climate was fundamentally different then. Roosevelt, celebrated for his optimism and empathy, had muscular Democratic majorities in Congress. But he also sought to unite the country. His first radio "fireside chat" in 1933 was devoted to asking Americans to trust the banking system again. "He promised them that they could get their money back," Goodwin said. The next fireside chat called for systemic change that Roosevelt argued would regulate capitalism's extremes and provide a safety net.

"Roosevelt was very concerned with the idea of one body politic," said Allan Winkler, a professor emeritus at Miami University of Ohio, who testified before Congress about the New Deal in 2009 during the height of the financial crisis. "I worry about that in the current situation, that we don't have a willingness to work together."

But the New Deal programs stemmed from bold visions that could be implemented by political leaders, he cautioned. "In our fragmented body politic, it would take an extraordinary politician to do what is necessary."

This is why a debate is starting among policy thinkers about the components needed for recovery and reform: so that leaders can feel empowered to take action.

Emanuel sees two needed chapters — one to provide immediate aid and a second with more lasting change.

"We need another bill to jump start the economy," Emanuel said. He says it should be followed by investments in infrastructure to improve online connectivity so that learning, medicine and work can get through stay-at-home orders.

The case for a major rebuilding may become clear if dire forecasts of a second-quarter decline in annual

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economic output ranging from 30% to 50% come true.

"I think we are going to see an epic lockup in the mortgage markets as people are going to be unable to make their payments," said Louis Hyman, a historian at Cornell University.

This same cascade of defaults existed in the Great Depression. The New Deal swung to the rescue with the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, which bought past-due mortgages with government bonds and blocked a wave of foreclosures. Government officials also developed what would become 30-year mortgages. The loan's stable interest rates helped spur new construction.

But now, Hyman says, there's a "painful truth": The bulk of most people's wealth is tied up in their homes — and inaccessible in a crisis.

"The policy that would undo that is to enable people to accumulate wealth in other ways," he wrote in an email. Those include better pay, capital market investment incentives and, especially, "building lots of houses for the under-housed."

THE IDEOLOGICAL SPLIT

Any attempt at updating a New Deal will reflect ideological differences between Democrats and Republicans.

Framing this divide is a simple choice: Is it better to establish a government firewall that can protect the economy during future downturns? Or should the tax code and regulations be re-engineered so that private companies and individuals can more easily adapt to pandemics?

Heather Boushey, president of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, says allowing government aid to automatically increase as the economy began to fall would have been one of "our best defenses so that the coronavirus recession does not turn into a full-scale economic depression."

"Responding to the crisis without also making our economy more resilient against future shocks would be a mistake," she said. Automatic triggers for expanded jobless benefits, increased medical aid and new construction spending would ease the pain of a downturn and speed recovery.

More conservative economists believe adjustments to the tax code and regulations will improve growth and resilience.

"This is not one of those things where if you send checks you can jump-start the economy," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a former Congressional Budget Office director and economic adviser to Republicans.

Price Fishback, an economist at the University of Arizona known for his work studying the Depression era, proposes another, more abstract notion as a key to fashioning a New Deal for the 21st century: humility.

Even New Deal programs that improved lives did not insulate the American people. There was stagflation in the 1970s. Untamed financial markets fueled a housing bubble during the 2000s. And at the end of 2019, no major economist forecasting this year envisioned that a pandemic would throw the world into turmoil.

The United States would be stronger with improved internet connectivity, more housing, government programs that can cushion a downturn and a health care system that can handle crises and emergencies. Life would be better. But the nation would be far from impervious.

So stay humble, Fishback urges.

"Once we think we got it licked," he says, "we get slammed in the face again."

Michael Tackett is deputy Washington bureau chief for The Associated Press, and Josh Boak covers the U.S. economy and voters. Follow Tackett on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/tackettDC> and Boak at <http://twitter.com/joshboak>.

This story has been revised to correct the spelling of Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's name.

The week that was: Caught between safety, restarting economy

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — In Spain, children will be allowed to go outside again. In the U.S. state of Georgia, a handful of businesses opened their doors, performing manicures and haircuts in masks. Auto workers are in factories, but producing ventilators, not cars.

The world is taking steps to reopen. But as a debate over getting back to business raged with urgency, in often politicized tones, it became clear that reopening the world's economy will be far more complex than suddenly shutting it down.

Brazil's hospitals are warning they are overwhelmed. Doctors in an ICU unit in New York saved a patient's life, but have lost many more. A cemetery could not keep up. The toll grew deeper in nursing homes, where workers and the frail cannot escape the spread.

There is yearning for recovery, and both hope and fear about the consequences of returning to the world. Here is a guide to some of AP's best coverage this week across the globe:

HEALTH AND SCIENCE

President Donald Trump prompted immediate warnings from health officials when he suggested injecting disinfectants could be a way to combat the new coronavirus. The president later claimed he was being sarcastic, although the transcript of his remarks suggests otherwise. It was the latest in a series of statements throughout his presidency that fly in contrast to mainstream science.

As the planet grapples with what reopening looks like, a flood of new research suggests that far more people have had the new coronavirus without any symptoms. While that's good news, it also means it's impossible to know who around you may be contagious — and complicates decisions about returning to normal life. There are other questions and unknowns: Who's immune? Who's at risk? And what tests are available, and what do they actually measure?

Yet while scientists work to answer those questions, there is a bright spot. Coyotes, pumas and goats wander around cities. Skies everywhere are less polluted. Scientists have noticed Earth has become wilder and cleaner as millions of people hunker down during the pandemic.

THE ECONOMY

There is a sobering milestone ahead in the unemployment crisis. One in every six U.S. workers has filed for unemployment benefits in the past five weeks, and economists say the unemployment rate could reach 20 percent, the worst since the Great Depression. Still, Americans remain optimistic.

An AP-NORC poll found that the vast majority of people whose households have experienced layoffs expect those jobs will return once the crisis passes. Gig workers and independent contractors are now eligible for benefits, but they're finding it particularly hard to navigate the system.

Auto companies, restaurants, retailers and tech firm are considering how to safely bring back their employees. Some auto workers who could be collecting most of their paychecks to stay home are back



A couple wearing protective masks to protect against coronavirus walk past a mural reading 'Stay home', in the Shoreditch area, as the lockdown continues due to the coronavirus outbreak, in London, Saturday, April 25, 2020.

(AP Photo/Alberto Pezzali)

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already: They've volunteered to make medical gear at their plants. In Belgium, Europe's second-biggest port will test bracelets designed to warn employees when they get too close to one another.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Small businesses in the United States were supposed to get help from the Paycheck Protection Program. \$349 billion in emergency loans would help keep workers in jobs and bills paid. But an AP investigation showed that publicly traded companies with thousands of employees and past penalties from government investigations were among those receiving millions of dollars from the fund.

Germany is further emerging as a model response to the virus, after years of criticism for a health care system that was seen as excessive and costly.

An Associated Press review also found states falling short on one of the federal government's essential criteria for reopening — having an efficient system to track people who have been physically near a person infected with the coronavirus. AP found a patchwork of systems around the U.S. for contact tracing, with many states unable to keep up with caseloads and scrambling to hire and train enough people.

AP reporting also revealed that states and municipalities had stockpiled 30 million doses of a malaria drug touted by Trump, despite warnings from doctors that more research is needed.

INEQUALITY

In the U.S., immigrants are facing special struggles amid the economic crisis. Many lost jobs in the service industries and scrambled to find any work they could, in laundromats, delivering groceries, disinfecting ATMs. "Any job is decent as long as you bring food to the table," one said.

In the race for scarce medical gear, some African nations have no ventilators at all. Many have a shortage of doctors, exacerbated by the pull of better wages abroad.

Nearly none of the millions of people in refugee camps have been tested, and even if they had there is little advanced medical care to be had.

And migrant workers in oil-rich Gulf states have found themselves out of a job, sometimes under quarantine and unable to get home.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Washington has changed during the pandemic so far — but not in the ways you might think, and not quite as much for a city bound by tradition. But could Washington change the country in the long term once the virus has ebbed? A 21st-century version of the New Deal could showcase federal power and remake the American landscape much as its predecessor did, though in different ways.

In a season of big changes, Amanda Reynolds' life has changed irrevocably as she stands on the cusp of adulthood. Hear what she has to say about it.

And as masks grew more prevalent around the United States, with regulations mandating them in some places, the disappearance of the face brought a moment to contemplate what role it plays in everyday communication — and what is lost when part of it is abruptly covered up.

In New York — and on TV — the New York accent is a staple for better or for worse. But it has received even more of a moment in the spotlight lately during the pandemic, thanks in part to its two high-profile amplifiers: Anthony Fauci and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The NFL draft unfolded as never before — virtually — but, for all the differences felt surprisingly normal.

Finally: Mid-April has been a time of sadness and challenge in the United States for more than a generation — a period where some of the nation's most cataclysmic events have taken place. This year, those anniversaries were marked in what might, for the entire country, be the most unsettling April of them all.

ONE GOOD THING

Feeling joy is essential in this existential stretch of time during the pandemic. It's there, everywhere, just sometimes harder to spot. AP's daily series, "One Good Thing," is a simple concept of stories written about the kindness of strangers and individuals who sacrifice for others during the coronavirus pandemic.

This week, we told the story of Colin Cosell, who is normally at Citi Field, rousing the crowd as public address announcer for the New York Mets. Now he's busy working at home, trying to cheer up one fan at a time. Teen Sarah Schneider took it upon herself to reach out by email to sick children who are undergoing treatment for serious illnesses. Why? "I wanted them to know they aren't alone."

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GROUND GAME

As COVID-19 spreads around the globe, so does inaccurate information. AP's podcast, "Ground Game: Inside the Outbreak" featured a discussion with Fact Check editor Karen Mahabir and reporter Amanda Seitz about how misinformation fueled some protests at state Capitols around the U.S. And how will the Supreme Court hear virtual arguments? Reporters Jessica Gresko and Mark Sherman explained how telephone arguments will work and how the public will be able to access the audio.

VIRUS DIARY

AP journalists are documenting their lives while covering the story. Tales Azzoni shared the anticipation of letting his triplets go outside for 60 minutes — after 44 days of complete confinement in Madrid. Follow Virus Diary here.

In Trump's shadow, Congress-at-home eyes reboot during virus

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — They long for what's being lost: the ability to publicly question officials at committee hearings, to chat across the aisle, to speak from the House and Senate floor for all of America, and history, to hear.

Congress wants its voice back.

With no real plan to reopen Capitol Hill any time soon, the coronavirus shutdown poses an existential crisis that's pushing Congress ever so reluctantly toward the 21st century option of remote legislating from home.

"It's the ability to be an equal branch of government," said Rep. Katie Porter, a freshman Democrat from California.

Divisions are fierce, but so too is the sense of what is being lost. Every day lawmakers shelter at home, their public role is being visibly diminished. While they are approving record sums of virus aid, they are ceding authority to oversee the effort and tackle next steps.

It's an imbalance of power for all to see: President Donald Trump's daily public briefings without a robust response from Capitol Hill, though there have been discussions within the White House about changing the format of the briefings to curtail his role.

"This is a time where oversight is really important," said Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-Wash., a leader of the moderate New Democrats caucus.

The pandemic "begs for Congress's engagement, virtual or otherwise," he said.

Changing the rules to allow lawmakers to cast votes or hold hearings from home would be unprecedented in House and Senate history. The Constitution requires lawmakers be "present" for most action.

The simmering debate cuts across political fault lines. Some lawmakers want to stick with tradition; others are tech-savvy and ready for change. A vocal band of conservatives insists Congress must reopen now, despite public health warnings, echoing Trump's push to end the shutdown. Others have no interest



FILE - In this April 23, 2020, file photo House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., walks to her office after signing the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, H.R. 266, after it passed the House on Capitol Hill in Washington. Pelosi shelved a proposal for proxy voting this week after Republicans objected. (AP Photo/Andrew

Harnik, File)

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in returning to the crowded Capitol complex until it's safe.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., shelved a proposal for proxy voting this past week after Republicans objected. Once resistant to what she called "Congress by Zoom" meeting, she tapped a bipartisan task force to present fresh ideas.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., rejected a GOP remote vote proposal. He expects Congress to return May 4, as planned.

The reluctance to change is leaving the legislative branch behind after even the tradition-bound Supreme Court announced it would hear oral arguments by teleconference as stay-home rules reorder civic life.

"It's a huge can of worms," said Sarah Binder, a professor at George Washington University.

She said the pandemic provokes a set of issues far beyond the logistics of working remotely. Among them: Is it safe to return to Capitol Hill? Can you be "present" if you appear on a computer screen?

But she said, "They need a solution if they're not going to be able to come back."

Lawmakers say they can only do so much on conference calls and virtual town hall meetings as they assess \$3 trillion in coronavirus aid and consider annual spending, defense and other bills.

While the 100 senators can usually command attention on their own, the 435 rank-and-file House members have a harder time being heard.

One prime opportunity is time allotted to lawmakers at committee hearings.

It may be just five minutes on C-SPAN. But for members of Congress, the committee means everything. It's their chance to make a difference.

Porter knows firsthand what's being lost with Congress away.

As the pandemic emerged, she wrote a letter asking the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide free virus testing as country scrambled to slow the spread of COVID-19.

"They blew us off," she said.

But when CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield appeared before the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Porter had her moment.

In a video that went viral, she grilled Redfield on whether he would commit to invoking authority under federal law to declare pandemic testing free.

He said yes.

"It wasn't until we got Dr. Redfield in front of me, and I had my five minutes with the cameras on him, in front of the American people, that I was able to get an answer," she said.

But under House rules, committees usually need members to be physically present to meet. While several committees have been conducting briefing calls with key administration officials, it's mostly out of public view.

The House Small Business Committee confirmed a private call this past week with the head of the Small Business Administration running the coronavirus paycheck program. The Appropriations Committee held one with Agricultural Secretary Sonny Perdue. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has had calls with other committees.

The House Oversight and Reform Committee was set for a briefing with the Census Bureau's director about curtailing the 2020 population count during the pandemic. It's a crucial conversation with billions of federal dollars at stake. But the public could not watch.

Still, some say the only way for Congress to act is for lawmakers to return to Washington during the pandemic. Conservative House Freedom Caucus members rallied this past week to reopen the Capitol. Key GOP senators agree.

"If COVID-19 requires Congress to act, then it requires Congress to convene," said Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, who self-quarantined last month after sitting near another GOP senator who tested positive for the virus.

As the House considers options, one advocate for remote legislating is Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., who enjoys FaceTime with his grandkids and suggests Congress could do the same.

Opening committees is the priority, he told reporters after the task force met. "We need committees to act," he said. "Even if they can't come to Washington."

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Hoyer acknowledged how difficult it is for Congress to change. Even during the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak, the House convened to vote. But this is an "extraordinary circumstance," he said. He expects an update this coming week.

Porter warns that without changes the 535-member legislative branch is being distilled to its most visible leaders — "a four person Congress," she said.

"Technology is not disruptive to the Founders' idea," she said.

"It's limiting the technology that is consolidating power in a small number of people," she said, "which is what they were worried about when they created the House of Representatives."

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, April 26, the 117th day of 2020. There are 249 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 26, 1994, voting began in South Africa's first all-race elections, resulting in victory for the African National Congress and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president.

On this date:

In 1607, English colonists went ashore at present-day Cape Henry, Virginia, on an expedition to establish the first permanent English settlement in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1785, American naturalist, hunter and artist John James Audubon was born in present-day Haiti.

In 1865, John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, was surrounded by federal troops near Port Royal, Virginia, and killed.

In 1933, Nazi Germany's infamous secret police, the Gestapo, was created.

In 1945, Marshal Henri Philippe Petain (ahn-REE' fee-LEEP' pay-TAN'), the head of France's Vichy government during World War II, was arrested.

In 1961, Roger Maris of the New York Yankees hit the first of his 61 home runs during a 162-game season (compared to Babe Ruth's 60 home runs during a 154-game season) as he hit a roundtripper off Paul Foytack at Tiger Stadium.

In 1968, the United States exploded beneath the Nevada desert a 1.3 megaton nuclear device called "Boxcar."

In 1986, an explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine caused radioactive fallout to begin spewing into the atmosphere. (Dozens of people were killed in the immediate aftermath of the disaster while the long-term death toll from radiation poisoning is believed to number in the thousands.)

In 1989, actress-comedian Lucille Ball died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles at age 77.

In 1994, China Airlines Flight 140, a Taiwanese Airbus A-300, crashed while landing in Nagoya, Japan, killing 264 people; there were seven survivors.

In 2009, the United States declared a public health emergency as more possible cases of swine flu surfaced from Canada to New Zealand; officials in Mexico City closed everything from concerts to sports matches to churches in an effort to stem the spread of the virus.

In 2018, Bill Cosby was convicted of drugging and molesting Temple University employee Andrea Constand at his suburban Philadelphia mansion in 2004; it was the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era and completed the spectacular downfall of a comedian who broke racial barriers on his way to TV superstardom. (Cosby was later sentenced to three to 10 years in prison.)

Ten years ago: A Haitian judge dismissed kidnapping and criminal association charges against 10 American missionaries who'd been detained for trying to take a busload of children out of the country after the January 2010 earthquake, but said that Laura Silsby, the last of the 10 still in jail, would face a lesser charge. (Silsby was freed in May 2010 after being convicted of arranging illegal travel and sentenced to time served.)

Five years ago: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (shin-zoh ah-bay) arrived in Boston for a stop at the

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John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and a dinner hosted by Secretary of State John Kerry as he began a weeklong U.S. visit. "General Hospital" and "The Young and the Restless" were the top winners of the Daytime Emmys with three trophies each, while the latter shared the best drama series award with "Days of Our Lives." Actress and TV personality Jayne Meadows, who'd often teamed with her husband Steve Allen, died in Los Angeles at age 95.

One year ago: A federal judge in Washington sentenced a Russian woman, Maria Butina, to 18 months in prison for being a secret agent for the Russian government, covertly gathering intelligence on the National Rifle Association and other groups. (Butina was deported to Russia six months later.) North Korean leader Kim Jong Un headed home from Russia after his first summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin; Kim accused the U.S. of negotiating in "bad faith" when he had met two months earlier with President Donald Trump in Hanoi. Catholic churches in Sri Lanka canceled all Sunday Masses until further notice over concerns that they remained a target of extremists linked to the Islamic State group; the move came even as authorities said a suspected local leader blew himself up in the Easter suicide bombings that killed more than 250 people.

Today's Birthdays: Actress-comedian Carol Burnett is 87. Rhythm-and-blues singer Maurice Williams is 82. Songwriter-musician Duane Eddy is 82. Singer Bobby Rydell is 78. Rock musician Gary Wright is 77. Actress Nancy Lenehan is 67. Actor Giancarlo Esposito is 62. Rock musician Roger Taylor (Duran Duran) is 60. Actress Joan Chen is 59. Rock musician Chris Mars is 59. Actor-singer Michael Damian is 58. Actor Jet Li (lee) is 57. Rock musician Jimmy Stafford (formerly w/Train) is 56. Actor-comedian Kevin James is 55. Record company executive Jeff Huskins is 54. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey (TREH-th'-eh-way) is 54. Actress Marianne Jean-Baptiste is 53. Country musician Joe Caverlee (Yankee Grey) is 52. Rapper T-Boz (TLC) is 50. First lady Melania Trump is 50. Actress Shondrella Avery is 49. Actress Simbi Kali is 49. Country musician Jay DeMarcus (Rascal Flatts) is 49. Country musician Michael Jeffers (Pinmonkey) is 48. Rock musician Jose Pasillas (Incubus) is 44. Actor Jason Earles is 43. Actor Leonard Earl Howze is 43. Actor Amin Joseph is 43. Actor Tom Welling is 43. Actor Pablo Schreiber is 42. Actor Nyambi Nyambi is 41. Actress Jordana Brewster is 40. Actress Stana Katic is 40. Actress Marnette Patterson is 40. Actor Channing Tatum is 40. Americana/roots singer-songwriter Lilly Hiatt is 36. Actress Emily Wickersham is 36. Actor Aaron Weeks is 34. Electro pop musician James Sunderland (Frenship) is 33. New York Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge is 28.

Thought for Today: "A good scapegoat is nearly as welcome as a solution to the problem." — Author unknown.

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