

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 1 of 63

[1- South Dakotans Called to Let It Shine During Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

[2- Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller](#)

[4- Drought Monitor](#)

[5- ADT Ad](#)

[6- Inogen Ad](#)

[7- Area COVID-19 Cases](#)

[8- 13 Cases at DemKota Facility](#)

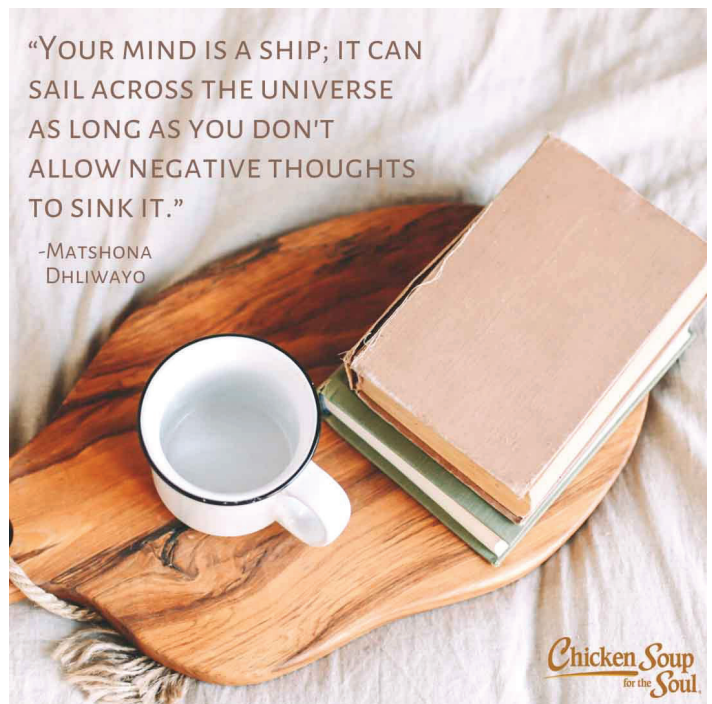
[10- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)

[11- Weather Pages](#)

[14- Daily Devotional](#)

[15- 2020 Groton Events](#)

[16- News from the Associated Press](#)



South Dakotans Called to Let It Shine During Coronavirus Pandemic

Success of Sioux Falls "Lighting Up the Night" Inspires Statewide Event

Sioux Falls, SD – Momentum is building around a statewide community formed with the mission of spreading hope and light to those impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

On March 30, 2020, Sioux Falls came together to light up the night. The purpose was to show support and appreciation for healthcare workers here and around the world; to spread hope to those who are sick during this pandemic; and to honor businesses that have closed their doors, people who have lost their jobs, and those who are struggling with mental health. The event was an overwhelming success.

As a result, organizer Tony Erickson decided to take the event statewide. "These are trying times for everyone whether you're a frontline worker, someone who is sick, a business owner that is hurting, or a person trying to work from home and help your children learn," said Erickson. "But, as South Dakotans, we are strong, we are resilient, and we're good at being there for one another."

On the night of May 1st, residents, communities, schools, and businesses across the state are invited to go outside to "let it shine." The main time frame is from 9:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., according to Governor Kristi Noem. She said helicopters will hover over the 16 largest cities tonight recording the event.

Helicopters, planes, and drones will take to the skies, and photographers will be a safe distance on the ground, to capture photos of businesses, schools, and households. Everyone is urged to turn on their lights that night. At the Sioux Falls event, families took to their driveways and yards, using flashlights, fire pits, Christmas lights and everything in between. A Facebook livestream of that event had reached almost 90-thousand people and 36-thousand people engaged in the post.

"As I hung out the side of the helicopter with my camera that night, I was blown away by all the twinkling lights over Sioux Falls. I could see everything and it's almost hard to put into words," said Collin McKenzie, partner with Storybuilt Media which helped with the project. "I'm looking forward to seeing what South Dakota looks like all lit up as well."

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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Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 2 of 63

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The numbers have resumed their downward march. This is a good thing.

We're at 1,073,700 cases in the US. The increase, both in raw number and percentage, declined today. NY leads with 309,696 cases, a nice decline in both number and percentage increase. NJ, with 118,652 cases, shows a decline in its rate of growth for the second consecutive day. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: MA – 62,205, IL – 52,918, CA – 50,139, PA – 47,201, MI – 41,347, FL – 33,683, TX – 29,025, and LA – 28,001. These ten states still account for 72% of US cases. 3 more states have over 20,000 cases, 7 more have over 10,000, 10 more over 5000, 15 more + DC, PR, and GU over 1000, 5 more over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

Here's the latest on movement in new case reports. Those with substantial numbers of cases which are not showing much change include NY, TX, CA, WA, PA, RI, MI, and MO. States where new case reports are increasing include MA, VA, IL, CO, MD, TN, IN, and NC. States where new case reports are decreasing include NJ, GA, FL, OH, LA, SD, CT, and ID. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 63,007 deaths in the US. Remembering that yesterday reflected an adjustment in methodology for counting, we're sort of starting anew today. The growth in percentage and raw number showed declines from the trend established before the adjustment. NY has 23,616, NJ has 7228, MI has 3788, MA has 3562, PA has 2489, IL has 2361, CT has 2257, CA has 2055, and LA has 1862. There are 4 more states over 1000 deaths, 5 more over 500, 18 more + DC over 100, and 14 + PR, GU, VI, and MP under 100.

I've read a paper from a multidisciplinary team pulled together by Harvard's Esmond Safra Center for Ethics entitled, "Roadmap to Pandemic Resilience: Testing, Tracing, and Supported Isolation." The paper lays out just that, a means for dealing with this virus over the long haul. The paper is long and comprehensive, laying out what needs to happen and supporting each of those points in some detail; it's a good read, and it's available online for those who are interested at https://ethics.harvard.edu/files/center-for-ethics/files/roadmaptopandemicresilience_updated_4.20.20.pdf.

I'm providing a few highlights from the Executive Summary for those who don't wish to read the entire report. Bottom line, we need more testing: "5 million tests per day by early June in order to deliver a safe social reopening." It suggests this number needs to increase to 20 million per day by late July to fully remobilize the economy and that even more may be needed as we go along. They recommend phasing in economic mobilization only as our testing capacity grows.

Additionally, there is a public health mechanism described to trace contacts, get them tested, and isolate the positives, supporting them with job protections, resource support, and health care. And the report emphasizes that all of this can and should be done in alignment with "civil liberties, due process, non-discrimination, data and health privacy protections, and health ethics."

And in relation to a point we talked about last night, that of using data mining for pandemic surveillance world-wide so we don't get caught with our pants down again, the authors recommend the establishment of a National Infectious Disease Forecasting Center to modernize disease tracking. There are some smart people working on what "after" looks like; this is one view that is well-supported by the facts and the science, as well as economics and policy recommendations.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 3 of 63

It's probably time to address, yet again, the rumors that this virus escaped from a lab near Wuhan, China. To reiterate something we established fairly definitively a while back, the genomic analysis of the virus make it pretty clear this is not a manufactured or engineered virus, but instead one that made its way naturally from animals, probably bats, to humans, likely through an intermediate host. But the rumors of an accidental release from a virology laboratory, a BSL-4 containment facility, to the public.

Here's the best science on that at the moment: An accidental release is possible, but there is zero evidence such an event occurred. The closest relative to SARS-CoV-2 known to have existed at Wuhan was still a distant relative, which predicates against an accidental release. Study of the virus's origins led scientists to say that "we do not believe that any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible." Scientists who worked with the researchers at Wuhan described them as particularly diligent and careful. That does not make an accidental release impossible, but in the absence of a shred of evidence this is what happened, such speculation is irresponsible and premature. While it is true the Chinese government was secretive and tried to obscure the severity of the initial outbreak, which certainly endangered their own citizens and much of the rest of the world, there is no direct evidence of a laboratory accident. So I think it's best we put these speculations to rest unless and until there is some sort of reason to think there's something more to the story.

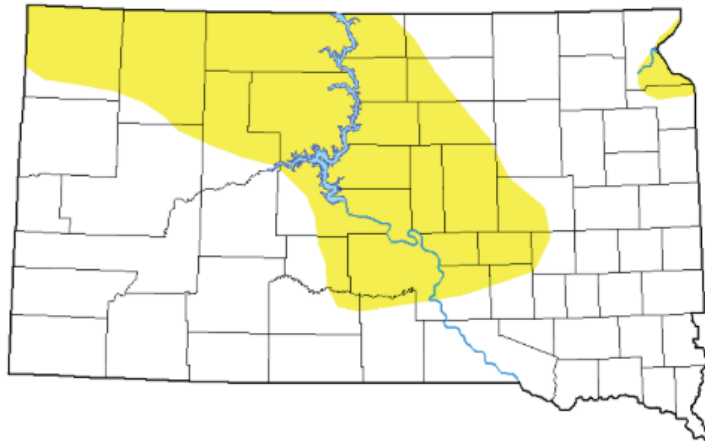
After a big news day yesterday, there isn't as much to report tonight. I will remind you that our most basic needs are for human contact and to know we are important to someone else. You can give someone the gift of knowing they are important to you, and I ask you to reach out and make that clear to them in the next day, even if they really ought to know without you mentioning it. Whatever you do for another person , you do for all of us because we're all in this thing together.

Stay healthy, and we'll talk again.

Drought Monitor

Map released: Thurs. April 30, 2020

Data valid: April 28, 2020 at 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

High Plains

Temperatures across the High Plains were generally warmer than normal last week with departures of 2 to 6 inches above normal. Much of the region received less than 0.5 inches of precipitation. Exceptions included parts of eastern North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska, with totals of more than 1 inch, and eastern Kansas, with amounts of more than 2 inches – nearly 200% of normal. The warm, dry conditions led to an expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) in the Dakotas, southwest Nebraska, northwest Kansas, and eastern Colorado. Additionally, moderate and severe drought (D1 and D2) expanded over Colorado's eastern plains. This area has failed to receive the timely spring rains needed, resulting in reductions in soil moisture, streamflow, and vegetation health. Across the entire High Plains region, local drought experts are discussing the emerging dryness and closely monitoring the situation as planting begins and the need for moisture increases.

Midwest

The western half of the region saw warmer than normal average temperatures, with departures ranging from 1 degree above normal in eastern Iowa to 8 degrees above normal in western Iowa. In the eastern half, temperatures were 1 to 7 degrees below normal, with the greatest departures generally occurring in the Upper Great Lakes area. Precipitation occurred across much of the region with weekly totals generally between 0.5 and 1.75 inches. A band of 3 to 4 inches of rainfall stretched from southwest Missouri to central Illinois. The only change in the region to this week's map was a small reduction in abnormal dryness (D0) in Minnesota.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 5 of 63

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Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 7 of 63

Area COVID-19 Cases

	Apr. 18	Apr. 19	Apr. 20	Apr. 21	Apr. 22	Apr. 23	Apr. 24	Apr. 25	Apr. 26	Apr. 27
Minnesota	2,213	2,356	2,470	2,567	2,721	2,942	3,185	3,446	3,602	3,816
Nebraska	1,287	1,474	1,648	1,722	1,813	2,124	2,421	2,732	3,028	3,358
Montana	426	433	433	437	439	442	444	445	448	449
Colorado	9,433	9,730	10,106	10,447	10,878	11,262	12,256	12,968	13,441	13,879
Wyoming	309	313	317	322	326	332	349	362	370	389
North Dakota	528	585	627	644	679	709	748	803	867	942
South Dakota	1542	1635	1685	1755	1858	1,956	2,040	2,147	2,212	2,245
United States	735,287	758,720	786,638	824,438	842,624	867,459	905,364	938,154	965,435	988,189
US Deaths	39,090	40,666	42,295	45,039	46,785	49,804	51,956	53,755	54,856	56,255
Minnesota	+142	+143	+114	+97	+154	+221	+243	+261	+156	+214
Nebraska	+149	+187	+174	+74	+91	+311	+297	+311	+296	+330
Montana	+4	+7	0	+4	+2	+3	+2	+1	+3	+1
Colorado	+379	+297	+376	+341	+431	+384	+994	+712	+473	+438
Wyoming	+7	+4	+4	+5	+4	+6	+7	+13	+8	+19
North Dakota	+89	+57	+42	+17	+35	+30	+39	+55	+64	+75
South Dakota	+131	+93	+50	+70	+103	+98	+84	+107	+65	+33
United States	+28,508	+23,433	+27,918	+37,800	+18,186	+24,835	+37,905	+32,790	+27,281	+22,754
US Deaths	+2,011	+1,576	+1,629	+2,744	+1,746	+3,019	+2,152	+1,799	+1,101	+1,399
	Apr. 28	Apr. 29	Apr. 30							
Minnesota	4,181	4,644	5,136							
Nebraska	3,374	3,784	4,281							
Montana	451	451	453							
Colorado	14,316	14,758	15,284							
Wyoming	396	404	415							
North Dakota	991	1,033	1,067							
South Dakota	2,313	2,373	2,449							
United States	1,012,583	1,040,488	1,070,032							
US Deaths	58,355	60,999	63,019							
Minnesota	+365	+463	+492							
Nebraska	+16	+410	+497							
Montana	+2	0	+2							
Colorado	+437	+442	+526							
Wyoming	+7	+8	+11							
North Dakota	+49	+42	+34							
South Dakota	+68	+60	+76							
United States	+24,394	+27,905	+29,544							
US Deaths	+2,100	+2,644	+2,020							

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 8 of 63

13 Cases at DemKota Facility

April 30th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from Dept. of Health Lab records

Four more deaths in Minnehaha County have been recorded, with a total of 12 in that county.

Brown County recorded 7 more positive cases with only 1 more being recovered. Brown now has 39 positive cases with 22 recovered. According to the south Dakota Department of Health, "There are 13 confirmed positive cases at DemKota. The South Dakota Department of Health has been working daily with leadership at DemKota to implement strategies that are appropriate for them and have conducted two site visits. The top priority is the safety of the people working at the plant and the Aberdeen community."

South Dakota:

Positive: +76 (2449 total) (15 more than yesterday)

Negative: +119 (14,579 total)

Hospitalized: +8 (173 total) - 76 currently hospitalized (7 more than yesterday)

Deaths: +4 (17 total) (4 more from Minnehaha)

Recovered: +81 (1573 total)

Active Cases: 858 (9 less than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett 11, Brule 55, Butte +1 (51), Campbell +1 (8), Custer 41, Dewey +4 (32), Edmunds 22, Grant +2 (42), Gregory +1 (33), Haakon 15, Hanson +1 (29), Harding 1, Jackson 9, Jones 4, Kingsburg +1 (67), Mellette 11, Perkins 5, Potter 32, Tripp 54, Ziebach +1 (4), unassigned -51 (760).

Brookings: +1 positive, +1 recovered (10 of 13 recovered)

Brown: +7 positive, +1 recovered (22 of 39 recovered)

Hughes: +1 positive (8 total)

Lincoln: +9 positive, +9 recovered (94 of 147 recovered)

Minnehaha: +53 positive, +68 recovered (1286 of 2038 recovered)

Stanley: +1 positive (7 total)

Turner: +2 positive, +2 recovered (9 of 17 recovered)

Union: +1 positive (18 total)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Hughes): Aurora, Bon Homme, Clay, Clark, Corson, Davison, Deuel, Fall River, Faulk, Hamlin, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lawrence, Marshall, McPherson, Meade, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink, Sully, Todd, Walworth.

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 1,924 total completed tests today for COVID-19, with 34 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,067.

State & private labs have conducted 27,460 total tests with 26,393 negative results.

458 ND patients are considered recovered.

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	154	0
20-29 years	460	0
30-39 years	570	0
40-49 years	483	1
50-59 years	438	4
60-69 years	226	3
70-79 years	55	2
80+ years	63	7

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Active Cases	859
Currently Hospitalized	76
Recovered	1573
Total Positive Cases*	2449
Total Negative Cases*	14579
Ever Hospitalized**	173
Deaths***	17

Broton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 9 of 63

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	1	1	41
Beadle	21	19	180
Bennett	0	0	11
Bon Homme	4	4	105
Brookings	13	10	353
Brown	39	22	591
Brule	0	0	55
Buffalo	1	0	12
Butte	0	0	51
Campbell	0	0	8
Charles Mix	5	4	87
Clark	1	1	56
Clay	6	6	129
Codington	14	13	469
Corson	1	1	18
Custer	0	0	41
Davison	5	5	298
Day	1	0	58
Deuel	1	1	78
Dewey	0	0	32
Douglas	1	0	26
Edmunds	0	0	22
Fall River	1	1	51
Faulk	1	1	17
Grant	0	0	42
Gregory	0	0	33
Haakon	0	0	15
Hamlin	2	2	62
Hand	1	0	21
Hanson	0	0	29
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	8	7	230
Hutchinson	3	2	94

Hyde	1	1	13
Jackson	0	0	9
Jerauld	6	4	37
Jones	0	0	4
Kingsbury	0	0	67
Lake	4	3	131
Lawrence	9	9	161
Lincoln	147	94	1416
Lyman	3	2	30
Marshall	1	1	38
McCook	4	3	88
McPherson	1	1	16
Meade	1	1	139
Mellette	0	0	11
Miner	1	1	20
Minnehaha	2038	1286	6281
Moody	5	1	91
Oglala Lakota	1	1	44
Pennington	12	10	699
Perkins	0	0	5
Potter	0	0	32
Roberts	4	4	99
Sanborn	3	3	38
Spink	3	3	95
Stanley	7	0	34
Sully	1	1	13
Todd	1	1	49
Tripp	0	0	54
Turner	17	9	147
Union	18	8	162
Walworth	5	5	48
Yankton	26	21	428
Ziebach	0	0	4
Unassigned****	0	0	760

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1156	4
Male	1293	13

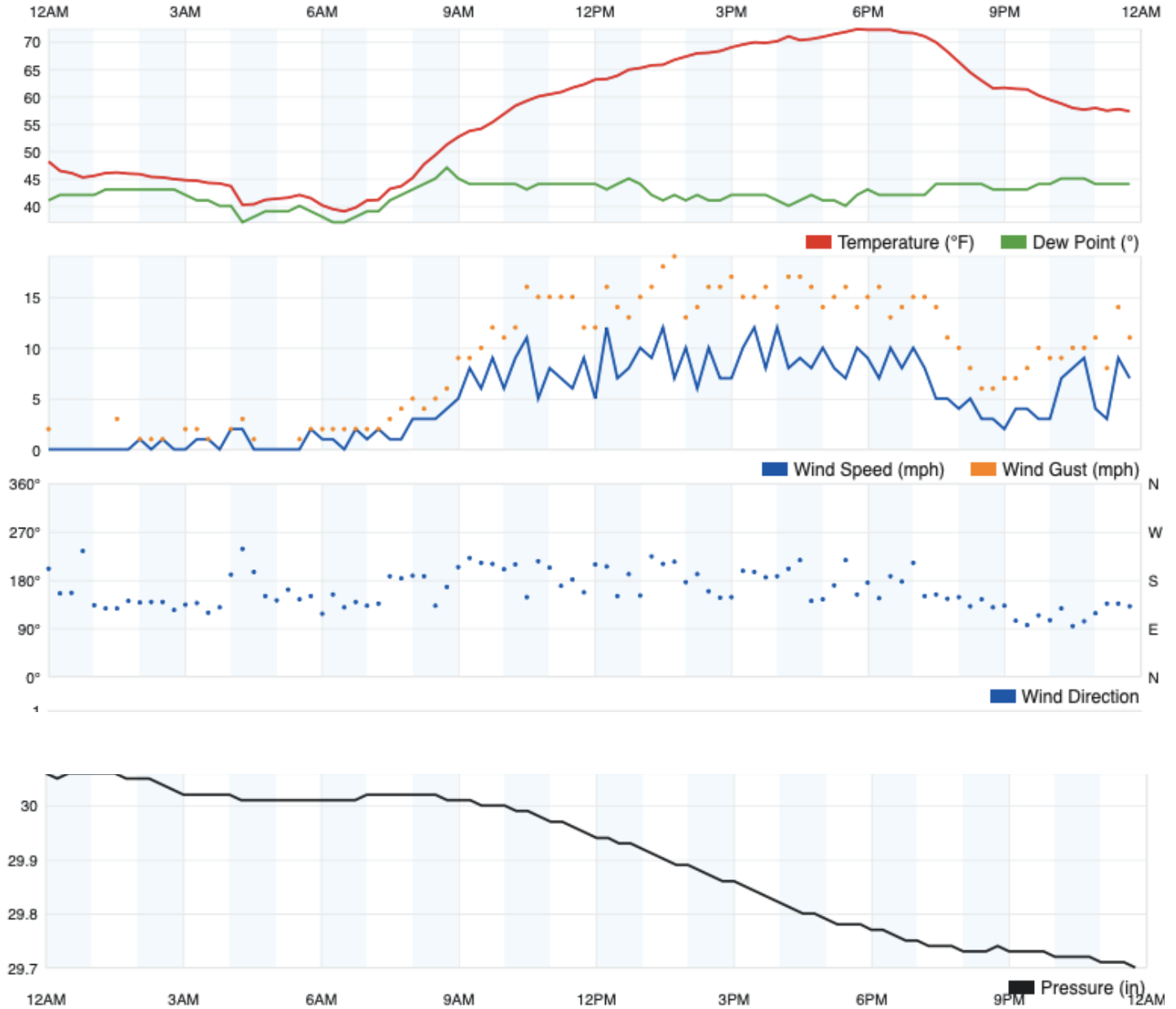
COVID-19 DEATHS IN SOUTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	2
Jerauld	1
McCook	1
Minnehaha	12
Pennington	1

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 10 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 11 of 63

Today



Mostly Sunny
then Sunny
and Breezy

High: 79 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear
and Breezy
then Mostly
Clear

Low: 47 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 72 °F

Saturday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 45 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 73 °F

NWS ABERDEEN  MAY 1, 2020

{ WARM & BREEZY }
Today



Scattered morning showers over far eastern SD/w MN
Breezy with elevated fire weather concerns
upper 70s to near 80°



near 70° 70s 60s

Saturday Sunday Monday

Expect warm and breezy conditions today, with scattered morning showers over far eastern South Dakota. The breezy winds out of the northwest and mainly dry weather will result in elevated fire weather concerns. Mainly dry weather will continue into Sunday morning. Above average temperatures will remain through Sunday.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 12 of 63

Today in Weather History

May 1, 1959: Aberdeen recorded a high temperature of 102, which is the earliest date that Aberdeen reached 100 degrees.

May 1, 1967: One of the latest blizzards on records for South Dakota ended on this day. Snowfall amounts in the west were 5 to 12 inches with a 16-inch report in Lemmon and 30 inches in the northern Black Hills. Winds of 40 to 50 mph caused blowing snow which occasionally reduced visibility to near zero and snow drifts of 4 to 5 feet. Other snowfall amounts include 5 inches in Murdo and 6 miles SE of McIntosh; and 4 inches in Timber Lake.

May 1, 1997: Torrential rains of 1.5 to 2.5 inches with a separate 4.5-inch report fell over central South Dakota and caused flooding to several creeks, streams, low-lying areas, and roads. This early May rain only aggravated the areas flooded in March and April. Lyman County experienced the most significant flooding where 4.5 inches of rain fell, north of Vivian. Part of a golf course was flooded, and some personal property was flooded along with the KOA campground near Kennebec. Some rainfall amounts include 2.5 inches 7 miles NW of Presho and 2.01 inches near Stephan.

1857: The Washington Evening Star publishes the first US national weather summary using observations from volunteers to the Smithsonian Institution's cooperative network.

1933: An estimated F4 tornado struck Minden, Louisiana, killing 28 people and injuring 400 others. 500 homes were damaged or destroyed with \$1.3 million in damage. Click [HERE](#) for more information from Minden Memories.org.

1999: Record, low temperatures for the date, were broken in the Deep South. Mobile, Alabama dropped to 46 degrees. Miami fell to 58; Miami Beach bottomed out at 61, and Vero Beach dropped to 47 degrees, all new records. Other stations in Florida also set record cold maximums for the date, including 61 at Jacksonville and Daytona Beach with 66 degrees.

2003: A record-setting 516 tornadoes occurred during May 2003. In particular, during the period May 4-10, 2003, an unprecedented number of tornadoes, 393 total, affected the central and the southern United States. The tornadoes resulted in 39 deaths across four states. Six of these tornadoes were classified as violent (F4) on the Fujita Tornado Intensity Scale. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

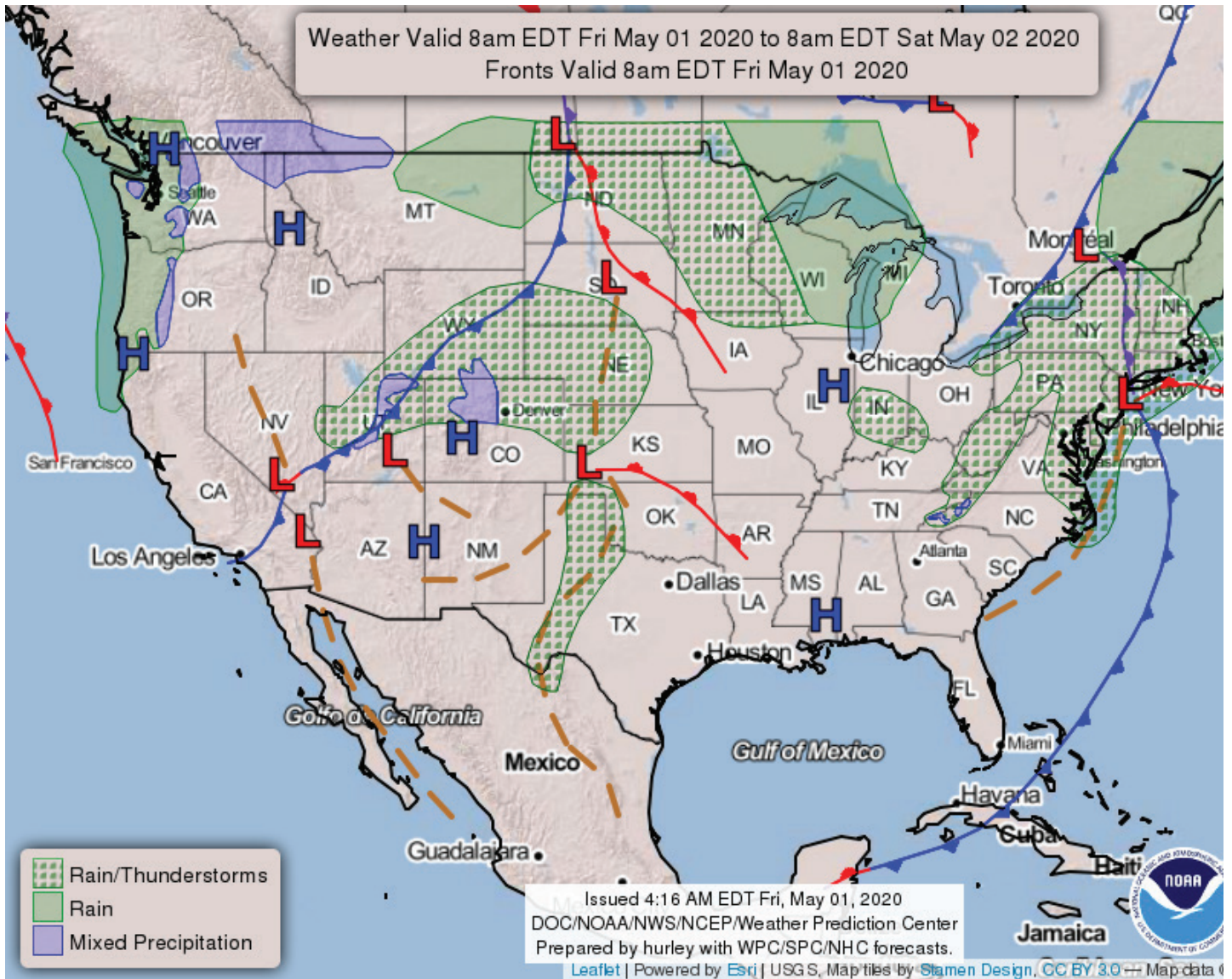
Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 13 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 72 °F at 5:46 PM
Low Temp: 39 °F at 6:20 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 1:38 PM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 102° in 1959
Record Low: 19° in 1961
Average High: 64°F
Average Low: 38°F
Average Precip in April.: 1.85
Precip to date in April.: 1.55
Average Precip to date: 4.03
Precip Year to Date: 1.90
Sunset Tonight: 8:41 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:20 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 14 of 63



HE BOWLED THREE HUNDRED! WHAT A GAME!

Tombstones are lasting reminders of what people accomplished in life. One that is very interesting and impressive is in Wisconsin. It reads: "He bowled 300 in 1962."

Do you wonder, as I do, if that was his greatest achievement in life? Or, how many games did he bowl before he had a perfect game? Or, was it the first game he ever bowled and it surprised him so very much that he never bowled again? We'll never know.

But one thing we do know is that we will all be remembered by someone for something. Paul made a most interesting observation about life's accomplishments. He was writing to the Philippians about his achievements. Reading them is like reading the resume of one of the world's great leaders. They are very impressive. But, after mentioning them, he pulled the rug out from under his own feet. After what sounds like someone bragging about what they had accomplished, he concluded his resume by adding: "But because of Christ, I decided that all of my worldly accomplishments are worth nothing."

Paul always had the proper perspective. Whatever he achieved in his life before his conversion did not matter to him. However, after he became a follower of Christ, he simply wanted to be remembered for one thing: his relationship with Christ and what he did for Him. Everything else, for him, was "worthless trash." What will your tombstone read?

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to place serving You first and foremost in our lives. May we be remembered for what we did for You and through You, because of You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Philippians 3:4-11 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 15 of 63

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

News from the Associated Press

Judge rules forced catheterizations unconstitutional

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota law enforcement officers cannot rely on involuntary catheterization to obtain urine samples from suspects because it is unconstitutional, a federal judge has ruled.

Chief Judge Roberto Lange of the U.S. Federal Court for the District of South Dakota said Monday that forced catheterization violates the Fourth Amendment that protects citizens from unreasonable searches and seizures.

Police used the catheters to obtain urine samples to determine if suspects had ingested drugs, the Argus Leader reported.

"Defendants' need to obtain the plaintiffs' urine to prove a low-level drug crime did not justify subjecting the plaintiffs to involuntary catheterization, a highly invasive — and in these cases — degrading medical procedure," Lange wrote in his 106-page opinion.

Lange recounted details of each catheterization, including videos taken by law enforcement that showed three of the plaintiffs screaming in pain. Two of the six were not arrested for, or suspected of, drug crimes.

The judge noted that law enforcement could have used a blood test to get evidence of illegal drug use.

He dismissed the cases against the individual officers named in the suit, with the exceptions of one, Adam Woxland, who is accused of directing another officer to perform catheterization on a female suspect, and watching as it took place.

A trial date has not been set.

Noem considers meeting Smithfield employees facing outbreak

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Thursday said she is considering meeting with employees of the Smithfield processing plant where a coronavirus outbreak infected 853 workers after advocacy organizations called on her to enforce safety measures at meatpacking plants.

The Republican governor has pushed for the plant's reopening, saying she hopes that Smithfield will implement safety measures to prevent another outbreak. But she did not commit to enforcing safety measures in response to a letter from a group of organizations advocating for employees at the plant that employs about 3,700 people. The letter points out that racial minorities have been disproportionately impacted by coronavirus infections.

"In a state where 85% of the population is white, 69% of positive COVID-19 cases have ravaged communities of color in South Dakota," the letter said.

The Department of Health released data on COVID-19 cases by race earlier this week. The data indicated that 20% of people with confirmed cases of COVID-19 are black, and 18% are Hispanic. Asian people make up 12% of the cases.

The governor said she is still analyzing what is required by President Donald Trump's order to keep meat processing plants open. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued recommendations to Smithfield like providing workers with plenty of masks and spacing them farther apart on production lines.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam Rysdon said, "The CDC guidance around some of the workplace protections were really scripted as recommendations and considerations, and so even by the CDC's standard they were not considered requirements."

The United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents employees at Smithfield, called on governors to enforce those recommendations and even take them a step further to ensure workers can stay 6 feet apart while doing their jobs.

State epidemiologist Josh Clayton said he does not expect that infections of Smithfield employees will increase because the plant has been closed for two weeks. Two Smithfield employees have died from CO-

VID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, contributing to a total of 17 people who have died statewide.

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.

Health officials on Thursday reported four deaths from COVID-19 and an additional 76 new cases. All the deaths came from Minnehaha County, which has had most of the infections in the state.

A total of 2,449 people have confirmed cases across the state. The actual number of COVID-19 infections is thought to be far higher than the number of confirmed because many people have not been tested and studies suggest people can be infected without feeling sick.

State officials also reported that 5,389 people made new claims for unemployment benefits last week. Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman said that the number of claims they have seen in recent weeks are historic.

Hairstylist gives free haircuts to Thai health frontliners

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Scrubs may be in fashion during the coronavirus crisis, but split ends — never. That's where Pornsupa Hattayong comes in.

The 43-year-old hairstylist is boosting the morale of frontline medical workers by dispensing free haircuts at Bangkok hospitals.

Pornsupa says she was almost embarrassed to offer her service, thinking it was too trivial. But she's been overwhelmed by the response it drew from desperate, shaggy-haired doctors, nurses and support staff wrapped up in the fight against COVID-19.

Thailand's hair salons have been closed for more than a month, to help stop the spread of the virus.

On her first hospital visit, Pornsupa had counted on cutting the hair of six health workers, but 30 turned up. On her second visit, 20 customers turned into 50.

"They just kept coming. Some arrived in their medical gowns and asked if they could get a haircut right away as they had to go to work," says Pornsupa.

At that point, she asked her friends to pitch in.

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration General Hospital is the fourth to welcome Pornsupa since she began her free service at the end of March. All of them are designated treatment centers for COVID-19 patients.

On arrival Thursday she quickly set up her makeshift salon and began working her way through a long list of hard-pressed medical staff. The team averages around 50 heads per day.

For this kind of work they would normally charge customers 500 baht (\$15.45).

The 20-year veteran hairdresser takes no chances: The full-on protective clothing she dons is impractical but doesn't seem to cramp her styling. She douses her equipment with an alcohol-based spray between clients.

There is no financial gain for her or the others — in fact, Pornsupa says she is living on her savings. She says she is proud that her skill is making a difference.

"The doctors are so happy to get a haircut. It's like we lift something off their chest, perhaps not chest but head," she says. "I think they feel lighter and relaxed. They all want to do something with their hair so it's easy to clean and ready for work."

For Dr. Teerapat Jitpoonkuson, it's the humanity behind the haircut that really counts.

"I don't feel like this is merely a service I am getting. It feels like more of a kindness given by a group of people to our hospital staff. This is more than just a haircut."

As of Thursday, Thailand had reported 2,954 positive cases of COVID-19, with 54 deaths. The toll is slowing, prompting the government to announce a gradual easing of lockdown measures — including next week's reopening of hair salons, with a list of safety restrictions to abide by.

Even then, Pornsupa says, she may continue to style and groom medical workers on her days off.

"I have cut hair for 20 years, and I feel so proud. Cutting hair for the rich, for the famous, is nothing

compared to these frontline heroes. They are the most important people in the world right now," she says.

May Day marks pain, not celebration for workers hit by virus

By EDNA TARIGAN, SOPHENG CHEANG and JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — May Day usually brings both protest rallies and celebrations marking international Labor Day. This year, many in Asia are shut up at home, riding out the coronavirus pandemic.

Among the ten of millions of people left idle or thrown out of work by the crisis, garment workers have been among the hardest hit as orders dry up and shutdowns leave factories shuttered, giving workers plenty to protest at a time when lockdowns are keeping them at home.

Wiryono, a father of two was laid off from his main job as a sample producer at a garment factory in North Jakarta in late April. His side gig, delivering coffee by motorcycle to construction workers, dried up when work halted as part of Indonesia's shutdown to fight the pandemic.

So, for now Wiryono has rented a small space and runs a clothing repair shop.

"I don't earn as much as I got from the clothing factory. But I have to feed my wife and kids every day," he said.

Millions of jobs have vanished in countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Cambodia and Myanmar that rely heavily on garment manufacturing as fashion brands cancelled or suspended billions of dollars' worth of orders.

More than 2 million garment factory workers in Indonesia have lost their jobs, and factories are operating at about 20% of capacity, according to the Indonesian Textile Association.

In Cambodia, which also relies heavily on apparel, footwear and textile exports, about 130 factories have laid off some 100,000 people, said Heng Sour, spokesman for the labor ministry.

The country's 1,000 clothing and shoe factories normally employ nearly 800,000 people and shipped nearly \$10 billion worth of products to the United States and Europe last year.

"COVID-19 is like a faceless murderer or terrorist, killing several hundred thousand people and infecting millions around the globe," Heng Sour said. Like many other governments, Cambodia has asked workers to forego the usual rallies and protests and celebrate Labor Day at home.

Likewise, in Muslim-majority Indonesia, where the month-long daytime fasting of Ramadan is underway and the government has likewise asked people not to gather in large groups as a precaution against the virus.

The shutdown has cut into sales of new clothing for Eid al-Fitr, the festival that follows Ramadan, after the Tanah Abang Market, Southeast Asia's biggest textile bazaar, closed in mid-March, said Rizal Tanzil Rakhman, executive secretary of the textile association.

The industry wants government help in covering fixed expenses and loans, he said.

"It's not just those who make the clothes, but the production chain, such as the makers of fibers and yarns, thread producers and dye and printing operators," Rakhman said. The situation is bad enough now but it will get worse without government help."

The pressures from the pandemic come at a time when countries like Cambodia and Myanmar already are threatened with the withdrawal of trade privileges under the "Everything But Arms" scheme that gives them preferential access to the EU market for products other than weapons.

The EU plans to withdraw those advantages for Cambodia, which are worth about one-fifth of the billion euros (\$1.1 billion) of its exports to the bloc each year, because of concerns about its poor record in human and labor rights.

In Myanmar, which has sought to build up its garments exports to industrialize an impoverished economy based mainly on farming, mining and logging, more than 60,000 factory workers have lost their jobs.

"With the factories being shut down, it has meant they have lost their only means of livelihood, that's their lifeline really, for themselves and the families that they support," said Araddhya Mehtta, the country director of the NGO ActionAid Myanmar.

The crisis has left many women more vulnerable to sexual and domestic violence, said Mehtta, whose

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 19 of 63

group says it provides health guidance, food relief, hand sanitizer and cash support to some 150,000 garment workers.

The fierce competition in an industry where slim profit margins leave factories scant leverage with the global, wealthy customers, the pressure to go back to work is building.

Nearly a month after Bangladesh ordered its garment factories shuttered to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, more than 800 factories have reopened or plan to do so soon, despite risks the disease might spread. Labor activists say the number of factories that have gone back to work is higher.

Bangladesh has the world's second largest garment industry after China and normally earns about \$35 billion a year from exports, mainly to the United States and Europe. The pandemic has cost manufacturers more than \$3 billion in cancelled or suspended orders, said Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, or BGMEA.

Most of Bangladesh's 4 million garment workers, mostly women from rural areas, were sent home in late March. Production is starting back up before the virus outbreak has been fully controlled: the number of newly confirmed infections has continued to rise this week.

"The global brands, especially the European ones, want their racks full of cheap Bangladeshi products. They are directly and indirectly telling the owners that they will move to our competitors like Vietnam, Cambodia or China, said Kalpona Akter, executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity.

"Some owners are perfectly maintaining good safety measures in place, but many others are ignoring them. This is dangerous," she said.

Egypt's dynasty of big cat trainers takes the show home

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — At his Cairo apartment, located just off a busy road along the Nile River, Ashraf el-Helw, a third-generation Egyptian lion trainer, prepares for a show with his big cats.

Instead of a circus ring, his living room is his stage. He has already posted one online video of the lions performing tricks inside his home since Egypt imposed restrictions to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus, including a nightly curfew.

He is now getting ready to film the second one and says more are in the works, claiming he wants to encourage people to stay at home amid the pandemic. The first video received rave responses from Egyptians on social media — but also raised questions over how the country's most famous lion-training family treats its animals.

The family's big cats are kept on their farm an hour outside of Cairo, and el-Helw says he brings them into the city for the shoots. After filming is over, they go back to the farm, with the some 40 other animals who live there, including monkeys and other large cats.

During a recent visit by The Associated Press to his apartment, el-Helw showed off Joumana, one of the family's female lions. He prompted her to put her paws on his shoulders and the two moved as in a dance. In another trick, the lioness obeyed a command, a light prod with a stick, to walk across a plank, stepping over el-Helw's sister Bushra, also a lion trainer.

The show's climax comes when el-Helw places a piece of meat hanging from a stick into his mouth, and Joumana jumps to grab it.

"Since I opened my eyes to the world, I found lions around me," said the 26-year-old Ashraf. He said he started working with the animals — alongside his older siblings — when he was 6 years old. By age 16, he was doing performances.

The el-Helws have been doing circus shows with the big cats for over a century. Ashraf's grandmother was a renowned circus performer, Mahassen el-Helw, the Arab world's first female lion trainer. She was known as "the iron woman" for her stern stage demeanor.

There has also been tragedy.

Ashraf's grandfather, Mohammed el-Helw, was killed in 1972 during one of his shows by Sultan, a lion who tore him to pieces before the eyes of a horrified, helpless public. There have also been reported

incidents of several other family members being attacked during shows in recent years.

Ashraf's older sisters — Luba, 38; Ousa, 35, and Bushra, 28 — are also professional lion trainers at Egypt's National Circus. Founded in 1966, the circus is housed in a tent beside the Nile, drawing mostly school groups and working-class families for its evening shows.

Some have criticized the el-Helws for their treatment of the animals.

Dina Zulfikar, an animal rights activist who sits on the board of the country's largest zoo, said that bringing wild animals into private homes is against the law. Also, Ashraf el-Helw's social media videos give a skewed picture of the danger big cats pose, she said.

"This is an irresponsible and foolish behavior," she said. "They are not pets, they are wild animals."

But for the el-Helw family, the lions are both a livelihood and a family constant.

"They are like my children," said Bushra, giving Joumana a loving pat on the back.

'Everyone's watching': Biden's VP audition process begins

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer wore a T-shirt on television emblazoned with the words "that woman from Michigan," a cheeky reference to President Donald Trump's dismissal of her. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar joined her onetime nemesis, Pete Buttigieg, for a friendly virtual chat on a late-night show. And Stacey Abrams speaks of her political ambition to almost anyone who will listen.

The audition to become the next vice president has begun.

And while the coronavirus has upended virtually every aspect of American life, there's one constant: The veepstakes competition that unfolds every four years is one of the most unpredictable, often awkward, rituals of politics. That's especially true this time as the pandemic has overtaken the presidential campaign, forcing those thought to be in the running for the No. 2 spot to be even more creative in getting noticed.

Presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden began the process of selecting a running mate in earnest on Thursday by announcing a committee to vet potential candidates. The panel's work will likely last through July, he said, meaning months in which some candidates will appear up one day only to fade and potentially be replaced with someone who isn't on anyone's radar the next.

Scott Reed, who managed Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign, said the search for a running mate often takes twists and turns because it's one of the few things a nominee can control after a primary spent largely reacting to surrounding political forces. He said reverberations from the choice can last for years.

"This is the first time in the campaign that the candidate is back in charge of something," he said. "Everyone's watching. Everyone in the party, world leaders, business leaders and congressional leaders, because, in a way, it lays out the nominee's decision-making process, and it answers the question, Does he have one or not?"

Biden has limited some of the mystery by promising to pick a woman, a potentially important move as he faces scrutiny after a former Senate staffer alleged he sexually assaulted her in the 1990s. Biden's campaign has denied the accusation.

Those thought to be under consideration for the vice presidency typically go to great lengths to avoid talking about it — much less audition for it. But that tradition is fading away this year.

Abrams, the former Democratic Georgia governor candidate, has been vocal about wanting the job, framing her lack of subtlety as the type of honesty her parents instilled in her growing up. Whitmer insists she won't be intimidated by Trump, and Klobuchar has positioned herself as a friendly Midwesterner who can overcome old rivalries.

Others, including Sens. Kamala Harris of California and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, have said they'd accept the vice presidency if Biden offered it.

Final selections can hinge on gut feelings or political calculation. They sometimes are built on personal relationships. Often it's about arrangements of simple accommodation.

Jimmy Carter, the former Georgia governor and political outsider, in 1976 picked Walter Mondale, a Senate stalwart who boosted the nominee's credibility with Washington power brokers. That same year,

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 21 of 63

Gerald Ford was seen as sometimes overly accommodating politically, which made the take-no-prisoners Senate style of his friend Dole appealing.

By selecting Mike Pence in 2016, Donald Trump helped solidify his standing with religious conservatives. That was crucial when Pence stood by Trump after a tape emerged of him bragging of grabbing women by their genitals, nearly sinking the campaign.

An important part of the modern process is visibility. Most of Biden's possible choices have been on media blitzes. When a decision appears imminent, reporters will scrutinize online flight information, attempting to decipher who is traveling where and when, often camping outside the homes of presumptive choices, hoping to glean clues by their comings and goings.

It wasn't always that way.

Mondale first injected a dose of reality television by winning the 1984 Democratic presidential nomination and summoning potential running mates to his home in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota — attracting a great deal of media attention each time.

"Vice presidents had always been picked in secret and were standby equipment, and it wasn't considered important, which was stupid," Mondale said in an interview. "Until we got into it ... and the public started to see that, 'Yes the vice presidency is important.'"

Like Biden now, Mondale saw the process from both sides, as the chooser and the chosen.

"I had some ideas of what it involved and what I needed to do," he said. "But I don't think anybody's really ready for this."

Another key factor weighing on Biden's choice is age since, at 77, he would be the oldest American president in history, should he win. Age was thought to have swayed the then-73-year-old Dole in 1996. He selected former Buffalo Bills quarterback Jack Kemp, who was more than a decade younger, despite the pair being longtime adversaries. But Reed said it was more about the element of surprise than making the ticket feel younger.

Indeed, final choice is sometimes an intentional shocker — with mixed results.

George H.W. Bush selected the young and photogenic Dan Quayle over more experienced choices like former Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker in 1988. Al Gore surprised many by picking Joe Lieberman, the first Jewish person on a major party presidential ticket, while George W. Bush tasked Dick Cheney with overseeing the running mate selection process in 2000, only to have Cheney recommend himself.

Perhaps the biggest stunner came in 2008, when John McCain chose Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, who was little known to most of the country, including McCain himself. The decision initially energized conservatives, but Palin proved uneven on the national stage and, perhaps predictably, a poor personal fit for McCain.

Rep. Cedric Richmond, a Louisiana congressman and a co-chairman of Biden's campaign, said for all the behind-the-scenes vetting, the decision ultimately lies with Biden.

"You lay out candidates, you articulate the pros and cons of each," Richmond said. "But then he's got a decision to make."

Socked by virus, comic book industry tries to draw next page

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

The pandemic has transformed Christina Blanch, owner of Aw Yeah Comics, into a nightly TV host.

Nine times a week, Blanch leads a livestream from the store she lives above in Muncie, Indiana, to sell some comics and interact with regulars. She holds up issues one by one, usually for \$5 or \$10, and takes down addresses from buyers. It's a way to get by but helps keep the shop's community spirit alive. The show has a warm, thank-God-we-have-each-other feel to it. Sometimes Blanch sips a Modelo or vents about a difficult day. She calls it "What We Do in the Comic Shop."

Long a repository for tales of world-threatening cataclysms and doomsday dystopias, the comic shop in the coronavirus era now finds itself drawn into a fight for its very survival. The crisis, felt across retailers, poses a particular threat to comic book shops, a pop-culture institution that has, through pluck and passion, held out through digital upheaval while remaining stubbornly resistant to corporate ownership.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 22 of 63

Even as the pandemic era takes on the appearance of a comic — desolate urban centers, masks everywhere — the ink-and-paper industry is at a standstill that some believe jeopardizes its future, casting doubt on how many shops will make it through and what might befall the gathering places of proud nerds, geeks and readers everywhere.

It won't go — insert "POW!" bubble — without a fight.

"I've put so much into this shop. I'm going to go down swinging if I'm going to go down," says Blanch, who also writes comic books and graphic novels. "This place is important to people. What are you going to do but keep going?"

Saturday would have been Free Comic Book Day, an annual nationwide event intended to bring die-hards and newbies alike into stores. Instead, stores are closed nationwide and new print issues haven't been released since late March, when the industry's primary distributor, Diamond Comic Distributors, shut down.

Normally, some 6 million extra comics are distributed for the day and around 1.2 million people flock to stores. For some shops, it dwarfs even Comic-Con, the annual San Diego convention (also canceled). Joe Field, owner of Flying Color Comics in Concord, California, who came up with the holiday, calls it "the single biggest retail day in the comic book industry."

The stoppage, says Dan Gearino, author of "Comic Shop: The Retail Mavericks Who Gave us a New Geek Culture," comes as the industry — despite being a pipeline to massive billion-dollar blockbusters — isn't in great financial health.

"We're going to come out of this with fewer comic shops, but there will be enough that survive that this industry will continue," Gearino says. "The question I'm asking is: How big will the culling be?"

Tate Ottati has run Tate's Comics in Lauderhill, Florida, for 27 years — long enough, he says, to see people who first came in as teenagers return with their own kids. "There's cool stuff every day where you go, 'Oh, my God, look at this great comic book,' or, 'Look at this amazing statue,'" he says.

But while his faith in the store remains strong, he's had to constantly improvise. "I was just going to reinvent the store, and then the coronavirus hit," Ottati says.

At Flying Colors Comics, Field has been offering biweekly curbside pick-ups. He's used to crowds every Wednesday when new comics come out — a shared experience for fans prowling racks to see latest issues. But even once shops reopen, the bustle of signings and other events will be curtailed by distancing protocols in the typically cramped aisles of comic stores.

Field, though, is certain the comic shop will abide.

"Comic book retailers are the cockroaches of pop culture," Field says. "We have been through all kinds of things that were meant to put us out of business, whether it's the new digital world or distribution upheaval or Disney buying Marvel. We have adapted and pivoted and remade our businesses in ways that are unique and survivable."

Steve Geppi, the founder of Diamond, said shutting down distribution was the hardest decision he's ever made.

"When I was a 9-year-old boy reading comics, I never dreamed I'd be the guy to pull the plug on the whole industry," says Geppi.

Diamond is now cautiously preparing to bring the company back on line, hoping to fill orders for the third week of May. But restarting will be gradual, and a two-month shutdown has already been enough to potentially reshape the industry.

This week, DC began a more robust release of digital comics. Until now, digital comics have been a fraction of the \$1 billion industry, accounting for about a tenth of sales. While newspapers have gone digital, most comic readers want to hold the colossal worlds of comic books in their hands.

DC also broke its exclusive distribution deal with Diamond to get new issues to shops that are open, adding a pair of new distributors. That move has been debated among shop owners; some say they'd rather wait until Diamond restarts. DC didn't comment.

"We want everybody to survive," Geppi says. "The consumer is going to be the one to decide the fate of the industry."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 23 of 63

Writers and artists have rallied to support shops. Kami Garcia, Brian Michael Bendis, Gwenda Bond, Sam Humphries and Phil Jimenez organized a five-day Twitter campaign, #Creators4Comics. They launched with 150 creators auctioning art, comics and experiences. By the time it was over, they had more than 600, including Frank Miller and Neil Gaiman. It raised more than \$433,000.

"We're not just fighting for businesses and storefronts. We're fighting to support our community," says Humphries, the Los Angeles-based writer of "Harley Quinn," "Nightwing" and others. "In many cases, we're fighting to support our friends."

"I could tell you my life story through the lens of comic book stores I've loved," Humphries adds. "I don't think any of us could cope with a world where comic book stores only lived on in our hearts. We need them to live on in the real world, too."

Easing of lockdown begs the question: Who's family in Italy?

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — When Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte said the government would relax some parts of a nationwide lockdown, residents entering an eighth week of home confinement to inhibit the coronavirus dove for their dictionaries.

Conte announced that starting May 4, people in Italy will be permitted to travel within their home regions for visits with "congiunti," a formal Italian word that can mean either relatives, relations or kinsmen. Under the lockdown, Italians only have been able to leave home for essential jobs or vital tasks such as grocery shopping.

The country's cooped-up citizens therefore sought clarification. Which relatives? What relation? Would a second-cousin count as kin? A brother-in-law? The additional freedom previewed by the premier Sunday night seemed to rest on a clunky, archaic-sounding noun.

The correct definition is more than pedantic in Italy, a country where the generous concept of family embraces extended clans tied by blood or marriage. Whatever the government's intent, "congiunti" would be part of what stitches much of Italian life together.

The next day, Conte sought to clear up the confusion. Instead, he created more. The premier allowed that "congiunti" is a "broad and generic formula." What he meant, he said, was Italians could pay visits to "relatives, and to those with whom they have relationships of steady affection."

Godparents? Longtime lovers? Couples engaged for years but without setting a wedding date, as is frequently the case in Italy?

An early morning talk show on state radio tried to parse what ties of "steady" or "stable" affection mean. Calls and text messages poured in.

One guest, a lawyer who specializes in marriage law, said he has met couples together for only a week with more stable relationships than some spouses who have been married for years.

As far as the issue of home regions is concerned, the show's host raised the possibility that someone who lived, say, in eastern Sicily, could drive hundreds of kilometers (miles) across the island to see relatives, but couldn't visit a loved one just a handful of kilometers away in Calabria, a different region across the Strait of Messina.

For Bianca Amodeo, 17, that host's hypothetical scenario is painful reality. Her boyfriend of 1 1/2 years — for many adolescents that equates to an exceedingly stable tie of affection — lives not far measured in kilometers but just across the Marche region border in the region of Abruzzo.

Deepening the teenager's anguish: Bianca has friends with boyfriends who live farther away but in the same region, and they are excitedly planning to see their sweethearts next week.

Said the girl's mother, Olga Anastasi, before passing the phone to her daughter: "There's a deep sense of injustice."

"When a Carabinieri (police officer) stops to ask where you are going, can he determine what's a steady relationship?" wondered Anastasi, a lawyer who deals with divorce and juvenile matters.

Some see more serious inequality in the government's policy. Same-sex marriages are not legal in Italy,

so civil rights advocates worry that same-sex couples and their children might be excluded from the "stable affection" category.

When Italians finally determine whom they can visit, they'll have to puzzle out how to express affection when they arrive. The new measure requires all to wear masks and stay a safe distance apart when visiting.

Forbidden City, parks in Chinese capital reopen to public

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing's parks and museums including the ancient Forbidden City reopened to the public Friday after being closed for months by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Forbidden City, past home to China's emperors, is allowing just 5,000 visitors daily, down from 80,000. And parks are allowing people to visit at 30% of the usual capacity.

One Beijing resident said this visit felt different than others, when the Forbidden City was more crowded. "When walking in some areas without others around I felt like getting back to the history," Bian Jiang said.

Large-scale group activities remain on hold and visitors must book tickets in advance online, according to Gao Dawei, deputy director of the Beijing Gardening and Greening Bureau.

Photos on social media showed visitors to the Forbidden City wearing face masks and being escorted by police along designated routes.

Beijing on Thursday downgraded its level of emergency response to the virus from first to second tier, but temperature checks and social distancing remain in force.

The change comes at the start of the five-day May 1 holiday and in advance of China's rescheduled gathering of the National People's Congress on May 22.

The sessions were delayed from early March. The two-week annual meetings are largely ceremonial, with the legislature rubber-stamping decisions reached earlier by Communist Party leaders, but in typical years they are a colorful spectacle in the nation's capital. It's not yet clear if the 3,000 or so delegates would come to Beijing, or if sessions would be held virtually through videoconference.

China on Friday reported 12 new cases of the virus, six of them brought from overseas, and no new deaths for the 16th day. It has reported a total of 4,633 deaths from the virus among about 83,000 cases, mostly in the central city of Wuhan.

Most recent cases reported in China have been among travelers arriving from abroad or in a northeastern province near the border with Russia.

Across the country, 599 patients remain under treatment for the virus. Just under 1,000 people are under medical observation because they tested positive but don't show symptoms or have symptoms but testing hasn't confirmed the infection.

Jobless fret as rent comes due again amid virus outbreak

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The rent is due again for more than 30 million people around the U.S. who have filed for unemployment benefits after losing work in the coronavirus pandemic.

Jason W. Still has been waiting six weeks for his first unemployment check since losing his job as a cook at an upscale restaurant in Spokane, Washington. Out-of-work bartender Luke Blaine in Phoenix got his first check three weeks ago, but now has to pay his landlord again.

Eli Oderberg in Denver is among those swept up in a later wave of layoffs as the pandemic's effects spread from restaurants to corners of the economy like the oil company where he had worked on apps to track spills and leaks.

Federal data released this week show the U.S. economy contracted at a 4.8% annual rate last quarter as the pandemic put the nation into a recession. Economists expect January-March to be just a taste of the widespread pain being recorded for April-June. And while a record number of people have applied for unemployment insurance payments, there are many other out-of-work people who don't qualify or couldn't get through the states' overwhelmed systems.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 25 of 63

Still said he's filed for unemployment every week, with nothing yet to show for it, since he was first interviewed by The Associated Press a month ago, just before he paid April rent. His wife still has her job in the legal marijuana industry, and his \$1,200 stimulus check helped pay an assortment of bills. "But I'm about to hit my savings and I really don't want to do that," he said.

Still said he called Washington state's unemployment office dozens of times a day until April 24, when he somehow got into an on-hold queue behind 83 other people. After hours of waiting, he was transferred to a claims specialist, but then the call was dropped. It took him until this week to reach a human, who said there seemed to be a minor glitch in his file that needs to be worked out.

"It seems to be getting closer, but it's not clear to me what's going on at that end," said Still. "I think I'm the last person who was laid off at my restaurant who hasn't gotten an unemployment payment yet."

The restaurant, Clover, remains in limbo. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee this week announced a partial opening May 5 of some recreational offerings like state parks, fishing and golf courses, but restaurant dining rooms and most other businesses will remain closed for now.

Blaine counts himself lucky: He started receiving unemployment checks three weeks after being laid off on March 17. Several coworkers are still waiting for their money after losing their jobs at Fez, a popular restaurant in Phoenix.

"I feel very fortunate based on what I've heard from my friends here and around the country," said Blaine, who also was interviewed by the AP a month ago. His boyfriend, Kyle Schomer, still has his job in the tech industry, and is working from their home in a trendy neighborhood of adobe homes. They have a huge vegetable and flower garden out back.

Blaine also said that he and everyone else he knows have received their stimulus money. With that and the unemployment checks, which through July include an additional \$600 per payment, Blaine has made ends meet, for now.

"We will be back," Fez management promised on the restaurant's Facebook page. "We hope sooner rather than later."

Anything but an opening soon is unlikely resolve the anxieties of people whose savings are running out as the initial wave of service-industry layoffs sweeps up other hard-hit sectors, like energy.

Oderberg lost his job in Denver on April 19, as global oil futures plunged into negative territory following the shutdowns of air travel, factories and commuting around the world.

He said his wife got her first unemployment check after losing her job in retail, but he's still waiting for his. The Colorado website for benefits has confirmed he is eligible, "but I haven't been able to get through to talk to anyone after making about 100 calls each time," he said.

In the meantime, Oderberg has been lining up job interviews in information technology, including at least four this week, and hopes to land something quickly, before he has to scramble for their next mortgage payment for the house he shares with his wife, who is pregnant, and their 4-year-old daughter.

"From my job, I'm accustomed to planning everything six months in advance," said Oderberg. "So we're going to be OK, for now at least."

Virus worries haunt workers demanding rights on May Day

By ELENA BECATOROS, ANGELA CHARLTON and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — No job at all, or a job without enough protections — millions of workers worldwide are marking international labor day trapped between hunger and fear, as more countries and states reopen for business even though the coronavirus pandemic is far from vanquished.

Beijing's Forbidden City cracked open its doors, and shopping malls from Texas to Indiana were set to do the same Friday, while world leaders try to salvage virus-battered economies without unleashing new waves of infections.

With traditional May Day labor marches curtailed by strict limits on public gatherings, Turkish protesters attempted to stage a wildcat demonstration. California activists planned strikes, and Parisians sang from balconies to plead their causes: workplace masks, health insurance or more government aid for the jobless.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 26 of 63

It' was a melancholy International Workers' Day for garment industry workers across southeast Asia such as Wiryono, a father of two in Indonesia's capital who was laid off last month as retailers slashed orders. His side gig delivering coffee dried up, too, amid a virus lockdown. So he set up a clothing repair business to make ends meet.

"I don't earn as much as I got from the clothing factory. But I have to feed my wife and kids every day," said Wiryono, who goes by only one name.

In Bangladesh, production is starting back up even despite a rising number of new confirmed cases of a virus that has infected more than 3.2 million and killed at least 230,000 worldwide.

A government-ordered lockdown couldn't extinguish the May Day protest spirit in Greece, where demonstrators lined up two meters (six feet) apart in careful rows in Athens' Syntagma Square. Organizers, wearing masks and gloves, used tape measures to set out exact positions for the protesters with large colored squares.

Greeks who work by doing deliveries staged a motorized protest, driving through Athens on their motor-bikes, and police were out in force to ensure residents don't head from cities to the countryside, another May Day tradition.

"We are praying for all workers, so that no one will lack work, and all will be fairly paid and can enjoy the dignity of work and the beauty of rest," Pope Francis pleaded during a private morning Mass.

May Day labor protests started in the 19th century in the United States, where this week the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits surpassed a staggering 30 million — and joblessness in April could hit numbers not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Essential workers were expected to strike around the U.S. on Friday to demand safer conditions during the pandemic, while other groups organized rallies to protest stay-at-home orders they say are crippling the U.S. economy.

Lacey Ward, an Omaha hairstylist, said she is worried that the Nebraska governor's decision to let salons reopen on May 4 could put her and her family at risk. She would prefer to collect unemployment until the danger subsides.

"I feel like we are literally the guinea pigs in this situation," she said.

May Day is a state holiday in many countries, but lockdowns mean this is the first time that Russia — whose prime minister has the virus — will not hold mass demonstrations on Red Square.

In Turkey, police and protesters wearing masks faced off in Istanbul, and 15 people were detained for defying confinement rules.

In the Czech Republic, people honked horns, played drums or shouted at midday in a special "noisy protest" over the government's handling of the crisis. And hundreds of Czechs who commute to work in Germany and Austria plan to block a border crossing to protest restrictions imposed on them amid the pandemic.

In the French spirit of keeping leaders in check, some Paris residents defied home confinement rules to hold unauthorized protests. Others staged a midday musical protest against French President Emmanuel Macron's handling of the pandemic, singing from balconies and windows to the tune of the rebel's anthem "Bella Ciao."

Instead of the usual May Day concert in Italy, musical artists will take turns performing solo in empty venues. As Italy prepares to reopen some businesses Monday, unions demanded scrupulous attention to social distancing at work stations and on assembly lines, and the sanitizing of factories before they start up again.

A holiday atmosphere enlivened South Africa's streets Friday, as the May Day holiday is also when the country has begun easing its strict lockdown. People were permitted to walk outside for exercise and some are returning to work in small batches.

The country where the coronavirus first erupted also is opening up: China's ancient, majestic Forbidden City reopened on Friday with all tickets for the May 1-5 holiday sold out, and a limit of 5,000 visitors a day, down from the earlier maximum of 80,000.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 27 of 63

Visitor Bian Jiang reveled at the chance to visit without huge crowds and said, "When walking in some areas without others around, I felt like I'm getting back to history."

In Spain, the closing of a massive field hospital that had symbolized the country's battle against the virus and its overwhelmed health system held significance.

Malaysia and Thailand prepared to reopen some businesses. Japan's prime minister, however, announced his virus state of emergency would stay in place for another month.

Worker and customer safety is a key question as the biggest U.S. mall operator, Simon Property Group Inc., plans to open 49 shopping centers Friday across 10 states, with mask-wearing employees and a limited number of shoppers.

President Donald Trump chose not to extend the White House's social-distancing guidelines past their expiration Thursday. Those guidelines encouraged people to work from home and avoid restaurants, groups and nonessential travel.

Trump continued to speculate on the origins of the coronavirus, and intelligence agencies said they are still examining a notion put forward by the president and aides that the pandemic may have resulted from an accident at a Chinese lab.

The virus has killed over 230,000 worldwide, including more than 61,000 in the U.S., according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Confirmed infections globally topped 3.2 million, with 1 million in the U.S., but the true numbers are believed to be much higher because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments.

As Australia plans to open up, Prime Minister Scott Morrison urged people to download a COVIDSafe app to help track cases, and warned: "The coronavirus is still out there."

Biden denies former staffer's sexual assault allegation

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden denied a former Senate staffer's allegation of sexual assault on Friday, saying "this never happened."

It's the presumptive Democratic nominee's first public comment on an accusation of sexual assault by his former Senate staffer, Tara Reade. He was to appear on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" to discuss the allegation for the first time on television.

Biden said he will ask the National Archives to determine whether there is any record of such a complaint being filed.

"The former staffer has said she filed a complaint back in 1993," Biden said. "But she does not have a record of this alleged complaint. The papers from my Senate years that I donated to the University of Delaware do not contain personnel files."

Biden said, "There is only one place a complaint of this kind could be — the National Archives. The National Archives is where the records are kept."

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden on Friday was expected to give his first public comments on a sexual assault allegation that has roiled his presidential campaign.

The presumptive Democratic nominee will appear on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" to address the allegation by his former Senate staffer Tara Reade that he assaulted her in the basement of a Capitol Hill office building in the 1990s. His campaign issued a statement in early April denying the allegation, and a number of former Biden staffers have defended their boss in interviews.

Biden himself has yet to face any questions or weigh in on the accusation, even as it's taken on fresh attention this week after two of Reade's associates said she previously told them about elements of her allegations.

Republicans worried about President Donald Trump's increasingly precarious political standing are seizing on the allegation to portray Democrats as hypocrites who only defend women who allege wrongdoing against conservatives. They are digging in despite the fact that it could renew attention on the multiple

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 28 of 63

sexual assault allegations lodged against Trump.

Democrats, meanwhile, are in an awkward position of vigorously validating women who come forward with their stories while defending the man who will be their standard-bearer in what many in the party consider the most important election of their lifetimes.

Some in the party have been urging Biden to mount a more forceful response to the allegation.

"The campaign has issued statements, but he hasn't issued any statements in his own voice," said former Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Donna Brazile. "It's not helping, it's just damaging — not only to the person who has come forward, but it's also damaging the candidate."

Lis Smith, a top strategist on Pete Buttigieg's presidential campaign, also called on the Biden campaign to speak up.

"These accusations have not been found to be credible, so it's in the Biden campaign's interest to nip this in the bud directly and do it quickly," she said.

The November contest between Biden and Trump will be the first presidential race of the #MeToo era, which has led numerous women to come forward with allegations of sexual assault. Trump has been accused of assault and unwanted touching by numerous women, allegations he denies.

Women are a core constituency for Democrats, and Biden has a mixed history. While he wrote the Violence Against Women Act as a senator, he also came under heavy criticism for his handling of Anita Hill's Senate testimony in the 1990s. Just before he launched his 2020 campaign, several women accused him of unwanted touching, behavior for which he apologized.

Biden has pledged to pick a woman as a running mate, and the allegation has left those thought to be in contention in a tough spot.

Stacey Abrams, the former Georgia Democratic governor candidate, said, "I believe Joe Biden," citing a New York Times investigation that she said exonerated him.

"Women deserve to be heard," she said, "but I also believe that those allegations have to be investigated by credible sources."

That echoed talking points issued by the Biden campaign to surrogates last week that were obtained by The Associated Press. They pointed to investigations by The New York Times, The Washington Post and the AP that found no other allegation of sexual assault and no pattern of sexual misconduct.

On Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also defended Biden. Speaking on CNN, she said she was "satisfied with how he has responded," even as she acknowledged "it's a matter that he has to deal with."

Some Democratic donors and fundraisers say the issue has not come up in calls with party financiers. Others worry that it could be used against Biden, much as Hillary Clinton's private email server and the activities of the Clinton Foundation were wielded against her by Trump.

Some, most notably women, say they are paying close attention to the allegations, which gave them pause.

Alex Sink, a donor and former Democratic nominee for governor of Florida, said she was "not happy" to read about the allegations against Biden. While she still plans to vote for him, she worried his campaign was too quick to categorically deny Reade's story.

"They put themselves immediately out on a limb by saying, 'It didn't happen, we categorically deny it, it's not true,'" Sink said.

Some female Democratic operatives expressed concerns the allegation is particularly damaging because it's an indictment of Biden's central campaign rationale: that he provides a moral counter to Trump and that the election is a "battle for the soul of America."

"The stakes could not be higher for defeating Donald Trump — but at the same time, I think we have to apply a consistent standard for how we treat allegations of sexual assault, and also be clear-eyed about how Donald Trump will use these allegations in the general election campaign," said Claire Sandberg, who worked as Bernie Sanders' organizing director.

The silence from the Biden campaign has given Republicans an opening on an issue that was, in 2016, more fraught for the GOP, when Trump was asked to answer for the more than two dozen women who

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 29 of 63

alleged varying levels of sexual assault and harassment. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told Fox News on Thursday that Biden will "have to participate in releasing all the information related to" the allegation, a stance he didn't take when Trump faced misconduct accusations.

The GOP argues Democrats aren't being consistent, pointing to aggressive questioning and coverage of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh when he faced an allegation of sexual assault.

Speaking about the allegation for the first time on Thursday, Trump said Biden "should respond" before proceeding to criticize the treatment of Kavanaugh as "an absolute disgrace to our country."

Steve Guest, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee, said "the left, and their media allies, has one standard for Republicans and another standard for Democrats like Joe Biden."

"The double standard," he said, "is appalling."

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

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at nonvirus stories in the news:

1. BIDEN DENIES EX-STAFFER'S SEXUAL ASSAULT ALLEGATION - In his first public comment on the allegation, Biden said the accusation isn't true. "This never happened."

2. 'EVERYONE'S WATCHING' To see who will be Joe Biden's running mate, with Amy Klobuchar, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Gretchen Whitmer and Stacey Abrams believed to be potential picks.

3. WATCHDOG: US NIXES TALIBAN ATTACKS DATA Washington is eager for the U.S.-Taliban agreement to be viewed as successful so that Trump can meet his commitments on pulling troops out of Afghanistan.

4. START YOUR ENGINES NASCAR will resume its season without fans starting May 17 at Darlington Raceway in South Carolina and then race three more times in a 10-day span.

5. MEET WYATT MORGAN COOPER CNN anchor Anderson Cooper is a father and he named his infant son after his dad who died when Cooper was 10.

Navy hospital ships, once thought critical, see few patients

By JULIE WATSON Associated Press

About a month ago, with Los Angeles girding for a potentially crippling surge of coronavirus cases, a massive white Navy hospital ship chugged into port: a powerful symbol of the government's response to the pandemic.

The USNS Mercy, with 1,000 hospital beds and giant red crosses on its sides, was welcomed by California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Mayor Eric Garcetti. Both officials were making grim predictions that LA could soon look like New York City, the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak, and Garcetti noted the ship immediately became his city's largest hospital.

That day may have been the high-water mark for the Mercy, which suffered a virus outbreak among its crew and was the target of a train engineer who hijacked a locomotive and crashed it near the ship. He told investigators the vessel was part of a government plot.

Ultimately, Los Angeles hasn't been overrun with virus cases, and so the Mercy has not had to play its envisioned role of being a safety net in order to allow hospitals to focus on treating those infected with the virus.

The Mercy is not alone: As virus infections have slowed or fell short of worst-case predictions, the globe is dotted with unused or barely used temporary hospitals. The Navy's other hospital ship, the USNS Comfort, left New York on Thursday as the outlook improves there. It treated 182 patients.

Since arriving at the end of March, the Mercy has treated just over 70 non-coronavirus patients for everything from heart and lung conditions to gastrointestinal problems. On Thursday, it had just nine patients on board. Its 750 medical crew members cycle through to provide treatment but otherwise are staying at local hotels to avoid another outbreak.

Even with hundreds of empty beds, there are no plans to send the Mercy home to San Diego.

"We're encouraged by data which suggest the curve is flattening, but the threat remains," the Federal

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 30 of 63

Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, said in a statement. "When appropriate, we will work with the city and state to determine if the mission is complete."

Brian Ferguson, a spokesman for the California governor's Office of Emergency Services, said talks are ongoing about how the ship's medical workers can be used elsewhere.

Officials around the world have offered similar assessments of other temporary hospitals: Their lack of use reflected the need to over-prepare, and they could still be used in a second wave.

But the longer the Mercy stays in port with few patients, the harder it will be to justify the costs, said Bryan Clark, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, a conservative-leaning Washington, D.C.-based think tank.

"There was a need to reassure people that something was being done, and hospital ships are very good for that," said Clark, a former special assistant to the chief of naval operations.

But he warned: "Once its need passes, it can turn from a symbol of commitment to a symbol of inefficiency."

FEMA estimates the Mercy's mission will cost it about \$7.5 million, though the final bill will not be known until the assignment's been completed, the agency said in an email to The Associated Press.

Military officials did not immediately provide a figure for costs on their end.

According to a military briefing document to the U.S. Northern Command obtained by the AP, the defense secretary approved \$3.5 million for the Mercy to help cover expenses starting April 20 for the following month.

The Mercy's Capt. John Rotruck said the ship can accept more patients. But those decisions are up to federal, state and local officials, and the health care facilities.

"We just haven't had a request," he said.

And the Mercy does have limitations. It can accept only patients not infected with the coronavirus and who are mobile.

The Navy recently expanded its mission by sending 40 doctors, nurses and corpsmen, most of whom were on standby to serve on the ship, to a state-run, skilled nursing facility near Los Angeles, and more personnel are available, Rotruck said.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness and lead to death, and nursing homes have been hit hard.

This is not the first time Navy hospital ships have been criticized for being underused; the Comfort was when it was deployed in 2017 to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico.

In the pandemic, the Comfort also took flak because it was initially not allowed to treat virus patients, even as hospitals in New York City became overrun.

Following the outcry, the ship did end up treating COVID-19 patients.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said this week federal "protocol" also prevented the ship from accepting residents of a Brooklyn nursing home that lost 55 people to the virus.

Nonetheless, Cuomo said the ship had saved lives.

The 894-foot-long (272 meter-long) converted supertankers are the largest military hospital ships in the world. They were built in the 1980s to treat war casualties; they have assisted after major natural disasters.

While their capabilities run the gambit from treating bomb injuries to replacing pacemakers, the ships' wide-open treatment bays are not designed to handle highly infectious diseases that require keeping patients far apart.

Still, President Donald Trump said the ships were proving so valuable that the government was looking to build two more of a similar size. Experts believe smaller, faster ships would better serve today's needs.

The Mercy, meanwhile, has been reconfigured as nine crew members recovered from the outbreak.

About 300 to 400 crew members come on board daily to staff 250 beds, staggered over three shifts. While not on board, some crew drive vans to pick up doctors at hospitals or do in-take when new patients are transferred, Rotruck said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 31 of 63

Some are taking time off, having worked long hours when the ship was treating about 20 patients a day, Rotruck said.

"We were able to be a relief valve in anticipation of something that didn't quite get as bad as anybody thought that it might," he said.

This time, Pence wears mask as he tours Indiana plant

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — This time, he wore a mask.

Vice President Mike Pence donned a face covering Thursday as he toured a General Motors/Ventec ventilator production facility in Indiana after coming under fire for failing to wear one earlier this week in violation of Mayo Clinic policy.

The facility in Kokomo had been closed because of the coronavirus but was brought back online in mid-April to produce critical care ventilators for hospitals around the country. General Motors requires workers to wear masks in the plant's production area, according to spokesman Jim Cain.

Pence removed the mask, however, for a roundtable with top officials, including General Motors CEO Mary Barra and Ventec CEO Chris Kiple. None of the participants wore face coverings.

Pence's visit to the factory came hours after his wife, Karen Pence, defended her husband's decision to not wear a mask during a Tuesday visit to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

Mrs. Pence told Fox News Channel that he had been unaware of the hospital's coronavirus policy during the visit and that the vice president has been following the advice of medical experts. Pence, like other senior White House staff, is tested for the virus at least once a week.

"As our medical experts have told us, wearing a mask prevents you from spreading the disease. And knowing that he doesn't have COVID-19, he didn't wear one," Mrs. Pence said, adding that it "was actually after he left Mayo Clinic that he found out that they had a policy of asking everyone to wear a mask."

"So, you know, someone who's worked on this whole task force for over two months is not someone who would have done anything to offend anyone or hurt anyone or scare anyone," she said.

The Mayo Clinic had earlier tweeted — then deleted — that it had informed the vice president of its "masking policy prior to his arrival."

"Mayo shared the masking policy with the VP's office," the health care system later said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that Americans wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, such as in supermarkets, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed discomfort about mask-wearing, saying he did not intend to wear one when the CDC's recommendations were unveiled. But he said Thursday that he would be open to wearing one when he travels to Arizona next week.

"I'm going to have to look at the climate," he said, telling reporters, "I'd have no problem wearing a mask."

Still he queried reporters about whether it would be appropriate to wear one while delivering a speech.

"Should I speak in the mask?" he asked. "You're going to have to tell me if that's politically correct. I don't know. If it is, I'll speak in a mask." Trump's has openly flouted political norms and taken pride in his political incorrectness.

Footage of Pence's tour of the Mayo Clinic earlier this week showed him bare-faced as he met with an employee who had recovered from the virus, even though everyone else in the room appeared to be wearing one. He also participated in a roundtable discussion in which every participant, from Food and Drug Administration chief Stephen Hahn to the state's governor, wore a mask except for him.

Pence explained his decision that day by stressing that he has been frequently tested for the virus.

"As vice president of the United States I'm tested for the coronavirus on a regular basis, and everyone who is around me is tested for the coronavirus," Pence said. "And since I don't have the coronavirus, I thought it'd be a good opportunity for me to be here, to be able to speak to these researchers, these incredible health care personnel, and look them in the eye and say 'thank you.'"

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 32 of 63

But even with a mask, Pence would have been able to look health care workers in the eye because one only covers the nose and mouth.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, a Democrat who wore a mask while he accompanied Pence on his visit to the Mayo Clinic, said he appreciated seeing that Pence was wearing a mask on his trip to Indiana on Thursday. "The simple gesture of wearing that mask in public goes an awful long ways," Walz said.

People who enter the White House complex have their temperature taken, and those who will be in close proximity to the president and the vice president are given rapid COVID-19 tests to ensure they're not infectious.

Senior staff also are given tests on a rolling basis so that infections are quickly detected.

Brazilians start defying isolation, egged on by Bolsonaro

By DAVID BILLER and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Divina Baldomero awoke, looked out the window at Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach under a cloudless sky, and decided to take her first stroll in 40 days.

The 75-year-old restaurant owner, like most Brazilians, had been adhering to her governor's call to stay home to contain the spread of the coronavirus. But on this day she decided to ignore that, urged on by the view of President Jair Bolsonaro that the shutdown is wrongheaded, will wreck the economy and that anyway, the virus isn't all it's cracked up to be.

"At first I thought (the shutdown) was viable. Later, I came to think we will have more economic difficulties, with the poverty there is. There should be a different way so we can be free of this," said Baldomero, speaking Wednesday in front of the shuttered Copacabana Palace hotel. Her legs, virtually unused for more than a month, began trembling after seven minutes of standing.

Egged on by Bolsonaro, who has routinely scoffed at both the virus and stay-at-home policies, Brazilians are heeding his call for revolt. Support for isolation is faltering, particularly among the wealthy, and more people are milling and mixing. From the sun-worshippers to the Instagram influencers and pro-Bolsonaro protesters, denial is spreading and quarantine is coming apart. But, unlike other countries looking to ease restrictions, Latin America's largest nation is still weeks from the peak in its viral curve.

Bolsonaro first staked out his argument that the economy needs to get back to work in a national address at the end of March, when he referred to the coronavirus as "a little flu" and said his history as an athlete would protect him.

Since then, he has doubled down time and again, saying only high-risk Brazilians need to be isolated, even as the official count of cases rockets past 85,000 and deaths surpass 5,900 — more than the amount suffered by China. Experts consider both figures to be significant under-counts due to a lack of widespread testing.

Asked about the grim milestone Bolsonaro responded, "So what? I'm sorry. What do you want me to do?"

Personal trainer Gabriela Pugliesi would seemingly have little reason to question risks posed by the virus. The 34-year-old was infected last month at her sister's wedding. Several other guests also contracted COVID-19 at the five-star resort with beachfront bungalows.

Coughing and feverish — yet no less bronzed and blonde — Pugliesi repeatedly told her 4.5 million followers on Instagram to stay home and take care of themselves. She recovered in late March, and on Saturday threw a party at her apartment in Sao Paulo, the epicenter of Brazil's outbreak. No one wore masks and in one video Pugliesi posted, she and friends shouted "Screw life!" into the camera.

Flouting isolation drew an immediate backlash and more than 100,000 people unfollowed her. She also lost about a dozen sponsors, who also bailed on her influencer guests.

Tatá Werneck, a TV talk show host, was a fierce critic.

"My cousin is a doctor and arrived home in tears. They already have to choose who to save," Werneck posted on Pugliesi's account. "This behavior of yours, even more so because you have so many followers ... is inadmissible."

Pugliesi apologized then suspended her Instagram account. She didn't respond to a request for com-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 33 of 63

ment from The Associated Press.

Others in Sao Paulo and elsewhere are defying social distancing, albeit more discreetly. Local authorities said in multiple news conferences that some bars in poor areas are welcoming clients behind closed doors, and police have been called to end gatherings in isolated spots.

On Thursday, the governor of Rio de Janeiro state extended restrictions on activity and gatherings until May 11; Sao Paulo had previously extended them until May 10. The two states have the largest virus incidence.

Still, a poll by Datafolha showed 52% of people surveyed believe even those who don't belong to at-risk groups – the elderly and people with chronic illness – should remain in isolation, down from 60% at the start of the month. Among the wealthiest, support for continued quarantine is just 39%.

Bolsonaro's hard-core base has staged rallies to shore up support for their leader's views, most recently on Sunday in the capital, Brasilia. Many of the several hundred demonstrators draped themselves in the Brazilian flag, and the few face masks were in the national colors of green and yellow. Most neglected to use masks altogether, even as they shouted into a shared bullhorn.

Not all of Bolsonaro's ministers have fallen into lock-step behind him, but those who don't do so risk losing their jobs. Luiz Henrique Mandetta, his former health minister, strongly supported the restrictions imposed by state governors and his handling of the crisis was widely praised. But earlier this month, Bolsonaro fired him and appointed Nelson Teich, who has said he sees eye-to-eye with the president.

And what do the morning walkers in Copacabana and beach-side Barra da Tijuca, Rio's two hardest-hit neighborhoods, say?

Walking along Barra, not far from Bolsonaro's personal home, 76-year-old Fernando Ferreira, recommended reading the Bible and Albert Camus' "The Plague," saying they are evidence that pandemics have always happened in history.

The retired dentist and lawyer said local governments' restrictions on commerce are "absurd." He pointed to how France is moving to ease its isolation measures, without acknowledging that the European nation's viral curve, unlike Brazil's, has begun to plateau.

Lilia Santiago, a 51-year-old dentist, was ambling with her 77-year-old mother. She insisted forcing everyone to stay home amounts to "buffoonery," particularly as poor people in Brazil often live in close quarters under the same roof.

"People at risk, with respiratory problems, auto-immune diseases, should take care, which doesn't mean they can't go out," Santiago said. "We can't be locked inside an apartment or house. We need to circulate, but safely."

"You don't stand next to someone with a cold. Same thing," she said, echoing Bolsonaro's belittling of the virus' dangers. "Flu kills more than coronavirus, folks! A lot of things kill more than coronavirus!"

'Goonies' cast, 'Flintstones' rescue TV viewers in pandemic

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Josh Gad had a notion about what might soothe the kid in him during a scary time and maybe do the same for others. The actor got to work organizing an online reunion of the cast and creators of the 1985 movie "The Goonies," which quickly tallied a million-plus views.

Gad's YouTube effort isn't alone in providing a screen version of comfort food for the housebound. With an uncertain future defined by coronavirus and its fallout, old movies, TV reruns and favorite characters offer a way to briefly swap current woes for familiar happy endings.

"It is the absolute right place, right time" to revisit "The Goonies," said Gad, the "Frozen" star who was a preschooler when he first saw the movie that left an indelible impression of joy. "I think nostalgia is so important right now because we all want to go back to simpler times. We all are hoping for something we can connect with that reminds of us better days."

"The Goonies" video, featuring cast members including Sean Astin, Josh Brolin, Ke Huy Quan and Kerri Green and producer Steven Spielberg, is raising money for those affected by the pandemic.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 34 of 63

There are other COVID-19-related fundraising reunions, including a scripted one with the original "Parks and Recreation" cast airing at 8:30 p.m. EDT Thursday on NBC, and an online virtual get-together of "Melrose Place" cast members held earlier this week.

In "A Parks and Recreation Special," Amy Poehler's Leslie Knope refuses to let social distancing undermine her friendships, trusting in the "power of community to hold people together" and in government as a force for good, both timely themes, sitcom co-creator Mike Schur told a teleconference.

Networks are surveying the emotional climate and responding.

Throughout May, CBS is bringing back its Sunday movie showcase, a longtime fixture that ended nearly 14 years ago. "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark" is the lead-off film, followed by "Forrest Gump"; "Mission: Impossible"; "Titanic" and "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" ("Titanic" airs 7-11 p.m. EDT, all others 8-11 p.m. Eastern).

To heighten the nostalgia, the network released a "CBS Sunday Night Movies" promotional spot done in an old-school style, as well as original trailers for the films.

"These are the new five big iconic films that we felt our audience would really enjoy," said Michael Benson, CBS president and chief marketing officer. The network had a bonanza to pick from: another reunion, the 2019 merger that brought CBS Corp. and Viacom back together, gave the network full access to Viacom's Paramount Pictures film library.

Asked why viewers who could choose to watch popular old movies on streaming or premium cable would tolerate a network's commercial breaks, Benson had a ready answer.

"The idea of a live communal event that you can actually talk about with your friends immediately after it happens" is the draw, he said, and less of an option with on-demand movies. CBS is using social media to build "excitement about what we're doing" and encourage viewers to arrange family or virtual viewing parties, Benson said.

The overall rise in viewing with people stuck at home has included a ratings boost for the MeTV channel, with "I Love Lucy," "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and "The Flintstones" on its slate of classic shows. According to Nielsen, the channel's prime-time viewership rose 5 percent from February to March.

That reflects a need for comfort, said Neal Sabin, vice chairman of Weigel Broadcasting Co., the owner of MeTV and sibling channels including Decades.

"None of us know what's going to happen in the next six months. But we all know what happens on 'I Love Lucy' when she switches jobs with Ricky," Sabin said. "It makes us feel like we're in control a little bit."

A fondly recalled series can draw a crowd, crisis or not, said Schur.

"TV has always functioned, especially comedy, as a sort of sustaining comfort food, where you can visit the people in the world over and over and over and over again," he said.

Carl Reiner, the 98-year-old creator and co-star of "The Dick Van Dyke Show," said his 1960s sitcom is an enduring celebration of a family that faces the world together.

"It's not accidental" that people are watching, Reiner said.

Economic figures show grim toll in Europe and US from virus

By DAVID CRARY, CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Bleak new figures Thursday underscored the worldwide economic pain inflicted by the coronavirus: The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits has climbed past a staggering 30 million, while Europe's economies have gone into an epic slide.

And as bad as the numbers are, some are already outdated because of the lag in gathering data. The true economic picture is almost certainly much worse.

The statistics are likely to stoke the debate over whether to ease the lockdowns that have closed factories and other businesses. While many states and countries have pressed ahead, health officials have warned of the danger of a second wave of infection, and some employers and employees have expressed fear of going back to work when large numbers of people are still dying.

In the U.S., the government reported that 3.8 million laid-off workers applied for jobless benefits last

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 35 of 63

week, raising the total to 30.3 million in the six weeks since the outbreak took hold. The layoffs amount to 1 in 6 American workers and encompass more people than the entire population of Texas.

Some economists say that when the U.S. unemployment rate for April comes out next week, it could be as high as 20% — a figure not seen since the Depression of the 1930s, when joblessness peaked at 25%.

The number of Americans thrown out of work could be much higher than the unemployment claims show, because some people have not applied and others couldn't get through to their states' overwhelmed systems. A poll by two economists found that the U.S. may have lost 34 million jobs.

There was grim new data across Europe, too, where more than 130,000 people with the virus have died. The economy in the 19 countries using the euro shrank 3.8% in the first quarter of the year, the biggest contraction since the eurozone countries began keeping joint statistics 25 years ago.

"This is the saddest day for the global economy we have ever seen" in the 50 years that economists at High Frequency Economics have been following the data, they wrote in a report.

Even then, the statistics do not capture the enormity of the crisis. The quarterly figures cover January through March, and many of the lockdowns in Europe and the U.S. were not imposed until March — the second half of March in a multitude of places in the United States.

Stocks fell on Wall Street as the discouraging news piled up, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average losing nearly 290 points, or more than 1 percent. Even Amazon, which Americans are relying on heavily to stock up on goods, offered a mixed report, with sales skyrocketing in the first quarter but profits dropping 29% because of the rising costs to get all those packages shipped.

The company still ended the quarter on a relatively high note, however, reporting net earnings of \$2.5 billion — an astonishing contrast to the losses sustained by some companies. One of them, American Airlines, slammed by a lack of passengers during the outbreak, on Thursday reported a loss of \$2.2 billion for the period.

The virus has killed over 230,000 people worldwide, including more than 61,000 in the U.S., according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Confirmed infections globally topped 3.2 million, with 1 million of them in the U.S., but the true numbers are believed to be much higher because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments.

In other developments:

— Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious-diseases expert, said he expects federal approval for the first drug to prove effective against the coronavirus to happen "really quickly." Remdesivir, made by California's Gilead Sciences, hastened the recovery of COVID-19 patients in a major government study, and it might also have reduced deaths, according to Fauci.

— A 1,000-bed Navy hospital ship that arrived in New York City to great fanfare a month ago left town after treating just 182 patients. The surge of cases there has fallen well short of the doomsday predictions. The 24-hour number of deaths statewide was down to 306, the lowest in a month.

— With signs that the outbreak has stabilized in places, President Donald Trump said he would not extend the White House's social-distancing guidelines past their expiration Thursday. Those guidelines encouraged people to work from home and avoid restaurants, groups and nonessential travel.

— Trump continued to speculate on the origins of the coronavirus, saying that China could have unleashed it on the world due to some kind of horrible "mistake" or that it might have been released intentionally. Intelligence agencies said they are still examining a notion put forward by the president and aides that the pandemic may have resulted from an accident at a Chinese lab.

— A suburban Minneapolis nursing home, St. Therese of New Hope, said 47 residents have died as a result of COVID-19 in yet another severe outbreak at an institution for the frail or elderly. At least 70 people have died at a veterans home in Massachusetts in the deadliest known cluster of its kind.

— California Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered beaches in Orange County closed until further notice after tens of thousands of people flocked to the sand last weekend.

— NASCAR announced it will resume the season on March 17 but without fans in the stands. But the Little League announced it would cancel its World Series for the first time ever.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 36 of 63

This week, the U.S. estimated its economy shrank at a 4.8% annual rate in the first three months of the year, the sharpest quarterly drop since the 2008 financial crisis. The current quarter is expected to be much worse, with a staggering 40% drop projected.

Still, analysts saw a glimmer of hope in the way new unemployment claims have fallen for four straight weeks. Andrew Stettner, a senior fellow at the Century Foundation, said the wave of layoffs at vulnerable businesses such as restaurants, hotels and stores may have largely run its course.

"Thankfully, for now, the economic contagion seems to have plateaued," Stettner said. "But we're still at a level that is a mortal threat to the nation's financial well-being."

Across the U.S., many governors have taken steps to gradually reopen their economies, amid impatience among Americans who complain their livelihoods are being destroyed and their rights trampled.

In Michigan, hundreds of protesters returned to the Capitol to denounce Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's stay-home order and business restrictions. The Republican-led Michigan House refused to extend the state's coronavirus emergency declaration and voted to authorize a lawsuit challenging Whitmer's authority and actions to combat the pandemic.

But even in states where businesses are being allowed to reopen, some workers are uneasy about returning.

Lacey Ward, an Omaha hairstylist, said she is worried that the Nebraska governor's decision to let salons reopen on May 4 could put her and her family at risk. She would prefer to collect unemployment until the danger subsides.

"I feel like we are literally the guinea pigs in this situation," she said.

Finding enough workers willing to return is proving to be a challenge for Jennifer Holliday, manager at a restaurant in Oklahoma City that will reopen its dining room Friday. Many of her employees are not returning calls or messages.

"There are some who want to just ride it out and take the unemployment," she said.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

The world's economic pain was on full display Thursday with new bleak evidence from Europe and the United States of the mounting devastation wrought on jobs and economies by coronavirus lockdown measures.

The European economy shrank a record 3.8% in the first quarter as lockdowns turned cities into ghost towns and plunged nations into recession. The drop was the biggest since eurozone statistics began in 1995 and compares with a 4.8% contraction in the United States.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— More than 3.8 million laid-off workers applied for unemployment benefits last week as the U.S. economy slid further into a crisis that is becoming the most devastating since the 1930s.

— Amazon, which Americans are relying on heavily to stock up on goods, saw first-quarter sales skyrocketing in the first quarter but profits dropping 29% because of the rising costs to get all those packages shipped. In contrast, American Airlines and United Airlines lost a combined \$4 billion as the pandemic triggered a sharp drop in air travel.

— U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that the new coronavirus was "not manmade or genetically modified" but say they are still examining whether the origins of the pandemic trace to contact with infected animals or an accident at a Chinese lab. President Donald Trump and his allies have touted the as-yet-unproven theory that an infectious disease lab in Wuhan was the source of the pandemic.

— Americans are grappling with an essential question as they try to get the information they need to stay safe during the coronavirus crisis: Whom do you trust?

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 37 of 63

— In Michigan, hundreds of protesters, some armed with rifles, returned to the Capitol to denounce Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's stay-home order. The Republican-led Michigan House refused to extend the state's coronavirus emergency declaration and voted to authorize a lawsuit challenging Whitmer's authority and actions to combat the pandemic.

— NASCAR will resume its season without fans starting May 17. It's joining the UFC as the first major sports organizations to announce specific plans to return to play since the coronavirus pandemic shut down U.S. sports in mid-March. Elsewhere in sports, this year's Little League World Series was canceled.

— Under Japan's coronavirus state of emergency, people have been asked to stay home. Many are not. Some still have to commute to their jobs despite risks of infection, while others continue to dine out, picnic in parks and crowd into grocery stores with scant regard for social distancing.

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 and death. The vast majority of people recover.

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

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

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

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

ONE NUMBER:

— 60,000: The number President Donald Trump predicted would be the U.S. death count from the coronavirus pandemic. The reported toll has now edged past Trump's marker.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **BRITISH WWII VETERAN** — Capt. Tom Moore celebrated his 100th birthday on Thursday, having raised some 30 million pounds (\$37 million) for the National Health Service after completing a challenge to mark the milestone by shuffling the length of his garden 100 times. His sunny attitude in a dark moment brought smiles to a country locked down amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

— **BROADWAY SERENADE** — Theaters are shuttered, but somehow, Brian Stokes Mitchell has found a way to keep singing on Broadway. Mitchell looks to serenade crews of ambulances, fire engines, police cars or medical workers from the urgent care facility near his Manhattan apartment.

Anderson Cooper is a father; gives infant son a special name

NEW YORK (AP) — Anderson Cooper is a father, a milestone the CNN anchor says for a while he didn't believe would ever happen.

Cooper announced the birth of his son, Wyatt, Thursday evening on his show and in a lengthy Instagram post. His son was born on Monday via a surrogate, the newsman said, and is named after his father who died when Cooper was 10.

"On Monday, I became a father. I've never actually said that before out loud, and it still kind of astonishes me," Cooper said on his show, "AC360."

The anchor said he felt it was important, amid stories about those who are suffering and dying during the coronavirus pandemic, to "hold on to moments of joy."

The segment included several photos of the newborn.

"As a gay kid, I never thought it would be possible to have a child, and I'm grateful for all those who have paved the way, and for the doctors and nurses and everyone involved in my son's birth," Cooper wrote

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 38 of 63

on Instagram. "Most of all, I am grateful to a remarkable surrogate who carried Wyatt, and watched over him lovingly, and tenderly, and gave birth to him."

Cooper, 52, said he regretted that his parents and brother were not alive to meet his son. Cooper's mother, Gloria Vanderbilt died in July at 95.

The Instagram post included a photo of Cooper feeding his son a bottle. The baby's middle name, Morgan, is also a family name. It was a name his parents considered for Cooper, according to a list he recently found.

GOP lawmakers reject Michigan's virus order; Whitmer unfazed

By DAVID EGGERT and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The Republican-led Michigan Legislature refused Thursday to extend the state's coronavirus emergency declaration and voted to authorize a lawsuit challenging Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's authority and actions to combat the pandemic.

The governor, unfazed, responded with orders stating under one law that an emergency still exists, while declaring a new 28-day state of emergency under another law.

The declarations are important because they are the foundation for Whitmer's stay-at-home measure, which will remain in effect through May 15, and other directives aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus. The virus that causes COVID-19 has infected more than 41,000 Michigan residents and contributed to the deaths of 3,789, many in the Detroit area.

Whitmer accused GOP lawmakers of "putting their heads in the sand and putting more lives and livelihoods at risk. I'm not going to let that happen."

The legislative pushback came as hundreds of conservative activists, including some who were openly carrying assault rifles, returned to the Capitol to denounce her stay-home order.

Whitmer wanted legislators to extend the emergency before it was to expire late Thursday. But at the same time, she believes she has other powers to respond to the crisis and does not need a legislatively-approved extension — which Republicans dispute and appeared poised to challenge in court.

The virus and the steps taken to curb it, including the closure of nonessential businesses, have had a devastating effect on the economy. In her new emergency orders, Whitmer said cases are doubling every six days or faster in some counties in western and northern Michigan.

The House and Senate voted along party lines for a bill, which Whitmer will vet, that would temporarily codify many of her directives but not her stay-home order.

Republicans accused Whitmer of ignoring their input.

"We can no longer allow one person to make decisions for 10 million people," said Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey of Clarklake.

House Speaker Lee Chatfield, of Levering, said the death toll is "terrible," but other lives have been "negatively impacted unnecessarily because of how we have handled this pandemic. We believe we you can prioritize public health yet be reasonable in your approach to fighting COVID."

Democrats opposed the legislation as an unconstitutional "political stunt" and called the likely legal action a wasteful expense amid plummeting tax revenues.

"We must ensure that our state can respond quickly and decisively to a situation that changes day by day," said state Rep. Tyrone Carter, a Detroit Democrat who recovered from COVID-19. "That means ensuring that our governor has the emergency powers necessary to lead us in this fight."

Late Thursday, Whitmer extended the closure of bars, casinos and other public places through May 28. She also continued a ban on dine-in service at restaurants.

Earlier at the Capitol, speakers took turns addressing a crowd on the lawn. Drivers leaned on their horns as they traveled past, a repeat of what occurred April 15 but not close to the thousands who participated in vehicles at that time, which paralyzed traffic for miles.

Protesters' placards read, "Shut down the lockdown," "No work no freedom," and "Tyrants get the rope." Some people wore the "Don't Tread On Me" flag as a cape. Others chanted, "Lock her up," in reference

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 39 of 63

to the governor. Some wore President Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" hats or carried signs supporting him.

"The virus is here. It's going to be here. ... It's time to let people go back to work. That's all there is to it," said Joni George, of Flushing.

Some angry protesters — many without face coverings — entered the Capitol and demanded to be let onto the House floor, which is not allowed. The gallery was closed to the public to allow room for representatives and reporters to spread apart. Some demonstrators in the Senate gallery were openly carrying guns, which is legal in the statehouse. One senator said some armed men shouted at her, and some senators wore bulletproof vests for protection.

Shanon Banner, a state police spokeswoman, estimated there were 400 to 700 protesters and said they were "peaceful" overall. People who did not wear masks or distance themselves were not issued tickets. One demonstrator was arrested for assaulting another protester.

Whitmer, whom the public has supported in polling, on Wednesday rejected Senate Republicans' proposal for a pair of one-week extensions of the emergency in exchange for giving legislators a say in any future stay-at-home restrictions.

Republicans want her to allow elective medical and dental procedures again and certainty on the date she plans to reopen the economy on a regional basis. Meanwhile, the governor has allowed some businesses, such as lawn-care companies and greenhouses, to resume operating.

Commercial and residential construction will resume next week.

Dem lawmakers say Trump's freeze for WHO to hurt Venezuelans

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — As much as \$110 million in U.S. funding for disease prevention in Latin America as well as U.S. support for Venezuelan migrants has been thrown into doubt as part of President Donald Trump's decision to halt funding to the World Health Organization over its response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Rep. Eliot Engel, the Democratic chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, sent a letter Thursday to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo complaining that freezing funds for the Pan American Health Organization threatened to worsen the plight of Venezuelans suffering at the hands of Nicolás Maduro.

"We believe it is dangerous and shortsighted of the Trump Administration to pause U.S. funding for the life-saving work" by PAHO in Venezuela, the New York Democrat wrote in the letter, which was also signed by Rep. Albio Sires, chairman of the subcommittee focused on Latin America.

PAHO said this week that the U.S. had suspended its contributions as an extension of Trump's funding freeze for the WHO.

But two U.S. officials cautioned that no final decision had been made. One said the next U.S. payment isn't due until late May and an exclusion for PAHO is being discussed. Both officials insisted on anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

The Washington-based PAHO is unique in that it is both a regional office in the Americas for the WHO but also a separately run institution that predates by almost a half century the creation of the United Nations agency. Only about a third of its funding comes from the WHO, with the rest provided by its 35 member states, of which the U.S. is by far its largest contributor, responsible for 60% of its overall budget. Currently the U.S. owes PAHO \$110 million in assessed contributions for 2019 and 2020.

The State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development would not comment.

Engel in his letter said he was dismayed to learn that \$12 million in U.S. funding for PAHO to conduct diagnostics and tracing for the coronavirus in Venezuela and among Venezuelan migrants in Colombia was on hold.

He said U.S.-supported efforts inside Venezuela had saved lives and prevented the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus. He said a PAHO-backed measles vaccination program supported by \$3.4 million in USAID funding enabled 9 million Venezuelan children to get shots and paved the way for a 90% decline in measles cases from 5,800 in 2018 to less than 600 in 2019. He cited studies indicating as many

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 40 of 63

as 94% of Venezuelans are living in poverty and 7 million need humanitarian assistance.

PAHO also declined to comment, pointing instead to comments by Dr. Carissa Etienne, who heads the organization, saying that Trump's freeze in funding for the WHO had been "extended" to include U.S. funding for PAHO.

"Over the years we have enjoyed a very firm collaboration and technical support from the U.S. government," Dr. Carissa Etienne said in remarks to journalists Tuesday. "This mutual collaboration between the U.S. and PAHO has stood the test of many, many years and it is our hope that we can continue to work in this vein to insure that health and well being come to the majority of people in the Americas."

Trump two weeks ago halted funding to the Geneva-based WHO, arguing that it had mimicked Chinese assurances about the coronavirus' spread, wrongly opposed travel restrictions at the start of the outbreak and was slow to declare the outbreak a global pandemic.

Many philanthropists like Bill Gates and Michael Bloomberg joined European and African leaders and health experts in criticizing the decision, calling it ill-timed.

PAHO is one of the few ways the U.S. is able to channel aid to Venezuela since it doesn't recognize Maduro and has no functioning embassy in Caracas.

In the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, PAHO was also key in brokering contact between Venezuelan health officials and their counterparts in Colombia to discuss ways to stop the virus' spread among millions of poor Venezuelans who have fled the country in recent years and who are expected to overload Colombia's already overburdened health system if the pandemic worsens. Like the U.S., Colombia doesn't recognize Maduro.

Maduro has consistently rejected U.S. offers of humanitarian aid, calling them an underhanded attempt to destabilize his rule. The opposition has been similarly reluctant to work with Maduro officials to distribute the aid that has trickled in from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Roman Catholic Church and other sources, seeing it as a tool of coercion.

But over the past year, as efforts to unseat Maduro have stalled and social conditions have worsened, the opposition has quietly eased its objections to working through the socialist government in the belief that regular Venezuelans will benefit and to prepare for eventually assuming power itself one day. One opposition official called the cooperation "a necessary evil."

Trump speculates that China released virus in lab 'mistake'

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has speculated that China could have unleashed the coronavirus on the world due to some kind of horrible "mistake," and his intelligence agencies said they are still examining a notion put forward by the president and aides that the pandemic may have resulted from an accident at a Chinese lab.

Trump even suggested Thursday that the release could have been intentional.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the clearinghouse for the web of U.S. spy agencies, said it had ruled out the virus being man-made but was still investigating the precise source of the global pandemic, which has killed more than 220,000 people worldwide.

Though scientists suggest the likeliest origin of the pandemic remains natural, that it spread from an infected animal to a human, Trump claimed to have seen evidence to support the theory that the origin was an infectious disease lab in Wuhan, the epicenter of the Chinese outbreak.

He said the U.S. now "is finding how it came out."

"It's a terrible thing that happened," the president said. "Whether they made a mistake or whether it started off as a mistake and then they made another one, or did somebody do something on purpose."

The intel statement said the federal agencies concur "with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified."

"The IC will continue to rigorously examine emerging information and intelligence to determine whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or if it was the result of an accident at a labo-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 41 of 63

ratory in Wuhan.”

In recent days the Trump administration has sharpened its rhetoric on China, accusing the geopolitical foe and vital trading partner of failing to act swiftly enough to sound the alarm about the outbreak or to stop the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. U.S. officials have said the Chinese government should “pay a price” for its handling of the pandemic.

This all comes as the pace of Trump’s own original response continues to come under scrutiny, questioned as too meager and too slow.

Earlier Thursday, before Trump’s comments, the Chinese government said that any claims that the coronavirus was released from a laboratory are “unfounded and purely fabricated out of nothing.”

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang cited the institute’s director, Yuan Zhiming, as saying the lab strictly implements bio-security procedures that would prevent the release of any pathogen.

“I would like to point out again that the origin of the virus is a complex scientific issue, and it should be studied by scientists and professionals,” Geng said.

He also criticized those in the U.S. who say China should be held accountable for the global pandemic, saying they should spend their time on “better controlling the epidemic situation at home.”

At the White House, Trump repeatedly blamed China for its handling of the outbreak, criticizing the country for restricting domestic travel to slow the virus but not international travel to keep it from spreading abroad.

“Certainly it could have been stopped,” Trump said during an event in the East Room on his administration’s efforts to aid seniors during the outbreak. “They either couldn’t do it from a competence standpoint, or they let it spread.”

“It got loose, let’s say, and they could have capped it.”

Earlier this month, Trump addressed the lab theory saying, “More and more, we’re hearing the story.” Secretary of State Mike Pompeo added at the time, “The mere fact that we don’t know the answers — that China hasn’t shared the answers — I think is very, very telling.”

Pompeo also pressed China to let outside experts into the lab “so that we can determine precisely where this virus began.”

While Trump and Pompeo have made their feelings clear, a U.S. intelligence official disputed the notion that there was pressure on agencies to bolster a particular theory. The intelligence official was not authorized to publicly discuss the issue and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

Scientists say the virus arose naturally in bats. Even so, Pompeo and others have pointed fingers at an institute that is run by the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It has done groundbreaking research tracing the likely origins of the SARS virus, finding new bat viruses and discovering how they could jump to people.

“We know that there is the Wuhan Institute of Virology just a handful of miles away from where the wet market was,” Pompeo said two weeks ago. The institute has an address 8 miles, or 13 kilometers, from the market that is considered a possible source.

U.S. officials say the American Embassy in Beijing flagged concerns about potential safety issues at the lab in Wuhan in 2018, but they have yet to find any evidence the virus originated there nearly two years later.

Scientists studying the virus for months have made clear they believe it wasn’t man-made but are still working to determine a point at which it may have jumped from animals to humans.

Early attention focused on the live-animal market in Wuhan where the first cases were reported in December. But the first person identified with the disease had no known connection to that market.

Kristian Andersen, who studies the virus at Scripps Research in La Jolla, California, puts the odds of it being accidentally released by the Wuhan lab at “a million to one,” far less likely than an infection in nature. But virus expert David O’Connor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison said he thinks too little is known to rule out any source, except the idea the virus was man-made. Finding the source is important, he said, because it may harbor the next pandemic virus.

The U.S. was providing funding to the Wuhan lab for its research on coronaviruses, Michael Morell, former acting director and deputy director of the CIA, said Thursday.

He said State Department cables indicate that there have been concerns in past years among U.S. of-

ficials about the safety protocols at that lab. If the virus did escape from a Chinese lab, it not only reflects negatively on China but also on the United States for providing research funding to a lab that has safety concerns, Morell said during an online forum hosted by the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy and International Security at George Mason University.

"So if it did escape, we're all in this together," Morell said. "This is not a gotcha for China. This is a gotcha for both of us."

Lives Lost: Virus silences angelic voice of WWII evacuee

By HELENA ALVES and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — After Adolf Hitler annexed his native Austria and Allied bombs laid waste to Vienna, Hannelore Cruz traveled to Portugal without her parents as a refugee from hunger, cold and post-war deprivation. She arrived with a group of other children when she was 5 years old.

A Portuguese family raised her and she later married. Eventually, she could only speak a few words of German. She told people she was born in Vienna, but only went back to Austria a couple of times to visit.

Cruz, despite becoming completely Portuguese herself, nonetheless stood out in the country that adopted her, according to the oldest of her five grandchildren.

Her grandson lovingly describes her flamboyant style and vanity. His face lights up when he recalls an outstanding singing voice that "lent magic" to the weddings and church recitals where she performed.

"She had an angelic voice, an angelic voice," José Miguel Cruz da Costa, 35, said of his grandmother. "It was an extraordinary thing."

Cruz died of COVID-19 complications on March 25 at a hospital in the city of Braga. She was 76.

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

More than 5,000 children from Austria were evacuated to Portugal during 1947-1952 through a program organized by the Catholic Church's Caritas Internationalis charity. The child refugees were placed with foster families after a trip by train and ship of almost 3,000 kilometers (2,000 miles).

Most returned to Austria after a year, once they were nourished back to health in temperate Portugal. Hannelore Friederike Andromache Fischer stayed the rest of her life.

Hannelore never knew her father. Her mother died young and came from a family that had musicians and painters in it, but that's all Cruz's grandson knows.

The foster family that took in the young Austrian girl lived in the town of Ponte de Lima in northwest Portugal, a land of deep forests and big rivers, and public buildings made of granite. It was a far cry from Austria's war-ruined capital, the former seat of an empire and the birthplace of Mozart and Sigmund Freud.

She later studied singing and the piano at the music conservatory in Braga, married a doctor and had four children while continuing a career as a singing teacher. She gave classes at the city's high schools, the university, a local music academy, and at the conservatory. Along with Mozart, her favorite composer was Bach.

While Cruz did not harbor dreams of stardom and bashfully declined to sing for her family, she performed regularly in public. An amateur YouTube video of an Easter 2010 concert by her local choir features Cruz singing the soprano solo in Cesar Franck's "Panis Angelicus."

Her clear, bright voice soars above the rest of the choir, whose harmonies seem to glide in her wake.

Costa, who lived with his grandparents for 18 years, recalls his "extremely beautiful" and well-groomed grandmother regularly turning heads in the streets of Braga.

In a city known for — and proud of — having conservative values that are as dependable as the local granite, Cruz displayed "unthinkable" boldness for a woman, he said.

"The best word to describe her is flamboyant," Costa said.

"She had a special care in buying certain clothes, not for other people's sake, but for herself," he said.

"Her own taste was something different from Portuguese society. I think she had a way of thinking, performing, dressing and of being that went beyond our own culture."

"Thirty or 40 years ago, she was known as that lady who, as well as being a teacher, wore some hair colors that were very radical" — blonde, brown and blue, sometimes with highlights, Costa said.

Widowed in 1995 at age 52, Cruz became the family's sole breadwinner. Diligent and dauntless, she reinvented herself again and began looking after several family properties, managing the farms and overseeing the workers.

Although his grandmother hardly spoke of her childhood, she often used her own life as a lesson showing that difficulties don't stand in the way of goals, Costa said.

"She was very good at getting this message across: I came here fleeing from the war, I came to a family I didn't know, I couldn't speak the language here, I wasn't from this land, I faced huge obstacles, and even so, here I am, I survived," he said.

In 2016, Cruz moved into a local nursing home. Costa visited her there almost every day until she entered the hospital where she died.

"Of course, I have that nagging thought that I could have done more for her or spent more time with her," he said.

But he added "I don't think I left anything unsaid, nor anything that needed doing. That's how I've been able to handle the mourning so well."

This is his quest: An actor serenades the front-line workers

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It's a stunning sound, emerging amid the clanging and the whooping and the banging and the honking at 7 p.m. each night as New Yorkers cheer front-line workers: the velvety, buttery baritone of Brian Stokes Mitchell.

For decades, Mitchell's voice has been one of the most celebrated in the Broadway theater, evoking goosebumps in musicals like "Kiss Me, Kate," for which he won a Tony, and "Man of La Mancha," in which he played Don Quixote. Now, with Broadway's houses shuttered due to the coronavirus, the voice rings out from a fifth-floor apartment on the Upper West Side — fittingly on Broadway, a couple miles up from the theater district.

"This is my quest," Mitchell sings, leaning precariously out his window, launching directly into the meatiest part of "The Impossible Dream."

"To follow that star. No matter how hopeless, no matter how far ..."

Below, and across the avenue in their apartments, neighbors cheer. But Mitchell, 62, is looking to serenade crews of ambulances, fire engines, police cars, or medical workers from the nearby urgent care facility. When they do stop and listen — as a city bus did recently — Mitchell sings directly to them. And when people clap, he sweeps his arms over the workers, as if to say: "Not me. Them."

Mitchell's gratitude, expressed nightly the last few weeks, stems from a very personal ordeal. He himself is a survivor of the coronavirus, falling ill in late March. One night, he had a fever nearing 105 degrees, and almost was hospitalized. He's been symptom-free for three weeks.

"I'd been going to the window to applaud for the health care workers like everybody else in New York," he says. "Then one night I spontaneously thought, 'Oh, I think my lungs feel like I can sing now.'"

And so, he did. He thought it would be a one-night gig. He was mistaken. People kept coming.

"To fight for the right, without question or pause, to be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause!" Mitchell smiles as he repeats the words, amazed at how appropriate they are for medical workers fighting an "unbeatable foe."

"People think it's just called 'The Impossible Dream,' but it's also called 'The Quest,'" he says. "It's not about DOING the impossible. It's about trying."

It is, of course, a terrible time for the theater community, with arts institutions suffering severe economic loss. Mitchell is chairman of The Actors Fund, which helps performing arts and entertainment profession-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 44 of 63

als. He's donating all profits from his latest album, "Plays With Music," to the fund.

When the city shut down, Mitchell was working on numerous projects. "Everything was canceled," he says. "I have no idea when they'll come back. A year? Six months? Unfortunately I think our sector will be one of the last to come back fully."

For now, though, Mitchell feels busy with his unpaid gig. "Broadway's closed, but someone's still singing on Broadway!" he quips.

His performance ends with a flourish: "And the world will be better for this, that one man, scorned and covered with scars, still strove, with his last ounce of courage, to reach the unreachable star!"

Mitchell, though, adapts the lyrics to squeeze in words like "one first responder and health-care worker." The audience cheers.

"It's three minutes," says onlooker Sari Rubin, "of me remembering that there's good in the world."

Police: Shooting at Cuban Embassy is 'suspected hate crime'

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man armed with an assault rifle was arrested after opening fire outside the Cuban Embassy in Washington early Thursday, his bullets tearing holes into the walls and pillars near the front entrance in what authorities suspect was a hate crime.

The gunfire broke out around 2 a.m. outside the embassy in northwest Washington. Metropolitan Police Department officers were called to the scene after neighbors reported hearing gunshots, authorities said. No injuries were reported.

Officers found the man, Alexander Alazo, 42, of Aubrey, Texas, armed with an assault rifle, and they and took him into custody without incident, police said.

A police report obtained by The Associated Press describes the shooting as a "suspected hate crime" and says Alazo "knowingly discharged multiple rounds from an AK-47 rifle into the Cuban Embassy." But the report also says Alazo's motivation is unknown.

Officers recovered the rifle, ammunition and a white powdery substance that was found in a small baggie after Alazo's arrest, according to the report.

Alazo was arrested on charges of possessing an unregistered firearm and ammunition, assault with intent to kill and possessing a high-capacity magazine, a U.S. Secret Service spokeswoman said.

Alazo remained in custody Thursday. It wasn't immediately clear whether he had a lawyer.

Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that embassy staff members were "safe and protected" but that the shooting caused "material damage" to the building. Photos showed large holes left in the building's facade near the front door and in pillars outside the building.

The Cuban government didn't know the suspect's potential motives, the statement said, adding that the State Department was aware of the incident.

"It is the obligation of States to adopt appropriate steps to protect the premises of diplomatic missions accredited to their country against any intrusion or damage and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity," the statement said.

Photos from the scene posted to social media showed a group of police officers outside the embassy after the shooting and investigators searching through an SUV parked there. Other images showed investigators surveying the damage in front of the ornate embassy in Washington's Adams-Morgan neighborhood, including a bullet hole in a window over the front door and damage to a flagpole and a column flanking a statue of Cuban independence hero José Martí.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police Department and the Secret Service were investigating.

Chalk marks, discipline aid mass protest in virus-era Israel

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Social distancing doesn't come naturally in Israel. But the country, known for its informal, in-your-face mentality, seems to be setting a new standard for public protests in the age of

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 45 of 63

coronavirus.

During the past two weekends, thousands of people have gathered in perfect geometric patterns in Tel Aviv's central square to comply with social distancing rules as they express their anger over the continued rule of a prime minister charged with serious crimes.

The demonstrations, resembling a vast glowing human matrix in stunning aerial photos, have become a symbol of Israel's dueling political and health challenges. They also contrast with some other hot spots of civic unrest at a time when gatherings are restricted or banned around the world.

"If we want to succeed, we need to do it the right way," said protest organizer Shikma Schwarzmann. "We obey the law."

Civic protests are common in Israel. When the government imposed movement restrictions last month, it made exceptions for protests as long as participants stayed two meters, or six feet, apart.

Schwarzmann, a particle physicist at Israel's renowned Weizmann Institute of Science, said she never intended to become a political activist but was galvanized by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's behavior. Many believe his actions, cloaked in the battle against the coronavirus, are really aimed at avoiding prosecution for corruption charges and remaining in power.

Last month, citing the coronavirus, Netanyahu's hand-picked justice minister all but shuttered the country's court system, postponing the prime minister's trial until May. The middle-of-the-night order came just two days before the trial was to begin.

Days later, a Netanyahu ally suspended parliamentary activity, temporarily preventing opponents from proceeding with legislation that could have barred the Israeli leader from serving as prime minister.

In their first act last month, Schwarzmann, her three brothers and some friends organized what they expected to be a small protest convoy. As word spread on social media, the convoy grew to hundreds of vehicles, many of them stopped by police en route to Jerusalem. Demonstrators honked horns and waved black flags from windows but remained in their cars to comply with public health instructions.

In recent weeks, the grassroots "Black Flag" movement turned its attention toward the new coalition agreement between Netanyahu and his rival Benny Gantz.

Gantz, who had vowed never to sit in a government with Netanyahu, cited the coronavirus crisis for the about-face. While Israel has largely kept its outbreak in check, over 200 people have died and its economy has been ravaged as unemployment spiked to 25%.

The protesters have held three gatherings in Tel Aviv, with volunteers telling people where to stand by marking the ground with "X's" carefully spaced over six feet apart from one another.

The X's were the idea of one of Schwarzmann's brothers, who brought a large box of chalk with him the first week. Activists have also held smaller demonstrations in Jerusalem.

The Tel Aviv protests have been vocal and visible. Participants wearing face masks hoisted Israeli and black flags, held signs reading "Crime Minister" and beamed their cellphone flashlights into the air for cameras above.

The demonstrators, estimated to be in the thousands, have been orderly. Police say there have been no arrests.

"It's nice to have nice pictures, because it gives us exposure," Schwarzmann said. "But this protest is not about beautiful pictures. The big picture in this country is not that beautiful. That's why we are protesting."

On Thursday, the Tel Aviv municipality lined the square ground with 250 stickers to help protesters, placing them 2 meters (yards) apart. The stickers say: "Protecting Democracy — Protecting our Health."

In Jerusalem, Netanyahu's supporters and opponents held counter demonstrations outside the Supreme Court, which is to decide next week on legal challenges to the coalition agreement. Both sides appeared to obey social-distancing rules.

Protests in Israel are not always so mild-mannered.

Jerusalem market vendors barred from opening their vegetable stalls recently scuffled with police. In pre-pandemic times, demonstrations by some groups, including Arab citizens, Ethiopian immigrants and ultra-Orthodox Jewish men, sometimes ended in clashes, with police accused of using a heavy hand.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 46 of 63

In the occupied West Bank and Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, security forces at times use lethal force against stone throwers.

Demonstrators in some other countries have struggled to adapt to the age of social distancing.

Russia has experienced some online protests, and anti-nuclear activists in Japan are encouraging people to protest on their balconies on May 9.

In other places, including southern Russia, Ukraine, the U.S., Germany, Lebanon and Somalia, protesters have flouted social-distancing rules.

In Hong Kong, which has banned public gatherings of more than four people, a few hundred anti-government protesters recently attempted unsuccessfully to split into small groups and were dispersed by police.

In Lebanon, hundreds of protesters set banks on fire and hurled stones at soldiers in riots triggered by a the country's financial crisis that was exacerbated by a weeks-long virus lockdown. Earlier this week, a man was killed in clashes.

Schwarzmann said she does not expect to demonstrate every week, but that activists will continue to find creative ways to protest.

A group of business owners, for instance, plans another convoy this week to press for financial help, while a good-government group is organizing another Tel Aviv demonstration on Saturday in support of the Supreme Court.

"I don't know if we will succeed. We will try at least to do things that have a chance," she said.

Army defends decision to have West Point graduation

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army's top leaders on Thursday defended their decision to bring 1,000 cadets back to the Military Academy at West Point for graduation, where President Donald Trump is slated to speak, saying that despite the coronavirus risk students would have had to return anyway to prepare for their next duty assignment.

The announcement has been criticized as a political move to get Trump on stage at the academy, where he hasn't yet given a graduation address. But Army officials said the students must return for final medical checks, equipment and training.

"We can't telecommute to combat," Gen. James McConville, the chief of staff of the Army, told Pentagon reporters when asked about the decision, which forces cadets spread out across the U.S. to travel, risking exposure on public transportation, and then land in New York, a coronavirus hot spot.

Cadets have been home since spring break in March, with their return to school delayed because of the outbreak. Only the seniors will return, and the graduation is set for June 13.

Lt. Gen. Darryl Williams, academy superintendent, said the students must return for medical and other required tasks that can only be done at the academy before they can be turned over as new officers to the Army.

He said the school will create a "safety bubble" around the cadets and build a staging base where they will arrive. All cadets will be screened and tested for the virus at the staging area and then separated into five groups that will eat and live separately. They will be quarantined for 14 days.

Williams said Keller Army Community Hospital at the base now has all the needed testing equipment, and was converted to be able to handle and quarantine virus patients.

Asked if cadets will face discipline if they can't or don't want to come back because of the virus, he said commanders will decide on a case-by-case basis.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., a member of West Point's Board of Visitors, said she expressed her concerns about the decision to Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy in a call this week.

"Trump's reckless decision to gather 1,000 Cadets at West Point for a speech puts our future military leaders at increased risk — all to stroke his own ego," said Duckworth, a retired Army helicopter pilot, who served in the Iraq war and received a Purple Heart.

McCarthy told reporters the Army wants to have a "small, safe graduation ceremony" for the cadets to

celebrate.

In contrast, the U.S. Naval Academy has announced it will hold a virtual graduation and postpone other traditional milestone events until large-scale gatherings are allowed. The academy's superintendent, Vice Adm. Sean Buck, called it a difficult decision but necessary "to safeguard the health and welfare of the entire Naval Academy family and local community."

The U.S. Air Force Academy opted to hold a scaled-down ceremony with hundreds of graduating cadets sitting in chairs eight feet apart on the school's parade field, instead of in its stadium. The ceremony was closed to visitors.

West Point's graduation ceremonies are usually held in May in a football stadium.

Workers must risk infection or losing unemployment payments

By JEFF AMY and ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Some of the millions of American workers laid off because of the coronavirus are beginning to face a tough choice — return to work and risk infection, or stay home and risk losing unemployment payments.

The decision is most pressing in states where governors have started allowing businesses such as restaurants to reopen with social-distancing restrictions.

Tyler Price, 26, was called back to his job at Del Frisco's Grille in the Nashville suburb of Brentwood. Tennessee allowed restaurants to open dining rooms at 50% capacity, with servers wearing masks and being tested for fever.

But Price, who has yet to receive any unemployment benefits, is wrestling with what to do. He said he is "highly susceptible" to respiratory illness and was hospitalized with pneumonia as a child.

"I know what it feels like to be in a hospital, to be drowning in your own lungs," said Price, who moved in with his mother near St. Louis after getting laid off. "It's horrifying. It's terrible. I don't want to find myself there."

He said waiting tables "is impossible to do under social distancing guidelines," and he would prefer to draw unemployment payments.

On Thursday, the Labor Department reported that the business shutdowns and stay-at-home orders caused by the pandemic have led 30 million Americans to file for unemployment insurance, or roughly 1 of every 6 workers.

The design of the unemployment system adds to the pressure. If an employer calls back laid-off workers, they must report to work or are likely to lose their benefits.

That's because unemployment insurance is designed to tide people over until they can get back to a job, said Michele Evermore, a senior policy analyst with the National Employment Law Project in New York.

"An unemployed worker cannot refuse suitable work and still continue to collect unemployment insurance," Evermore said. "Presumably, the job you used to have is suitable."

Fear of getting sick or worries that an employer isn't providing adequate infection protection are generally not reasons someone can file for benefits. The latter concern is getting more complicated because some businesses are lobbying to keep employees and customers from suing them over coronavirus transmission.

Lacey Ward, a hairstylist in Omaha, Nebraska, filed for unemployment benefits in mid-March and is still waiting for the first payment. She's been forced to drain her family's savings and feels increasing pressure to return to work. Still, she is worried that Gov. Pete Ricketts' decision to let salons reopen Monday could put her, her husband and two young sons at risk.

Ward, 38, said she would prefer to collect unemployment until the risk from the virus subsides and it's clearer whether she can offer services like shampooing. She co-owns the salon but makes money only off her own clients.

"I would rather be safe than sorry," Ward said. "We are not an essential field. I haven't had my hair done in three or four months at this point. But what does it matter? Who are people seeing?"

Ward said she's so concerned about spreading the virus that she plans to change clothes and wash her

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 48 of 63

hair before she returns home.

"We're playing with fire, physically touching another person," she said.

Some workers are ready to go back. Kathryn Marsilli, 33, is a manager and server at The Collins Quarter restaurant in Savannah, Georgia.

She knows she may make less at work because of reduced business and would like a way for those with fears of the virus to stay home. But she said she wants to go back out of loyalty to the owner and because she's not interested in trying to maximize her unemployment benefits.

"My future where I work is more important to me than trying to get what I can now," Marsilli said.

Other workers may be tempted to hold on to unemployment. Especially in some low-wage regions, laid-off workers may receive more money with the state benefit and the additional \$600 a week provided by Congress than they were on the job. The federal boost ends July 31.

Georgia labor officials are trying to balance the needs of business owners with the genuine concerns of workers. State Labor Commissioner Mark Butler said he's telling businesses that are easing into reopening and don't need all their employees to call in those who are willing to work and leave the others to the unemployment system.

Georgia also is allowing people to earn up to \$300 a week before it begins to eat into their state unemployment benefit, meaning workers could earn more than \$1,200 a week in total.

"It was a way we could get more people back to work at reduced hours," Butler said. "Otherwise, why would you go back to work at all?"

Jennifer Holliday is a manager at a restaurant in Oklahoma City called Zio's Italian Kitchen, which plans to reopen its dining room Friday. She said getting furloughed employees to return has been difficult. Many are not returning her phone calls or messages.

"There are some who want to just ride it out (until July) and take the unemployment," Holliday said. "They don't even have to apply" for other jobs.

Little League World Series canceled for first time

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (AP) — This year's Little League World Series and the championship tournaments in six other Little League divisions have been canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Little League President Stephen Keener announced the cancellations in a Facebook Live broadcast Thursday afternoon from league headquarters in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, saying it would be "impossible" to hold the events amid ongoing restrictions on large gatherings and travel.

The Little League World Series has been held every August since 1947 and had never been canceled before. Next year was to be the 75th playing of the tournament; that milestone has been pushed back to 2022.

"Let me tell the folks in all those communities and all the sites where we have regional qualifying tournaments how disappointed we are to have to do this, but it was inevitable," Keener said. "It would be irresponsible and impossible to bring teams and thousands of people from all over the world into the community of Williamsport as well as those six other communities that have been such great friends and supporters of ours over the years."

He added that travel restrictions would make it equally impossible to hold qualifying tournaments for international teams and to bring those teams safely to the United States.

Little League has not, however, called off the 2020 regular season. Keener said there was reason for optimism that teams could play this spring and summer, depending on restrictions in states and localities.

The annual major league game in Williamsport, which this year was to feature the Boston Red Sox and Baltimore Orioles on Aug. 23, has been canceled, MLB said.

"While the cancellation of the 2020 Little League World Series is extremely disappointing, the health and safety of all of the people involved must be the paramount consideration. We look forward to our return to Williamsport for the 2021 MLB Little League Classic," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said in a statement.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 49 of 63

Little League announced in March that the season was on hold until at least May 11 because of guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention against gatherings of 50 people or more.

After that date, Keener said, districts and leagues should look to states and localities for guidance on when or if the season can resume. He also urged districts to hold all-star tournaments to give kids at least a taste of the competition they'll be missing with World Series qualifying scrapped.

"We will be very amenable to (changing) eligibility requirements and be very flexible to allow as many kids the opportunity to play as possible for whatever can remain of the 2020 Little League season," he said.

Along with the Little League World Series, which is held in South Williamsport, the other events canceled were the World Series of Little League Softball in Greenville, North Carolina; Junior League Baseball in Taylor, Michigan; Junior League Softball in Kirkland, Washington; Senior League Baseball in Easley, South Carolina; and Senior League Softball in Sussex County, Delaware.

Sex assault allegation raises questions for Biden, Democrats

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A sexual assault allegation is Joe Biden's first big challenge as the Democrats' presidential nominee, fueling Republican attacks and leaving many in his own party in an uncomfortable bind.

Biden's campaign has denied the allegation from his former Senate staffer Tara Reade, who has said Biden assaulted her in the basement of a Capitol Hill office building in the 1990s. But the story garnered fresh attention this week after two of Reade's associates said she previously told them about elements of her allegations.

Republicans worried about President Donald Trump's increasingly precarious political standing are seizing on the allegation to portray Democrats as hypocrites who only defend women who allege wrongdoing against conservatives. They are digging in despite the fact that it could renew attention on the multiple sexual assault allegations lodged against Trump.

Democrats, meanwhile, are in an awkward position of vigorously validating women who come forward with their stories while defending the man who will be their standard-bearer in what many in the party consider the most important election of their lifetimes.

The tension is heightened because Biden himself has said nothing about the allegation.

Like many Americans, he has spent the past several weeks at home to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Biden has participated in a handful of local and national interviews, during which he wasn't asked about the allegation. He will be interviewed Friday morning on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" and is expected to face questions about the accusations.

Ahead of that appearance, Democrats urged a more forceful response.

"The campaign has issued statements, but he hasn't issued any statements in his own voice," said former Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Donna Brazile. "It's not helping, it's just damaging — not only to the person who has come forward, but it's also damaging the candidate."

Lis Smith, a top strategist on Pete Buttigieg's presidential campaign, also called on the Biden campaign to speak up.

"These accusations have not been found to be credible, so it's in the Biden campaign's interest to nip this in the bud directly and do it quickly," she said.

The November contest between Biden and Trump will be the first presidential race of the #MeToo era, which has led numerous women to come forward with allegations of sexual assault. Trump has been accused of assault and unwanted touching by numerous women, allegations he denies.

Women are a core constituency for Democrats, and Biden has a mixed history. While he wrote the Violence Against Women Act as a senator, he also came under heavy criticism for his handling of Anita Hill's Senate testimony in the 1990s. Just before he launched his 2020 campaign, several women accused him of unwanted touching, behavior for which he apologized.

Biden has pledged to pick a woman as a running mate, and the allegation has left those thought to be

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 50 of 63

in contention in a tough spot.

Stacey Abrams, the former Georgia Democratic governor candidate, said, "I believe Joe Biden," citing a New York Times investigation that she said exonerated him.

"Women deserve to be heard," she said, "but I also believe that those allegations have to be investigated by credible sources."

That echoed talking points issued by the Biden campaign to surrogates last week that were obtained by The Associated Press. They pointed to investigations by The New York Times, The Washington Post and the AP that found no other allegation of sexual assault and no pattern of sexual misconduct.

On Thursday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also defended Biden. Speaking on CNN, she said she was "satisfied with how he has responded," even as she acknowledged "it's a matter that he has to deal with."

Some Democratic donors and fundraisers say the issue has not come up in calls with party financiers. Others worry that it could be used against Biden, much as Hillary Clinton's private email server and the activities of the Clinton Foundation were wielded against her by Trump.

Some, most notably women, say they are paying close attention to the allegations, which gave them pause.

Alex Sink, a donor and former Democratic nominee for governor of Florida, said she was "not happy" to read about the allegations against Biden. While she still plans to vote for him, she worried his campaign was too quick to categorically deny Reade's story.

"They put themselves immediately out on a limb by saying, 'It didn't happen, we categorically deny it, it's not true,'" Sink said.

Some female Democratic operatives expressed concerns the allegation is particularly damaging because it's an indictment of Biden's central campaign rationale: that he provides a moral counter to Trump and that the election is a "battle for the soul of America."

"The stakes could not be higher for defeating Donald Trump — but at the same time, I think we have to apply a consistent standard for how we treat allegations of sexual assault, and also be clear-eyed about how Donald Trump will use these allegations in the general election campaign," said Claire Sandberg, who worked as Bernie Sanders' organizing director.

The silence from the Biden campaign has given Republicans an opening on an issue that was, in 2016, more fraught for the GOP, when Trump was asked to answer for the more than two dozen women who alleged varying levels of sexual assault and harassment. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told Fox News on Thursday that Biden will "have to participate in releasing all the information related to" the allegation, a stance he didn't take when Trump faced misconduct accusations.

The GOP argues Democrats aren't being consistent, pointing to aggressive questioning and coverage of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh when he faced an allegation of sexual assault.

Speaking about the allegation for the first time on Friday, Trump said Biden "should respond" before proceeding to criticize the treatment of Kavanaugh as "an absolute disgrace to our country."

Steve Guest, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee, said "the left, and their media allies, has one standard for Republicans and another standard for Democrats like Joe Biden."

"The double standard," he said, "is appalling."

'And then, boom': Outbreak shows shaky ground as Texas opens

By TONY GUTIERREZ, JAMIE STENGLE and PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

PARIS, Texas (AP) — Barely a week ago, rural Lamar County could make a pretty good argument for Texas' reopening on Friday.

Only a handful of the 50,000 residents here, right on the border with Oklahoma, had tested positive for the coronavirus. None had died. The mayor of Paris, Texas — a pit stop for drivers passing through to snap a selfie with the city's miniaturized Eiffel Tower — had drive-thru virus testing in the works, just to give locals peace of mind. Some wore masks but many saw little reason to bother.

Then an outbreak at a nursing home turned up over the weekend.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 51 of 63

Now at least 65 people are infected, and everything has changed. A courier drove 11 hours through the night to pick up testing kits and stores are second-guessing reopening as Lamar County becomes a cautionary tale of the fragility of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott's plan to get Texas back in business faster than many states. And on the eve of every retailer, restaurant and movie theater being allowed to let customers back in the door, Texas set a single-day record high for fatalities Thursday with 50.

"We don't know what it's going to do here," said Taylor Wright, owner of Aden Ann's, a women's boutique in Paris. Word of the sudden outbreak at Paris Healthcare Center, she said, shelved her plans to reopen over fears of exposing her staff and family.

"We don't know where it's all spreading," she said.

The whiplash in Paris from healthy outlier to overnight hot spot illustrates the balancing act states are taking on as they begin relaxing public health restrictions, particularly in places with Republican governors, who broadly support President Donald Trump's determination to get the U.S. economy back up and running.

In Texas, Abbott's instinct throughout the crisis has been to govern from the middle ground, reflected in his reluctance early on to issue statewide stay-at-home orders that soured conservative activists. Democrats who control Texas' booming big cities, meanwhile, have praised him for shaking loose protective gear from a stretched-thin supply chain, but the speed at which Abbott is now hitting the reset button is making some fidget.

Like many governors, Abbott is taking a piecemeal approach to rolling back restrictions. Counties with fewer than five active cases of COVID-19 can reopen businesses at 50% capacity, which Abbott on Monday said would apply to nearly half of Texas' 254 counties. Everywhere else — which is where the vast majority of Texas' nearly 30 million people live — can open back up at 25% capacity. Beaches in Texas are reopening this weekend, while hair salons, gyms and bars remain closed.

Up until last weekend, Lamar County looked like a contender to begin to reopen under the loosest restrictions. There had been just eight cases of coronavirus as of April 23, and six of those had recovered.

"And then, 'boom,'" Paris Mayor Steve Clifford said.

The first positive case at the nursing home appeared the very next day. "It hits us like right between the eyes, and all of a sudden we have this really huge, huge outbreak."

Now Clifford, a radiologist, worries about a second wave. He worries about getting more testing kits, which has been a chronic problem that may have masked the true number of cases in his city from the start. He had purchased 1,500 antibody tests — a big gesture for a city of 25,000 — and did a trial run of drive-thru testing April 23, in preparation for opening up for three days this week.

The nursing home outbreak scuttled those plans. One resident has died, but Clifford said if Texas doesn't open back up soon, "every business in my city is going to go bankrupt and no one will have a job, and then there will be poverty."

Texas has reported 27,000 cases and more than 750 deaths linked to the virus. Experts said a one-day spike in deaths is no cause for alarm on its own, since it could reflect a lag in reporting or patients who succumbed after battling the disease for weeks.

But as Abbott targets May 18 as the date for peeling back restrictions even more, they also worry it's rushed.

"It seems a little bit jumping the gun. It seems a little fast, for sure," said Dr. Diana Cervantes, an epidemiologist at the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

It hasn't come fast enough for John Bratcher, whose restaurant and beer garden, named 107, off the town square in Paris has been pushed to the breaking point. Money is tight despite having kept the kitchen open for to-go orders. He wishes the governor would let his outdoor patio, which sways Saturday nights with live music, accommodate at least a half-full crowd again.

"He's trying to take into consideration all areas of Texas," Bratcher said. "And that's a tough one."

Pandemic brings fortunes to Amazon - and headaches too

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Retail Writers

Amazon has spent years honing the business of packing, shipping and delivering millions of products to doorsteps around the world.

Now it has a captive audience.

With much of the globe in various stages of a lockdown because of the coronavirus pandemic, the world's largest online retailer has become a lifeline to many shoppers. But it is also grappling with delivery delays and mounting complaints from workers who worry about contagion while on the job.

The company's website hit 2.54 billion visitors for the entire month of March, according to online research company Comscore. That marks a 65% jump from the same period last year. Amazon will report quarterly earnings on Thursday, providing a first glimpse into its financial performance during the pandemic.

Discounters like Walmart and Dollar General that sell essential products have seen their shares soar 8% and 15% respectively. But Amazon has been a standout, with its stock up 22% so far this year. That's in contrast to the S&P, which has slid 11%. Amazon is also hiring 175,000 more workers at a time when many businesses have cut back and are seeking federal aid.

At the same time, Amazon's vast empire is showing cracks. Deliveries that used to take just hours to arrive can instead take weeks or even months. High demand items like toilet paper and paper towels are frustratingly out of stock.

Probably the biggest issue facing the \$1.1 trillion company is persistent complaints by warehouse workers of grueling hours of backbreaking work with little protection against catching the coronavirus. A growing number of infections has increased pressure on the company to take steps that could further slow down operations, including shutting down some of its warehouses and easing productivity quotas.

"Amazon has gone from a nice-to-have to a necessity," said Jon Reily of Isobar, a global digital agency. "It's becoming a public utility like the electric company or the water company. But they're putting pressure on workers. And workers are scared."

The most dramatic fallout came in France when a court ordered Amazon last week to stop delivering non-essential products for a month while it works out better worker safety measures. An appeals court upheld the ruling, although it expanded the number of products the company is allowed sell. Amazon responded by closing all its French warehouses, saying it is too complicated to separate out its activities.

Small groups of workers have staged walkouts at Amazon warehouses in New York, Chicago and Detroit, demanding that the facilities be closed for deep cleaning after workers there tested positive for the virus. Kentucky's governor ordered a warehouse in Shepherdsville closed for several days last month after workers there got infected.

Amazon has refused to say how many workers have fallen ill. It says it has stepped up protection measures, ramping up cleaning, implementing temperature checks, racing to distribute masks, staggering shifts and spreading out tables in break rooms. It is also allowing any worker who feels unsafe to stay home without pay through April, while offering a \$2 hourly pay bump for those who stay on the job.

Amazon also says it's developing an internal lab that could potentially provide coronavirus tests for all employees, even those without symptoms.

It's unclear how many of Amazon's workers are staying home without pay or how many have been put into isolation because of contact with infected workers. But employees at some warehouses say absences are common.

Guiselle Diaz, 23, said she has not reported to her job at the Staten Island warehouse for weeks because she worries her asthma makes her vulnerable and she fears passing the virus to her 81-year-old grandmother, who lives with her.

"A lot of people are afraid, and a lot of people have conditions that stop them from going," Diaz said.

Amazon's competitors have faced similar challenges with delays, product scarcity and worker discontent. Walmart faced calls to step up safety measures after two workers from the same store contracted the virus and died. Some workers at grocery delivery services Instacart and Shipt, which is owned by Target, have walked off their jobs to demand greater safeguards against the virus.

Many shoppers have been forgiving of Amazon, in large part because there are few better alternatives for getting essentials online.

"That's the only place you can shop for most everything you need," said Marlina Fol, a caregiver in Manhattan, who said she was able to buy masks and hand sanitizer from Amazon in early March but now struggles to get a window for grocery delivery from Whole Foods, which Amazon acquired two years ago.

Amazon accounts for about 40% of online sales in the U.S., according to eMarketer, an online research firm. It has developed fierce loyalty among its more than 110 million U.S. Prime members, who pay \$129 a year to get practically anything shipped to them in up to two days. That accounts for half of American households. Many experts believe Amazon is only picking up more subscribers during the pandemic and expect its dominance to grow further.

The company is also providing essential cash flow to third-party sellers who've seen their physical stores closed because of lockdowns. Aaron Krahlung, whose vitamin store in Waldorf, Maryland, has been shuttered since mid-March, has been able to pay the rent for his business and other bills because of income he's received from selling home accessories on Amazon.

"Everything would have come down to a screeching halt," Krahlung said. "It's helped me cover all overhead without freaking out."

Craig Johnson, president of retail consultancy Customer Growth Partners, says Amazon has a "high class problem" considering how many other stores have gone dark.

"Given all that is going on, they have done remarkably well," Johnson said. "Yes, there are glitches. But there are glitches all over. We have never been through this."

A coronavirus drug seems to work. What's next?

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

News that an experimental drug seems to be the first effective treatment for the new coronavirus has unleashed a flurry of interest – and a clamor to know how soon it might be available.

Talk turned Thursday to how quickly the federal Food and Drug Administration might act on Gilead Sciences's remdesivir after preliminary results from a major study found it shortened the recovery time by an average of four days for people hospitalized with COVID-19.

"You do now have a drug that you have proven can actually work on the virus," the National Institutes of Health's Dr. Anthony Fauci told The Associated Press.

"Will it be an overwhelming cure? No, of course not," Fauci said. But with its use, "you will free up hospital beds, you will take less stress on the health care system."

No drug currently is approved for treating the virus, which has killed more than 230,000 people worldwide since it emerged late last year.

When independent experts monitoring the study called with the news that the drug was working, study leader Dr. Andre Kalil of the University of Nebraska said he was "almost speechless" with joy.

Here are some questions about the results and next steps.

Q: How much does the drug help?

A: Remdesivir reduced the time patients were in the hospital by 31% to 11 days on average versus 15 days for those just given usual care, preliminary results of the study found.

The drug also might be reducing deaths, although that's not certain from the partial results revealed so far.

About 8% of those on the drug died versus 11.6% of the comparison group, but the difference is not large enough for scientists to say for sure that the drug was the reason.

Q: What about folks with milder illness?

A: Remdesivir so far has only been tested in people with moderate to severe illness who were hospitalized and got it through an IV.

Even among those in the study there was "a very big span of illness," from people just needing a little extra oxygen to those requiring breathing machines, said Dr. Elizabeth Hohmann, who enrolled 49 patients in the study at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 54 of 63

"We need more information to see how best to use it going forward" and which types of patients get the most benefit, she said.

Q: When will it be available and for whom?

A: The drug is not yet approved anywhere in the world for any use. The FDA could make it immediately available through an "emergency use authorization," which speeds experimental drugs, tests and other medical products to patients during public health crises. Under the authorization, the agency can waive the usually rigorous standards necessary for drug approval and instead approve drugs whose potential benefits outweigh their risks.

The FDA has already done that for hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug President Donald Trump has touted for COVID-19, despite no clear evidence it works.

Fauci said on NBC's "Today" show Thursday morning that he expects remdesivir to get emergency use approval "really quickly," and that he spoke with FDA commissioner Stephen Hahn about it Wednesday evening.

Q: How much remdesivir is there and what will it cost?

A: Gilead has or is close to having 140,000 treatment courses now and will donate them, Chairman Daniel O'Day said in a letter to the public Wednesday night. The company aims to have made a total of 500,000 treatment courses by October and more than 1 million by December.

Gilead's own testing, also revealed on Wednesday, suggests that five days of treatment are as good as 10, so the estimates of how many people can be treated with the available supply likely can be doubled, he added.

Q: How might having a treatment affect the impact of the pandemic?

A: Having to spend less time in the hospital reduces the risk patients will develop complications, such as other infections, or spread the virus to health care workers, Kalil said.

Those benefits extend not just to the patients who receive the drug but to others as well, said Dr. Aneesh Mehta, who enrolled 103 patients on the study at Emory and other Atlanta hospitals

"We create more availability in our hospitals," and can take care of more patients with other medical problems, including those who have been forced to delay surgeries for cancer, bad hearts and other maladies, Mehta said.

Q: What about other drugs in testing?

A: Remdesivir will become the standard of care and any other potential treatments will now have to be tested against or in combination with it, Fauci said.

He recalled AZT, the first drug shown to help people with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. That drug by itself proved not terribly strong, but it led to a host of others being developed and the notion of combination treatments that are used now for HIV, tuberculosis and other diseases.

Dr. Max Parmar, director of the clinical trials unit at University College London, said it was likely remdesivir would need to be combined with other treatments to more successfully treat COVID-19. The study "suggests remdesivir could be the backbone of treatment, but other drugs may be needed," he said.

Q: Will having a treatment cause people to ease up on social distancing and other measures meant to limit the spread?

A: "I hope not," Fauci said. "This is not a knockout punch. This is not a cure."

Turtle Recall: Derby dashed, turtles go in slow, steady race

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

Losing the Kentucky Derby has left race fans shell-shocked.

The first Saturday in May has yielded to the legs of a bunch of slowpokes: Seattle Slow headlines a field of turtles — yes, turtles — that will race in the Kentucky Turtle Derby.

Call it, the slowest eight minutes in sports.

The race is more methodical marathon than mad dash to the finish — though the victor can win at the line by a turtleneck rather than a nose — and is just one more offbeat sport that has had a moment dur-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 55 of 63

ing the coronavirus pandemic.

The Derby, America's longest continuously held sports event, had been scheduled for May 2. It will now be run Sept. 5, kicking off Labor Day weekend. It's the first time the Derby won't be held on its traditional first Saturday in May since 1945, when it was run June 9. The federal government suspended horse racing nationwide for most of the first half of the year before World War II ended in early May, but not in time to hold the first leg of the Triple Crown that month.

Looking for a slower substitute, the first Kentucky Turtle Derby was hatched.

The Courier-Journal headline from 1945 read: "167 Turtles Arrive for Races Saturday" and about 6,500 fans filled the Jefferson County Armory for the 8 p.m. post time. The event went down like this: 20 turtles were herded into seven qualifying races and the winners went on to compete in a 20-foot finale.

The Kentucky Derby Museum reported that Broken Spring paid \$2.50 on his win and \$8,000 was raised to support a local children's health charity.

With Old Forester signed on as a sponsor, Saturday's race will run at 7 p.m. on YouTube.com/OldForester.

The sounds may be familiar for Derby fans: Triple Crown announcer Larry Collmus is calling the race and bugler Steve Buttlerman will serenade viewers prior to the turtles taking off.

"I don't think I've called a race that's eight minutes long," Collmus said. "I'm going to have to drink plenty of water to prepare for that one. With the Kentucky Derby, there's months of preparation getting to know all the horses, getting the names in your head. These turtles, they're going to be a little bit new to me."

The Derby was first run in 1875 and has gone uninterrupted, even through the Great Depression and World Wars I and II. In 1943, there were travel restrictions imposed by World War II and no out-of-town tickets were sold. Still, the Derby went on, with Count Fleet winning in front of 65,000. The colt won the Triple Crown that year.

Yes, in the slow-and-steady-wins-the-race tradition of turtles, the event is finally back.

The turtle race will actually be pre-taped in Chicago with the likes of Sir-Hides-A-Bunch, American Toruga and Galapa-GO! in the field. There was no immediate word if Leonardo, Michelangelo, Donatello or Raphael would be eligible to compete.

"It is weird, but there's been a lot of weird going on the last couple of months in this country," Collmus said. "It will be like the Derby broadcast. Just turtles instead."

And one big shell-abrasion at the end.

VIRUS DIARY: In a morning run, a tonic for pandemic anxiety

ALINA HARTOUNIAN Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — My alarm goes off shortly after 6 a.m. I'm usually up before then, lit by the glow of my iPhone, rifling through my inboxes, mindlessly scrolling feeds that don't matter.

As I pad out of bed, the house is quiet and I try to be too. I've laid out all my gear the night before in the kitchen: top, running tights, socks and the gizmos that will monitor the concrete route I've pattered down for years. My water bottle is full but my stomach is empty, so I scarf down one of my kids' fig bars.

My runs in the past have offered me freedom of head space, a churning meditation that declutters the mind to make room for problem-solving. Now, in the coronavirus era, they take on added importance.

They are frequently my only time outside of a house brimming with responsibility: work calls and obligations, two demanding children, one who just turned 5. (Her party was to be held at a playground I regularly run past, now swaddled in yellow tape.)

Sometimes, before I hit the pavement, I'll risk peering in to see whether my 3-year-old needs his blankets rearranged. He almost always does.

I run on Scottsdale, Arizona's, greenbelt: a stretch of golf courses, parks, ponds and playgrounds that runs for miles up the middle of the city.

In this new normal, my runs are more of a calculation. Does this narrow path provide me six feet of social distance? Does wiping away a bead of sweat count as touching my face? If I cough, could I unknowingly leave a cloud of contaminants behind me? I only use my elbows to touch water fountains or crosswalk

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 56 of 63

buttons.

With every footfall, I realize how lucky I am to still have this piece of my routine. Parks around the world are shuttered. I often find myself thinking what I would do if outdoor activity was more strictly limited. How many laps up and down my driveway would I have to run to make up my miles? Am I so dependent on my runs that I'd do that? Probably.

On the greenbelt, I still nod to familiar faces whose names I don't know. The elderly man with a U.S. Air Force veterans baseball cap and a cane he carries instead of using, who always smiles and says, "Morning." The spandex-encased runners who are slightly faster than I am (not that I care). The woman with a baby carrier-like contraption for her dog, which is almost always empty while the furball prances ahead.

The pandemic has brought out new faces as well, many evicted from gyms shuttered by the virus. A man and woman have staked a claim on a scrap of grass near the pond and do exercises I don't understand, which involve kicking and jump ropes. Dog walkers eager for fresh air crowd the path more than before.

The mornings are crisp and fresh now, but that'll change. The Phoenix area's stifling heat is descending and will eventually snuff out much outdoor activity. I dread the idea of sheltering in place when that place is so hellishly hot. But I also look forward to a time when the desert sun chases away all these greenbelt interlopers who bring unwelcome risk to my runs.

When the run is over I trade the fresh morning air for the stuffy chaos of our home.

"Smelly mommy!" the youngest cries gleefully. He's not wrong.

I immediately wash my hands and wipe down my equipment. Then I wait for endorphins to rush over me to help me face another day of mounting work, guilt and bone-rattling anxiety.

"Virus Diary," an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus saga through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. Follow Alina Hartounian, visual editor for the AP's national beat teams, on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ahartoun>

With European economy in record drop, central bank gives aid

By DAVID McHUGH Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — The European Central Bank is stepping up its efforts to cushion the economy against a record downturn that the bank's president, Christine Lagarde, said was "of a magnitude and speed that are unprecedented in peacetime."

The monetary authority for the 19 countries that use the euro currency on Thursday lowered the interest rate on the cheap, long term loans it provides to banks. It also offered a raft of new credit lines to banks at a negative interest rate, meaning banks get paid a bonus as an incentive to borrow and lend.

The idea is to support banks so they can keep lending to businesses, thereby helping the economy, which contracted by a record 3.8% in the first three months of the year from the quarter before, according to new official figures.

That decline is the biggest since statistics started being kept in 1995 and worse than the drop in 2009 during the Great Recession that followed the collapse of U.S. investment bank Lehman Brothers.

"Measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus, COVID-19, have largely halted economic activity in all the countries of the euro area and across the globe," Lagarde told an empty press room at the ECB's headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, after a meeting conducted by teleconference among members of its rate-setting council.

While Europe's economic activity is plunging amid the shutdowns that idled everything from florists to factories, the labor market is holding up thanks to generous government support. Unemployment rose only slightly in March, to 7.4% from 7.3% in February, statistics agency Eurostat said. Millions of workers are being supported by temporary short-hours programs under which governments pay most of their salaries in return for companies agreeing not to lay people off.

U.S. unemployment rose to 4.4% in March from 3.5% in February, though the eventual picture is likely far worse. First-time claims for unemployment benefits have skyrocketed in the U.S. as 30 million people

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 57 of 63

applied through the first three weeks of April.

The statistics in Europe likely understate the depth of the fall since shutdown measures were mostly put in place only in March, the last of the three months in the quarter.

Figures from eurozone countries France and Italy showed both fell into recession, defined as two quarters of economic contraction. The French economy shrank 5.8%, the most since the country's statistics agency began keeping the figures in 1949. The drop was particularly pronounced in services that involve face to face interaction, such as hotels and restaurants, retail stores, transportation and construction.

The new ECB measures come on top of already announced stimulus efforts that include an ongoing 750 billion euros (\$825 billion) in bond purchases. Those purchases help drive down market borrowing rates for companies and governments. In particular, they have kept a lid on financing costs for heavily indebted Italy, one of the countries hardest hit by the outbreak.

The bank did not cut its interest benchmarks, although the new credit offers amount to the same thing, since they lower the cost to banks of borrowing from the central bank - on the condition they loan the money to businesses so they can keep operating and paying their employees and suppliers.

The ECB did not change the amount of the bond purchases but said it was "fully prepared" to increase their size "by as much as necessary and for as long as needed." ECB purchases of government bonds help stabilize the eurozone since governments will be borrowing heavily to pay for stimulus and because of falling tax receipts due to the virus outbreak.

The ECB has also eased requirements for bank capital cushions, relief that means banks are not pressed to restrict lending in order to shore up their own finances. The central bank made it easier for banks to tap cheap credit directly from the central bank by loosening collateral requirements.

The ECB had already lowered its key interest rate benchmarks to record lows before the virus outbreak during a period of sub-par growth in Europe.

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

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at nonvirus stories in the news:

1. NEW LIGHT SHED ON SEALS' MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN In efforts to free Mark R. Frerichs, a 57-year-old military contractor from Illinois, Navy commandos raided a village and detained suspected Taliban-linked militants, the AP has learned.

2. WHO MIGHT PLAY SPOILER IN NOVEMBER Running as a Libertarian, Michigan Rep. Justin Amash faces almost impossibly steep odds, but his candidacy can produce unpredictable twists.

3. BIDEN AND SANDERS REACH DELEGATE DEAL: Presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden has agreed to let former primary rival Bernie Sanders keep hundreds of delegates he would otherwise forfeit by dropping out of the presidential race.

4. NETFLIX FILM WINS BIG AT TRIBECA Alice Wu's "The Half of It," a teenage spin on Cyrano de Bergerac, is the winner of the top award from the Tribeca Film Festival.

5. ALABAMA STUDENT NAMES MARS HELICOPTER — NASA chose Ingenuity, the name submitted by Vaneesa Rupani, for the helicopter that will be deployed to the red planet later this summer.

Analysis: NCAA moves toward athlete compensation, but how?

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

The foundation is in place for the NCAA to drastically alter its definition of amateurism.

By this time next year, college athletes may have the official OK to become paid sponsors, able to earn money for their names, images and likenesses without compromising their eligibility.

Remember when Ohio State players got into trouble with the NCAA in 2010 for trading their own memorabilia and gear for tattoos? Or when Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel signed autographs for money in 2013 and everyone wondered what the punishment might be?

Under the new rules being drawn up across the NCAA, all that would most likely be fine. A report from

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 58 of 63

the NCAA's Federal and State Legislation Working Group laid out how we got here, what has been agreed upon and what is still to be determined.

There is still a lot to figure out, including how, exactly, to draw up "guardrails sufficient to ensure that ... the role of third parties in student-athlete NIL activities is regulated."

Some questions and answers as the NCAA moves to address athlete compensation, a thorny issue for the nation's biggest college sports governing body for more than 60 years.

Q: Who will be permitted to pay the athletes?

A: The best way to answer that is by laying out who will not be permitted to pay the athletes: the NCAA, the schools and the conferences.

That doesn't mean everybody else is good to go: The NCAA working group said member schools should consider prohibiting athletes from promoting things like alcohol, tobacco and sports gambling. There is also a recommendation to limit what athletes can do with shoe and apparel companies — a source of angst for college sports for a long time.

Q: What about boosters?

A: Boosters likely won't be disqualified immediately from working with athletes. The NCAA plans to monitor deals athletes make and require them to disclose details, perhaps through a clearinghouse.

Q: Will this be enough to satisfy lawmakers, both state and federal?

A: No. The NCAA is trying to fend off attempts by states to force the association into opening up the free market for athletes. The NCAA is also hoping to get help from Congress in the form of a federal law to override anything states come up with and to provide uniformity.

Reactions to the NCAA's announcement from lawmakers ranged from cautiously optimistic (California state Sen. Nancy Skinner, the primary driver of the state's law on the topic, said it was a step in right direction) to downright dismissive (Florida state Rep. Chip LaMarca said: "If the NCAA's goal was to limit access, then they have accomplished their goal.").

Q: When will Congress get around to dealing with the NCAA?

A: Hard to know.

Sens. Chris Murphy of Connecticut and Mitt Romney of Utah are leading a group of lawmakers examining compensation for college athletes and related issues. There was momentum for senators to take action. Then a global pandemic hit. This is still a big issue for Murphy and others, but whether it can move forward during a public health and economic crisis remains to be seen.

Q: Is the NCAA angling for an antitrust exemption?

A: Not directly, but when you ask Congress to protect your organization from state laws and future lawsuits challenging your rules, it sounds a lot like you are asking for antitrust exemption.

Q: Will athletes be capped on what they can earn?

A: No, according to Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith, who led the group that produced the recommendations approved by the NCAA Board of Governors.

That is notable since the NCAA is still fighting the appeal of an antitrust case in which the plaintiffs claimed the association and its member schools and conferences have illegally capped compensation to athletes at the value of a scholarship.

Q: Can we expect to see athletes in their jerseys touting the local sandwich shop?

A: No. Athletes will not be allowed to use their school logo or brand in their personal deals.

Q: Is the NCAA football video game coming back?

A: Not under these recommendations. That would require a group licensing deal between the players and the schools, and the NCAA is steering clear of that.

Poll: Many Americans feel lonely and anxious during pandemic

By TAMMY WEBBER and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

OAK PARK, Ill. (AP) — Americans are feeling isolated and anxious. They fear they or their loved ones will get sick. They worry about their jobs.

As the coronavirus pandemic upends lives across the United States, it's taking a widespread toll on people's mental health and stress levels, according to a survey that finds a majority of Americans felt nervous, depressed, lonely or hopeless in the past week.

"It's just so overwhelming, the fear and anxiety," said 49-year-old Julie Hitchcock of Milwaukee, who had pneumonia last fall. She spent two weeks on a ventilator and 10 weeks away from work, only to be furloughed because of the coronavirus shutdown shortly after resuming work full time.

Her furlough ended last week. She rides city buses to and from her job at an international education nonprofit, and that drives her fears that she could get sick or unknowingly have the virus and infect someone else, who then might end up on a ventilator.

The poll conducted last week is the first wave of the COVID Impact Survey by NORC at the University of Chicago for the Data Foundation. The survey aims to provide an ongoing assessment of the nation's mental, physical and financial health during the pandemic.

Roughly two-thirds of Americans say they felt nervous, depressed, lonely or hopeless on at least one of their past seven days, the poll found. For each of the four emotions, close to 2 in 10 Americans said they felt that way on three or more days. Fourteen percent said they felt reactions such as sweating, becoming nauseous or hyperventilating when thinking about their experience with the pandemic.

But the survey also found some bright spots as Americans cope with the pandemic: About one-fifth report more frequent texting, phone calls or online contact with friends and family.

Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp of Indianapolis, a master gardener who makes her living through freelance writing, speaking to gardening groups and designing flower boxes, said the economic uncertainty is difficult, but the social isolation is worse.

She had begun antidepressants a year ago after the death of a sister and the loss of writing and editing jobs. She was doing better until the pandemic cost her a job at a garden center and all of her spring and summer speaking engagements, and then took away her social life. She called her doctor this week after spending last weekend moving only between the bed and couch.

"I've always seen myself as an affectionate person who likes to socialize, but you can't do that," said Meyers Sharp. She lives alone but speaks to friends and her son via text and phone, and meets with a gardening communicators' organization and a book club on the video conferencing app Zoom. But, she said, "You need a hug every once in a while."

The survey finds women more likely than men to say they had felt at least one of the distressful emotions in the past week, 71% to 56%.

Emotional distress also was especially common among younger adults. Some 81% of Americans under 30, along with 70% of those age 30 through 44, report feeling nervous, depressed, lonely or hopeless at least one day in the past week. That compares with 62% of those age 45 through 59 and 48% of adults 60 and over.

Physical distancing, the lack of predictability, economic upheaval and the inability to mourn the death of loved ones in traditional ways all are taking their toll, said Dr. Karestan Koenen, a professor of psychiatric epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health.

"We can't do all the normal stuff," said Koenen. "It feels like we're more alone."

She said stress among parents is high whether they work from home or have to leave because "all the things parents worked to set up in their lives have been taken away from them" as schools and day cares closed. What's more, they're worried about their children staying on track in school and that they're safe and happy, said Koenen. She advises people to stick to a schedule and seek help if they're feeling overwhelmed.

Phil Schmitter, pastor at Christ the King Catholic Church in Flint, Michigan, spends much of his time talk-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 60 of 63

ing to shut-in and vulnerable parishioners. Some members of his predominantly African American parish have been infected with the virus and some have died, while others worry about how they'll pay bills.

"I've found that people are really struggling and they're getting more and more angry," said Schmitter. He said he has been "talking people down" by phone or on Facebook.

"They're stressed out and finding it hard to sleep ... they're afraid to go out for groceries," he said. Many are feeling cut off because they used computers at now-shuttered libraries to get news or find out about health care and other benefits.

Perhaps as a result of the emotional effects of physical and social distancing, the poll finds Americans saying they more regularly reach out to friends and family now than they did before the start of the outbreak.

Overall, 65% say they are communicating with friends and family by phone, text, email or online "basically every day" in the past month, compared with 54% who said they did that in a typical month before. About another one-quarter, 24%, say they are in touch a few times a week.

Sixty-nine-year-old Barbara Hanc of Dudley, Massachusetts is a widow who lives alone with three cats. She said she is grateful for good friends and neighbors who provide emotional support and virtual companionship during the shutdown.

"Just reaching out and talking to somebody makes you realize you're not alone. There are people who love, support and care for you," she said. "I have to look at it as, 'This situation is temporary' ... and I'm setting my sights on the future."

SEALs tried to locate US citizen taken by Afghan militants

By JAMES LAPORTA and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the days following the January capture of an American contractor in Afghanistan, Navy SEAL commandos raided a village and detained suspected members of a Taliban-linked militant network, The Associated Press has learned.

U.S. intelligence agents also tried to track the cellphones of the man and his captors, but the trail went cold. There has been little public discussion by the U.S. government of Mark R. Frerichs' case, even as American negotiators arranged prisoner exchanges as part of their efforts to reach a peace deal with the Taliban.

Little is known about the circumstances surrounding the abduction of the contractor from Illinois. But the previously unreported operation, described by multiple U.S. officials over the past month, sheds new light on the American government's efforts to locate him soon after he went missing and to collect intelligence aimed at his recovery.

A senior U.S. government official and a second Defense Department official spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. The Pentagon and U.S. Special Operations Command declined to comment on the operation.

The new details emerge as violence and political infighting in Kabul threaten to scuttle the peace deal between the Taliban and the U.S. Last month, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo voiced frustrations after a failed attempt to mediate a power struggle between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his political rival, Abdullah Abdullah.

Frerichs' father, Art, said in a statement that though he has faith in President Donald Trump and Pompeo, "I just need them to tell their people negotiating with the Taliban that America won't lift a finger until my son comes home. He's a veteran. This is America. We don't leave people behind."

Though no formal demands are known to have been made, U.S. officials believe Frerichs was captured by members of the Haqqani network. The militant group is aligned with the Taliban in Afghanistan and was designated as a foreign terrorist organization in 2012.

The Haqqanis are known to carry out assassinations and kidnappings for ransom, but Taliban leadership has not acknowledged Frerichs' abduction.

"The first 96 hours is crucial," the senior U.S. government official briefed on the case told the AP. "If they're not recovered in the first few days, it becomes harder every minute after."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 61 of 63

In late January, the SEALs that would become involved in Frerichs' case spent the latter part of the month working to recover the bodies of two American service members who died when their aircraft crash-landed in Ghazni in central Afghanistan, an operation that had been complicated by inclement weather.

The weather also delayed the SEAL operation to gather intelligence on Frerichs' whereabouts. Once the weather cleared, the SEAL team loaded onto helicopters on the night of Feb. 3, and flew to the undisclosed location, said the senior U.S. government official, who has direct knowledge of the raid. The official declined to disclose the exact location of the province for operational security reasons.

The senior U.S. government official and the Defense Department official with knowledge of the raid said the SEAL platoon was not met with Taliban resistance and that once at the compound, the platoon detained several alleged Haqqani militants and uncovered a weapons cache.

The suspected Haqqani members were questioned about Frerichs' whereabouts and were ultimately turned over to the Afghan government, according to the senior U.S. government official.

There are no public indications that Frerichs, a Navy veteran, has been part of negotiations between the U.S. and Taliban leadership or that his release is part of any peace deal.

"The Taliban kidnapped my brother in January. In February, the U.S. signed a peace deal with the Taliban. My brother wasn't part of the deal. Now we are arranging for the Taliban and Afghan government to exchange thousands of prisoners," Charlene Cakora, one of Frerichs' sisters, said in a statement provided to the AP. "Why can't we make an American hostage be one of them?"

The rescue effort is being coordinated through the FBI-led, multiagency Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell. It said in a statement that it was working with its partners to ensure "that Mark Frerichs and all Americans held hostage abroad are returned home." It encouraged anyone with information about the case to come forward.

The State Department said it was aware of an American citizen taken captive in Afghanistan.

"The welfare, safety and security of Americans is the Trump administration's highest priority," the department said. "The United States will continue to push for the safe return of this and all other U.S. citizens through all relevant channels."

A former U.S. national security official who is advising the Frerichs family called on Washington peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad to resolve the situation. "He needs to understand from the top that getting an American hostage home is also part of his job. He is aware of Mark's presence, but it does not appear yet that he understands that he needs to get him home," said the former official, who insisted on anonymity to speak candidly because the official sometimes works with the Trump administration.

A representative for Khalilzad did not immediately respond to an email from the AP seeking comment.

U.S. officials believe Frerichs, 57, of Lombard, Illinois, was held for at least some time in Khost, an eastern province along the border with Pakistan and its so-called tribal regions, a mountainous area that has historically been a haven for Taliban and al-Qaeda militants.

The former national security official said that Frerichs has been in Afghanistan for about a decade working as a contractor on private commercial projects. He was not a contractor for the U.S. government, the former official said.

Rep. Michael Waltz, a Florida Republican and Army veteran who led the teams that searched for Bowe Bergdahl after the Army soldier abandoned his post in 2009 and wound up captured by the Taliban, said the Taliban frequently hide American hostages until the militants can move them over the border into Pakistan.

He said peace deal negotiations should have stopped as soon as the U.S. government learned that Frerichs was missing.

"I have real concerns about suggestions that the Taliban are serious about peace, that the Taliban are upholding their end of the deal when — as we speak today — they are holding a former Navy veteran and American citizen hostage that they took, again, during the peace negotiations," Waltz said in an interview.

The search area for Frerichs began in Khost and extended south to the province of Kandahar, the two officials said.

On Feb. 4, American intelligence officials received a report that Frerichs had possibly been moved to Quetta, Pakistan, a historical haven for the Taliban, the officials said. But the information was deemed not

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 62 of 63

credible enough to warrant a special operations mission, according to the senior U.S. government official.

The report also conflicted with signals intelligence U.S. officials had at the time. Signals intelligence is information gathered from the electronic signals that are broadcast from devices like portable radios and cellphones. The information can be used to track the movements of individuals or eavesdrop on conversations, known in the spy business as low-level voice intercepts.

U.S. intelligence officials continued to receive location pings from the suspected cellphones of Frerichs and his captors, but the trail went cold on Feb. 5, according to the officials.

"Operationally, the reason why time is critical in a kidnapping is because you can close the distance quicker, ideally immediately or by utilizing sources," said the senior U.S. government official. "This is not the case right now. He could be two houses down from where he was taken and we would not know."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, May 1, the 122nd day of 2020. There are 244 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 1, 1992, on the third day of the Los Angeles riots, a visibly shaken Rodney King appeared in public to appeal for calm, pleading, "Can we all get along?"

On this date:

In 1707, the Kingdom of Great Britain was created as a treaty merging England and Scotland took effect.

In 1915, the RMS Lusitania set sail from New York, headed for Liverpool, England (it was torpedoed and sunk by Germany off the coast of Ireland six days later).

In 1931, New York's 102-story Empire State Building was dedicated. Singer Kate Smith made her debut on CBS Radio on her 24th birthday.

In 1945, a day after Adolf Hitler took his own life, Admiral Karl Doenitz effectively became sole leader of the Third Reich with the suicide of Hitler's propaganda minister, Josef Goebbels.

In 1960, the Soviet Union shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance plane over Sverdlovsk and captured its pilot, Francis Gary Powers.

In 1963, James W. Whittaker became the first American to conquer Mount Everest as he and Sherpa guide Nawang Gombu reached the summit.

In 1967, Elvis Presley married Priscilla Beaulieu at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas. (They divorced in 1973.) Anastasio Somoza Debayle became president of Nicaragua.

In 1971, the intercity passenger rail service Amtrak went into operation.

In 1982, the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee, was opened by President Ronald Reagan.

In 1991, Nolan Ryan of the Texas Rangers threw his seventh no-hitter at age 44, shutting out the Toronto Blue Jays 3-0. Rickey Henderson of the Oakland A's set a major league record by stealing his 939th base during a game against the New York Yankees.

In 2009, Supreme Court Justice David Souter announced his retirement effective at the end of the court's term in late June. (President Barack Obama chose federal judge Sonia Sotomayor to succeed him.)

In 2011, President Barack Obama announced the death of Osama bin Laden during a U.S. commando operation (because of the time difference, it was early May 2 in Pakistan, where the al-Qaida leader met his end).

Ten years ago: Pakistan-born U.S. citizen Faisal Shahzad (FY'-sul shah-ZAHD') failed in an attempt to set off a homemade bomb in an SUV parked in New York's Times Square. (Shahzad is serving a life prison sentence.) Jockey Calvin Borel steered Super Saver through the mud to win his third Kentucky Derby in four years, beating Lookin At Lucky by 2 1/2 lengths. Actress Helen Wagner, who'd played Nancy Hughes on the CBS soap opera "As the World Turns" for 54 years, died in Mount Kisco, New York, at age 91.

Five years ago: Baltimore's top prosecutor charged six police officers with felonies ranging from assault to murder in the death of Freddie Gray, who'd suffered a spinal injury while riding in a police van. Actress Grace Lee Whitney, who played Captain Kirk's assistant, Yeoman Janice Rand, on the original "Star Trek"

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 01, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 293 ~ 63 of 63

TV series, died in Coarsegold, California, at age 85.

One year ago: Tensions between Justice Department leaders and special counsel Robert Mueller's team broke into public view as Attorney General William Barr pushed back at what he called "snitty" complaints by the special counsel over Barr's handling of the report from the Trump-Russia investigation. Venezuelans heeded a call from opposition leader Juan Guaidó to fill the streets around the nation, but they were met with tear gas as security forces failed to fulfill his appeal for a widespread military uprising. A British judge sentenced WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to 50 weeks in prison for skipping bail seven years earlier and taking refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. The Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled that Olympic gold medalist Caster Semenya and other female runners with unusually high testosterone must take medication to reduce their levels of the male sex hormone in order to compete in certain events.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Judy Collins is 81. Actor Stephen Macht is 78. Singer Rita Coolidge is 75. Pop singer Nick Fortuna (The Buckingham) is 74. Actor-director Douglas Barr is 71. Actor Dann Florek is 69. Singer-songwriter Ray Parker Jr. is 66. Actor Byron Stewart is 64. Hall of Fame jockey Steve Cauthen is 60. Actress Maia Morgenstern is 58. Actor Scott Coffey is 56. Country singer Wayne Hancock is 55. Actor Charlie Schlatter is 54. Country singer Tim McGraw is 53. Rock musician Johnny Colt is 52. Rock musician D'Arcy is 52. Movie director Wes Anderson is 51. Actress Julie Benz is 48. Actor Bailey Chase is 48. Country singer Cory Morrow is 48. Gospel/rhythm-and-blues singer Tina Campbell (Mary Mary) is 46. Actor Darius McCrary is 44. Actor Jamie Dornan is 38. Actress Kerry Bishe is 36. TV personality Abby Huntsman is 34. Actress Lizzy Greene is 17.

Thought for Today: "Anyone who is satisfied to stand still should not complain when others pass him."
— Italian proverb.

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