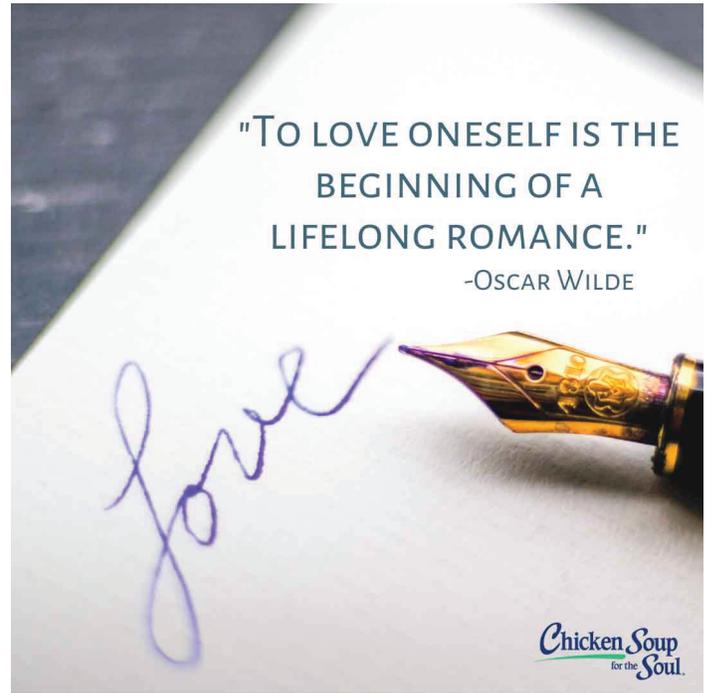


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Governor Noem to hold press conference at 1 p.m. today



The South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation presented a check for \$150,000 to Feeding South Dakota. Pictured are Ryan Eichler, President of the South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation and Matt Gassen, CEO of Feeding South Dakota. See related article on Page 5.

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 City Council Meeting Agenda

May 5, 2020 – 7:00pm

Groton Community Center

**(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE
MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL
605-397-8422)**

1. **Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1**
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. **Minutes**
3. **Bills**
4. **2019 Annual Report**
5. **First reading of Ordinance #734 Amending 4-4-1 Removing Fowl Restrictions**
6. **Reopen City Playground Equipment at Parks**
7. **Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)**
8. **Cemetery Caretaker Wage**
9. **Adjournment**

Now is not the time to panic

The Brown County EOC would like to remind everyone to please continue to practice Covid-19 guidelines set for by the CDC. Those guidelines are:

- Clean hands often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover coughs & sneezes with a tissue or inside of your elbow.
- Avoid close contact with other people, stay home when you can and practice physical distancing when out of the house.
- Clean and disinfect touched surfaces frequently.
- Wear a cloth face cover out in the public. This need to cover your mouth and nose.
- Immune compromised people need to do what is best for you.

As we have seen an increase in positive cases in Brown County, it is not time to panic, now is the time to step up our game on the above listed guidelines. As the total number of tests being performed goes up we will probably see an increase in positive cases.

Nice weather has people wanting to get out even more, along with the Governor's "back to normal" plan is just a reminder that we still need to practice and make good decisions.

Remember we got this far with the above guidelines and we need to continue with this to help us get thru this pandemic.

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Northern State University will recognize spring graduates on Saturday, May 9

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Northern State University will commemorate its 260 spring 2020 graduates on Saturday, May 9.

Though the university will not hold a traditional graduation ceremony, Northern will post a short video to Facebook and Twitter at 10:30 a.m. CST, which will address commencement and confer degrees. Diplomas will be mailed out over the summer.

Spring graduates will also have additional chances to be honored later this year:

- They will be recognized during fall 2020 homecoming, Sept. 21-26.

- They are also encouraged to take part in Northern's winter commencement ceremony on Dec. 12.

Jayleen Lier, Bath (Banking and Financial Services)*

Courtney Ullrich, Bath (Medical Laboratory Science)

Kathia Dirksen, Groton (M.S.Ed. Counseling - Clinical Mental Health)

Sydney Erickson, Groton (M.S.Ed. Teaching and Learning)

Parker Rossow, Groton (Sport Marketing and Administration)

Chance Strom, Groton (Management)

Megan Unzen, Groton (B.S.Ed. Special Education)**

Carly Wheeting, Groton (B.A. in Honoribus Communication Studies)***

Stefani Holmgren, Frederick (M.S.Ed. Teaching and Learning)

Jordan Carson, Langford (Mathematics; B.S.Ed. Mathematics)

Micah Hoellein, Mansfield (Biology)*

***Candidate for Summa Cum Laude

**Candidate for Magna Cum Laude

*Candidate for Cum Laude

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Prime Time Gala presents check to Feeding South Dakota for \$150,000

Total donations from South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation tops \$1.379 million in seven years.

While the 7th Annual Prime Time Gala that was originally planned for Saturday, June 27, 2020 will be postponed until next year, the South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation presented a check for \$150,000 to Feeding South Dakota to help procure protein for those in our state that need it the most during these unprecedented times. Of the 12.8 million pounds of food that Feeding South Dakota distributes on an annual basis, only about 10% of that is protein. High quality protein, like beef, plays an important role in overall health, including weight control, by increasing satiety and helping to build and maintain muscle mass.

"While the South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation is saddened by the postponement of the 7th Annual Prime Time Gala, we are committed to continuing our mission to provide the most vulnerable South Dakotans access to beef; the most complete and nourishing protein on earth," said Ryan Eichler, President of the South Dakota Cattlemen's

Foundation. "We are humbled and honored by the willingness of our event sponsors and producers to provide these funds in a very difficult economic time in the beef industry. The people behind our state's farms, ranches, and industry-related businesses are the most compassionate and giving people around. We are very proud to represent them and overwhelmed to facilitate this and future donations to Feeding South Dakota."

Since hosting the first Prime Time Gala in June 2014, over \$1,379,360 has been raised at the event and funds have helped to purchase and distribute over 970,213 pounds of beef for those individuals and families throughout South Dakota. These donations have been distributed to all 66 counties in the state. Annually, Feeding South Dakota provides 15.4 million meals to hungry individuals across the state.

Today, Matt Gassen, CEO of Feeding South Dakota, exclaimed, "We are incredibly grateful and completely surprised to be receiving this donation at this moment. The South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation could have easily cancelled the Prime Time Gala to tend to more pressing matters that directly impact their personal and professional lives. Feeding South Dakota finds itself amidst the largest historical crisis this organization has ever seen and yet we remain committed to our mission to feed a state in desperate need. Thank you to all that helped to make this donation possible and for your continued support to provide beef protein to many South Dakotans in need."

To continue in the spirit of raising funds for such an important mission, the South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation are now challenging the community and other organizations to join them by purchasing a raffle ticket for a chance to win a 2020 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 Duramax Crew Cab 4WD LT, donated by Billion Chevrolet of Sioux Falls.

To purchase a truck raffle ticket or for additional details about next year's Prime Time Gala & Concert that will be hosted on Saturday, June 19, 2021 featuring Little Big Town at the Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, please visit <http://SDPrimeTimeGala.com>.

Truck raffle tickets are \$100 each and there are only 1,000 tickets printed. All proceeds from the sale of the raffle tickets will directly benefit Feeding South Dakota.

The winning raffle ticket will be drawn during a virtual auction that will be held on the 7th Annual Prime Time Gala's originally scheduled date of Saturday, June 27, 2020. While the South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation and their guests are not gathering in-person for the event next month, they will be hosting a virtual auction where all proceeds from the auction will also benefit Feeding South Dakota. A second check presentation will be hosted shortly after the event closes.

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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

All of the numbers continue to move in the right direction.

We're at 1,186,700 cases in the US. The increase, both in raw number and percentage, is well below yesterday, showing a third consecutive day of decline in growth. NY leads with 324,357 cases, the second consecutive day of decline in growth rate. NJ, with 128,269 cases, shows a decline in its rate of growth. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: MA – 69,087, IL – 63,840, CA – 56,293, PA – 52,919, MI – 43,928, FL – 36,889, TX – 33,022, and LA – 29,973. These ten states account for 71% of US cases. 5 more states have over 20,000 cases, 5 more have over 10,000, 15 more + DC over 5000, 10 more + 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 CA, LA, PA, GA, MI, OH, FL, and WA. States where new case reports are increasing include IL, VA, TX, TN, MD, NC, IN, and IA. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, CO, NJ, RI, MA, DE, CT, and AR. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 68,822 deaths in the US. The growth in percentage and raw number showed declines for the second consecutive day. The US has reported at least 1000 deaths per day every day since April 2; that's a lot of people to lose. Today, we were barely over 1000; maybe one day soon we'll be below that again. NY has 24,788, NJ has 7910, MI has 4135, MA has 4090, PA has 2862, IL has 2673, CT has 2556, CA has 2296, and LA has 1991. There are 5 more states over 1000 deaths, 4 more over 500, 18 more + DC over 100, and 14 + PR, GU, VI, and MP under 100.

For a while now, I have been suggesting the things we most need while we wait around for a vaccine are testing, testing, and testing. That outlook is getting a little bit rosier. Reports show our capacity is increasing—from around 140,000 tests/day to 200,000/day. This will help. Now, over two months in, approximately 1.7% of the US population has now been tested; this is just short of the percentage of us which should be getting tested every single day in order to assure a safe social reopening of society.

Also on the testing front, there is a new test that does not rely on the collection of nasal swabs, which will be less unpleasant for the patient and safer for the health care worker collecting the specimen, not to mention requiring less PPE. The specimen collected will be saliva; the patient simply spits into a container until a sufficient sample has been collected. The new test that runs on these specimens will make vastly more tests available, and this is a good thing too. I will say, however, having once submitted a saliva specimen for lab testing, you would be surprised how long it takes to come up with very much saliva when you're collecting it. What seems like a lot in your mouth is pitifully little in a tube. This is still a good step forward.

One of the governors said, in response to complaints about restrictions on our movement, "Now is a time we decide who we are as a people. Not who we want to be, but who we are today." And he's right. Further, in making good choices about who we are today, we are also making good choices about who we will be tomorrow. It seems there really is no time like the present to actually be the person you hope people see when they look at you—down inside where only you can see. Who doesn't want "cares for others" in their self-image? You make that happen by caring for others. Starting now. Plenty of need: meet it.

And we'll talk again.

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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	May 1	May 2	May 3	May 4
Minnesota	4,181	4,644	5,136	5,730	6,228	6,663	7,234
Nebraska	3,374	3,784	4,281	4,838	5,326	5,659	6,083
Montana	451	451	453	453	455	455	457
Colorado	14,316	14,758	15,284	15,768	16,225	16,635	16,907
Wyoming	396	404	415	420	429	435	444
North Dakota	991	1,033	1,067	1,107	1,153	1,191	1,225
South Dakota	2,313	2,373	2,449	2,525	2,588	2,631	2,668
United States	1,012,583	1,040,488	1,070,032	1,104,161	1,133,069	1,157,945	1,180,634
US Deaths	58,355	60,999	63,019	65,068	66,385	67,680	68,934

Minnesota	+365	+463	+492	+594	+498	+435	+571
Nebraska	+16	+410	+497	+557	+488	+333	+424
Montana	+2	0	+2	0	+2	0	+2
Colorado	+437	+442	+526	+484	+457	+410	+272
Wyoming	+7	+8	+11	+5	+9	+6	+9
North Dakota	+49	+42	+34	+40	+46	+38	+34
South Dakota	+68	+60	+76	+76	+63	+43	+37
United States	+24,394	+27,905	+29,544	+34,129	+28,908	+24,876	+22,689
US Deaths	+2,100	+2,644	+2,020	+2,049	+1,317	+1,295	+1,254

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May 4th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from Dept. of Health Lab records

Brown County recorded six more positive cases, resulting in 65 total for the county. Of those, 41 are employees from the DemKota Beef Plant in Aberdeen. Minnehaha County recorded 28 more positive cases and 21 recovered cases.

There are two fewer people in hospitals today compared to yesterday in South Dakota and there have been no new deaths in the Dakotas in the last 24 hours.

Changes on the Community Impact Map: Beadle County from minimal spread to no spread, Clay from no spread to minimal to moderate spread and Union from minimal spread to substantial spread.

South Dakota:

Positive: +37 (2668 total) (6 less than yesterday)

Negative: +259 (16,045 total)

Hospitalized: +14 (211 total) - 69 currently hospitalized (2 less from yesterday)

Deaths: 0 (21 total)

Recovered: +31 (1830 total)

Active Cases: 817 (6 more than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett 14, Brule 59, Butte +1 (62), Campbell 9, Custer +3 (50), Edmunds 26, Grant +7 (53), Gregory 34, Haakon 17, Hanson +1 (31), Harding 1, Jackson 10, Jones 5, Kingsburg +1 (74), Mellette 12, Perkins 7, Potter 33, Tripp 57, Ziebach 6, unassigned +37 (964).

Brown: +6 positive (65 total)

Codington: +1 positive (15 total)

Hand: +1 recovered (1 of 1 recovered)

Lincoln: +1 positive, +3 recovered (109 of 163 recovered)

Minnehaha: +28 positive, +21 recovered (1497 of 2170 recovered)

Moody: +1 recovered (2 of 6 recovered)

Turner: +1 recovered (14 of 17 recovered)

Union: +1 positive, +3 recovered (16 of 32 recovered)

Yankton: +1 recovered (23 of 28 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Gained Hand): Aurora, Bon Homme, Brookings, Buffalo, Clark, Corson, Deuel, Douglas, Faulk, Hamlin, Hand, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lawrence, Marshall, McPherson, Meade, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Sanborn, Spink, Sully, Walworth.

COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Active Cases	817
Currently Hospitalized	69
Recovered	1830
Total Positive Cases*	2668
Total Negative Cases*	16045
Ever Hospitalized**	211
Deaths***	21

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 1,401 total completed tests today for COVID-19, with 34 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,225.

State & private labs have conducted 34,754 total tests with 33,529 negative results.

540 ND patients are considered recovered.

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	1	1	42
Beadle	21	19	194
Bennett	0	0	14
Bon Homme	4	4	108
Brookings	13	13	374
Brown	65	27	655
Brule	0	0	59
Buffalo	1	1	17
Butte	0	0	62
Campbell	0	0	9
Charles Mix	5	4	90
Clark	1	1	57
Clay	7	6	148
Codington	15	13	504
Corson	1	1	22
Custer	0	0	50
Davison	6	5	318
Day	8	1	59
Deuel	1	1	85
Dewey	1	0	37
Douglas	1	1	26
Edmunds	0	0	26
Fall River	2	1	58
Faulk	1	1	20
Grant	0	0	53
Gregory	0	0	34
Haakon	0	0	17
Hamlin	2	2	73
Hand	1	1	24
Hanson	0	0	31
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	13	7	259
Hutchinson	3	3	99

Hyde	1	1	17
Jackson	0	0	10
Jerauld	6	5	38
Jones	0	0	5
Kingsbury	0	0	74
Lake	4	3	145
Lawrence	9	9	179
Lincoln	163	109	1523
Lyman	3	2	36
Marshall	1	1	46
McCook	4	3	102
McPherson	1	1	16
Meade	1	1	174
Mellette	0	0	12
Miner	1	1	23
Minnehaha	2170	1497	6762
Moody	6	2	98
Oglala Lakota	1	1	45
Pennington	14	10	811
Perkins	0	0	7
Potter	0	0	33
Roberts	10	4	118
Sanborn	3	3	40
Spink	3	3	100
Stanley	8	1	43
Sully	1	1	13
Todd	3	1	61
Tripp	0	0	57
Turner	17	14	154
Union	32	16	192
Walworth	5	5	49
Yankton	28	23	467
Ziebach	0	0	6
Unassigned****	0	0	964

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

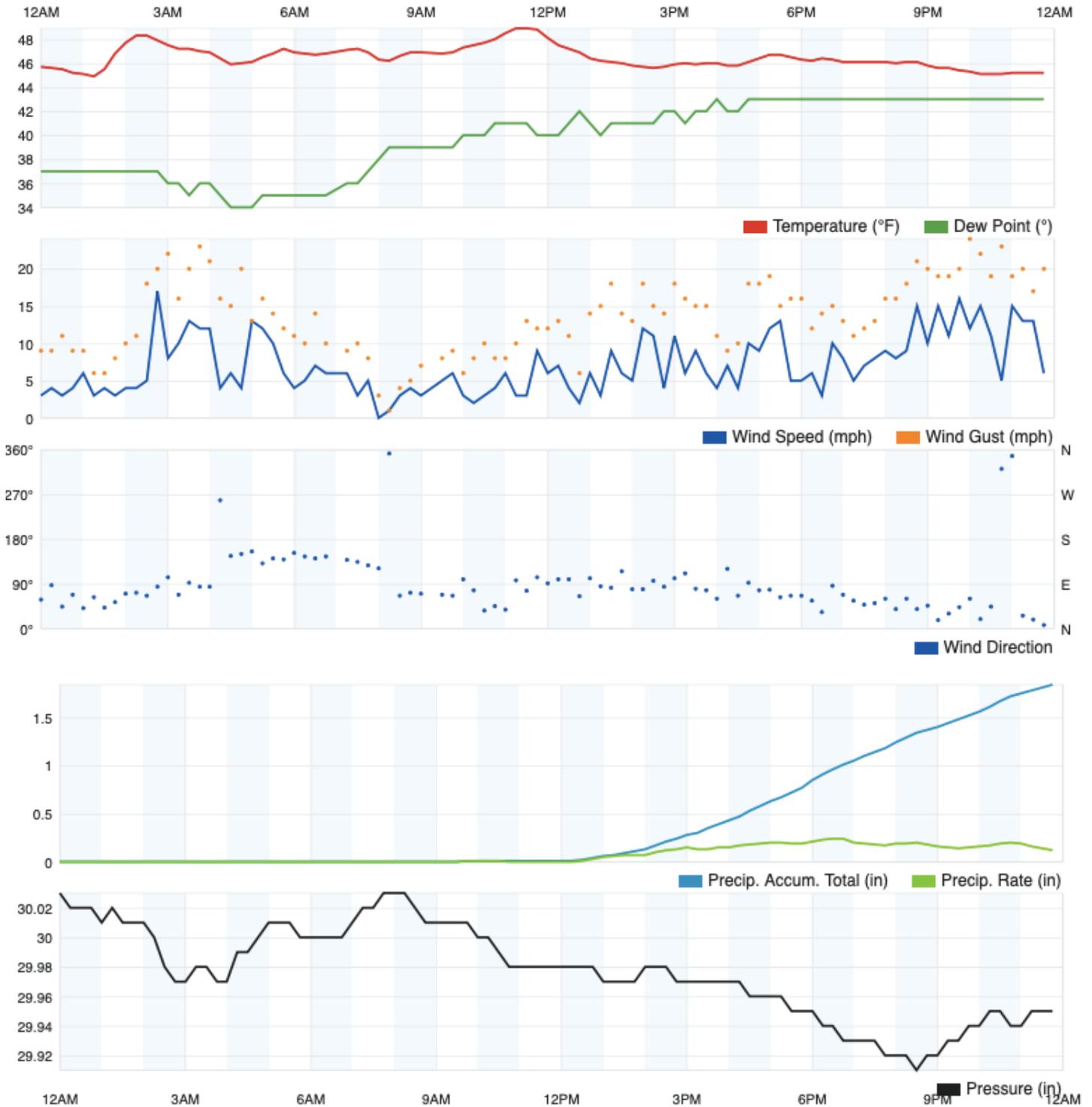
Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1263	6
Male	1405	15

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	180	0
20-29 years	501	0
30-39 years	610	0
40-49 years	516	1
50-59 years	466	4
60-69 years	251	4
70-79 years	65	3
80+ years	79	9

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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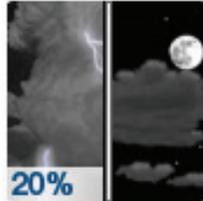
Today



Cloudy then
Chance
Showers

High: 54 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance
T-storms then
Partly Cloudy

Low: 34 °F

Wednesday



Sunny

High: 61 °F

Wednesday
Night



Partly Cloudy

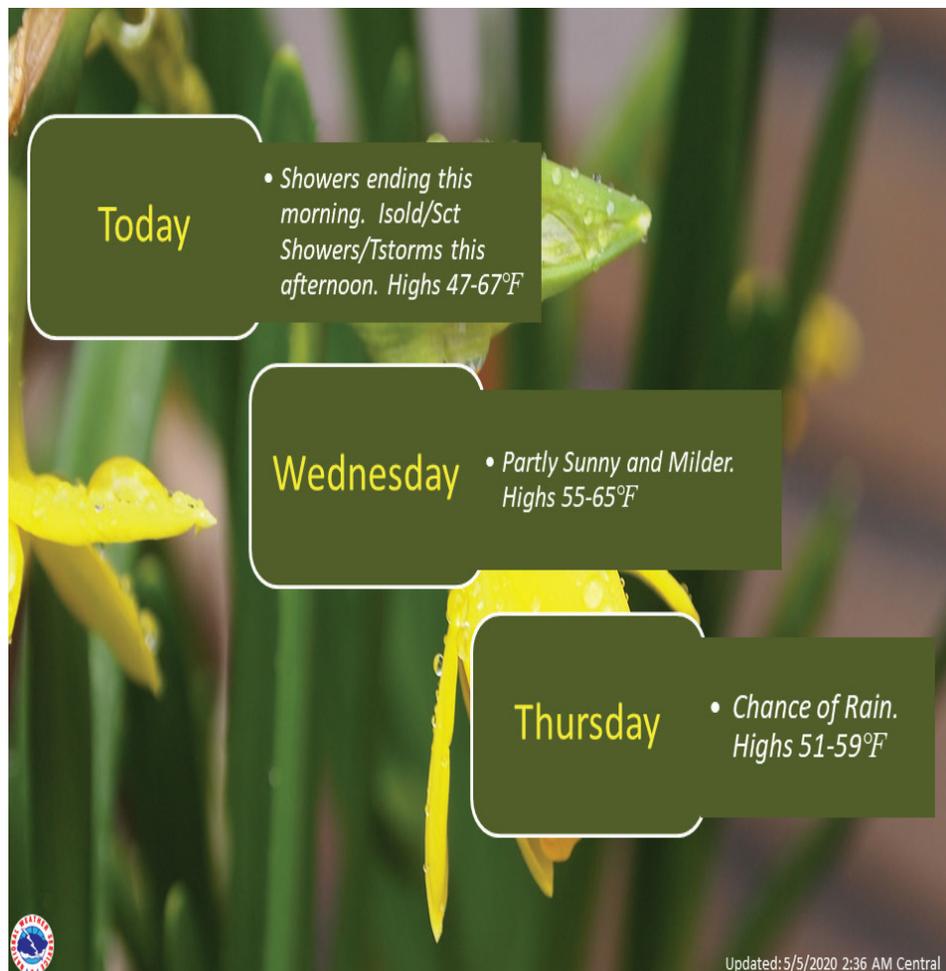
Low: 38 °F

Thursday



Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
Showers

High: 56 °F



Today

- Showers ending this morning. Isold/Sct Showers/Tstorms this afternoon. Highs 47-67°F

Wednesday

- Partly Sunny and Milder. Highs 55-65°F

Thursday

- Chance of Rain. Highs 51-59°F

Updated: 5/5/2020 2:36 AM Central

Rain will end in the east this morning, but more showers and isolated thunderstorms are expected this afternoon. It will be cooler than normal through the end of the week.

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Today in Weather History

May 5, 1964: A two-state, F3 tornado moved northeast from 4 miles WNW of Herreid to the south of Streeter, North Dakota, a distance of about 55 miles. Blacktop was ripped for 400 yards on Highway 10, five miles north of Herreid, South Dakota. Two barns were destroyed northeast of Hague, North Dakota, with a dozen cattle killed on one farm. The F3 damage occurred at one farm about midway between Wishek and Hogue. Other barns were destroyed south of Burnstad.

May 5, 1986: A tight pressure gradient produced winds over 60 mph in west central Minnesota. City officials in Browns Valley estimated a quarter of the city suffered damage. The roof of a grandstand was blown off and landed a quarter of a block away. Seventy-five homes and six businesses sustained roof damage. In nearby Dumont, Minnesota, the wind ripped a large grain bin off its foundation and tore open the top of another.

May 5, 2007: A north to south frontal boundary, powerful low-level winds, and abundant gulf moisture resulted in training thunderstorms across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. The training thunderstorms produced torrential rains from 3 to over 10 inches resulting in widespread flash flooding across Brown, Buffalo, Hand, Spink, Clark, Day, Marshall, and Roberts Counties. The counties of Brown, Buffalo, Clark, Day, Marshall, and Spink were declared disaster areas by President Bush. The Governor also declared a state of emergency for the flooded counties with Senator John Thune and Representative Stephanie Herseth surveying the flood damage. Eight damage assessment teams from local, state, and FEMA came to Brown and other counties.

Dozens of cities were affected by the flooding with several hundred homes, businesses, and countless roads affected and damaged or destroyed by the flooding. Aberdeen received the most extensive damage, especially the north side of Aberdeen. Seventy-five percent of the homes in Aberdeen received some water in their basements. Basement water levels ranged from a few inches to very deep water all the way up to the first floor of homes. Many homes had the basement walls collapse. The overwhelming load on the drainage systems caused sewage to back up into many homes across the region. Also, many vehicles stalled on the roads with many others damaged by the flooding. Power outages also occurred across the area. Many families were displaced from their homes with many living in emergency shelters. Countless homes were condemned across the region with many considered unlivable. Thousands of acres of crops were also flooded and damaged with many seeds, and large quantities of fertilizer washed away.

Rainfall amounts from this historic event included 3.65 inches in Miller, 3.82 inches in Britton, 4 inches in Eden, 4.47 inches in Andover, 4.90 inches in Webster, 5.68 inches west of Britton, 5.7 inches in Garden City, and 5.82 inches in Conde. Locations with 6 or more inches of rain included, 6 inches in Langford, 6.33 inches in Gann Valley, 6.72 inches in Clark, 7.41 inches in Ashton, 7.49 inches in Stratford, 7.55 inches near Mellette, 7.97 inches in Aberdeen, 8.02 inches in Redfield, 8.73 inches in Columbia, and 8.74 inches in Groton. The 8.74 inches of rainfall in Groton set a new 24-hour state rainfall record. Adding in the rainfall for the previous day, Aberdeen received a total of 9.00 inches; Columbia received a total of 10.19 inches; **Groton received an astonishing two-day total rainfall of 10.74 inches.**

1933: An estimated F4 tornado cut a 35-mile path from near Brent into Shelby County, Alabama. The town of Helena, AL was especially hard hit, as 14 people died. The tornado roared through Helena at 2:30 am.

1987: Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the western U.S. A dozen cities in California reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 93 degrees at San Francisco, 98 degrees at San Jose, 100 degrees at Sacramento, and 101 degrees at Redding were the warmest on record for so early in the season. The high of 94 degrees at Medford, Oregon was also the warmest on record for so early in the season.

1995: A supercell thunderstorms brought torrential rains and large hail up to four inches in diameter to Fort Worth, Texas. This storm also struck a local outdoor festival known as the Fort Worth Mayfest. At the time the storm was the costliest hailstorm in the history of the US, causing more than \$2 billion in damage.

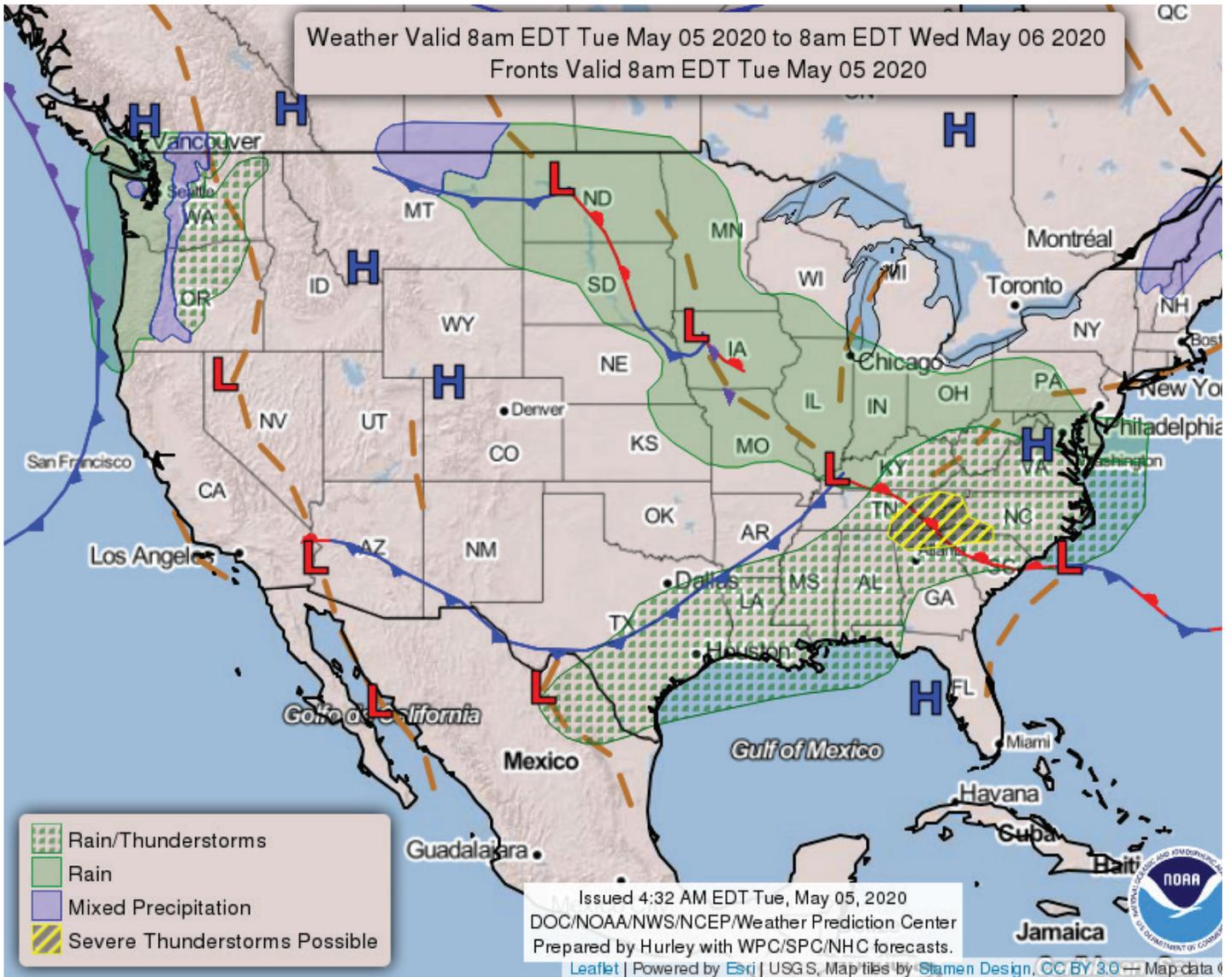
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 49 °F at 11:34 AM
Low Temp: 45 °F at 1:08 AM
Wind: 24 mph at 4:02 AM
Precip: 2.23

Record High: 92° in 2000, 1926
Record Low: 24° in 1968, 1944
Average High: 66°F
Average Low: 40°F
Average Precip in May.: 0.41
Precip to date in May.: 2.23
Average Precip to date: 4.44
Precip Year to Date: 4.13
Sunset Tonight: 8:46 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:14 a.m.



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HOW STRONG IS YOUR BELIEF?

Watching a person walking across a deep crevice on a wire is nerve-racking for most of us. As they carefully make their way from one side to the other with their long pole, it becomes frightening, even breath-taking at times.

There was a "walker" who decided that he was going to walk from one side of Niagara Falls to the other pushing a wheelbarrow that contained 200 pounds of rocks. When he accomplished his goal flawlessly, the reporters in the crowd thronged him with several questions. After answering a few of their questions he looked one of them in the eye and asked, "Do you think I can take my wheelbarrow back to the other side?"

Quickly the reporter responded, "Yes, I certainly do!"

" Good," he said. "Then you believe that I can do it."

" Of course I believe you can," said the reporter.

Dumping the bricks on the ground in front of him he said, "If you believe it - get in the wheelbarrow and let me push you to the other side."

Accepting Christ as our Savior is the first step in our walk of faith. It begins with "believe and be saved!" However, when we recognize Jesus as Lord, it means that we will trust Him completely to get us safely from where we are at that moment until we will be with Him in glory.

Our journey will have times of doubt, fear, and uncertainty but we must always trust Him.

Prayer: Give us courage, Father, to trust You for safe passage through those times in our lives when we fear "letting go and letting God" carry us through scary times. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Acts 16:31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household."

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
 - **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
 - **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
 - **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
 - 06/05/2020 Athletic Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
 - 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/20/2020 Shriner's Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/22/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ladies Invitational
 - 06/26/2020 Groton Businesses Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
 - 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
 - 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
 - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
 - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
 - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
 - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
 - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
 - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
 - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
 - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
-
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
-
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

South Dakota's top youth volunteers of 2020 honored with \$2,500 donation for local COVID-19 response

PIERRE, S.D., May 4, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- South Dakota's top two youth volunteers of 2020, Eleanor Abraham, 18, of Brookings and Bennett Gordon, 13, of Whitewood, were recognized this weekend for their outstanding volunteer service during the 25th annual, and first-ever virtual, Prudential Spirit of Community Awards national recognition celebration.

In recognition of the spirit of service that they have demonstrated in their communities, Eleanor and Bennett – along with 100 other top youth volunteers from across the country – were also each given \$2,500 to donate toward the local COVID-19 response efforts of a nonprofit organization of their choice. These funds come in addition to the \$1,000 scholarship and engraved silver medallion they earned as South Dakota's top youth volunteers of 2020.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, sponsored by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), named Eleanor and Bennett South Dakota's top high school and middle level youth volunteers in February.

"Over the past 25 years, this program has honored students spanning three generations, and the common thread between them has been the determination of young people to respond to the challenges of the moment," said Charles Lowrey, chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial. "Who better than this group of young leaders from all over the country to help identify and direct resources to community needs arising from COVID-19?"

As State Honorees, Eleanor and Bennett also earned an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the program's annual national recognition events; the trip, however, was canceled due to COVID-19 and changed to a three-day online celebration this past weekend. In addition to remarks and congratulations from actress Kristen Bell, honorees had opportunities to connect with each other through online project-sharing sessions, learn about service and advocacy from accomplished past Spirit of Community honorees, hear congratulatory remarks from Lowrey and NASSP Executive Director and CEO JoAnn Bartoletti, and more.

"We admire these young leaders for their ability to assess the needs of the communities they serve and find meaningful ways to address them," said Bartoletti. "At a time when everyone is looking for optimism, these students are a bright light for their peers and the adults in their lives."

About the Honorees

Eleanor (pictured left), a senior at Brookings High School, founded and chairs a community service committee at her church that has conducted monthly projects included raising money to provide 20 beds for children in need, helping to collect cold-weather gear for more than 300 families, roofing a garage for a mother and her adult daughter, and delivering meals to senior citizens. In 2018, Eleanor attended a national church youth gathering in Houston, where part of her time was spent doing yard work for elderly people in a low-income neighborhood. "I was struck by how such a small effort on my part could make such a huge difference in someone else's life," said Eleanor.

When she returned home, she asked her pastor if she could form an "action team" of volunteers at church that would "connect people with time, talents, and monetary gifts to assist others." Soon after, the "Face of Grace" committee was formed with the mission of performing one or more monthly acts of kindness. Eleanor's committee, comprised of both students and adults, meets once a month to assess needs in the community and decide on projects to address those needs. One such project was a breakfast fundraiser for a nonprofit that builds and delivers beds for children who don't have a comfortable place to sleep. Eleanor and her team raised \$3,000, enough to purchase materials to build 20 beds. They then built, delivered and set up the beds in homes around their community.

Bennett (pictured right), a seventh-grader at Sturgis Williams Middle School, raises awareness of the need to recycle by organizing collection and recycling drives, conducting a recycling workshop for elementary

school students, and sponsoring an annual essay contest that challenges middle schoolers to envision how they can make the world a better place by recycling. Two years ago, Bennett went on a tour of the local landfill and was shocked by what he saw. "I remember the horrible smell of the garbage from the parking lot," he said. "But once inside, what made my jaw drop most was seeing the mountains of trash." During the tour, Bennett learned that 75 percent of the items people throw away can be recycled. But, in fact, only about 30 percent are. He went home determined to change that.

He started small, setting up a recycling bin for his family along with a donation box, so household items and clothing could be given away instead of trashed. And he began researching what others were doing for the planet. This gave him the confidence, he said, to initiate a project at school. His first step was to collect 200 pairs of gently used shoes to be reused by people in need. He then set up a Facebook page (named "Recycle: There is No Planet B") to share tips for where and how to recycle or reuse everything from eyeglasses to electronics. He also hosted a statewide essay contest, coordinated a recycling workshop for elementary school students in a local after-school program, and led a drive that collected 150 books to set up small libraries in area laundromats.

About The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program was created in 1995 to identify and recognize young people for outstanding volunteer service – and, in so doing, inspire others to volunteer, too. In the past 25 years, the program has honored more than 130,000 young volunteers at the local, state and national level.

For more information about The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and this year's honorees, visit <http://spirit.prudential.com>. For more information about the National Association of Secondary School Principals, visit www.nassp.org. For more information about Prudential Financial, visit www.news.prudential.com.

Learn more at spirit.prudential.com

View original content to download multimedia: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/south-dakotas-top-youth-volunteers-of-2020-honored-with-2-500-donation-for-local-covid-19-response-301052058.html>

SOURCE Prudential Financial, Inc.

Oglala Sioux president out of jail after weekend arrest

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — The president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota is out of jail after being arrested over the weekend.

The Rapid City Journal reports Julian Bear Runner was booked into jail on Saturday, according to the Community Information Portal website of the tribe's departments of public safety and corrections. His name was removed from the jail's roster by Sunday.

Police Chief Robert Ecoffey confirmed to the newspaper that the Bear Runner booked into jail is the president. But the police chief said he was out of the office and didn't have the arrest report to give details of the arrest.

Bear Runner confirmed in a news release Sunday that he was arrested but said that because he has not yet been arraigned, he doesn't know what he's being charged with. He said he could not comment, but as president of the Oglala Sioux he wanted to inform the Oyate of his arrest.

Neither Ecoffey nor Bear Runner immediately replied to Associated Press requests for comment Monday.

Noem: South Dakota budget to take big hit from COVID-19

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem said Monday that South Dakota's budget is expected to take a big hit from the economic shock of the coronavirus pandemic.

Noem said South Dakota's general fund revenues for March are down \$18.1 million. While not all of that is related to COVID-19, the Republican governor said the brunt of the economic impact will be felt in April. She said those figures will be available at the beginning of June.

South Dakota health officials reported 37 new cases of the coronavirus on Monday, bringing the state's total to 2,668 cases. But for third consecutive day, South Dakota reported no new deaths, with the state's death toll remaining at 21.

Minnehaha County, the state's most populous county, reported 28 new cases, bringing the county's total to 2,170. Lincoln County is second in South Dakota, with 163 after recording one new case. Brown County reported six more cases, for a total of 65.

The number of active COVID-19 cases reported in South Dakota grew by six, to 817. Sixty-nine people remained hospitalized. A total of 1,830 patients have recovered.

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

The Latest: 13 deaths at Sioux Falls senior living facility

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

A Sioux Falls senior living facility reports 13 people have died after testing positive for the coronavirus.

The Argus Leader reports it's unclear if the virus caused the deaths. But the number is up from seven deaths reported by the Good Samaritan Society at the Sioux Falls Village location on Friday.

Overall, the facility reports 97 positive confirmed cases, up from 90 cases as of Friday. Of those cases, 59 are residents and 38 are employees. The total number of employees who have recovered is 14.

Officials have said residents who have tested positive continue to be isolated from the rest of the facility's community.

A spokesman for Sanford Health said Monday that the majority of the confirmed cases stem from the skilled nursing facility within the Sioux Falls Village.

6:50 a.m.

Some meatpackers are returning to work at Smithfield Foods in Sioux Falls.

The company is opening part of the plant Monday after being closed for more than two weeks.

The meatpacking plant asked about 250 employees to report to work in two departments — ground pork and night cleanup, according to the United Food and Commercial Workers local union.

The coronavirus has infected 853 of the plant's 3,100 workers.

Smithfield has told employees who are sick, those over 60 or who have existing health problems to stay home, according to the union.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks.

Meanwhile, OSHA is looking into worker complaints that the plant operated under unsafe conditions, the Argus Leader reported.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention toured the facility last month and recommended several changes to reduce crowding, especially in the break and locker rooms and cafeterias.

Rapid City-area families evacuate after sinkhole opens mine

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Several homes in the Rapid City area were evacuated after a sinkhole collapsed and opened into an abandoned gypsum mine.

Twelve Blackhawk families were displaced last week when the 40-foot-by-50-foot sinkhole opened last Monday, breaking water and sewer lines in the neighborhood.

"It was going into a bottomless pit," said 40-year-old resident John Trudo, who realized something was wrong when his sink faucet didn't work.

Carvers found that the sinkhole opened into an abandoned gypsum mine at least 600 feet (182.88 meters) long, filled with holes from drilling and mining equipment, the Rapid City Journal reported Monday.

"I really never imagined that when we went back down there it would be that big," said Adam Weaver, a member of Paha Sapa Grotto, a local caving group. He added the mine is 25 feet (7.62 meters) to 30 feet (9.14 meters) below ground.

Doug Huntrods, emergency manager for Meade County, said between 30 and 35 people were evacuated. Meanwhile, families said they're concerned about the financial burden evacuation costs have presented. "We want to know what kind of compensation are we going to get for this because this is draining our pocketbooks," said Albert Reitz, who's been living in a hotel with his fiancée.

Reitz and Trudo said their home insurance companies will not cover expenses because their policies didn't include underground risks by sinkholes.

Huntrods said he's been contacting local, state and federal officials to help obtain reclamation funds for the families.

"People's homes are at stake and we're going to do what we can to assist them throughout this process to seek state or federal aid," Huntrods said.

Meatpackers cautiously reopen plants amid coronavirus fears

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota pork processing plant took its first steps toward reopening Monday after being shuttered for over two weeks because of a coronavirus outbreak that infected more than 800 employees.

Employees reporting for work in Smithfield Foods' ground pork department filed through a tent where they were screened for fever and other signs of COVID-19. Some said they felt the measures Smithfield has taken would protect them from another virus outbreak, while others were not confident that infections could be halted in a crowded plant.

Lydia Toby said she was "kind of worried" as she entered the plant before 6 a.m. for her first shift in over two weeks. Managers met employees in her department Friday and explained they had installed dividers on the production line and would require everyone to wear masks.

"I think it's going to be OK," Toby said.

In the wake of an executive order from President Donald Trump ordering meat plants to remain open, Arkansas-based Tyson Foods was also resuming "limited production" Monday at its pork plant in Logansport, Indiana, where nearly 900 employees tested positive. And the JBS pork plant in Worthington, Minnesota — just an hour east of Smithfield's South Dakota plant — planned a partial reopening on Wednesday.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden on Monday called meatpacking plants — along with nursing homes — "the most dangerous places there are right now." He called for greater protections for meatpacking workers, as well as a \$13-an-hour pay premium.

"They designate them as essential workers and then treat them as disposable," Biden said, on a conference call about protecting essential workers, such as meatpacking workers, that was organized by the League of United Latin American Citizens.

Virginia-based Smithfield is offering COVID-19 testing to all employees and their family members, according to a text message sent to employees. The message told employees to report to a local high school to be tested. Gov. Kristi Noem said employees aren't required to undergo tests before returning to work, though it's strongly encouraged. Noem's health commissioner, Kim Malsam-Rysdon, said it was Smithfield's decision to make the tests optional.

Smithfield didn't respond to requests for comment.

About 250 employees were told to report to work on Monday, according to the union that represents them. The plant employs about 3,700 workers and produces roughly 5% of the nation's pork.

Salaheldin Ahmed, who works in a department that has not yet reopened, said he was called in by plant management to look at changes.

"They fixed a lot of things," he said, describing how workers would be spread apart where possible.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report Friday said more than 4,900 workers at meat and poultry processing facilities have been diagnosed with the coronavirus, including 20 who died. Not all states provided data.

The CDC researchers cited risks including difficulties with physical distancing and hygiene, and crowded

living and transportation conditions. They suggested enhanced disinfection and that workers get regular screening for the virus, more space from co-workers and training materials in their native languages. Many meatpacking employees are immigrants; a CDC report on the Smithfield outbreak found that employees there spoke about 40 different languages.

The United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents most beef and pork workers and about one-third of poultry workers nationwide, has called for stricter measures than the CDC's, including mandating that workers be spaced 6 feet apart on production lines. It has appealed to governors for help enforcing worker safety rules. The union also wants to get rid of waivers that allow some plants to operate at faster speeds.

As plants warily reopen or others operate at diminished capacity with many workers staying home sick or in fear, it's unclear Trump's order will guarantee an unbroken supply of meat.

Tyson Foods reported record meat sales in the first quarter but warned investors Monday that it faces continued production slowdowns. Company officials said it expected lower productivity "in the short term until local infection rates begin to decrease."

Zach Medhaug, a maintenance employee at Tyson's pork plant in Waterloo, Iowa, said he will feel comfortable returning to work when the plant reopens, even as he fears that one of his closest colleagues may soon die from the coronavirus.

Jose Ayala, 44, is in critical condition on a ventilator at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics after catching the virus a month ago. Medhaug has been calling Ayala, who is medically paralyzed but may still be able to hear, encouraging him to keep fighting.

Medhaug tested positive himself for the coronavirus on April 20. He said he had mild symptoms and expects to return to work later this week at the plant, which suspended production April 22. Medhaug said Tyson has made key safety changes, such as vowing to enforce rather than just encourage social distancing and providing employees with masks instead of telling them to bring their own.

"That's a huge step," he said. "The people returning, I see them having a better chance of not getting it at all."

Associated Press writers Ryan J. Foley in Iowa City, Iowa, and Dee-Ann Durbin in Ann Arbor, Michigan, contributed to this report.

Tribes have yet to get share of \$8B in virus relief money

Associated Press undefined

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The U.S. Treasury Department has not sent any payments to tribal governments from a coronavirus relief package approved in late March.

The agency said it has not determined how to allocate \$8 billion in funding that was set aside for tribes. It said it would post details on its website, but nothing appeared as of Monday.

The Treasury Department was named as a defendant in a federal lawsuit brought by tribes that sought to keep the money out of the hands of Alaska Native corporations. U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, D.C., agreed last week to limit funding to the country's 574 federally recognized tribes while he settles the larger question of eligibility.

In a status report filed late Friday, an attorney for the Treasury Department said the agency hadn't decided whether to appeal that ruling but is working to process initial payments to tribal governments.

Attorneys for the tribes wrote in court documents that they will take further action if the payments do not go out this week.

States and local governments already have received funding. The deadline to distribute money under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act was April 26.

The tribes that have sued are in Alaska, Arizona, California, Maine, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah and Washington state. They and the federal government disagree over the definition of "Indian Tribe" that was included in the relief package.

South Dakota teen to plead guilty in Wyoming girl's killing

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota teenager plans to plead guilty to manslaughter in the death of a 16-year-old Wyoming girl whose body was found in his basement last fall, attorneys said.

The 17-year-old defendant originally was charged as an adult with alternative counts of first- and second-degree murder in the killing of Shayna Ritthaler of Upton, Wyoming. Meade County State's Attorney Michele Bordewyk told the Rapid City Journal the boy is expected to plead guilty to manslaughter on Thursday. He originally pleaded not guilty and not guilty by reason of insanity.

Bordewyk and the teen's defense attorney, Steven Titus, have agreed to ask the judge for a 55-year sentence, but the judge does not have to agree to their recommendation.

Titus called it a "sad situation for everyone involved."

Titus said he hopes the judge agrees to the sentence since it gives the teen "a light at the end of the tunnel" by making him eligible for parole in his early 40s.

Titus had planned on arguing that his client should be transferred to juvenile court, but that hearing was canceled given the plea deal. The Associated Press isn't naming the defendant because his case might end up back in juvenile court.

Titus said the plea deal also means he's dropping the insanity defense, which argued that the defendant was not mentally competent at the time of the killing.

Ritthaler went missing Oct. 3, 2019, after being seen getting into a vehicle at coffee shop in Moorcroft, Wyoming. She was found Oct. 7 in the basement of the home the boy shared with his mother east of Sturgis in western South Dakota, near the border with Wyoming.

The prosecutor previously has said the suspect shot Ritthaler after an argument turned violent. The sheriff has said the victim died of a single gunshot wound to the head.

The arrest affidavit is sealed and officials have not yet shared how the two met, their relationship and the events leading up to her death.

The defendant remains in the juvenile jail in Rapid City on \$1 million bond.

As Trump resumes travel, staff takes risks to prepare trip

By **AAMER MADHANI** and **DARLENE SUPERVILLE** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For much of the last two months, President Donald Trump has rarely left the grounds of the White House as he's dealt with the fallout of the coronavirus pandemic and sought to minimize his own exposure to the disease.

But that changes Tuesday, when Trump is scheduled to travel to Arizona to visit a Honeywell facility that makes N95 masks in what the president suggests will mark the return to more regular travel.

The trip also means a small army of advisers, logistical experts and security staff — a coterie of hundreds that includes personnel from the White House, Defense Department, Secret Service and more — will resume regularly hitting the road again and taking a measure of risk to assist Trump.

In addition to Tuesday's trip to Honeywell, Trump says he will travel soon to Ohio, to New York in June for the U.S. Military Academy graduation, and to South Dakota in July for a holiday fireworks display at Mount Rushmore. Trump says he's also eager to get back on the campaign trail, though he acknowledged during a Fox News forum Sunday that it might not be able to hold his signature big-stadium rallies until the final months before the Nov. 3 election.

"I've been at the White House now for many months, and I'd like to get out, as much as I love this. ... Most beautiful house in the world," Trump said in announcing his travel plans.

At a moment when public health officials have asked Americans to postpone nonessential travel to help stem the coronavirus, Trump is looking to rev the engines of Air Force One as he tries to prod a shell-shocked American electorate — reeling from the death and economic destruction wrought by the virus — to edge back to normal life.

But White House officials are also taking precautions to try to prevent Trump and Vice President Mike

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Pence from exposure to the virus. Honeywell workers who meet Trump on Tuesday — just like anyone else who comes in close proximity to the president and vice president — will be first required to take a rapid point-of-care test to determine if they're carrying the virus.

"When preparing for and carrying out any travel, the White House's operational teams work together to ensure plans to incorporate current CDC guidance and best practices for limiting COVID-19 exposure are followed to the greatest extent possible," White House spokesman Judd Deere said.

But Matt Bennett, who served as Vice President Al Gore's trip director, said he worries that Trump is putting his staff, military personnel and local and state officials at unnecessary risk.

"I think there is a value of seeing our leaders out in the country and escaping the White House," said Bennett, executive vice president at the center-left think tank Third Way. "But it has to be balanced against the cost. The cost here could be the health and safety of a lot of people."

James McCann, a Purdue University political scientist who has studied presidential travel, said that Trump early in his term traveled significantly less frequently on official presidential business compared to his four predecessors. But now that a big campaign rally is not possible, Trump is searching for a way to assert himself.

"Trump is itching to get into campaign mode," McCann said.

Marc Short, Pence's chief of staff, told reporters the vice president, who last week traveled to Indiana and Minnesota, has been debriefing the White House Military Office after each trip to discuss planning and protocols.

Typically, White House advance staff fly commercial airlines when traveling to scout a location before a presidential or vice presidential visit. But Short said staffers are now taking military aircraft. Ahead of Pence's trip to an Indiana plant where ventilators are being manufactured, advance staffers were not allowed to leave the military base where Air Force Two landed, Short said.

The Secret Service, which is tasked with protecting the president and his family, wouldn't get into the details of how it's altering operations but said it's following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance.

"Since the beginning of this pandemic, the Secret Service has been working with all of our public safety partners and the White House Medical Unit to ensure the safety and security of both our protected persons and our employees," said Justine Whelan, a spokeswoman for the agency.

In addition to the White House advance staff, which is tasked with plotting out the smallest details of the president's visit, the Secret Service sends its own advance team that maps out security for the visit. Officials from the White House communications office advance team are dispatched to set security telephone access for the president should he need it.

The president flies on Air Force One, military-operated aircraft, on all trips, regardless of whether it is White House business, political or personal travel. The Defense Department also airlifts equipment such as armored limousines and occasionally helicopters for the president's travel.

The Military Working Dog Program and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Program are dispatched to support protection of the president. Typically, about a dozen members of the news media travel with the president on Air Force One at their organization's expense.

The president usually travels with a representative from the press office, the chief of staff's office and the National Security Council, as well as a personal assistant. Other aides, like his economic advisers, a Cabinet secretary or lawmakers, also may join depending on the nature of the visit.

Johanna Maska, who served as the White House director of press advance during the Obama administration, said it's important for administration officials to remember that everyone who travels or assists in the president's travel — from the closest aides to the volunteer van drivers who drive lower-rung aides from the airport — have families.

"There is a whole orbit around those people," Maska said. "I certainly hope that they are making the right decisions here."

'A resume for future office': Virus tests a GOP governor

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Kristi Noem had been South Dakota's governor for less than six months when she made clear she wasn't going to let her job in the sleepy capital of Pierre keep her out of national politics — or off President Donald Trump's radar.

The 48-year-old Republican had a TV studio with live hookup capability installed in the governor's office. She started seeking advice from Trump's former adviser Corey Lewandowski, who worked to raise her profile within conservative circles.

Then came the pandemic.

Now Noem's pursuit of the spotlight comes with much higher stakes. While many other governors have broken from Trump on the need for stay-at-home orders to curb the spread of coronavirus and on when to restart the economy, Noem has largely tracked close to the president. She declined to impose broad restrictions on business and public activity, resisting calls from doctors. And when Trump touted a malaria drug as a potential remedy for the disease, she was among the first to launch a trial of the drug, despite no proof of its effectiveness.

That's earned her praise from conservative activists and the attention of the president, who last week announced plans to visit the state for an Independence Day celebration at Mount Rushmore, complete with once-banned fireworks.

The White House sees her as someone trying to "push back against the grain," said Charlie Kirk, a conservative activist and close Trump ally. "That's hero status in the conservative movement."

But it's also drawn criticism even from Republicans in her solidly red state, who say she's been slow to lead the response and seems focused on climbing the political ladder. They worry, along with health experts, that the fallout from her decisions may have yet to be felt. The state's virus caseload isn't expected to peak until June.

"No governor has faced this enormous a test before, but this is the kind of challenge they will be judged on," said Gail Gitcho, a Republican strategist and former communications director for the Republican Governors Association. For Noem's national profile, Gitcho added, "it becomes her leadership resume for future office."

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, Noem has stuck to a hands-off approach, refusing to order businesses to close and rejecting calls for sweeping stay-at-home orders. She's held her ground even as mayors and doctors — including the state's largest medical association — called for stricter measures.

Noem argued that would only delay the peak of infections and extend disruption of daily life. She invoked the state ethos of individualism and said she trusted South Dakotans to be responsible.

"The calls to apply a one-size-fits-all approach is herd mentality, it's not leadership," she said in early April.

"I did get kind of ridiculed by the media for telling people in my press conferences, if you're scared and you're fearful, to stay home. You have every right and responsibility to stay in your house," Noem told Kirk during a podcast recorded last week.

It's not just the media who have questioned her approach. Fellow Republican Paul TenHaken, the mayor of Sioux Falls, said she was not doing enough to stop a spike in infections after an outbreak at a Smithfield pork-processing plant eventually sickened 853 employees, including two who died. Noem ultimately joined TenHaken in asking Smithfield to temporarily close the plant.

Despite the shift on the Smithfield plant, Noem tends to dig in when challenged. Most famously, she stood by her anti-drug campaign — tagline: "Meth, We're on it" — after it became the butt of jokes. After facing criticism for hiring her daughter as a policy adviser, Noem gave her a bigger job and a hefty raise.

Noem has largely praised the Trump administration throughout the crisis — even in March, when the state health lab ran out of supplies and had to halt tests for several days. That tack has resulted in access to Trump and his advisers. During a call with the president last week, she pressed for flexibility in using her state's \$1.25 billion in relief funding to offset sharp state revenue declines. Trump invited Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin onto the call to discuss the possibility, Noem later told reporters.

Noem's increased contact with the White House comes after several months of close consultation with

Lewandowski, Trump's former campaign manager.

The two were among roughly 40 conservative guests, including Kirk and Donald Trump Jr., who attended an annual deep-sea fishing trip last summer off British Columbia hosted and paid for by Wyoming GOP donor Foster Friess.

Lewandowski has since connected Noem with conservative leaders and activists and opened doors to speaking engagements at conservative forums around the country, according to two South Dakota Republicans with direct knowledge of Lewandowski's role. The two spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the private conversations.

And Noem, with Lewandowski's help, became a more regular presence on Fox News Channel, regular viewing in the White House.

Not all of Lewandowski's advice has landed. When Noem invited him to speak at her monthly luncheon with her Cabinet, the consultant told them that they, too, should be appearing on Fox News to promote Noem and the state. Some left confused about how a South Dakota bureaucrat would be booked by a national cable outlet, according to one person who attended the meeting and another who was briefed afterward.

Many South Dakota Republicans say she's widely viewed as seeking a job in Washington, whether in Trump's administration or beyond.

"I have been suspicious of that for a while," said Lance Russell, a Republican state senator who has been an outspoken critic of the governor.

Noem's spokeswoman Maggie Seidel said it's "unequivocally false" that Noem is looking for an administration job. Seidel said Noem received an offer to interview for a Cabinet position before being elected governor, but turned it down.

A rancher's daughter, Noem left college midway through her studies to take over the business when her father died. She describes the decision as the moment she set out on a political path seeking lower taxes and cultivating personal freedom.

After serving in the state legislature, Noem swept into the House with the tea party wave in 2010 and served eight years. She won the governor's office with just 51 percent of the vote in 2018.

An appearance with Trump at Mount Rushmore could boost Noem's popularity. She suggested this week that she'll be there to meet him. But her standing may depend more on whether South Dakotans feel safe coming out to watch the show.

Beaumont reported from Des Moines, Iowa.

Here come COVID-19 tracing apps - and privacy trade-offs

MATT O'BRIEN and CHRISTINA LARSON Associated Press

As governments around the world consider how to monitor new coronavirus outbreaks while reopening their societies, many are starting to bet on smartphone apps to help stanch the pandemic.

But their decisions on which technologies to use — and how far those allow authorities to peer into private lives — are highlighting some uncomfortable trade-offs between protecting privacy and public health.

"There are conflicting interests," said Tina White, a Stanford University researcher who first introduced a privacy-protecting approach in February. "Governments and public health (agencies) want to be able to track people" to minimize the spread of COVID-19, but people are less likely to download a voluntary app if it is intrusive, she said.

Containing infectious disease outbreaks boils down to a simple mantra: test, trace and isolate. Today, that means identifying people who test positive for the novel coronavirus, tracking down others they might have infected, and preventing further spread by quarantining everyone who might be contagious.

That second step requires an army of healthcare workers to question coronavirus carriers about recent contacts so those people can be tested and potentially isolated.

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Smartphone apps could speed up that process by collecting data about your movements and alerting you if you've spent time near a confirmed coronavirus carrier. The more detailed that data, the more it could help regional governments identify and contain emerging disease "hot spots." But data collected by governments can also be abused by governments — or their private-sector partners.

Some countries and local governments are issuing voluntary government-designed apps that make information directly available to public health authorities.

In Australia, more than 3 million people have downloaded such an app touted by the prime minister, who compared it to the ease of applying sunscreen and said more app downloads would bring about a "more liberated economy and society." Utah is the first U.S. state to embrace a similar approach, one developed by a social media startup previously focused on helping young people hang out with nearby friends.

Both these apps record a digital trail of the strangers an individual encountered. Utah's goes even further, using a device's location to help track which restaurants or stores a user has visited.

The app is "a tool to help jog the memory of the person who is positive so we can more readily identify where they've been, who they've been in contact with, if they choose to allow that," said Angela Dunn, Utah's state epidemiologist.

A competing approach under development by tech giants Apple and Google limits the information collected and anonymizes what it pulls in so that such personalized tracking isn't possible.

Apple and Google have pushed for public health agencies to adopt their privacy-oriented model, offering an app-building interface they say will work smoothly on billions of phones when the software rolls out sometime in May. Germany and a growing number of European countries have aligned with that approach, while others, such as France and the UK, have argued for more government access to app data.

Most coronavirus-tracking apps rely on Bluetooth, a decades-old short-range wireless technology, to locate other phones nearby that are running the same app.

The Bluetooth apps keep a temporary record of the signals they encounter. If one person using the app is later confirmed to have COVID-19, public health authorities can use that stored data to identify and notify other people who may have been exposed.

Apple and Google say that apps built to their specifications will work across most iPhones and Android devices, eliminating compatibility problems. They have also forbidden governments to make their apps compulsory and are building in privacy protections to keep stored data out of government and corporate hands and ease concerns about surveillance.

For instance, these apps rely on encrypted "peer to peer" signals sent from phone to phone; these aren't stored in government databases and are designed to conceal individual identities and connections. Public-health officials aren't even in the loop; these apps would notify users directly of their possible exposure and urge them to get tested.

In the U.S., developers are pitching their apps directly to state and local governments. In Utah, the social media company Twenty sold state officials on an approach combining Bluetooth with satellite-based GPS signals. That would let trained health workers help connect the dots and discover previously hidden clusters of infection.

"It's unlikely that automated alerts are going to be enough," said Jared Allgood, Twenty's chief strategy officer and a Utah resident, citing estimates that the peer-to-peer models would need most people participating to be effective.

North and South Dakota are pursuing a similar model after a local startup repurposed its existing Bison Tracker app, originally designed to connect fans of North Dakota State University's athletic teams.

Regardless of the approach, none of these apps will be effective at breaking chains of viral infections unless countries like the U.S. can ramp up coronavirus testing and hire more health workers to do manual outreach.

Another big limitation: many people, particularly in vulnerable populations, don't carry smartphones.

In Singapore, for instance, a large migrant worker population lives in cramped dorms, makes about \$15 a day, and powers the city's previously booming construction industry — but smartphone usage in this group is low. When the Southeast Asian city-state launched its tracing app in March, total confirmed COVID-19

cases were well under 1,000. Then in early April, a rash of new infections in worker dormitories pushed that number to more than 18,000, triggering new lockdown policies.

"If we can find a way to automate some of the detective work with technology, I think that would be a significant help," said Nadia Abuelezam, a disease researcher at Boston College. "It won't be all we need."

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, May 1

Noem's path forward ignores the obvious. None of this is normal.

At least it's not "Meth. We're on it."

That may be the best that can be said for Governor Kristi Noem's recently unveiled "Back to Normal" plan, the very title of which underplays the long-term COVID-19 challenge facing South Dakota and the country.

We all chafe at the extended limits on our movement, at our inability to gather and socialize with friends and loved ones. Prolonged confinement and the lack of available options to let off steam are driving sharp increases in mental health problems and domestic violence.

The economic implications are equally dire, as Sioux Falls business owners clamor for restrictions to ease so they can begin the path to recovery or, in some cases, keep from closing their doors for good.

But the "normal" that most of us enjoyed only a few short months ago won't be snapping smartly back into place anytime soon. We can't achieve the relative relief of even a "new normal" until an effective vaccine is developed and widely administered. Even then, a great deal of work remains to be done.

So what is the plan in the meantime? It depends on who you ask. The problem with a lack of statewide direction, whether with restrictions or the removal of them, is that municipalities and businesses are left to their own accord to make serious public health decisions. Those decisions affect not just them but everyone their citizens or customers come in contact with if something goes awry.

We agree that it's possible to phase in more "normal" flow of social and business structures, such as opening parks and some work spaces with proper safety guidelines. But these steps should include standardized procedures for implementation and monitoring, not a vague series of frequently asked questions.

In order to live with the virus in our midst, we need to continue to improve our understanding of how to reduce infections and protect the people and places that are most vulnerable.

Noem acknowledges as much, but to a limited degree. "A big requirement of (how we could get back to normal) is that I have the ability to aggressively test from border to border across the entire state of South Dakota," she said last week.

At the "Back to Normal" press briefing, Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon said that the state's current capacity of 3,000 tests per day will ramp up to 5,000 per day in the coming weeks. Unfortunately, that's well short of the recommended rate to "help ensure a safe social opening (and) fully re-mobilize the economy," according to Harvard University's bipartisan "Roadmap to Pandemic Resilience" report.

The governor added that the number of tests conducted each day in the state is determined by doctors ordering the test for their patients and isn't decided by the state. Only symptomatic South Dakotans are being tested, and her "Back to Normal" plan calls for more of the same. That's not the kind of comprehensive epidemiological approach our state should take moving forward.

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease director Anthony Fauci says that "somewhere between 25 percent and 50 percent" of those infected with COVID-19 may never show symptoms or become sick yet can still transmit the virus to others.

For those who do eventually fall ill, the average delay from infection to symptom onset is five days. More of the virus is shed in earlier stages of the infection. That's why experts emphasize the need to test not only people showing symptoms but also — at minimum — continue to randomly test samples of the general population.

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Though the spike of the Smithfield outbreak and variances in the number of daily tests obscure the trend line, infections continue unabated, controlled only by mitigation efforts. Our testing rates, however, are going down. That's a baffling juxtaposition given the testing capacity Noem's administration says we possess, especially as we inch closer to the projected mid-June peak infection rate.

Meanwhile, the governor promises a continuation of her laissez faire tactics. "I am not announcing any new government programs, more red tape, more prescriptive phases or tight controls. That is not South Dakota. Rather, the plan I'm unveiling today puts the power into the hands of the people where it belongs," Noem said.

The problem is that we will need coordinated systems in place to help us live with the virus more safely. Temperature checks, serology tests and increased contact tracing to contain clusters cannot be left up to individuals or individual businesses. As the Smithfield outbreak shows, heralding "personal responsibility" and urging businesses to "innovate" isn't necessarily sufficient to impel changes in corporate behavior, especially with social and economic urgencies at play.

The governor press briefings also regularly include a litany of other too-familiar phrases. We can't stop the virus. People will be infected. We've flattened the curve. Our hospitals will not be overwhelmed by the surge. Such statements sidestep other important considerations. We want to slow the spread not just to maintain adequate health system capacity, but to give researchers time to identify better treatments as well as find a vaccine. Each passing day reveals another devastating way that COVID-19 lays waste to the human body.

The need to craft a continuing public-private partnership between state health officials and our major health systems is paramount, particularly as we look to avoid anticipated viral flareups in the coming fall and winter months. That doesn't mean more high-profile collaborative panders to the White House such as the hastily conceived statewide hydroxychloroquine trial. There are too many unknowns still to be uncovered about COVID-19; we need to prepare for a full range of outcomes.

The pandemic doesn't present a simple tug-of-war between the economy and public health. The two are intertwined; neither can thrive without the other. People will not flock to restaurants, malls and sporting events unless they have a degree of confidence that they are not jeopardizing their health or that of their loved ones.

As stated earlier, full confidence won't come until a vaccine arrives. In the meantime, a carefully crafted and well-articulated statewide plan that leans on enhanced testing, monitoring and mitigation would be the best way to restore confidence that "normal" is within reach.

Until then, we're left to figure it out on our own.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, April 30

A message for 2020 grads: Look around

The news this week that Yankton High School has scheduled a "virtual graduation" for its seniors on May 17 — with COVID-19 having taken care of the real thing — snapped me briefly out of the blur that's been this plague year by making me realize that graduation time is here again.

In any other spring, every high school and college would be gearing up right now for this ritual, the solemn culmination of years of hard work and the pinnacle of so many memorable experiences.

One tradition of the graduation season is the commencement address, in which featured speakers impart wisdom and life lessons to graduates who, let's face it, are probably barely listening since they already have one foot out the door. But we do it anyway, if for no other reason, to provide some filler and create a little squirmy anticipation before diplomas are dispensed.

However, this is a different time — a nervous, empty moment unlike anything we've seen before, a time when the virtual and the distant must occasionally stand in for the real.

Even so, this commencement season still makes me think of the messages graduates ought to hear. While I can't remember anything that was said at my own graduation, I've covered enough of these addresses to have picked up on a few common strands along the way.

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To be fair, though, I believe any commencement address that one might imagine for this year would be criminally ignoring the reality of these times if it didn't include the words, "Well, THIS sucks ..."

Then again, I also think there's really no need at all for this year's graduates to hear commencement speakers serving up life lessons.

Instead, all the kids need to do is look around.

Many commencement addresses point out that life is full of unexpected twists and turns. Hey, welcome to 2020! The pandemic has derailed everything, but people are generally coping with it and making the adjustments (some of them quite difficult) that they need to make. For their part, students have been learning online and, in the process, getting a good taste of working independently and focusing on tasks that aren't overseen by teachers hovering directly in front of them to explain everything. This has required some discipline and initiative, and that's the foundation upon which a successful life is built.

Some graduation speeches emphasize devoting time to family. With everyone hunkered down and spending a ton of time with their own family members — mostly because there's nowhere else to go — the grads-to-be are cultivating this valuable skill by default, if not under protest.

Many graduation speeches herald the importance of charity and giving to the community. We're seeing a lot of that these days. Last week, I shot photos at a food distribution event held in the YHS parking lot. Several volunteers were there to help the participants maneuver their vehicles around the pylons and get to where they needed to go, and then more volunteers helped load boxes of food for people who have been hit hard by the economic downturn. Meanwhile, other volunteers are doing other important deeds at this time; in fact, they're doing them ALL the time. The need never goes away, and neither do the opportunities.

Some commencement speakers advise graduates to "cherish the good times." That's self-explanatory, although the "good times" bar has been lowered lately to include pretty much anything before mid-March.

And on it goes ...

Typical graduation speaker: "Try new things." In my case, I've discovered how to turn a bandanna and some rubber bands into a double-ply face mask. Check.

Typical graduation speaker: "Life is full of obstacles." Yep.

Typical graduation speaker: "Never stop learning." Me again: I've learned the correct way to thoroughly wash my hands and how to measure about six feet of distance almost instantly by sight. So there's that.

Typical graduation speaker: "Don't forget your old school." I'm fairly certain this year's graduates aren't going to forget the empty, isolated limbo that should have been their cherished last quarter of their senior year, and they may even start missing their old schools a lot sooner than past graduates.

Finally, commencement speakers always let you in on the ultimate, most practical truth about any graduation exercise: It isn't an end but a beginning. That has never, ever been truer than this year. The "end" arrives in such an uncertain, clumsy, anticlimactic void, and the beginning must now blossom from this wreckage. And it will. That's a lesson these graduates should not soon forget.

Madison Daily Leader, April 28

Great time to improve meatpacking plants

We're most familiar with the situation at the Smithfield Foods plant in Sioux Falls, but other meat processing plants around the country have been shut down due to coronavirus outbreaks.

JBS Pork Processing in Worthington, Minnesota, and Tyson Fresh Foods in Waterloo, Iowa, have also closed indefinitely. Together, the three plants account for about 15% of the nation's pork production.

There is a substantial ripple effect of these huge plants closing, in both directions. Hog farmers who supply the plants now have fewer — and usually farther — places to go, and some have euthanized healthy pigs. On the other side, stores that have empty meat shelves have lower sales.

There are others affected.

Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies are working on plans to return the plants to production. They include sanitization, social distancing, personal

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protective equipment, enhanced testing and more.

While company officials work on those, we'd urge them to keep in mind the possibility of other improvements they could make. There may be new innovations for processing equipment, new modern procedures for cutting, new methods for receiving hogs and shipping finished goods.

We also believe there are lean (no pun intended) manufacturing processes that could increase efficiency. There may be better human resource practices that could improve safety or morale.

The focus of safely returning the plants to operation is the priority now. But the creative thinking that goes into that process could very well yield other improvements that would make the plants much better in the long term.

UK becomes virus epicenter of Europe; S Korea plays baseball

By JILL LAWLESS, DAVID RISING and NICK PERRY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain on Tuesday became the first country in Europe to confirm more than 30,000 coronavirus deaths, and infections rose sharply again in Russia, even as other nations made great strides in taming the virus. China marked its third week with no new virus deaths and South Korea restarted its professional baseball season.

In the U.S., some states began halting steps to lift the lockdown restrictions being blamed for throwing millions out of work and upending the global economy even as thousands of new U.S. infections and deaths were being reported daily.

Britain looks set to surpass Italy as Europe's hardest-hit nation. The government says 28,734 people with COVID-19 had died in U.K. hospitals, nursing homes and other settings while Italy has reported 29,079 fatalities. Tallies from both nations are likely to be underestimates because they only include people who tested positive and testing was not widespread in Italian and British nursing homes until recently.

Yet official U.K. statistics released Tuesday that take into account people who died with suspected COVID-19 give a fuller picture and put Britain's coronavirus toll at more than 30,000 dead. The statistics, which cover up to April 24, show that deaths were a third higher than in the government count. A comparable figure for Italy was not available.

In Russia, the number of infections rose sharply again, with Moscow reporting more than 10,000 new cases for three days in a row.

At the same time, many European countries that have relaxed strict lockdowns after new infections tapered off were watching their virus numbers warily.

"We know with great certainty that there will be a second wave — the majority of scientists is sure of that. And many also assume that there will be a third wave," Lothar Wieler, the head of Germany's national disease control center, said Tuesday.

Widely seen as a success story, South Korea reported only three new cases of the virus, its lowest total since Feb. 18. Schools will be reopened in phased steps, starting with high school seniors on May 13, but the highlight Tuesday was the baseball season.

Cheerleaders danced beneath rows of empty seats and umpires wore protective masks as one of the world's first major professional sports returned to action in games broadcast to starved sports fans around the world. The Korea Baseball Organization employed other protective measures, including fever screenings for players and coaches before they entered the stadiums.

With Major League Baseball in the U.S. still mulling plans on what to do about its own season, American sports network ESPN signed a contract to broadcast six KBO games per week, starting with Tuesday's season opener between Daegu's Samsung Lions and Changwon-based NC Dinos, which the Dinos won 4-0.

The country's professional soccer leagues will kick off Friday, also without spectators.

In China, it has been three weeks since any new deaths have been reported in the country where the pandemic began late last year. Just one new case of infection was confirmed, and fewer than 400 patients are still being treated for COVID-19, health officials said.

Other places in the Asia-Pacific region have also suppressed their outbreaks, including Hong Kong, Taiwan,

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Vietnam, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand, which has had zero new cases for two days. But experts say India, a nation of 1.3 billion people, has yet to see the peak of its outbreak.

In Britain, which unlike other European nations remains in lockdown, a trial began Tuesday of a mobile phone app that authorities hope will help contain the outbreak. The app, which warns people if they have been near an infected individual, is being tested on the Isle of Wight, off England's south coast. The government hopes it can be rolled out across the country later this month.

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to soon detail a route out of a nationwide lockdown that began March 23 and runs through Thursday. Critics say Johnson's Conservative government responded too slowly when COVID-19 began to spread, and failed to contain the outbreak by widely testing people with symptoms, then tracing and isolating the contacts of infected people.

Countries that did that, including South Korea and Germany, have recorded much lower death rates than those that did not.

The British government's chief scientific adviser, Patrick Vallance, acknowledged Tuesday that "if we'd managed to ramp up testing capacity quicker it would have been beneficial."

In the U.S., a shuttered pork processing plant in South Dakota took its first steps toward reopening after more than 800 employees were infected with the virus. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, one of the first to impose a statewide stay-home order, announced that some businesses can reopen as early as Friday, with restrictions.

In Louisiana, state lawmakers were restarting their legislature — but feuded over whether they should return at all. Political battles have become increasingly embedded in U.S. coronavirus policy.

The moves to open U.S. states came even as daily new infections continue to exceed 20,000 and daily deaths were over 1,000, according to figures from Johns Hopkins University.

Governments around the world have reported 3.5 million infections and more than 251,000 deaths, including nearly 69,000 deaths in the United States. Deliberately concealed outbreaks, low testing rates and the severe strain the disease has placed on health care systems mean the true scale of the pandemic is undoubtedly much greater.

With pressure growing in many countries for more measures to restart the economy, politicians were trying to boost funding for research into a vaccine for COVID-19. There are hopes one could be available in months, but many scientists warn it could take much longer.

Developing a vaccine will be the key to returning to less restricted everyday life. An alliance of world leaders on Monday pledged to give 7.4 billion euros (\$8 billion) for the effort, but the U.S. and Russia were notably absent.

The money raised will be channeled mostly through recognized global health organizations. French President Emmanuel Macron said he was convinced the U.S. would at some point join the initiative.

Rising reported from Berlin and Perry reported from Wellington, New Zealand. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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

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

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at nonvirus stories in the news:

1. AFRICAN AMERICANS PRESSURE BIDEN TO CHOOSE BLACK RUNNING MATE They argue that the presumptive Democratic nominee's success — and that of the party as a whole — depends on black people turning out to vote in November.

2. 'I MISS MY DAUGHTER SO MUCH' Critics say the Chinese Communist Party's expanding use of exit bans to block people from leaving, including American citizens, reeks of hostage-taking and violates in-

ternational law.

3. WHERE THERE'S TURMOIL A bid by separatists funded by the United Arab Emirates to assert control over southern Yemen reopens a dangerous new front in Yemen's civil war, now in its sixth year.

4. WHO'S UP AGAIN FOR INTEL POST Texas Rep. John Ratcliffe, who saw Trump withdraw his nomination last August, gets another shot after bipartisan Senate criticism that Ratcliffe was unqualified to oversee 17 U.S. spy agencies.

5. BASEBALL SALARIES STAGNATE Major League Baseball's average salary remains virtually flat at around \$4.4 million for the fifth straight season, an AP study concludes, a slowing unprecedented during the previous half-century.

Biden pressed to choose a black woman as his running mate

By KAT STAFFORD and BILL BARROW Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — After a devastating start to the Democratic primary, Joe Biden's campaign was revived when black voters in South Carolina and throughout the South overwhelmingly sided with him. Now that he's the presumptive Democratic nominee, black voters and leaders are pressing for him to pick a black woman as his running mate.

Biden launched a committee last week to begin vetting possible candidates for the vice presidency, a process he has said will likely last through July. He has already committed to picking a woman.

But black voters and leaders say he needs to go further and pick a black woman. They argue that Biden's success — and that of the Democratic Party as a whole — depends on black people turning out to vote in November. They want a tangible return for their loyalty, not just a thank you for showing up on Election Day.

"Black people want an acknowledgement of the many years of support they have given the Democratic Party," said Niambi Carter, a Howard University political science professor.

House Minority Whip Jim Clyburn, whose endorsement in South Carolina was widely credited with helping widen Biden's winning margin and start his avalanche of March primary victories, said "clearly" he would prefer a black woman. But he insisted he's not pushing Biden in that direction.

"I'm the father of three grown African American women. So naturally I prefer an African American woman, but it doesn't have to be," Clyburn said. "I've made that very clear."

Biden has been unusually vocal about the people he would consider as running mates. He's referenced two black women, Sen. Kamala Harris of California and Stacey Abrams, the former Democratic nominee for governor in Georgia. Other black women, including Rep. Val Demings of Florida and Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, have also been mentioned.

But Biden is also thought to be considering several white women, including Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

President Donald Trump said his November opponent owes the spot to Warren, theorizing that Sen. Bernie Sanders "would have won every single state on Super Tuesday" if Warren had dropped out of the primary race earlier.

In an interview Monday with the New York Post, Trump dismissed Abrams while claiming responsibility for her defeat in the 2018 Georgia governor's race.

Zerlina Maxwell, a political analyst and former director of progressive media for Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, said this is an opportunity for Biden to recognize the political force of black women.

"The Democratic nominee needs to make it completely clear that they understand the moment and that they understand that black women are the foundation of a successful Democratic Party at every level," Maxwell said.

Adrienne Shropshire, executive director of Black PAC, said black voters are looking for "authenticity."

"When folks have talked to us about what they want in a candidate, it is someone who can relate to them," Shropshire said, noting the coronavirus's disparate impact on black Americans.

But she said that doesn't mean that a vice presidential nominee has to be a black woman.

"Having a black running mate checks that box for a lot of people, but I would also say in the same way

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that black voters weren't simply during the primary contest saying, 'Who's the black candidate?' I don't think black voters are doing that for the vice presidential choice either," she said, later adding the bottom line: "Ultimately, people want to win."

Tharon Johnson, a prominent black strategist who worked for Barack Obama's two presidential campaigns, said Biden's focus should be on "energy," not necessarily on race.

"I am totally, 100% behind the narrative that it's time for a black woman on the ticket," Johnson said. "But he has to consider a lot of metrics. Who can he bring on that will increase enthusiasm and drive turnout in those states that matter most in November? And what characteristics are there that will bring that excitement?"

Biden campaign co-chair Cedric Richmond, a Louisiana congressman and a former Congressional Black Caucus chairman, is a forceful advocate for African Americans within Democratic politics. But he's also absolute in his assertion that Biden cannot be forced to check a demographic box.

"I'm not sure that the VP is going to throw names out there just to appease people," Richmond said.

Symone Sanders is the highest-ranking black woman on Biden's staff and played a key role in shoring up Biden's campaign in South Carolina. But he also has an older cadre of advisers reminding him of the complicated calculations in putting together a winning coalition.

Kenneth Walden, a 26-year-old black man who lives in the battleground state of North Carolina, said the pick must be a black woman.

"And if not, I believe that it would be a repeat of 2016, where we had an all-white ticket and everybody was not energized," said Walden, who works in telecommunications and on a YouTube show. "Black people are going to feel betrayed. We're not just voting based off just party lines anymore."

Cierra Conerly, a 32-year-old entrepreneur and small-business owner, said she's torn about whom she wants to see on the ticket, but she said it needs to be someone who can identify strongly with diverse groups.

"I'm African American, I'm a woman, I'm a business owner and I'm also LGBTQ" said Conerly, who lives in Arizona, another state Democrats hope to flip. "All of those aspects are really important and I want someone who is going to be able to speak to those."

Taylor Harrell, the political director for Mothering Justice, a nonprofit that advocates for mothers, said Biden's choice shouldn't be all that complicated: Choose a black woman.

"It's become a cute catchphrase to say 'trust black women' or that black women are the backbone of the Democratic Party, so if we're truly the backbone, being the backbone should essentially mean being the vice president," Harrell, a Detroit resident, said. "White people have had a voice for so long and having a black woman will allow us to feel like our voices are going to continue to be heard after they've been put on pause for these past four years."

Barrow reported from Atlanta.

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

Virus-afflicted 2020 looks like 1918 despite science's march

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite a century's progress in science, 2020 is looking a lot like 1918.

In the years between two lethal pandemics, one the misnamed Spanish flu, the other COVID-19, the world learned about viruses, cured various diseases, made effective vaccines, developed instant communications and created elaborate public-health networks.

Yet here we are again, face-masked to the max. And still unable to crush an insidious yet avoidable infectious disease before hundreds of thousands die from it.

As in 1918, people are again hearing hollow assurances at odds with the reality of hospitals and morgues filling up and bank accounts draining. The ancient common sense of quarantining is back. So is quack-

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ery: Rub raw onions on your chest, they said in 1918. How about disinfectant in your veins now? mused President Donald Trump, drawing gasps instead of laughs over what he weakly tried to pass off as a joke.

In 1918, no one had a vaccine, treatment or cure for the great flu pandemic as it ravaged the world and killed more than 50 million people. No one has any of that for the coronavirus, either.

Modern science quickly identified today's new coronavirus, mapped its genetic code and developed a diagnostic test, tapping knowledge no one had in 1918. That has given people more of a fighting chance to stay out of harm's way, at least in countries that deployed tests quickly, which the U.S. didn't.

But the ways to avoid getting sick and what to do when sick are little changed. The failure of U.S. presidents to take the threat seriously from the start also joins past to present.

Trump all but declared victory before infection took root in his country and he's delivered a stream of misinformation ever since. President Woodrow Wilson's principal failure was his silence.

Not once, historians say, did Wilson publicly speak about a disease that was killing Americans grotesquely and in huge numbers, even though he contracted it himself and was never the same after. Wilson fixated on America's parallel fight in World War I like "a dog with a bone," says John M. Barry, author of "The Great Influenza."

The suspected ground zero of the Spanish flu ranges from Kansas to China. But it was clear to U.S. officials even in 1918 that it didn't start in Spain.

The pandemic took on Spain's name only because its free press ambitiously reported the devastation in the disease's early 1918 wave while government officials and a complicit press in countries at war — the U.S. among them — played it down in a time of jingoism, censorship and denial.

Like COVID-19, the 1918 pandemic came from a respiratory virus that jumped from animals to people, was transmitted the same way, and had similar pathology, Barry said by email. Social distancing, hand-washing and masks were leading control measures then and now.

Medical advice from then also resonates today: "If you get it, stay at home, rest in bed, keep warm, drink hot drinks and stay quiet until the symptoms are past," said Dr. John Dill Robertson, Chicago health commissioner in 1918. "Then continue to be careful, for the greatest danger is from pneumonia or some kindred disease after the influenza is gone."

In the manner of the day, there just had to be a catchy rhyme in circulation, too: "Cover up each cough and sneeze. If you don't you'll spread disease."

But there were also marked differences between the viruses of 1918 and 2020. The Spanish flu was particularly dangerous to healthy people aged 20 to 40 — the prime generation of military service — paradoxically because of their vibrant immune systems.

When such people got infected, their antibodies went after the virus like soldiers spilling from the trenches of Europe's killing fields.

"The immune system was throwing every weapon it had at the virus," Barry said. "The battlefield was the lung. The lung was being destroyed in that battle."

Young soldiers and sailors massed at military camps in the U.S., sailed for Europe on ships stuffed to the gunwales with humanity, fought side by side in the trenches and came home in victory to adoring crowds. The toll was enormous, on them and the people they infected. The Spanish flu could just as easily have been called the U.S. Army or U.S. Navy flu instead. Or the German or British flu, for that matter.

Among those who died in the pandemic was Friedrich Trump, Donald Trump's paternal grandfather. Among those who contracted it and recovered were the wartime leaders of Britain and Germany as well as of the United States, British and Spanish kings and the future U.S. president, Franklin Roosevelt, when he was assistant Navy secretary.

But the toll was heavier on average people and the poor, crowded in tenements, street cars and sweaty factories.

They could not all live by the words of the 1918 U.S. surgeon general, Rupert Blue: "Keep out of crowds and stuffy places as much as possible. ... The value of fresh air through open windows cannot be over-emphasized. ... Make every possible effort to breath as much pure air as possible."

An estimated 675,000 Americans died in the pandemic, which is thought to have infected one-third of

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the global population.

BAD SCIENCE

In 1918, the surgeon general noted in a handbill that “a person who has only a mild attack of the disease himself may give a very severe attack to others.” The warning is just as applicable to the coronavirus, especially as scientists learned large numbers of people with COVID-19 may spread it despite no obvious symptoms. Exactly how often the new virus kills can’t be determined without better counts of the infected; some estimates put the 1918 flu’s death rate at 2.5%.

Blue’s public notice also warned people to avoid charlatans and only get medicine from doctors.

Physicians, though, didn’t always know what they were doing. Medical journals at the time describe a rash of unusual treatments, some in the league of Trump’s amateur theories about disinfectant, blasts of lights and an unapproved drug that has both potential benefits and risks.

One 1918-era doctor recommended that people sniff a boric acid and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) powder to rinse out nasal passages. Others prescribed quinine, strychnine and a poisonous garden plant called Digitalis to help circulation, as well as drugs derived from iodine for “internal disinfection,” according to Laura Spinney, who wrote the 2017 book “Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How it Changed the World.”

Popular theories spread that warming your feet would prevent infection, or gobbling brown sugar, or getting the onion rubdown. A “clean heart” was one supposed preventive, though it is not clear whether that meant the organ or the heart of love.

“There was no Tony Fauci back then,” Barry said in a remote Library of Congress interview in April.

We have Fauci now — a federal immunologist who has been regarded as the truth-teller in White House briefings, singularly immune to Trump’s positive spin and falsehoods. Plus, we know so much more than people did in 1918.

Yet we’re still hearing lots of Dark Ages nonsense.

Conspiracy theorists have blamed COVID-19 on the development of 5G networks, just as they say radio waves caused the 1918 flu. Arsonists recently torched more than a dozen British cell towers after that falsehood circulated.

Over the months of this pandemic, The Associated Press has debunked a series of bogus remedies that spread on Facebook, Twitter and the like. No, blasting hot air up your nose from a hair dryer won’t protect you. Nor will drinking tonic water, eating high-alkaline foods, stuffing antibiotic ointment up your nose, downing vodka or any home elixir.

No, it’s not true that if you can’t hold your breath very long, you have COVID-19. Or that a vaccine from a lab only works on a disease created by a lab.

Social distancing has not come with social-media distancing. Over a century of science, we haven’t gone back to the future, but ahead to the past.

LESSONS OF 1918 (and 1919)

In September 1918, as the Spanish flu’s second and by far deadliest wave hit in the U.S., Philadelphia’s public health chief disregarded advisers and let a massive war-bond parade proceed through downtown. The H1N1 virus raced through the masses in what has been called the world’s deadliest parade. As officials insisted there was nothing to be alarmed about, people were seeing neighbors sicken and die with astonishing speed and mass graves being dug.

“It’s just the flu” had worn thin as the mantra of officialdom.

Late that November, sirens wailed in San Francisco to sound the all-clear after six weeks of lockdown and tell people they could remove their masks. San Francisco, like many cities in the West, had been largely spared the first wave and spent the interval preparing for Round 2, mandating masks and jailing people who didn’t comply.

They had a rhyme for that, too, of course: “Obey the laws, and wear the gauze. Protect your jaws from

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septic paws.”

The precautions paid off with a death rate lower than in afflicted cities elsewhere. But the city relaxed too soon.

In December, thousands of new cases erupted. A wave spilling into the new year was underway. San Francisco's death toll mounted by more than 1,000. It was the last lashing by the Spanish flu, and a less lethal one.

The brutal lessons of 1918 and 1919? To Barry, who was enlisted 15 years ago in a Bush administration drive to prepare all levels of government for pandemics, they are to respond early, relax cautiously, tell people the truth.

Instead he has seen denial followed by a chaotic federal response and leadership vacuum as Washington and the states compete for the same medical essentials and now move fitfully toward reopening.

“Now we have plans, even war-gamed the plans, spent billions preparing for just what is happening, federal agencies have been tasked to handle all these things, and we get ... next to nothing,” he said.

Not even a jingle.

Associated Press writers Colleen Long and Lauran Neergaard in Washington, Amanda Seitz in Chicago and Karen Mahabir in New York contributed to this report.

Trump's anti-China rhetoric aimed at boosting US leverage

By DEB RIECHMANN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is making ever louder pronouncements casting blame on China for the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to sidestep domestic criticism of the president's own response, tarnish China's global reputation and give the U.S. leverage on trade and other aspects of U.S.-China competition.

President Donald Trump has vowed to penalize China for what U.S. officials have increasingly described as a pattern of deceit that denied the world precious time to prepare for the pandemic. The opening salvo isn't in the form of tariffs or sanctions but in a one-sided accounting of China's behavior that could yank the Chinese lower on the global reputation meter.

The State Department, the Department of Homeland Security and the White House have all launched public efforts in recent days to lay bare what they say is clear evidence that China tried to mask the scale of the outbreak and then refused to provide critical access to U.S. and global scientists that could have saved lives. More than 250,000 people have died globally from COVID-19, including more than 68,000 in the U.S.

The Trump administration, a senior administration official says, is trying to convince the world that China isn't playing by the same rules as everyone else, and that may be the biggest punishment for an intensely proud emerging superpower. The official was not authorized to publicly discuss the issue and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

To that end, the administration has pushed its China criticism beyond the bounds of established evidence.

Trump and allies repeat and express confidence in an unsubstantiated theory linking the origin of the outbreak to a possible accident at a Chinese virology laboratory. U.S. officials say they are still exploring the subject and describe the evidence as purely circumstantial. But Trump, aides say, has embraced the notion to further highlight China's lack of transparency.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" that there is "enormous evidence" that the virus began in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

The institute, which is run by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is about 8 miles, or 13 kilometers, from a market that is considered a possible source for the virus. 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.

Pompeo said China has denied the U.S. and World Health Organization access to the lab. But Trump

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says he has seen information that gives him a high degree of confidence that the Wuhan institute is the origin of the virus. Asked why he has such confidence, Trump said: "I can't tell you that. I'm not allowed to tell you that."

Health officials are dubious.

"From our perspective, this remains speculative," WHO emergencies chief Dr. Michael Ryan says of the lab theory. "But like any evidence-based organization, we would be very willing to receive any information that purports to the origin of the virus."

Trump's ouster of more than a handful of top intelligence officials has given him an additional credibility problem when it comes to the administration's pronouncements based on intelligence.

"These purges have already, I fear, politicized the intelligence community's work in key ways," said Mike Morell, a former acting CIA director under President Barack Obama who now hosts the "Intelligence Matters" podcast. One of our institutions critical to the pursuit of the truth has a large crack in it."

China strongly rejects Trump's version of events.

On Monday, China's official Global Times newspaper said Pompeo was making "groundless accusations" against Beijing by suggesting the coronavirus was released from a Chinese laboratory.

The populist tabloid published by the ruling Communist Party mouthpiece People's Daily said the claims were a politically motivated attempt to preserve Trump's presidency and divert attention from the U.S. administration's own failures in dealing with the outbreak.

While Trump's and Pompeo's critical statements have been at the forefront of the administration's anti-China rhetoric, U.S. government agencies, including the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security, have been compiling often publicly available information to try to support the allegations.

DHS documents, obtained by The Associated Press on Sunday and Monday, accuse the Chinese government of intentionally downplaying the scope and severity of the spread of the virus in order to buy up international stocks of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies needed to combat the disease.

Although any country might be expected to purchase large quantities of materials necessary to combat a major threat to public health, the administration has sought to portray China's actions as secret, irresponsible and dangerous for the rest of the world.

One such document, drawing from open source material, emphasizes reports about the disappearance of Chinese doctors who raised early alarms about the virus and the response, the Chinese government's alleged suppression and destruction of virus samples and closure of relevant laboratories.

It also reports on China's early resistance to acknowledging human-to-human transmission of COVID-19, the failure of authorities to immediately block domestic or international travel out of Wuhan and China's opposition to calls for an international inquiry into the pandemic.

The focus on China comes as Trump's own record has faced persistent scrutiny. White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany, told the AP on Monday that Trump was first briefed by intelligence agencies about the virus on Jan 23, and then again on Jan 28.

Providing a rare glimpse into one of the most sensitive U.S. government practices, the highly classified presidential daily briefing, McEnany said it was only in that second briefing that Trump was told that the virus was spreading outside China.

Trump, she added, was told that all the deaths were still occurring inside China and that Beijing was not sharing key data. Days later, Trump moved to severely curtail travel to the U.S. from China. The White House's descriptions of the briefing were prepared by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, a spokesperson said.

But reference to the coronavirus was included in at least passing mention in the written version of the intelligence briefing on Jan. 11 and Jan. 14, according to a senior U.S. government official within the intelligence community, who said that other officials, including Defense Secretary Mark Esper, were briefed.

Officials emphasized that much of the U.S. government's attention during that period was on Iran, after the killing of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Gen. Qasem Soleimani in a Jan 3 U.S. drone strike and the subsequent downing of Ukrainian airliner over Tehran.

Associated Press writers James LaPorta and Matthew Lee contributed to this report.

Virus deaths hit hard in Spain's shrinking rural villages

By FELIPE DANA and JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

DURUELO DE LA SIERRA, Spain (AP) — When someone dies in tightly knit Duruelo de la Sierra, the whole community walks from the church service to the cemetery, accompanying the deceased to their final resting place. In times of pandemic, just a few relatives are allowed.

"You are used to seeing a funeral with lots of people," said Alberto Abad, a 54-year-old carpenter who's also the mayor and sees the virus as tearing at his town's social fabric. "It touches you because you know all the people who live here."

Spain has been one of the hardest-hit countries in the pandemic, with more than 25,600 confirmed deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. But while Madrid has been the epicenter of the suffering, each death in the countryside is a sorely felt blow for struggling villages.

Duruelo de la Sierra lies in Spain's north-central province of Soria, one of Europe's most sparsely populated areas, home to shrinking communities amid a landscape dotted by abandoned villages. Many in these dwindling villages and towns thought their sparse populations would shield them from the coronavirus pandemic.

On the contrary: Soria's relatively high percentage of older adults and limited health care resources created conditions for COVID-19 to have a particularly devastating impact on communities that even before were struggling to survive.

The numbers, while imprecise because of the scarcity of testing, tell the tale: Provincial authorities reported on April 22 that 1.52% of Soria's population was infected, compared with 0.44% for all of Spain. The province had a virus death rate of 1.08%, more than twice the national level of 0.46%. Officials calculate there were at least 500 overall deaths in Soria since the start of the outbreak in April, compared with a previous average of 83 per month.

"In less populated areas, transmission is slower, but when it hits, it hits," said Fernando Simón, Spain's leading health official on the virus.

Duruelo de la Sierra, a lumber town of 1,000 that's fighting to stave off extinction from depopulation, is surrounded by green hills of pine forests, cows and sheep as well as the stone remains of forgotten homesteads.

Abad, speaking to The Associated Press among the gravestones in the town's cemetery, said March 24 will be remembered as the "darkest day" in many years. On that Tuesday, four residents were hurriedly buried or cremated.

Duruelo de la Sierra usually sees one or two deaths per month and about 20 in a year, according to the mayor. From Feb. 26 to April 2, there were 13. Five of the dead had tested positive for the virus and others are suspected of having contracted it.

"Never, never before in the memory of Duruelo had the village bid farewell to four neighbors on the same day," Abad said.

Similar tragedies are playing out throughout Soria and other parts of Spain's rural interior.

In Cabrejas del Pinar, Soria, a hamlet of 380, nine people, or over 2% of the population, have been lost to the virus.

Eusebio Soria, who is now recovering at home in the village, said his doctor diagnosed him with the flu, but when his fever wouldn't go away it became clear he had COVID-19.

"I thought it was out there, but that it hadn't yet arrived here," he said.

Some residents believe that people from Madrid, less than a three hours' drive to the south, could have brought the virus when they visited their second homes.

The province's population has plummeted since 1950, when it had 160,000 inhabitants, with many young people leaving for better educational and job opportunities in Madrid and other big cities. Of Soria's 186

municipalities, 116 now have fewer than 100 people.

Today, all 88,000 Sorianos wouldn't even fill the stadium of soccer club FC Barcelona. With 23 people per square mile (eight people per square kilometer), it is among the least densely populated places in Europe, comparable to areas of Finland and Scotland's Outer Hebrides.

Health authorities say demographics — 10% of the residents are over 80, four percentage points above the national average — made Soria more vulnerable to the virus, which is more dangerous for older people and those with previous health conditions.

Provincial leaders also point to underfunding of basic services.

Abad, who contracted coronavirus himself and recovered at home, said three medical workers at Duruelo de la Sierra's clinic weren't immediately replaced after they were sickened by COVID-19 and had to stop working.

Things were even more dire in Tardelcuende, population 355. Mayor Ricardo Corredor said when its only doctor fell ill, the local nursing home went without proper medical attention for several days. All 21 residents at the home were infected and seven died.

Soria's lone hospital had eight intensive care unit beds before the crisis. That was increased to nearly 30, but some patients still had to be transferred to hospitals in other provinces and Madrid sent in medical workers.

"When 500 people die in Soria compared with the monthly average of 83, you have to face the truth. It has a psychological and economic impact," said Carlos Martínez, mayor of Soria's eponymous provincial seat. "Health care cannot depend on an act of generosity."

Mercedes Pascual, a caregiver at a nursing home in Duruelo de la Sierra who has spent over a month and a half quarantined at home after being infected, called the isolation depressing and said the aftermath promises to be bleak.

"In the village we all know each other, we are family or friends," Pascual said. "We are very sad to see how they have died. When things get back to normal, it will be difficult to accept it and see the void they have left."

Joseph Wilson reported from Barcelona.

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

U.S. couple's nightmare: Held in China, away from daughter

By ERIKA KINETZ Associated Press

SHANGHAI (AP) — The first thing Daniel Hsu noticed about the room was that there were no sharp edges. The walls were covered with beige rubber, the table wrapped in soft, grey leather. White blinds covered two barred windows.

Five surveillance cameras recorded his movements, and two guards kept constant, silent watch. They followed Hsu to the shower and stood beside him at the toilet.

Lights blazed through the night. If he rolled over on his mattress, guards woke him and made him turn his face toward a surveillance camera that recorded him as he slept. He listened for sounds of other prisoners -- a door slamming, a human voice. But he heard only the occasional roar of a passing train.

"First, keep healthy," Hsu told himself. "Second, keep strong."

He had no idea when or how he would get out.

Hsu is a U.S. citizen. He has not been convicted of any crime in China, yet he was detained there for six months in solitary confinement under conditions that could qualify as torture under international conventions. Authorities from eastern Anhui province placed exit bans on Hsu and his wife, Jodie Chen, blocking them from returning home to suburban Seattle in August 2017 and effectively orphaning their 16-year-old daughter in America.

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Critics say the Chinese Communist Party's expanding use of exit bans to block people — including U.S., Australian and Canadian citizens and permanent residents — from leaving China reeks of hostage-taking and collective punishment. They also warn that it lays bare China's will to exert influence, not just over Chinese citizens in China, but also permanent residents and citizens of other countries.

"American citizens are too often being detained as de facto hostages in business disputes or to coerce family members to return to China—this is shocking and unacceptable behavior by the Chinese government and a clear violation of international law," said James P. McGovern, chair of the bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

Hsu says Anhui authorities have been effectively holding them hostage in order to convince his father, Xu Weiming, to come back from the U.S. and face charges he embezzled 447,874 yuan (worth \$63,000 today) over 20 years ago — an allegation Xu denies.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added grave new urgency to their desire to leave. Despite fear of retribution, the family is speaking out for the first time, offering a rare account of life inside China's opaque system of exit bans and secretive detention centers.

Their story is supported by Chinese court documents and correspondence and interviews with U.S. and Chinese government officials. Some details could not be independently verified but are in line with accounts from other detainees.

'WHY ARE YOU NOT HERE?'

Five days before Hsu entered the smooth beige room at a Communist Party-run "education center" in Hefei, the capital of Anhui province, his stepdaughter, Mandy Luo, boarded a flight from Shanghai to Seattle alone. She had been on a family visit to China and was supposed to return with her mother to finish high school. But airport security had blocked her mother from boarding.

Mandy vomited for 10 hours on the flight home. When Luo felt bad, she liked to curl up on her mother's lap. But now it was just her, a barf bag and a snoring man next to her.

"Mom," she kept thinking, "why are you not here?"

The answer to that question lies in Chinese laws that give authorities broad discretion to block both Chinese citizens and foreign nationals from leaving the country. Minor children, a pregnant woman and a pastor — all with foreign passports — have been exit banned, according to people with direct knowledge of the cases.

The U.S., Canada and Australia have issued advisories warning their citizens that they can be prevented from leaving China over disputes they may not be directly involved in. People may not realize they can't leave until they try to depart.

"U.S. diplomats frequently raise the issue of exit bans and the need for transparency with the PRC government," a State Department spokesperson said in an email. "The Department has raised Mr. Hsu's case at the highest levels and will continue to do so until he is allowed to return home to the U.S."

"The misuse of exit bans is troubling," said a spokesman for Canada's Foreign Minister. "Promoting and protecting human rights is an integral part of Canada's foreign policy."

Australian consular cables obtained by the AP through a freedom of information request show that diplomats have repeatedly flagged concerns to Chinese counterparts about the growing number of exit bans on Australians.

Within China, exit bans have been celebrated as part of a best-practices toolkit for convincing corrupt officials to return to the motherland for prosecution, part of President Xi Jinping's sweeping campaign to purify the ruling Communist Party and shore up its moral authority. Many corruption suspects fled to the U.S., Australia and Canada, which do not have extradition treaties with China.

Requests for comment to Anhui Province's Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision, Public Security Department and procuratorate, as well as the province's foreign affairs and propaganda offices all went unanswered. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing declined to comment.

I DON'T HAVE A FERRARI

Hsu was accused of being a co-conspirator in the corruption case against his father, Xu. The Hefei Intermediate People's Court found that Xu embezzled money for real estate in the 1990s, while serving

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as chairman of Shanghai Anhui Yu'an Industrial Corporation, a developer owned by the Anhui Provincial People's Government. At the time, Hsu was half a world away, studying accounting at the University of San Francisco.

Xu denies the charges. In a letter to the court, he wrote that the money was a housing stipend, vetted by a government audit committee and awarded to dozens of employees. He said he is the target of a political vendetta.

If he had really been interested in corruption, Xu added, he would have stolen far more than \$63,000.

"If my dad's rich, OK, I deserve this maybe," said Hsu, who ran a barbecue restaurant in Bellevue, Washington, which he was forced to sell during his involuntary exile. "But I never enjoy anything. I don't have a Ferrari. I don't have a yacht. I'm just a small business owner. I work by my hands, cutting meat."

His interrogations came in fits and starts. He gazed at the smooth edges in his room and thought about hurting himself. He fantasized a Delta Force chopper would rescue him. The men would break through the walls and say, "You're free, sir. Come with us." No one came. He read sports magazines and the Bible.

"Try to sit in a room for three hours and tell me how do you feel, just by yourself. You have nothing," he said in an interview.

Before coming to the party education center, Hsu had spent 14 days in detention in Hefei, sharing a cell and one bucket toilet with two dozen men. Hsu asked police to send him back. At least there were other people, TV, chess. Even his cellmate who allegedly murdered his girlfriend was kind of nice.

In mid-September police gave Hsu a phone so he could convince his parents to return. His mother told him they'd written letters to Washington. Surely, there would be justice. "Be strong," she said. "I am proud of you."

Hsu's mother told him he was living in the dark. No, he argued, there is a window in my room: "I can sometimes see the sun and the moon."

Now, he said, he knows what she meant. "I knew nothing else, nothing that happens in the world, they closed everything," he said. "She told me, 'In your heart there should be a light. You should keep that light on.'"

After a few days, the phone was taken away. Hsu had been given a mission – convince his father to return – and he'd failed.

Hsu was being held under "residential surveillance in a designated location," a legal mechanism that allows detentions of up to six months without formal charges or judicial review in certain cases.

The United Nations has urged Beijing to halt the practice, saying it "may amount to incommunicado detention in secret places, putting detainees at a high risk of torture or ill-treatment."

China is a signatory to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which defines torture as an intentional abuse of power by the state that causes severe physical or mental suffering. It signed, but did not ratify, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which precludes torture as well as "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."

Joshua Rosenzweig, a deputy regional director at Amnesty International in Hong Kong, said that though residential surveillance sounds better than throwing someone in jail, in practice it's one of the most excruciating forms of detention under Chinese law. In Hsu's case, he said prolonged solitary confinement and 24-hour surveillance seemed designed to cause psychological suffering with the aim of coercing him to do something.

"That would clearly satisfy the criteria for torture and other ill treatment," Rosenzweig said. "The ability, inside a black box, to carry out this kind of coercion against someone — it's incredible this is allowed to go on."

SURVIVING SOLITUDE

Hsu set a new challenge for himself: He would convince his guards, who had been ordered not to speak to him, to tell him their names.

"You study me. I study you back," he said. "Who is stronger?"

Over time, and late at night, his guards relaxed. Hsu discovered one was a fan of Manchester United. Others wanted to know what the schools were like in America and how much real estate cost. Eventually,

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he said, he got one guy to bring him a caramel macchiato from Starbucks.

In December, police announced Hsu's father had agreed to go back to China. Hsu was shocked. On Dec. 14, a consular officer came with news that his father had made a sworn statement declaring Hsu's innocence.

His mother also sent word that her husband's health was poor and he would postpone his return.

Hsu held his fists and began to shake.

The next morning, his minders yelled at him. They made him make a videotaped message. Hsu told his parents they should have kept their word and returned. He wrote a letter, telling them he was getting sick in his head, pulling his hair out, not sleeping.

The new rotation of guards refused to speak to him. He dreamed about his daughter and woke in the night, his face wet with tears.

Back in Seattle, Mandy was also struggling with solitude. Her mother's presence had been like the air she breathed, invisible until it was gone. She missed the security of knowing someone was in the next room, just in case.

She expanded her cooking repertoire beyond boiled eggs. She managed the garden, got the boiler fixed, put up her Christmas tree by herself and waded through college financial aid forms on her own, all while pulling straight A's and helping her grandmother fire off petitions to Washington.

"What I need to do gives me a lot of pressure," she said. "I have to be a mom and then be a student at the same time."

She didn't want to add to the general misery, so she boxed up the rage and helplessness. Instead of shouting at her relatives, she wept in her family's big, empty house.

"Why me?" she cried out, to no one in particular. "I'm only 16. What are you expecting of me?"

WHO GETS SAVED

On Feb. 11, 2018, near the end of Hsu's sixth month in detention, he was released. His wife drove nine hours to pick him up. They tossed his prison books in a dumpster and went out to dinner.

Hsu watched his wife eat. He couldn't bring himself to hug her.

He was so sorry.

Maybe he had been alone too long.

After sleeping under blazing lights for six months, he could no longer sleep in the dark. Shanghai's jostling crowds made him nervous. He kept crying.

In Chinese tradition, he reasoned, nothing is more important than a son. The father should come back, even at pain of death, for his son. But what, then, of the son? Hsu said if his father returned to China and something bad happened, he would never forgive himself.

Hsu's mother, Qin Peiyun, insisted she and Hsu's father would return to China only after Hsu and Chen, a U.S. green card holder, were safely back in Seattle.

"My husband and I go to China, we can't save Daniel and Jodie," Qin said in an interview. "If we go to China, they will destroy our whole family."

Hsu, 43, and Chen, 44, were living off savings. Their marriage was rapidly deteriorating. When they weren't fighting, they sat at home and stared at each other.

They couldn't say much on the phone because they figured their communications were monitored. It was a struggle to make their Americanized teenager understand how they could be stuck in China if they had done nothing wrong. Thousands of years ago, people who angered the Emperor risked having their entire family executed. But blood bonds and collective punishment were difficult for a person born in 2001 and living in Seattle to grasp.

Friends offered Hsu jobs or money to start a restaurant in Shanghai. But he always declined, worried he'd get them in trouble. He couldn't work legally because he had a U.S. passport with an expired visa and the Anhui authorities wouldn't give him paperwork needed to get a new one.

The U.S. Consulate in Shanghai lobbied intensively on their behalf. But nothing changed.

Hsu spent a lot of time at Starbucks. He realized that by sinking into the ruin of his life he was doing

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exactly what Anhui authorities wanted. The more miserable Hsu became, the more pressure it would put on his father to return. He decided to change things, starting with his marriage.

"We have to show them no matter how hard the situation, we are fine, we are better somehow," he told his wife. This might be their final chapter in China, so they should do their best to relish the country.

Chen got a job. They went out with friends, ate crawfish and went to the beach at Sanya.

In May 2019, immigration officers came to Hsu's home and told him they were going to deport him because his visa had expired. They warned him he'd never be able to return to China.

"I said, 'We can talk about that later, but deport me, please.'"

They didn't.

That same month a court notice went up outside their apartment saying the property would be auctioned.

"We still need a happy life," Hsu said. "We have to show people the positive side."

Tears were running down his face.

A HOMECOMING

In June 2019, Hsu and Chen missed their daughter's high school graduation. In August, they recruited relatives to see her off to college. The days inched by.

"Jail, I know my release date," Hsu said. "I'm still in jail. The (expletive) China jail. And I don't know my release date."

In early April, at the request of Anhui authorities, Chen wrote a formal petition for her exit ban to be lifted.

"I miss my daughter so much, especially at this critical moment," she wrote. "I do hope to take care of her, side by side, to fulfill my duty as a mother."

She pledged to persuade her father-in-law to return to China, saying she would deepen her emotional bond with her in-laws to establish mutual trust, then explain the "tolerant and humanized approach" of Chinese justice. She would use her wisdom and emotional suasion to reassure them that "the party and government will be fair and impartial."

It was unclear why Chen's exit ban was lifted. Hsu would have to stay in China. "They told me if my dad is not coming back, I will never leave this country," he said.

Talking on FaceTime with her parents a week before her mother's departure, Mandy, now 19, began to cry over a minor disagreement, then found she couldn't stop. She cried so long and so deeply she could barely breathe, pouring out three years of stress and loneliness.

The morning of April 10, Chen and Hsu rode to Shanghai's Pudong International Airport in a diplomatic sedan, a small American flag on the hood flapping in the wind. The Shanghai consul general, Sean Stein, escorted Chen to the departure gate.

Chen's trip back to Seattle took more than 24 hours. Concerned she might have picked up COVID-19 on the journey, she took an Uber from the airport to the leafy cul-de-sac they call home. Her daughter and her mother-in-law were waiting outside in the dark.

It had been 971 days since Chen had touched her daughter.

"Finally, Mom's back," Chen said.

Mandy ached to embrace her mother, but her grandmother had her by the arm, holding her back. No one knew what terrible germs Chen might be carrying.

Chen had planned to self-quarantine for two weeks, but Mandy couldn't wait. She moved from her grandparents' house and went into quarantine with her mother.

"It's 50 percent over," Mandy said. "My dad is the other 50 percent."

Back in Shanghai, Daniel went home from Pudong airport and slept most of the day.

When he awoke, he was alone.

Associated Press correspondents Kristen Gelineau in Sydney and Rob Gillies in Toronto and researcher Chen Si in Shanghai contributed to this story.

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75 years after WWII, search continues for missing soldiers

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

KLESSIN, Germany (AP) — Thomas Siepert looks across the verdant grain field, glowing in the sun after a spring thunderstorm, as windmills slowly churn in the distance.

Wild boar piglets trundle across the road into town and a hare pops out and dashes away. Yet the serene scene belies the slaughter there 75 years ago as German troops fought furiously — and futilely — to stave off the Soviet Red Army that was approaching the Nazi capital.

"It seems so idyllic, but it's a huge cemetery," Siepert said. "That shouldn't be forgotten."

But for decades, many of those who died there were forgotten, some buried where they fell and others dragged by civilians in the months after the war into trenches and foxholes they had themselves dug, and covered over.

For the last 15 years, volunteers like Siepert from around Europe have been trying to rectify that, devoting vacations to excavating long-buried trench lines and military positions in the search for those who never made it home.

During 19 digs across a square kilometer (less than half a square mile), members of the Association for the Recovery of the Fallen in Eastern Europe have found 116 German and 129 Soviet soldiers.

They seek to identify as many as possible — to provide closure for families, to give the dead their names back, and to separate them from the numbers in the history books in the hope of explaining the cost of war to future generations.

"On all sides, these are destroyed lives. These are all people who died senselessly," said Albrecht Laue, chairman of the association. "If we talk about a huge slaughter with hundreds of thousands of dead, nobody can understand that. But if I talk about the story of a young 17-year-old soldier, that's tangible."

Laue, a 46-year-old businessman from Hamburg, got interested in the search when looking for the grave of his grandfather, which he located near where he died fighting in Russia in 1942 as a young lieutenant. Siepert, 47, an engineer from nearby Frankfurt an der Oder, remembers as a child having regular lectures in school about avoiding the grenades and other munitions still found in the area, and wondering why.

Other volunteers include anthropologists, archaeologists, excavators and the disposal experts needed when munitions are found. They hail from all over, including Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Italy, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

"We couldn't, and also don't, want to look for soldiers from a specific nation," Laue said. "That's the interesting thing when one finds one of the dead; one never even knows at the beginning if it's a German or a Soviet."

In February 1945, they were bitter foes.

The village of Klessin sits on a height 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the Oder River. German military observers used it to call in artillery strikes on Soviet troops as they streamed across a pontoon bridge in the build-up before the final push on Berlin.

Recognizing the strategic importance of the hamlet, 100 kilometers (60 miles) east of Berlin, the Soviets made it a target. The Nazis resolved to hold it, moving in a unit of soldiers, augmented by officer cadets and older "Volkssturm" militia, scraped up as the number of military-aged men dwindled.

The fighting pitted 400 Germans in Klessin against about four times that number of Soviets, with the Germans supported by a unit of Panther tanks in the neighboring village of Podelzig, nearby artillery and air-dropped supplies.

Fierce combat raged for nearly two months, often hand-to-hand, as the Soviets attempted to take the village, firing off 62,000 mortar rounds and artillery shells.

Exactly how many were killed or listed as missing is not known, but the casualties were enormous, Siepert said.

"On March 20, German troops tried to break through there to make a corridor," he said, pointing to a field between Klessin and Podelzig where the Soviets had laid a minefield and other defenses after encircling the village. "There were 150 missing from that single attack, as well as 50 killed. Seventy made it through."

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On March 23, 1945, the beleaguered German soldiers attempted a breakout under the cover of darkness. About 60 made it, and the others were captured or killed.

German tank commander Lt. Hans Eimer was listed as missing after the breakout attempt. Eimer had led his Panther tank into Klessin the week before on his 22nd birthday to support the garrison, but the vehicle ended up being knocked out and he was wounded and trapped in the village.

Eimer's younger brother, Fritz, had died in fighting that January. After the war, his sister Margarete had long urged Laue's group to try and determine the fate of her only other sibling.

Eimer's remains were located by Laue's group in 2016 by chance and identified by dogtags. The group told Margarete before she died in 2018 that her brother had made it 250 meters (yards) out of the village before he was killed, and lay with two other soldiers.

Identifications are rare, especially of the Soviet soldiers who had no dogtags, but occasionally the volunteers get lucky.

In a dig on a Soviet outpost on a hill outside of Klessin in 2018, they came across three Soviet soldiers who were all highly decorated and traced their names through the medals.

This year's spring dig has been postponed due to lockdown restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic. Some work is still underway on a memorial site being established amid the rubble of the original farm buildings.

Hermann Kaiser, a member of the small community association behind the memorial, said he remembered finding military material as a kid growing up in the area, happily throwing on an old steel helmet and fighting "war" with his friends, while not understanding they were playing on graves.

The hope is with the memorial to make sure that others do understand.

"We want to present what happened here 75 years ago, what war means, show the younger generation that war destroys everything," he said, looking at the cratered landscape and rubble of the memorial. "And if we can do that in the place where it happened, it's unforgettable."

Yemen's south in turmoil after separatists' self-rule bid

By MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A bid by separatists funded by the United Arab Emirates to assert control over southern Yemen has reopened a dangerous new front in Yemen's civil war and pushed it closer to fragmentation at a time when the coronavirus pandemic poses a growing threat.

The separatists' recent declaration of self-rule over the key port city of Aden and other southern provinces also further pits Saudi Arabia and the UAE on opposing sides in the conflict, now in its sixth year. A separatist leader made the declaration from the UAE — a clear sign of its backing for the move.

The two Gulf states had been partners in a coalition waging war against Iran-linked Houthi rebels who seized the northern part of Yemen in 2014.

The two allies have conflicting interests in the south, though, and are aligned with rival sides. The UAE backs the separatists, and Saudi Arabia sides with Yemen's internationally recognized government, led by exiled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi.

The intensifying split in the south could further impede the Saudis' efforts to find a way out of the costly and seemingly unwinnable war against the Houthis.

Saudi Arabia has accelerated its exit strategy in recent months, including conducting back channel talks with the rebels. Last month, the Saudis declared a unilateral cease-fire, but it was rebuffed by the Houthis as a purported ploy, and fighting continued.

The UAE, meanwhile, is interested in securing shipping lanes along the Red Sea corridor and the crucial Bab el-Mandeb chokepoint off Yemen's shoreline. The UAE is both a major oil exporter and home to DP World, a global shipping and logistics firm. By supporting Yemeni separatists, the UAE also ensures that the Saudi-backed Islah party — the transnational Muslim Brotherhood's branch in Yemen — won't grow too powerful. The UAE opposes Brotherhood affiliates throughout the Middle East.

"It's becoming a conflict by proxy between the UAE and Saudis," said Fernando Carvajal, a former mem-

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ber of the U.N. Security Council Panel of Experts.

Yemen's conflict has split the country along tribal, regional and political lines. It started with the Houthis taking Sanaa, the capital, in 2014. In the spring of 2015, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other Arab states formed a coalition to battle the rebels and curb Iran's influence in what turned into a regional proxy war.

Since then, more than 100,000 people — fighters and civilians — have been killed. Airstrikes by the Saudi-led coalition and Houthis' ground fighting has displaced more than 3 million people and left millions of others unable to meet basic needs, pushing them to near-famine conditions.

The bid for southern self-rule comes as the country finds itself on the brink of a devastating virus outbreak.

Yemen has only reported 21 confirmed cases of the virus, including three fatalities, most of them in Aden, according to the internationally recognized government's Health Ministry. Aden residents claimed the hospitals shut their doors as medical staffers feared contracting the virus while lacking protective equipment.

The World Health Organization warned Saturday that the virus is actively circulating in Yemen and that it's preparing for the possibility of half the population getting infected.

In the south, the separatists' power grab brought fighting to areas that had been largely untouched by violence, threatening further displacement.

Late last week, explosions and artillery fire echoed through the valleys of the island of Socotra, a UNESCO world heritage site and home to species not found elsewhere. Separatists fought with forces loyal to Hadi's government on the island, a former UAE stronghold.

The UAE officially pulled troops out of southern Yemen last summer, but it continues to exert control through its proxies to ensure it holds onto key areas on Yemen's 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) of coastline.

Separatist leader Aydarous al-Zubaidi delivered the April 25 declaration of self-rule from the UAE's seat of government, Abu Dhabi.

Al-Zubaidi heads the Southern Transitional Council, an umbrella group of heavily armed and well-financed militias propped up by the UAE since 2015. The council hopes to restore an independent southern Yemen, which existed from 1967-1990.

The southern fighting leaves Hadi's government in a much weaker position amid efforts to end the conflict with the Houthis.

The self-rule declaration robbed the Hadi government of its temporary capital, Aden. Hadi has been living in exile in the Saudi capital of Riyadh for several years, but his government maintained a presence in Aden.

His government called the announcement a "blatant coup" against a peace deal with the separatists signed in Riyadh in November. The Saudis had brokered the agreement after deadly battles between the separatists and Hadi-allied forces. The fighting left the separatists in firm control of Aden, with the help of air cover from Emirati jets.

The Saudi-led coalition said the self-rule declaration was a "strange action" and called for the implementation of the Riyadh power-sharing deal, which stipulated the handover of heavy weapons, withdrawal of rival forces, and formation a new government.

The Hadi government said it had largely upheld the November power-sharing agreement and accused the separatists of failing to meet their obligations.

In an interview with The Associated Press, the foreign minister in Hadi's government, Mohammed al-Hadhrami, appealed to the UAE to stop its support for the separatists' council.

Derailing the November agreement "means bringing down all efforts for a comprehensive and just peace deal," he said.

It's unclear if Saudi Arabia has the stamina for more maneuvering in Yemen. The Saudis are already embroiled in an international oil price war and a coronavirus outbreak of their own.

Consolidating Yemen's south to only continue their stalemate with the Houthis might prove too great a task, some observers say.

"It's like a bullet-riddled boat and Saudis have to use all their 10 fingers and 10 toes to plug in all holes else the ship will sink," said Carvajal.

Associated Press writer Samy Magdy in Cairo contributed to this report.

Coronavirus returns long-banned drive-in movies to Iran

By MEHDI FATTAHI and NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The new coronavirus pandemic has brought back something unseen in Iran since its 1979 Islamic Revolution: a drive-in movie theater.

Once decried by revolutionaries for allowing too much privacy for unmarried young couples, a drive-in theater now operates from a parking lot right under Tehran's iconic Milad tower, showing a film in line with the views of hard-liners.

Workers spray disinfectants on cars that line up each night here after buying tickets online for what is called the "Cinema Machine" in Farsi. They tune into the film's audio via an FM station on their car radios.

With stadiums shut and movie theaters closed, this parking-lot screening is the only film being shown in a communal setting amid the virus outbreak in Iran, one of the world's worst. Iran has reported more than 98,600 cases with over 6,200 deaths, though international and local experts acknowledge Iran's toll is likely far higher.

"It was very fascinating, this is the first time this is happening, at least for people my age," said Behrouz Pournizam, 36, who watched the film along with his wife. "We are here mostly for the excitement to be honest, the movie itself didn't matter that much. I didn't care what movie it is or by whom or which genre."

The film being shown, however, is "Exodus," produced by a firm affiliated with Iran's hard-line Revolutionary Guard. The film by director Ebrahim Hatamikia focuses on cotton farmers whose fields die from salt water brought by local dams. The farmers, led by an actor who appears to be the Islamic Republic's answer to American cowboy stand-in Sam Elliott, drive their tractors to Tehran to protest the government.

There is precedent for this anger. Iran had built dams across the country since the revolution — especially under hard-line former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad — that environmentalists blame for damaging waterways and farmland. But this film instead involves "a peasant protest against the local authority that symbolically resembles President Hassan Rouhani's government," the state-owned Tehran Times said.

Rouhani, a relative moderate in Iran's Shiite theocracy, has increasingly faced hard-line criticism amid the collapse of his nuclear deal with world powers. Those allied with his administration have criticized the film.

Moviegoer Atefeh Soheili, however, was glad just to enjoy entertainment outside of her home.

"Now I'm sitting here with clean hands and if I want to eat something or relax I don't need to worry about distancing from other people," she said.

At senior home, staff stays put 24-7 to stop virus spread

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As girls, Nadia Williams and her sister spent countless hours imagining their weddings. Now 30, Williams helped her younger sibling plan her big day, but when it came on Friday, she couldn't be at her side as maid of honor. Instead, she put on a sequined dress, pulled her hair back, held a bouquet, and watched the ceremony alone, via Zoom, from a community for older adults.

Williams is among about 70 employees who are sheltering in place alongside more than 500 residents at an upscale assisted-living facility just outside Atlanta. Since the end of March, Park Springs has had employees live on its 61-acre campus instead of commute from home to protect residents from the coronavirus — an unusual approach, even as nursing homes have been among the hardest-hit places by the pandemic.

"Most facilities are so short on space," said Betsy McCaughey, of the Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths, a nonprofit that provides guidelines for preventing coronavirus at nursing homes. She lauded the idea of keeping staff on site, noting it also protects workers' families and communities.

The approach has been used elsewhere: In France, staff at a nursing home ended a 47-day quarantine Monday. In Connecticut, the owner of an assisted-living facility that is housing staff on the premises, Tyson

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Belanger, has called for government funding to help more senior communities do so.

In Georgia, Williams, a health care administrator, said her duty to the residents came first, even though it meant missing the wedding.

"I wish I was there, definitely," she said, choking up in a video interview with The Associated Press. "I wish I was able to help her get ready."

Park Springs' lockdown started after four employees and a resident tested positive for the virus. Most nursing homes have limited visitors, and many screen people for fevers or ask whether they've had contact with anyone with the virus. Park Springs' administrators said they feared those strategies might not be enough.

"We knew we had to do something drastic," said Donna Moore, chief operating officer of the company that owns Park Springs.

In some ways, Park Springs is more like a resort than a traditional elder-care facility. Residents — some needing no medical care — are spread out in apartment buildings, homes and duplexes on the gated campus near the base of Stone Mountain, a giant rock formation that lures tourists with a trail to the summit and an enormous carving of Confederate leaders.

Residents pay an entrance fee that can top \$500,000, with monthly fees ranging from about \$2,500 to over \$6,000, depending on the type, size and location of their home and whether they live alone or as a couple, according to Park Springs' website. The median cost of a one-bedroom unit at an assisted-living facility in Georgia last year was just over \$3,300 monthly, according to a survey by insurance giant Genworth Financial.

Some facilities might not have the amenities or financial resources to keep staff on campus, said Charlene Harrington, a professor emeritus of nursing at the University of California, San Francisco.

"If it's a lovely place, maybe the workers wouldn't mind staying there," she said.

Park Springs has a gym, tree-lined walking trails to a lake, a steakhouse and an art studio. Employees can use the gym, and administrators have organized karaoke, bingo and Easter dinner for them. They're also paying those living on site more — a decision made after volunteers had committed to stay, COO Moore said.

Those employees represent a fraction of Park Springs' normal 300-person staff. Another 30 or so are working from home, but the majority have been furloughed.

Employees' on-site logistics have required sacrifice. Moore sleeps on an air mattress in a tent she set up in a community hall. Her 18-year-old daughter, Megan, texts recordings of her singing to keep her mom's spirits up.

For Justin Craft, who runs Park Springs' food service, there have been no returns home for family dinners on a table set by his 12-year-old son.

Instead, he and his wife have weekly date nights and dinners with their boys separated by a fence on campus. On Thursday, she brought takeout from one of their favorite restaurants. He pulled his food under the gate, and she grabbed a small bottle of wine he'd left on a fence post. They sat at tables about 15 feet apart on opposite sides of the fence and chatted.

"It's our new normal, but we're used to it by now," Crystal Craft said.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, and the vast majority recover. But for some others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia or death. Nationwide, 20,000 deaths have been linked to virus outbreaks in nursing homes and other long-term care centers.

The Park Springs' employees and resident who tested positive recovered. Since the lockdown, the facility has seen one additional case — a 96-year-old resident with dementia tested positive April 23. Park Springs allows visitors for residents who are near the end of their lives. A daughter and a caregiver saw the woman, and she died three days after her positive test.

On campus, employees' workdays are longer, with expanded duties. Resident Kaffie McCullough, 74, teared up praising their efforts.

"I expect my family to jump in and help me out when something is somewhat of a crisis in my life. I don't expect that from the people who are providing services for me," she said.

Initially, Moore asked volunteering employees to stay on the property through the end of April. Now, she's asked if they can stay longer, perhaps for all of May.

Moore left an open book on a table with a pen for her staff's answers. When she returned, most had written: "I'm staying till the end."

Associated Press photographer John Bazemore contributed from Stone Mountain.

For more coverage of the pandemic, visit <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

Venezuela: 2 US 'mercenaries' among those nabbed after raid

By SCOTT SMITH and JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro said authorities arrested two U.S. citizens among a group of "mercenaries" on Monday, a day after a beach raid purportedly aimed at capturing the socialist leader that authorities say they foiled.

Maduro held up a pair of blue U.S. passports, reading off the names and birth dates on them in a nationwide broadcast on state television. He showed images of the fishing boats the alleged attackers rode in on and equipment like walkie-talkies and night-vision glasses collected in what Maduro called an "intense" couple of days. He blamed the attacks on the Trump administration and neighboring Colombia, both of which have denied involvement.

"The United States government is fully and completely involved in this defeated raid," Maduro said, praising members of a fishing village for cornering one group in the sweep netting the "professional American mercenaries."

Before dawn on Sunday, officials say the first attack started on a beach near Venezuela's port city of La Guaira, when security forces made the first two arrests and killed eight others attempting to make a landing by speedboats.

The two U.S. citizens arrested Monday were identified as as Luke Denman and Airan Berry, both former U.S. special forces soldiers.

Florida-based ex-Green Beret Jordan Goudreau said earlier Monday that he was working with the two men in a mission intending to detain Maduro and "liberate" Venezuela. Goudreau has claimed responsibility for the operation.

The two served in Iraq and Afghanistan with him in the U.S. military, Goudreau said, adding that they were part of this alleged mission in Venezuela called "Operation Gideon." The aim was to capture Maduro.

Venezuela has been in a deepening political and economic crisis under Maduro's rule. Crumbling public services such as running water, electricity and medical care have driven nearly 5 million to migrate. But Maduro still controls all levers of power despite a U.S.-led campaign to oust him. It recently indicted Maduro as a drug trafficker and offered a \$15 million reward for his arrest.

Venezuela and the United States broke diplomatic ties last year amid heightened tensions, so there is no U.S. embassy in Caracas. Officials from the U.S. State Department did not respond Monday to a request by The Associated Press for comment.

"I've tried to engage everybody I know at every level," Goudreau said of the attempt to help his detained colleagues. "Nobody's returning my calls. It's a nightmare."

Goudreau's account of the confusing raid has at times seemed contradictory — for example, he says he was plotting a rebellion for months while claiming not to have received a single penny. Meanwhile, a self-aggrandizing Maduro has thrived broadcasting videos on state TV of what he says was a flawless defense of the nation's sovereignty.

Kay Denman, the mother of one of the Americans, said the last time she heard from her son was a few

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weeks when he texted her from an undisclosed location to ask how she was coping with the coronavirus pandemic. She said she never heard her son discuss Venezuela and only learned of his possible capture there after his friends called when they saw the reports on social media.

"The first time I heard Jordan Goudreau's name was today," she said when reached at her home in Austin, Texas.

Goudreau has said he reached an agreement with the U.S.-backed Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó to overthrow Maduro, which Guaidó has denied. The opposition leader said he had nothing to do with Sunday's raid.

Goudreau says Guaidó never fulfilled the agreement, but the former Green Beret pushed ahead with an underfunded operation with just 60 fighters, including the two U.S. veterans.

He said he last communicated with Denman and Berry when they were adrift in a boat "hugging" the Caribbean coast of Venezuela. They were still in their boat following an initial confrontation with the Venezuelan Navy early Sunday, he said.

"They were running dangerously low on fuel," Goudreau said. "If they had gone onto landfall, they would have gone to a safe house."

Goudreau said the two were waiting for a boat on the Caribbean island of Aruba with emergency fuel to help extract them.

Venezuelan state TV showed images on state TV of several unidentified men handcuffed and lying prone in a street. One video clip showed authorities handling a shirtless man in handcuffs.

He was identified as a National Guardsman Capt. Antonio Sequea, who participated in a barracks revolt against Maduro a year ago. Goudreau said Sequea was a commander working with him in recent days on the ground in Venezuela.

Maduro ally and Attorney General Tarek William Saab said that in total they've arrested 114 people suspected in the attempted attack and they are on the hunt of 92 others.

Goudreau, a three-time Bronze Star U.S. combat veteran, claims to have helped organize the deadly seaborne raid from Colombia. Goudreau said the operation had received no aid from Guaidó or the U.S. or Colombian governments.

Opposition politicians and U.S. authorities issued statements suggesting Maduro's allies had fabricated the assault to draw attention away from the country's problems.

Goudreau said by telephone earlier Monday that 52 other fighters had infiltrated Venezuelan territory and were in the first stage of a mission to recruit members of the security forces to join their cause.

An AP investigation published Friday found that Goudreau had been working with a retired Venezuelan army general — who now faces U.S. narcotics charges — to train dozens of deserters from Venezuela's security forces at secret camps inside neighboring Colombia. The goal was to mount a cross-border raid that would end in Maduro's arrest.

Investigative researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

Coronavirus cuts 'deep scars' through meatpacking cities

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — As the coronavirus spread from the nation's meatpacking plants to the broader communities where they are located, it burned through a modest duplex in Waterloo, Iowa.

In the downstairs unit lived Jim Orvis, 65, a beloved friend and uncle who worked in the laundry department at the Tyson Foods pork processing facility, the largest employer in Waterloo. Upstairs was Arthur Scott, a 51-year-old father who was getting his life back on track after a prison term for drugs. He worked 25 miles (40.23 kilometers) away at the Tyson dog treats factory in Independence, Iowa.

The two men were not well acquainted. But both fell ill and died last month within days of each other from COVID-19 — casualties of an outbreak linked to the Waterloo plant that spread across the city of 68,000 people. Similar spread is happening in other communities where the economy centers around

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raising hogs and cattle and processing their meat, including the hot spots of Grand Island, Nebraska, and Worthington, Minnesota.

The virus is "devastating everything," said duplex owner Jose Garcia, who received notification two days apart from his deceased tenants' relatives. "These two guys were here last week. Now they are gone. It's crazy."

He said it's possible one of the men infected the other because they shared an entryway, or that they each contracted the virus separately at their workplaces.

The virus threatens the communities' most vulnerable populations, including low-income workers and their extended families.

"They're afraid of catching the virus. They're afraid of spreading it to family members. Some of them are afraid of dying," said the Rev. Jim Callahan, of the Church of St. Mary of Worthington, a city of 13,000 that has attracted immigrants from across the globe to work at the JBS pork processing plant.

"One guy said to me, 'I risked my life coming here. I never thought something that I can't see could take me out.'"

In Grand Island, an outbreak linked to a JBS beef plant that is the city's largest employer spread rapidly across the rural central Nebraska region, killing more than three dozen people. Many of the dead were elderly residents of long-term care facilities who had relatives or friends employed at the plant.

In Waterloo, local officials blame Tyson for endangering not only its workers and their relatives but everyone else who leaves home to work or get groceries. They are furious with the state and federal governments for failing to intervene — and for pushing hard to reopen the plant days after public pressure helped shut it down.

"We were failed by people who put profit margins and greed before people, predominantly brown people, predominantly immigrants, predominantly people who live in lower socioeconomic quarters," said Jonathan Grieder, a high school social studies teacher who serves on Waterloo's city council. "This is going to be with us for so long. There are going to be very deep scars in our community."

Grieder cried as he recounted how one of his former students, 19, lost her father to the coronavirus and has been left to raise two younger siblings. Their mother died of cancer last September.

Black Hawk County Sheriff Tony Thompson said he first became concerned after touring the Tyson plant April 10 and witnessing inadequate social distancing and a lack of personal protective equipment. As hundreds of workers began getting sick or staying home out of fear, Thompson joined the mayor and scores of local officials in asking Tyson to close the plant temporarily on April 16.

But Tyson, with support from Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, waited until April 22 to announce that step after the outbreak intensified. The company warned of the significant economic consequences even a temporary shutdown would create.

The plant, which can process 19,500 hogs per day, is now poised to resume production after President Trump invoked the Defense Production Act to require meatpackers to stay open.

Reynolds and Tyson have argued the plant with 2,800 workers is critical to the nation's pork supply and the regional farmers who sell millions of hogs to Tyson.

In three weeks, Black Hawk County's cases skyrocketed from 62 to 1,523 — more than 1% of its 132,000 residents. Deaths rose from zero to 15. Ninety percent of the cases are "attributed or related to the plant," the county's public health director said.

Tyson has not released the number of workers who tested positive but said that "workplace safety continues to be a top priority."

Thompson said the plant's outbreak decimated the community's "first line of defense" and allowed the virus to spread to nursing homes and the jail he oversees. "These are the places we did not want to fight the COVID-19 virus," he said.

The losses are quickly mounting.

A refugee from Bosnia died days after falling sick while working on the Tyson production line, leaving behind her heartbroken husband. The virus also took an intellectually disabled man who died at 73, years

after escaping forced labor at an Iowa turkey plant and happily retiring to Waterloo.

Scott, who went by the nickname Dontae, was planning to reunite in June with two teenage children he had not seen in person since he was incarcerated on federal drug charges in 2011.

A former small-time heroin distributor who suffered from addiction, he and his wife divorced during his prison term, and she moved to Mississippi with the children. Since his 2018 release, friends said he was doing well and rebuilding relationships.

Scott told his daughter, Destiny Proctor, 18, that he suspected he became infected at the Tyson pet food factory, which has stayed open under federal guidance classifying the industry as critical infrastructure.

Proctor and her 15-year-old brother were looking forward to living with their dad this summer. Instead, their final talk was a video call from a hospital where he struggled to talk.

"It was so, so sad," said Proctor, who described her father as funny and caring and frequently sending her cards and gifts. "He told me he couldn't breathe."

Associated Press writers Amy Forliti in Minneapolis and Grant Schulte in Lincoln, Nebraska, contributed to this story.

Called to order: Supreme Court holds 1st arguments by phone

By JESSICA GRESKO and MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — They politely took turns speaking. Not a child, spouse or dog could be heard in the background. The conference call went long, but not by that much.

And with that, the Supreme Court made history Monday, hearing arguments by telephone and allowing the world to listen in live, both for the first time.

The arguments were essentially a high-profile phone discussion with the nine justices and two arguing lawyers. The session went remarkably smoothly, notable for a high court that prizes tradition and only reluctantly changes the way it operates.

The high court had initially postponed arguments in 20 cases scheduled for March and April because of the coronavirus pandemic. Courtroom sessions were seen as unsafe, especially with six justices aged 65 or older and at risk of getting seriously sick from the virus. But the justices ultimately decided to hear 10 cases by phone over six days this month.

The cases the court will hear include President Donald Trump's effort to shield tax and other financial records and whether presidential electors have to cast their Electoral College ballots for the candidate who wins the popular vote in their state.

The court chose a somewhat obscure case about whether the travel website Booking.com can trademark its name for its first foray into remote arguments. The more high-profile arguments come next week.

Monday's groundbreaking session began at the usual time of 10 a.m. EDT, when Marshal Pamela Talkin called the court to order and Chief Justice John Roberts announced the case.

"Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!" Talkin began, using the ceremonial language used in the courtroom. But she skipped a few words of her usual script and didn't tell people "to draw near" and give their attention, a reflection of the unusual circumstances. One other difference: her words were prerecorded "to simplify the proceedings," court spokeswoman Kathy Arberg said in an email.

Some justices were at the court, but Arberg did not say who or how many.

Roberts asked the first questions of government attorney Erica Ross, who was arguing that Booking.com should not be allowed to trademark its name because it is a generic term followed by ".com." The justices then asked questions in order of seniority instead of the usual free-for-all, rapid-fire style that questions are asked in the courtroom. That meant Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who joined the court in 2018, went last.

One mild surprise came early in the arguments when Roberts passed the questioning to Justice Clarence Thomas, who once went 10 years between questions and has said he thinks his colleagues pepper lawyers with too many. But in this format, Thomas spoke up, asking questions of both lawyers. It was the first time in more than a year that he had asked a question.

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Glitches were minor. At one point Justice Stephen Breyer's line was briefly garbled. At another, when the questioning was passed to Justice Sonia Sotomayor, there was a long pause and the chief justice said her name a second time before her voice was heard. "I'm sorry, chief," she said before beginning her questioning.

Several justices said "good morning" to the lawyers, a telephone nicety not often heard in the courtroom. And Roberts occasionally interjected to keep things moving, saying, "Thank you, counsel," when he wanted Ross or Booking.com's lawyer Lisa Blatt to stop talking so he could move to the next justice.

"It is a fundamental principle of trademark law that no party can obtain a trademark for a generic term like 'wine,' 'cotton,' or 'grain,'" Ross told the justices, pointing them to an 1888 Supreme Court case in which the justices ruled that adding a word like "Company" or "Inc." to a generic term doesn't make it eligible to be trademarked.

Some of the exchanges were playful, as happens from time to time in the courtroom. Breyer used pizza.com and cookies.com as examples of websites and discussed with Blatt searching on the internet for toilet paper.

All told, arguments took roughly an hour and 15 minutes, slightly longer than the hour allotted in the courtroom.

One element of the morning that was truly different was the audience. While the courtroom holds only about 500 people and members of the public who want a seat have to line up outside the Supreme Court before dawn, an untold number of people anywhere in the world could listen to Monday's arguments, which were streamed to the public by the media.

The experiment could propel the court to routinely livestream its arguments. Or it could just be an extraordinary exception to the court's sustained opposition to broadening the audience that can hear, if not see, its work live.

Follow AP's Supreme Court Twitter feed at https://twitter.com/AP_Courtside. And Supreme Court reporters Mark Sherman at <https://twitter.com/shermancourt> and Jessica Gresko at <https://twitter.com/jessicagresko>.

Italy lets millions back to work, US restrictions easing up

By NICOLE WINFIELD and TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italy started stirring Monday, with millions allowed back to work as Europe's longest coronavirus lockdown started easing, while the U.S. took halting steps to lift some restrictions even as tens of thousands of new cases were reported daily.

In Washington, the Senate convened for the first time since March. The Supreme Court heard arguments by telephone and allowed the world to listen in live — for the first time ever.

Dozens in Florida waited before sunrise for the 7 a.m. opening of Clearwater Beach. And a shuttered pork processing plant in South Dakota took its first steps toward reopening after more than 800 employees were infected with the coronavirus.

In Louisiana, state lawmakers were restarting their legislature — but feuded over whether they should return at all.

Political battles have become increasingly embedded in U.S. coronavirus policy. Republican Louisiana legislators irritated by Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards' decision to extend the state's stay-at-home order through May 15 were eager to return to work.

Democrats saw things differently: "It could be a devastating blow to the strides made and to the safety of our residents, our staff and members if we returned to business as usual prematurely," Democratic leaders wrote in a letter.

The moves to open U.S. states came even as the country's one-day death toll stood at 1,313 with more than 25,500 confirmed new infections, according to a Sunday count by Johns Hopkins University. The real numbers are likely significantly higher.

Governments around the world have reported 3.5 million infections and more than 253,000 deaths as of Monday, including more than 68,000 dead in the United States, according to Johns Hopkins University.

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Deliberately concealed outbreaks, low testing rates and the severe strain the disease has placed on health care systems mean the true scale of the pandemic is undoubtedly much greater.

With pressure growing in many countries for more measures to restart the economy, politicians were trying to boost funding for research into a vaccine for COVID-19. There are hopes one could be available in months, but many scientists warn it could take much longer.

Developing a vaccine will be the key to returning to less restricted everyday life. On Monday, an alliance of world leaders hosted by the European Union held a virtual summit on vaccine research, pledging to give 7.4 billion euros (\$8 billion).

The U.S., along with Russia, was notably absent.

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Norway and top European Union officials said that money raised will be channeled mostly through recognized global health organizations.

French president Emmanuel Macron, who donated 500 million euros on behalf of France, noted that the U.S. was currently "on the sidelines," but said he had discussed the issue with President Donald Trump and was convinced the U.S. would at some point join the initiative.

Italy, the first European country hit by the pandemic and a nation with one of the world's highest death tolls, began opening up cautiously after its two-month shutdown — allowing 4.4 million Italians to return to work.

Traffic in downtown Rome picked up, construction sites and manufacturing operations resumed, parks reopened and flower vendors returned to the Campo dei Fiori market for the first time since March 11.

"It's something that brings happiness and joy, and people have been missing that these days," vendor Stefano Fulvi said. He doesn't expect to break even anytime soon, "but you have to take the risk at some point."

But Europeans' new-found freedoms are limited as officials are wary of setting off a second wave of infections. In Italy, mourners were allowed to attend funerals, with services limited to 15 people. Restaurants scrubbed floors in preparation for take-out service. Sit-down service is several weeks away.

In Florida, where Gov. Ron DeSantis said restaurants and retail shops could open at 25% capacity beginning Monday, some business owners were unsure how to see things.

Tony Loeffler, the owner of Atlas Body and Home, a men's apparel and lifestyle shop in downtown St. Petersburg, said he was both apprehensive and excited.

"We feel like we have to do this, even though we feel a little conflicted," he said. "But we're practicing all the common sense and CDC requirements so I feel like on our end we're safe. But it's so hard to know how everyone else is, how seriously they're taking it."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat and one of the first U.S. governors to impose a statewide stay-home order, announced that some businesses in the state will receive permission to reopen as early as Friday, with restrictions.

Newsom's phased-in plan allows clothing stores, sporting goods, florists and other retailers to resume operations with curbside pickup. Dining in at restaurants and office reopenings are still prohibited.

California's state Assembly restarted its legislative session Monday, though the Senate will not bring members back until May 11.

California Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon said members should participate in person at committee hearings and floor sessions, based on legal advice that votes taken remotely "would likely be challenged in the courts and thrown out."

He said uncomfortable state lawmakers are "encouraged to stay home. We are definitely not forcing anybody to come to work."

Often, it was unclear just what would reopen.

In the Atlanta suburb of Kennesaw, the giant Town Center at Cobb mall reopened Monday but many stores remained closed, with dark interiors and locked gates at Starbucks, Victoria's Secret and other shops.

A maze of one-way paths wound through the eating area, marked off with signs and blue electrical tape stuck to the floor. But policies were inconsistent.

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The four workers at the Chick-fil-A counter all wore masks, and customers stood on black X's about 6 feet (1.8 meters) apart as they waited to order. Next door at the American Deli, workers Monday morning did not wear masks and there were no marks for customers to stand apart. By afternoon some employees were wearing masks.

In Early County, Georgia, which has one of the highest death rates for COVID-19 in the U.S., a hospital official said it worries her that Georgia has been so aggressive about reopening businesses.

"I'm very concerned," said Ginger Cushing from LifeBrite Community Hospital, noting that over the weekend it was "like back to normal just looking at the amount of cars on the road and people in food places. They're still standing outside and maintaining social distance, but it's just a lot busier."

Meanwhile, the city of Miami Beach closed seaside South Pointe Park after too many people refused to wear face masks or remain socially distanced over the weekend.

Carnival Cruise Line, which saw a series of high-profile outbreaks on its ships, announced Monday it will start cruises again in August, leaving from Florida and Texas. The Caribbean trips will be the company's first since the pandemic forced a near-total pause in the global cruise industry.

Sullivan reported from Minneapolis. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

Millions of people were allowed to return to work in Italy on Monday as Europe's longest coronavirus lockdown started to ease, while the U.S. took halting steps to lift some of its own restrictions even as tens of thousands of new cases are reported every day.

In Washington, the U.S. Supreme Court held hearings by phone for the first time, and the Senate convened for the first time since March.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— U.S. officials believe China covered up the extent of the coronavirus outbreak to stock up on medical supplies needed to respond to it. Chinese leaders "intentionally concealed the severity" of the pandemic from the world in early January, according to a four-page Department of Homeland Security intelligence report obtained by The Associated Press.

— California Gov. Gavin Newsom, one of the first governors to impose a statewide stay-home order, announced that some businesses can reopen as early as Friday, with restrictions.

— "The case is submitted." With those words, Chief Justice John Roberts wrapped up the first U.S. Supreme Court argument conducted by telephone and where audio was available live to the public. The court's plaza was deserted as it has been since the building was closed to the public in mid-March.

— World leaders, organizations and banks pledged 7.4 billion euros (\$8 billion) for research to find a vaccine against the new coronavirus but warned that it is just the start of an effort that must be sustained over time to beat the disease. The United States was notably absent from the video-conference event hosted by the European Union.

— A woman, her adult son and husband have been charged in the fatal shooting of a security guard in Michigan who refused to let her daughter enter a store because she wasn't wearing a face mask.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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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:

— 11: As in Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, which struggling fashion brand J.Crew has filed for, becoming the first major retailer to do so since the coronavirus pandemic forced most stores across the United States to close their doors. More retail bankruptcies are expected in coming weeks.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— **PANDEMIC SONGS:** Musicians have been inspired to write and record songs that reflect the mood of a world dramatically altered by the new coronavirus.

— **PARAMEDIC HONORED:** Fire trucks and other emergency vehicles drove in procession from the Denver airport to honor a retired Colorado paramedic who died after volunteering to help combat the pandemic in New York City.

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

NBC News chief Andy Lack out in corporate restructuring

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC News chief Andy Lack is out following a corporate restructuring announced Monday that places Telemundo executive Cesar Conde in charge of NBC News, MSNBC and CNBC.

Lack's departure was revealed when Jeff Shell, new NBC Universal CEO, outlined a new corporate governance plan. Besides Conde's elevation, Shell is giving broad new powers over NBC's entertainment properties to Mark Lazarus, who has overseen NBC Sports.

The 72-year-old Lack has had two runs as head of NBC News, the first as NBC News president from 1993 to 2001, and he rejoined the company as news chairman in 2015.

NBC News' flagships, "NBC Nightly News" and "Today," generally run second to ABC in viewership but are stronger among the lucrative young advertising demographic. MSNBC has gained popularity, often second only to Fox News Channel as the second most-popular cable news network each week.

The news division was embarrassed, however, when Ronan Farrow took his reporting on disgraced Hollywood executive Harvey Weinstein to the New Yorker and complained his bosses at NBC showed little interest in his work. NBC said Farrow's material wasn't ready to be aired.

Farrow won a Pulitzer Prize for his work on the Weinstein case, and the restructuring was announced as this year's Pulitzer's were being awarded.

Lack's signing of Fox News Channel's Megyn Kelly to a big-money deal turned out to be a high-profile failure.

Conde's appointment as chairman of the NBC Universal News Group puts him in charge of NBC News, MSNBC and CNBC. Under the old structure, Lack did not oversee CNBC. The individual presidents, Noah Oppenheim at NBC News, Phil Griffin at MSNBC, and Mark Hoffman at CNBC, remain.

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Lazarus becomes chairman of NBC Universal Television and Streaming, putting him in charge of NBC's broadcast division, entertainment cable networks like Bravo and USA, and the new Peacock streaming service.

'Riveting' coverage of Alaska policing wins Pulitzer Prize

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Anchorage Daily News and ProPublica won the Pulitzer Prize in public service Monday for illuminating the sparse policing of remote Alaska villages, as a delayed awards ceremony recognized writing, photos and — for the first time — audio reporting on topics ranging from climate change to the legacy of slavery.

The public service winners contacted 600 village, tribal and other local governments and traveled by plane, sled and snowmobile to reveal that a third of rural Alaska communities had no local police protection, among other findings.

The "riveting" series spurred legislative changes and an influx of spending, the judges noted in an announcement postponed several weeks and held online because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Anchorage Daily News Editor David Hulen said the series "called attention to some really serious problems in Alaska that have needed attention for a long time."

"There's more to be done," and the paper will keep pursuing the issue, he said in a phone interview.

The New York Times won the investigative reporting prize for an expose of predatory lending in the New York City taxi industry and also took the international reporting award for what the judges called "enthral-ling stories, reported at great risk," about Russian President Vladimir Putin's government.

The Times also was awarded the commentary prize for an essay that Nikole Hannah-Jones wrote as part of the paper's ambitious 1619 Project, which followed the throughlines of slavery in American life to this day.

Times Executive Editor Dean Baquet told the staff — in a virtual meeting — that this year's prizes were "particularly meaningful because they come as we are managing our lives under great difficulty even as we produce great journalism."

The Washington Post's work on global warming was recognized for explanatory reporting. The newspaper tracked nearly 170 years of temperature records to show that 10% of the planet's surface has already exceeded a rise of 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial times, the threshold world leaders have agreed they'd try not to exceed.

While the country is now focused on the coronavirus, "another worldwide public-health crisis is upon us" as the world warms, Executive Editor Martin Baron said.

Monday's awards recognized reporting last year, before the virus sparked a pandemic.

In a development that recognized how podcasting has brought new attention to reporting aimed at listeners rather than readers or viewers, a first-ever award for audio reporting went to "This American Life," the Los Angeles Times and Vice News for "The Out Crowd," an examination of the Trump administration's "remain in Mexico" immigration policy.

In another prize for the Los Angeles Times, Christopher Knight won the criticism award for what the judges called "extraordinary community service by a critic" in examining a proposal to overhaul of the L.A. County Museum of Art.

The staff of The Courier-Journal of Louisville, Kentucky, took the breaking news reporting award for unpacking racial disparities and other issues in a spate of governor's pardons.

Two different projects won the national reporting award: ProPublica's look at deadly accidents in the U.S. Navy and The Seattle Times' examination of design flaws in the troubled Boeing 737 MAX jet.

ProPublica Managing Editor Robin Fields said its reporting "laid bare the avoidance of responsibility by the military's most senior leaders."

The local reporting award went to The Baltimore Sun for shedding light on a previously undisclosed financial relationship between the mayor and the public hospital system, which she helped oversee.

The New Yorker took the feature reporting prize for Ben Taub's piece on a detainee at the U.S. military

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base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. New Yorker contributor Barry Blitt got the editorial cartooning award for work that "skewers the personalities and policies emanating from the Trump White House," as the judges saw it.

The Associated Press won the feature photography prize for images made during India's clampdown on Kashmir, where a sweeping curfew and shutdowns of phone and internet service added to the challenges of showing the world what was happening in the region.

AP photographers Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand snaked around roadblocks, sometimes took cover in strangers' homes and hid cameras in vegetable bags to capture images of protests, police and paramilitary action and daily life. Then they headed to an airport to persuade travelers to carry the photo files out with them and get them to the AP's office in New Delhi.

"These journalists' courage and compelling storytelling show the absolute best of what we do," AP Executive Editor Sally Buzbee said.

Reuters won the breaking news photography award for its coverage of protests that shook Hong Kong. Editor-in-Chief Stephen Adler said the photos "brilliantly captured the magnitude of the protests."

While big outlets and collaborations got plenty of recognition, the small Palestine Herald-Press, in East Texas, got a Pulitzer for Jeffery Gerritt's editorials on the deaths of jail inmates awaiting trial.

In the arts categories, Michael R. Jackson's musical "A Strange Loop" won the drama prize. And Colson Whitehead's "The Nickel Boys" won the fiction prize; he also won in 2017 for "The Underground Railroad."

The Pulitzer board also issued a special citation Monday to the trailblazing African American journalist and civil rights activist Ida B. Wells, noting "her outstanding and courageous reporting" on lynchings.

Wells was a journalist and publisher in the late 1800s and later helped found civil rights and women's suffrage groups; she died in 1931. The board said the citation comes with a bequest of at least \$50,000 in support of Wells' mission, with recipients to be announced.

The initial Pulitzer ceremony, which had been scheduled for April 20, was pushed to give Pulitzer Board members who were busy covering the pandemic more time to evaluate the finalists.

The Pulitzer Prizes in journalism were first awarded in 1917 and are considered the field's most prestigious honor in the U.S.

Associated Press writer Deepti Hajela contributed to this report.

Gridlock gone, sports car collectors take over Times Square

By JAKE SEINER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Danny Lin cruised his white sports car down Broadway, the bright lights of Times Square gleaming off his sharply detailed Audi R8. He looped through the tourist hotspot again and again, navigating around Corvettes, Mercedes, Mustangs and BMWs — a parade of high-priced vehicles gathered for a rare photo-op.

"I never bring my car here," said the 24-year-old from Queens. "Only for today, to get some cool shots."

From a star turn in "Taxi Driver" to the Naked Cowboy to the million people who crowd its streets on New Year's Eve, the "Crossroads of the World" has for generations been an iconic New York backdrop in movies, culture and the arts. Now, Times Square has taken a turn toward Tokyo Drift, just without the "Fast and the Furious," as car-loving New Yorkers flock to the barren streets of the theater district.

Car mavens normally wouldn't dare rev their engines in gridlocked Midtown, but they're eagerly driving into Manhattan to take photos and show off for sparse crowds walking through the famed streets.

With the weather turning toward summer and restlessness settling in after six weeks of mandated social distancing, hundreds of automobile aficionados rolled down Broadway on Saturday night.

"This is the only time we could come down here and take photos," Lin said.

At least 100 pedestrians were wandering the area when the cars began roaring down Times Square's main drag Saturday, along with dozens of motorcycles in one crew that created a deafening buzz. Police — some in cars, some on horseback — were mostly patient with the procession and only intervened if cars remained parked for too long.

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Some families with young children also drove through in minivans and SUVs, taking in Times Square as if touring neighborhood Christmas lights.

Onlookers, mostly keeping six feet apart and wearing facemasks, cheered and took video from the sidewalks as sped-up cars and bikes went by.

The area maintained some of its touristy quirks. A violinist with a glowing wand and blue hair played for tips, and a salsa-dancing couple put a camera phone on a tripod to record their performance. One woman wearing a leather leotard biked down Broadway a few times, cycling next to a giant van with a cameraman hanging out the passenger window to record as she sang and danced.

By 11 p.m., sports cars were backed up for blocks along Broadway, and police closed the road from 47th Street down through Times Square, effectively ending the party.

Car collectors have been driving into the area for weeks in smaller packs. Mike Hodurski and Steve Cruz brought their Chevrolet pickup trucks Wednesday night and took photos in front of a light-up American flag at the corner of Broadway and 43rd Street.

It was already Hodurski's second trip to Midtown amid the outbreak. This time, the MTA bus driver brought a blue 1977 Chevy C10 pickup that he'd purchased earlier that day.

"It's a lot of fun. Might as well take advantage of it now, while nobody's over here," Hodurski said. "The streets are dead. You'd never get to see the streets like this. So we said, 'You know what, screw it,' and we all got together."

Hodurski is from Queens and Cruz from Brooklyn, and both said they usually avoid Times Square as much as possible — too many tourists and too much traffic. There was hardly anyone in the area when they cruised through Wednesday. They spent about five minutes in front of the flag before a cop asked them to keep moving.

Andre Godfrey has driven his 2018 Ford Mustang — with glowing red shark teeth embedded in the grill — into Times Square twice. He and a buddy came around 3 a.m. last Thursday, when the area was completely empty, and pulled his car up onto a sidewalk for a glamour shot.

"Nobody bothered us," Godfrey said. "There was one police officer down the street, like a crossing agent, and they didn't really seem bothered by us on the sidewalk."

He came back Saturday after hearing from a friend that a crew of over 100 BMWs was heading toward the area. That caravan never got into Times Square — it arrived in Midtown shortly after police blocked off Broadway.

"This is crazy," Godfrey said.

Follow Jake Seiner: https://twitter.com/Jake_Seiner

AP wins feature photography Pulitzer for Kashmir coverage

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The story of India's crackdown on Kashmir last August was difficult to show to the world. The unprecedented lockdown included a sweeping curfew and shutdowns of phone and internet service.

But Associated Press photographers Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand found ways to let outsiders see what was happening. Now, their work has been honored with the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in feature photography.

Snaking around roadblocks, sometimes taking cover in strangers' homes and hiding cameras in vegetable bags, the three photographers captured images of protests, police and paramilitary action and daily life — and then headed to an airport to persuade travelers to carry the photo files out with them and get them to the AP's office in New Delhi.

"It was always cat-and-mouse," Yasin recalled Monday. "These things made us more determined than ever to never be silenced."

Yasin and Khan are based in Srinagar, Kashmir's largest city, while Anand is based in the neighboring

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Jammu district.

Anand said the award left him speechless.

"I was shocked and could not believe it," he said, calling the prize-winning photos a continuation of the work he's been doing for 20 years with the AP.

"This honor continues AP's great tradition of award-winning photography," said AP President and CEO Gary Pruitt. "Thanks to the team inside Kashmir, the world was able to witness a dramatic escalation of the long struggle over the region's independence. Their work was important and superb."

In a year when protests arose across the globe, AP photographers Dieu Nalio Chery and Rebecca Blackwell were Pulitzer finalists for the breaking news photography award for their coverage of violent clashes between police and anti-government demonstrators in Haiti.

Bullet fragments hit Chery in the jaw while he documented the unrest. He kept taking pictures, including images of the fragments that hit him.

"All five of these photographers made remarkable, stunning images despite dangerous and challenging conditions, sometimes at great personal risk," said AP Director of Photography David Ake. "Their dedication to getting up every morning and going out to tell the story is a testament to their tenacity. The result of their work is compelling photojournalism that grabbed the world's attention."

AP Executive Editor Sally Buzbee called the Kashmir prize "a testament to the skill, bravery, ingenuity and teamwork of Dar, Mukhtar, Channi and their colleagues" and lauded Chery's and Blackwell's "brave and arresting work" in Haiti while many journalism outlets were focused elsewhere.

"At a time when AP's journalism is of more value than ever to the world, these journalists' courage and compelling storytelling show the absolute best of what we do," Buzbee said.

The honor for the photographers is the AP's 54th Pulitzer Prize. The news cooperative last won a Pulitzer last year for stories, photos and video on the conflict in Yemen and the ensuing humanitarian crisis.

Conflict has flared for decades in Kashmir, a Muslim-majority Himalayan area that is divided between India and Pakistan and claimed by both.

The tension hit a new turning point in August, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist-led government stripped Indian-controlled portions of Kashmir of their semi-autonomy.

India poured more troops into the already heavily militarized area, imposed a curfew and harsh curbs on civil rights, laced the area with razor-wire roadblocks, and cut off internet, cellphone, landline and cable TV service in the region.

India said the moves were needed to forestall protests and attacks by rebels seeking independence or Pakistani control for the region. Thousands of people were arrested.

With communications shut down, AP journalists had to find out about protests and other news by finding them in person. Khan and Yasin took turns roving the streets in and around the regional capital of Srinagar, Yasin said, facing mistrust from both protesters and troops. The journalists were unable for days to go home or even let their families know they were OK.

"It was very hard," Khan said, but "we managed to file pictures."

After spotting luggage-toting people walking toward the airport, he said, the photographers decided to ask travelers to serve as couriers. Yasin also recalled how a relative of his, who was also a photojournalist, had told him about delivering film to New Delhi in person as the conflict in Kashmir raged in the 1990s.

So the AP photographers went to the Srinagar airport and sought out strangers willing to carry memory cards and flash drives to New Delhi and call AP after landing in the Indian capital.

Some flyers declined, fearing trouble with the authorities, Yasin said. But others said yes and followed through. Most of the memory cards and drives arrived.

Yasin says their prize-winning work has both professional and personal meaning to him.

"It's not the story of the people I am shooting, only, but it's my story," he said. "It's a great honor to be in the list of Pulitzer winners and to share my story with the world."

Shula, winningest coach in pro football history, dies at 90

By STEVEN WINE AP Sports Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Measuring Don Shula by wins and losses, no NFL coach had a better year. Or career. He looked the part, thanks to a jutting jaw and glare that would intimidate 150-pound sports writers and 300-pound linemen alike. He led the Miami Dolphins to the only perfect season in NFL history, set a league record with 347 victories and coached in six Super Bowls.

Near the end of his career, Shula's biography in the Dolphins' media guide began with a quote from former NFL coach Bum Phillips: "Don Shula can take his'n and beat you'n, and he could take you'n and beat his'n."

Shula died Monday at his home across Biscayne Bay from downtown Miami, the team said. He was 90. "If there were a Mount Rushmore for the NFL, Don Shula certainly would be chiseled into the granite," Dolphins owner Stephen Ross said in a statement.

Shula surpassed George Halas' league-record 324 victories in 1993 and retired following the 1995 season, his 33rd as an NFL head coach. He entered the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1997, and the induction ceremony took place at Canton, Ohio, 70 miles from his native Grand River.

Shula became the only coach to guide an NFL team through a perfect season when the Dolphins went 17-0 in 1972. They also won the Super Bowl the following season, finishing 15-2.

The 2007 Patriots flirted with matching the perfection of the '72 Dolphins but lost to the Giants in the Super Bowl and finished 18-1.

When asked in 1997 if he was the greatest coach in NFL history, Shula said he didn't know how to measure that, but added, "I always thought that's why they keep statistics and wins and losses."

Shula reached the playoffs in four decades and coached three Hall of Fame quarterbacks: Johnny Unitas, Bob Griese and Dan Marino. During his 26 seasons in Miami he became an institution, and his name adorns an expressway, an athletic club and a steakhouse chain.

"There was no better man or coach in the history of the profession than coach Don Shula," Miami Heat president Pat Riley said in a statement. "He was tough, courageous and an authentic leader with great integrity in his pursuit of perfection, which he achieved!"

But because the Dolphins last reached the Super Bowl after the 1984 season, Shula came under increasing criticism from fans and the media. He was replaced in January 1996 by Jimmy Johnson, and Shula later said the adjustment to retirement was difficult.

"There's such a letdown," he said in 2010. "There's no way you can fill the time you spent as a coach. Life is great after football, but you don't have those emotional ups and downs you had on game day."

Shula's active retirement included plenty of travel and social events. In January 2010, the Dolphins threw him an 80th birthday party at their stadium, and guests included NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, former U.S. Sen. Bob Graham and former NFL coaches Marty Schottenheimer and Dan Reeves.

Hall of Fame fullback Larry Csonka was among the '72 Dolphins who threw a surprise party for Shula in December to celebrate his 90th birthday.

"It was the first time in the entire time I'm known him where he was genuinely surprised," Csonka said. "I think he was very happy."

Shula always enjoyed talking about the 17-0 team, and he and his 1972 players drew criticism for the way they savored their unique status each season.

"People think we're a bunch of angry old guys who can't wait for that last undefeated team to get beat," Shula said in 2010. "We're very proud of our record, and if somebody breaks it, I'm going to call that coach and congratulate them. Until they do, it's our record, and we're proud of it."

As for regrets, Shula put not winning a Super Bowl with Marino at the top of the list. They were together for 13 years, and Marino became the most prolific passer in NFL history, but he played on only one AFC championship team — in 1984, his second season.

Shula was born Jan. 4, 1930, and raised in Painesville, Ohio. He played running back at John Carroll University in Cleveland and cornerback in the pros for seven seasons with Cleveland, Baltimore and Washington. He entered coaching as an assistant at Virginia in 1958.

Before his 1970s triumphs with Miami, Shula had a reputation as a coach who thrived during the regular

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season but couldn't win the big game.

Shula became the youngest head coach in NFL history when the Baltimore Colts hired him in 1963 at age 33. The Colts finished 12-2 the following season and were widely seen as the league's dominant team.

But they lost 27-0 to Cleveland in the title game, and for the next few years continued to come up short.

The humiliation was greatest in the Super Bowl to end the 1968 season. The Colts steamrolled through the NFL, finishing 13-1 and outscoring opponents by a nearly 3-1 margin. After crushing the Browns 34-0 in the title game, they were overwhelming favorites to defeat the Jets of the upstart AFL, which had lost the first two Super Bowls.

But the Colts lost 16-7, blowing numerous scoring opportunities and allowing Jets quarterback Joe Namath to control the game.

The result is still regarded by many as the biggest upset in pro football history, and it contributed to Shula's departure after the 1969 season. In 1970, after the NFL-AFL merger, Shula joined the Dolphins, a fourth-year AFL expansion team that had gone 3-10-1 the previous year.

Miami improved to 10-4 in his first season and made the playoffs for the first time, and the 1971 Dolphins reached the Super Bowl before losing to Dallas. The following season, when Miami took a 16-0 record into the Super Bowl against Washington, Shula considered his legacy on the line.

"If we had won 16 games in a row and lost the Super Bowl, it would have been a disaster, especially for me," he said in a 2007 interview. "That would have been my third Super Bowl loss. I was 0-2 in Super Bowls and people always seemed to bring that up: 'You can't win the big one.'"

The Dolphins beat the Redskins 14-7, then repeated as champions the following year by beating Minnesota in the title game.

After Shula retired, he traveled extensively with his wife, Mary Anne. He would also wrestle with his grandchildren, lose to his wife at gin, read John Grisham novels and fall asleep watching late-night TV.

He supported many charities. The Don Shula Foundation, formed primarily to assist breast cancer research, was established as a tribute to his late wife, Dorothy. They were married for 32 years and raised five children before she died in 1991. Shula married Mary Anne Stephens during a bye week in 1993.

Shula's oldest son, David, coached the Cincinnati Bengals from 1992-96. When Cincinnati played Miami in 1994, it marked the first time in professional sports that a father and son faced each other as head coaches.

Don won, 23-7. Another son, Mike, is a longtime NFL assistant coach and was head coach at Alabama in 2003-06.

Shula spent more than 20 years on the powerful NFL Competition Committee, which evaluates playing rules as well as regulations designed to improve safety.

"If I'm remembered for anything, I hope it's for playing within the rules," Shula once said. "I also hope it will be said that my teams showed class and dignity in victory or defeat."

There were many more victories than defeats. His career record was 347-173-6.

Shula is survived by his second wife, two sons and three daughters.

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

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What's shopping in a pandemic like? Drive to your local mall

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Many Americans are getting their first taste of what pandemic shopping looks like at their local mall.

Simon Property Group, the nation's largest mall operator, reopened several dozen shopping centers across Texas, Georgia and roughly ten other states between Friday and Monday.

There, a new reality is on display: Play areas and water fountains are off limits. Employees wear masks and

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shopping in groups is banned. Shoppers can also get their temperature checked for free on the premises.

Among other changes: Every other urinal and sink is taped off, and there's ample space between seating in the food court. Simon also has technologies that will make sure occupancy will not exceed one person for every 50 feet (15 meters).

But despite all the safety measures, the question remains: Will anyone come?

"There are still a lot of people who are scared," said Jon Reily, global head of commerce strategy at Isobar Global, a global digital agency. "The tricky part for malls is finding that sweet spot. Yes, you can come here and yes, you can be safe."

So far, the early signs haven't been encouraging.

At Simon's Town Center at Cobb, which reopened Monday in Kennesaw, a suburb of Atlanta, many of the stores remained closed. Those still dark and locked by gates included Starbucks, Victoria's Secret, Helzberg Diamonds and the Build-A-Bear Workshop. Some of the kiosks selling jewelry, cell phones and T-shirts were open, though others were closed.

For sale at one of the kiosks: A black-and-white T-shirt emblazoned with a gas mask and the words "I Survived Coronavirus 2020."

Douglas Butler, 28, arrived at Simon's Lenox Square mall in Atlanta around 11 a.m. on Monday. It was much less crowded than normal, and he easily found a parking spot in the normally packed lot.

Mall employees were handing out masks at the door, and just about everyone was wearing one while also maintaining distance from other shoppers, he said. Many stores still weren't open, especially the higher-end and designer stores. He bought two new pairs of shoes for his 4-year-old son. He added he might pick up something for himself as well.

"Since I'm here, I might as well," Butler said. "Everybody has a sale on. If you're open, you have a sale."

Meanwhile, a Nebraska mall got off to a subdued start Friday morning with just a few shops welcoming customers and about half a dozen patrons wandering the open-air facility wearing masks.

Nebraska Crossing resumed business with new safety measures, including hand sanitizing stations, plexiglass barriers and signs to promote social distancing guidelines. A handful of mall patrons walked through mostly empty pathways between stores, glancing into shop windows.

"I do think it's a little soon, but it's kind of slow and there aren't a lot of people here, so I'm not too worried," said Jasmine Ramos of Omaha.

Lawrence Gostin, a public health expert at Georgetown University who has been consulting businesses and governors on reopenings, agrees that it is too soon. There first needs to be a "long-term verifiable significant reduction" in cases and ample virus testing and contact tracing, he said.

And shoppers should be required to wear masks, he said.

"Malls are inherently risky places for transmission of the coronavirus by design," he said. "They are there to have a lot of people congregating among each other and among the staff."

Given so much uncertainty, many major national mall operators have held off on announcing reopening plans and are weighing safety protocols while waiting for stay-at-home restrictions to be lifted.

Taubman Centers, which operates 26 malls worldwide and is being acquired by Indianapolis-based Simon, said it plans to open three malls — two in Florida and one in Utah— on Wednesday. Chattanooga, Tennessee-based CBL Properties, which owns and manages 108 properties, said it will be announcing its reopening plans on a property-by-property basis.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, malls were grappling with a shift to online retail as well as shoppers who'd grown bored of department stores and specialty chains like The Gap. That resulted in a number of bankruptcies and liquidations of stores.

The coronavirus has brought further peril by derailing consumer spending and scaring off public gatherings.

Jan Rogers Kniffen, a consultant to investors in retail companies and a former retail executive, now expects that 500 of the 1,000 malls in the U.S. will either close or be unrecognizable in two years. Before the pandemic, he expected 300 to shutter by 2030.

The imminent demise of several key tenants could also leave shoppers with fewer places to spend. J.Crew, saddled by debt, filed for Chapter 11 on Monday, becoming the first major retailer to do so. J.C.

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Penney and Neiman Marcus are also expected to file for Chapter 11.

And Macy's CEO Jeff Gennette told analysts Thursday that it would emerge from this crisis as a "smaller company." That's bad news because department stores represent 60% of mall anchor space, according to research firm Green Street Advisors.

Macy's reopened nearly 70 stores Monday, with many just focusing only on curbside pickup. Gennette said he expects less than 20% of the business to come back at first. And shoppers will notice a lot of changes: The chain is banning spa-like services, as well as bra fitting and ear piercing. For clothes that have been tried or returned, workers will take them off the sales floor for 24 hours.

Higher-end malls are expected to survive the crisis because owners like Simon, which operates 200 properties in 37 states, have enough money to cover losses. A Simon spokesperson declined to comment.

There was already a growing gap between the high- and low-end malls. While vacancies at top malls have remained tight at 2.7 %, the bottom-rung of malls are struggling with an average vacancy rate of 7.9% as of the first three months of 2020, according to Kevin Cody, senior consultant at CoStar Portfolio.

"It's really a tale of two cities," said Steve Dennis, president and founder of SageBerry Consulting, a retail consultancy. "(The crisis) really pushes the extremes further apart."

William Taubman, chief operating officer at Taubman Centers, which operates such high-end centers as The Mall at Short Hills in N.J. and Beverly Centers in Los Angeles, said he believes the carnage in stores in communities will only fortify business at malls like his. He feels heartened that Taubman's mall business in South Korea is exceeding sales prior to the pandemic. In China, business is "not quite there but almost there."

Taubman said he thinks many are interested in getting out but "they may come less frequently." He expects spending will be higher for each trip.

AP Writers Jeff Martin in Kennesaw, Georgia, and Kate Brumback in Atlanta and Grant Schulte in Gretna, Nebraska, contributed to this report.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

This story has been updated to correct that department stores represent 60% of mall anchor space, not 60% of U.S. malls are anchored by department stores.

Treasury says April-June borrowing will be a record \$2.99T

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The economic paralysis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic is forcing the U.S. Treasury to borrow far more than it ever has before — \$2.99 trillion in the current quarter alone.

The amount is more than five times the government's previous record borrowing for a quarter, \$569 billion, set in the depths of the 2008 financial crisis. It also dwarfs the \$1.28 trillion the government borrowed in the bond market for all of 2019.

The Treasury Department said the huge sum is needed to pay for nearly \$3 trillion in rescue aid that the government has unleashed in programs to support tens of millions of jobless workers and shuttered businesses with direct payments and loans.

"Borrowing needs are skyrocketing as Treasury needs cash to fund stimulus measures and to compensate for a plunge in revenues caused by massive job losses," said Nancy Vanden Houten, an economist at Oxford Economics.

In addition, the government needs to borrow to cover the shortfall in revenue that will occur because the Trump administration has delayed the deadline for tax payments this year from April to June.

The Congressional Budget Office is forecasting that the government will run a record deficit of \$3.7 trillion this year, far above the \$1 trillion-plus annual deficits recorded from 2009 through 2012 when the government was fighting the 2008 financial crisis and a deep downturn that followed.

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The deficits would be even higher but the Federal Reserve has cut its benchmark short-term interest rate to a record low near zero and is buying trillions of dollars in government bonds and mortgage-backed securities to push long-term interest rates, which were already at record lows, even lower.

Private economists believe that the government has little choice but to spend the money now to prevent an even worse downturn and possibly even a situation like the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Under the plans the Treasury unveiled on Monday, the government will borrow \$4.48 trillion this budget year including a projected \$677 billion in borrowing in the July-September quarter. The budget year ends on Sept. 30.

In a stark demonstration of how the government's financial situation has changed, three months ago before the coronavirus outbreak caused widespread shutdowns in the United States, Treasury was projecting that it would be able to pay down \$56 billion in debt during the quarter.

CBO is projecting the U.S. economy will shrink by a record 40% at an annual rate in the current April-June quarter.

The Latest: 1st audio Pulitzer prize goes to 'The Out Crowd'

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — The Latest on the announcement of the 2020 Pulitzer Prizes (all times local):
5 p.m.

The Pulitzer Prizes had something new this year — the inaugural award for audio reporting.

The award announced Monday went to the collaboration between the staff of "This American Life," Molly O'Toole of the Los Angeles Times, and Emily Green, a freelancer for Vice News.

They won for "The Out Crowd," which focuses on the human impact of the "Remain in Mexico" policy on asylum cases used by the Trump Administration.

The prize board had announced the new category in December, in recognition of the excellent work being done in audio journalism.

4:30 p.m.

The Pulitzer Prize board on Monday awarded its prize for commentary to Nikole Hannah-Jones of The New York Times for an essay she wrote for the 1619 Project.

The project, which she helmed, marked the 400th anniversary of the first enslaved Africans being brought to what became the United States of America and the impact it has had.

The board called her work a "sweeping, deeply reported and personal essay," and recognized its "prompting public conversation about the nation's founding and evolution."

4:15 p.m.

The board of the Pulitzer Prizes issued a special citation Monday to Ida B. Wells, the trail-blazing African American investigative journalist.

The Pulitzer board said the citation comes with a bequest of at least \$50,000 in support of Wells' mission, with recipients to be announced.

In honoring her during the prize announcements, the board noted "her outstanding and courageous reporting on the horrific and vicious violence against African Americans during the era of lynching."

Wells, born and raised in the south, was a civil rights activist in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who campaigned against lynching, which she showed in her writing was used as oppression against African Americans. She later moved north, and continued her activism.

3:50 p.m.

The Pulitzer Prize for public service went to a collaboration between the Anchorage Daily News and ProPublica for coverage of policing in Alaska villages.

The stories, which Pulitzer Prize Administrator Dana Canedy described as "riveting," showed how severely public safety is lacking in Alaska, with one-third of villages having no police protection and dozens

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of communities hiring officers with criminal records of their own.

The coverage brought in funding and inspired legislative change.

3:45 p.m.

Michael R. Jackson's musical "A Strange Loop," a musical about a man trying to write a musical, has won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Jackson, who wrote the music, story and lyrics, centers on an overweight, overwhelmed "ball of black confusion" trying to navigate the worlds of white, black, gay as well as his family's religion.

"No one cares about a writer who is struggling to write," sings the anxiety-ridden lead character, Usher.

The Pulitzer board called it a "meditation on universal human fears and insecurities." The play was seen off-Broadway in 2019 at Playwrights Horizons.

The Pulitzer drama award is "for a distinguished play by an American author, preferably original in its source and dealing with American life," according to the guidelines. Musicals rarely claim the Pulitzer, with only "Next to Normal" and "Hamilton" winning since 2010.

3:40 p.m.

The Anchorage Daily News and ProPublica won the Pulitzer Prize in public service Monday for illuminating the sparse policing of many Alaska villages.

The New York Times won the investigative reporting prize for an expose of predatory lending in the New York City taxi industry, while the staff of The Courier-Journal of Louisville, Kentucky, took the breaking news reporting award for quickly unpacking racial disparities and other issues in a spate of governor's pardons.

A first-ever award for audio reporting went to "This American Life," the Los Angeles Times and Vice News for "The Out Crowd," an examination of the Trump administration's "remain in Mexico" immigration policy.

3:30 p.m.

Colson Whitehead became the rare writer to win Pulitzers for consecutive books.

His novel about a brutal Florida reform school, "The Nickel Boys," received the fiction prize Monday. Whitehead's most recent previous book, "The Underground Railroad," won for fiction in 2017.

He is also known for such acclaimed works as "John Henry Days" and "The Intuitionist."

The drama winner was Michael R. Jackson's musical "A Strange Loop." Benjamin Moser's "Sontag: Her Life and Work," about the late Susan Sontag, won for biography.

There were two winners in general nonfiction: Greg Grandon's "The End of the Myth" and Ann Boyer's "The Undying."

In history, W. Caleb McDaniel won for "Sweet Taste of Liberty." The poetry winner was Jericho Brown's "The Tradition."

In music, the winner was Anthony Davis' opera "The Central Park Five," about the five young men wrongly imprisoned for sexual assault. ___

This item has been corrected to show that the fiction prize winner's first name is Colson, not Colton.

3:20 p.m.

The Associated Press won a Pulitzer in feature photography for images made during India's clampdown on Kashmir, where a sweeping curfew and shutdowns of phone and internet service added to the challenges of telling showing the world what was happening in the region of 7 million people.

AP Photographers Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand snaked around roadblocks, sometimes took cover in strangers' homes and hid cameras in vegetable bags to capture images of protests, police and paramilitary action and daily life. Then they headed to an airport to persuade travelers to carry the photo files out with them and get them to AP's office in New Delhi.

"It was always cat-and-mouse," Yasin said, later adding: "These things made us more determined than ever to never be silenced."

American public space, rebooted: What might it feel like?

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

And the American people returned to the American streets, bit by bit, place by place. And in the spaces they shared, they found a world that appeared much the same but was, in many ways, different — and changing by the day.

And the people were at turns uncertain, fearful, angry, determined. As they looked to their institutions to set the tone, they wondered: What would this new world be like?

The choppy re-engagement of Americans with public life over the past week, with more to come as cries to “reopen the country” grow, means a return to a shared realm where institutions of all types form the shape of American life.

Yet can you reopen a society — particularly a republic built on openness and public interaction — without its physical institutions at full capacity, without public spaces available for congregation?

“Humans are just terrified of other humans right now. They just don’t feel confident about each other,” says Daniel Cusick, a New York architect who has worked on public spaces for three decades. “But people need a structure. They need to be told there’s something greater.”

Enter the “institution,” a word with multiple personalities — some truly public, some partially public, some purely commercial. All figure in this mid-virus re-engagement. All are part of the web of public trust, and all have a tone to set.

“Institution” means government buildings — post offices and courthouses and DMVs. It means town squares and public parks, churches and nursing homes and college campuses and, of course, hospitals.

It can also mean skyscraper lobbies, shopping malls, hotels, big-box stores and supermarkets — the touch points of a consumer society whose open, public operation means a society is edging toward normal.

Eric Martin, a Bucknell University associate professor of management who studies disaster responses, cites an established place like Katz’s, the crowded New York deli made famous in “When Harry Met Sally.” How businesses like that act, he says, will speak volumes.

“It doesn’t change quickly. It’s been around forever. That’s what it means to be an institution. And so we allow these places a legitimacy that we might not with other places,” Martin says.

“We think those are legitimate organizations. So if they’re doing it, if they’re changing, we say, ‘Oh, this is real,’” he says.

Something else unites these places. In each, the woman on the next bench, the man ahead in the checkout line, the family down the pew are suddenly potential vectors — or potential victims. So we’re assessing the public realm in the way we assess a salad bar when we walk into a restaurant.

That can impede a free society’s functions in ways not yet fathomed.

“Democracy depends to a surprising extent on the availability of physical, public space, even in our allegedly digital world,” John R. Parkinson writes in “Democracy and Public Space: The Physical Sites of Democratic Performance.”

The digital world has kept many institutions going in the United States since mid-March. It has allowed an approximation of office life to continue. It has, along with a robust supply chain, brought to our doors some of the goods we usually go and get.

But those same functions, paired with unease, could work against the return to public spaces.

“Technology is reshaping what it means to be in a public place,” says John R. Stilgoe, a historian and landscape expert at Harvard who has spent his career exploring and chronicling the landscapes where Americans move around.

“How do you define the ‘public realm’ when an enormous percentage of the American public spends the majority of its day in its pajamas?” Stilgoe says.

Already, there are hints of what institutions and the spaces they occupy could look like. If even some come to pass, they could alter Americans’ relationship with the public realm.

— Vibrating pagers like those used at chains like Red Lobster. Already some hospitals are handing them out; instead of entering a lobby, wait in the car until you buzz.

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— Arrows on the ground, and other physical markers to encourage and enforce distance. Imagine sidewalks with scoring every 6 feet (2 meters) so those walking could make sure they're the human equivalent of a few car lengths behind. Or large sculptures deployed to separate people.

— New designs for eating places. McDonald's is already prototyping a socially distanced version of its restaurant that could be a template for fast-food spaces around the world.

— Checkerboard grids on the grass in parks, with people allowed to occupy one square only if those surrounding it are empty. Or time-sharing of public places: If you don't show up for your 12:15 p.m. slot at the playground, you're out of luck.

— Churches holding services in shifts. Ballparks and movie theaters deliberately keeping seats empty, halving attendance.

A bit dystopian? Maybe. But there are warmer alternatives, too.

Nan Ellin, dean of the college of architecture and planning at the University of Colorado Denver, is working with her students and the city to close some restaurant-heavy blocks to traffic so the street can be used as outdoor cafes and "the tables can be farther apart from one another."

"We don't want to lose our public ground. But we want to have a safe public ground," says Ellin, editor of "Architecture of Fear" and author of "Good Urbanism: Six Steps to Creating Prosperous Places." She adds: "We need little hooks to get there so people can start to be with one another again in a way that feels safe."

Architecture has always dictated behavior. In China, where controlling people is a government priority, Beijing's avenues are lined with metal fences just high enough to keep people on sidewalks. The sprawling, segmented layout of Pakistan's capital city was designed in part to discourage mass gatherings.

But those are public spaces responding to visible threats. Retooling spaces to an invisible virus — the crux of what American institutions face today — is different.

Will we wear masks in banks, where a masked man means something different? Will the DMV, the butt of a thousand long-line jokes, suddenly lack lines? Will we retreat to our cars, bypassing public space entirely in what Cusick calls "people moving from bubble to bubble, like the Jetsons"?

In 1943, after a German bombing of the British Parliament, Winston Churchill advocated rebuilding the House of Commons chamber exactly as it had been. He invoked the importance of the physical institution in preserving national ideals. "We shape our buildings," he said, "and afterwards our buildings shape us."

As isolation ebbs, a similar question confronts Americans repopulating the public places they share. How will these places reshape society — and how will trepidations about a post-isolation world shape them in turn? We can only go so far.

"You cannot hold the air to yourself. The air is shared," says Marci J. Swede, dean of the school of education and health sciences at North Central College in Illinois.

"No man is an island" has no more truth than when we're talking about the air we're breathing," she says. "And it's hard to be around other people when you don't have that sense of trust."

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, has been writing about American culture since 1990. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/anthonyted>.

US to rein in flood of virus blood tests after lax oversight

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. regulators Monday pulled back a decision that allowed scores of coronavirus blood tests to hit the market without first providing proof that they worked.

The Food and Drug Administration said it took the action because some sellers have made false claims about the tests and their accuracy. Companies will now have to show their tests work or risk having them pulled from the market.

Under pressure to increase testing options, the FDA in March essentially allowed companies to begin selling tests as long as they notified the agency of their plans and provided disclaimers, including that

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they were not FDA approved. The policy was intended to allow "flexibility" needed to quickly ramp up production, officials said.

"However, flexibility never meant we would allow fraud," Dr. Anand Shah, an FDA deputy commissioner, said in a statement. "We unfortunately see unscrupulous actors marketing fraudulent test kits and using the pandemic as an opportunity to take advantage of Americans."

Blood tests are different from the nasal swab tests currently used to diagnose active COVID-19 infections. Instead, the tests look for blood proteins called antibodies, which the body produces days or weeks after fighting an infection. Most use a finger-prick of blood on a test strip.

The revised policy follows weeks of criticism from doctors, lab specialists and members of Congress who said the FDA's lack of oversight created a Wild West of unregulated tests.

The agency acknowledged Monday that there have been problems with deceptive, false marketing among the 160 tests that have been launched in the U.S. Some companies have claimed their tests can be used at home, although FDA has not allowed that use. Others make unsubstantiated claims about their accuracy. Some U.S. hospitals and local governments have reported buying tests that turned out to be inaccurate or frauds.

So far, the FDA has granted authorization to 12 antibody tests, meaning their methods, materials and accuracy passed muster with agency regulators. Companies with test kits currently on the market without FDA authorization will now be required to submit formal applications to regulators within 10 business days. Companies that launch at a later date will have 10 days to turn over their applications after validating their tests.

Health officials in the U.S. and around the world have suggested the tests could be helpful in identifying people who have previously had the virus — with or without getting sick — and developed some immunity to it. But researchers haven't yet been able to answer key questions that are essential to their practical use: what level of antibodies does it take to be immune and how long does that protection last?

"We're spending a lot of time and resources on something that is not really a panacea for reopening," said Kamran Kadkhoda, a lab director at the Cleveland Clinic.

For now, the tests are mainly a research tool for scientists trying to determine how widely the coronavirus has spread among the U.S. population. Those studies are underway but have produced widely different preliminary results, in part, due to variations between tests. Even high-performing tests can produce skewed results when used in a large population where few people have had the virus.

The National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies are also reviewing tests and conducting research into whether they can successfully predict immunity.

FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn told reporters Monday that his agency's "careful balancing of risks and benefits shifted to the approach we've outlined today," based on new data from FDA and NIH reviews. Hahn said more than 200 companies are in the process of submitting testing data to the FDA.

Experts who criticized the government's previous policy welcomed the new evidence requirement.

"We want to make sure that testing in the U.S. is of high quality and that those using the tests understand how the results should or should not be used," said Dr. Robin Patel of the Mayo Clinic.

Monday's move is the latest in the Trump administration's fitful attempt to roll out an effective, comprehensive testing strategy. While testing has ramped up since the outset of the outbreak, state and local governments continue to report shortages of testing supplies needed to screen for the virus and safely ease social distancing measures. A "testing blueprint" released last week by the White House emphasized that states are responsible for developing their own testing plans.

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

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UN: US hasn't shared evidence on alleged coronavirus origin

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization's emergencies chief said Monday that it has received no evidence from the U.S. government to back up allegations by President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the coronavirus could have originated at a laboratory in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

"From our perspective, this remains speculative," Dr. Michael Ryan told reporters in Geneva. "We have not received any data or specific evidence from the U.S. government relating to the purported origin of the virus."

He said WHO would be "very willing" to receive any such information the U.S. has.

The comments come as the Trump administration has denounced both China and the U.N. health agency for alleged missteps in handling the outbreak that first emerged in the city of Wuhan and has now infected millions and killed at least 239,000 people. Trump on Friday said WHO was "like the public relations agency for China."

Ryan reiterated that the evidence and advice that the U.N. health agency has received suggest that the novel coronavirus is of natural origin, even if Pompeo and Trump have alleged evidence they have seen suggests it could be from the Wuhan Institute of Virology lab.

"If that data and evidence is available, then it will be for the United States government to decide whether and when it can be shared," Ryan said. "But it's difficult for WHO to operate in an information vacuum in that specific regard."

On Sunday, Pompeo told ABC's "This Week" program that there was "a significant amount of evidence that this came from that laboratory in Wuhan."

Ryan and Maria Van Kerkhove, the technical lead on the WHO emergencies program, put their focus on the hunt for the animal host that is believed to have relayed the coronavirus from bats. Such a determination could help drive public health policies, like advising people to keep away from some types of wildlife or livestock.

They said Chinese scientists continued to work with the world against the pandemic, and suggested such collaboration remained crucial — and that efforts to "investigate" possible wrongdoing by Chinese officials could derail such scientific cooperation.

"We need to understand that we can learn from Chinese scientists, we can learn from each other, we can exchange knowledge and we can find the answers together," Ryan said. "If this is projected as aggressive investigation of wrongdoing, then I believe that's much more difficult to deal with. That's a political issue. That is not a science issue."

"Science will find the answers," he added. "The implications of those answers can be dealt with from a policy and political perspective."

WHO heaped praise on China from early on in the outbreak.

On Jan. 30, moments before announcing that the coronavirus was a global health emergency, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said China was "setting a new standard for outbreak response." He praised the speed with which China detected the outbreak, sequenced the genome and shared that information with WHO. He said its "commitment to transparency" was "beyond words."

The joint team said at the time that it was not probing any allegations that China may have mishandled the outbreak.

___ AP Medical Writer Maria Cheng contributed from London.

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

Billions projected to suffer nearly unlivable heat in 2070

By **SETH BORENSTEIN** AP Science Writer

KENSINGTON, Maryland (AP) — In just 50 years, 2 billion to 3.5 billion people, mostly the poor who can't afford air conditioning, will be living in a climate that historically has been too hot to handle, a new study said.

With every 1.8 degree (1 degree Celsius) increase in global average annual temperature from man-made climate change, about a billion or so people will end up in areas too warm day-in, day-out to be habitable without cooling technology, according to ecologist Marten Scheffer of Wageningen University in the Netherlands, co-author of the study.

How many people will end up at risk depends on how much heat-trapping carbon dioxide emissions are reduced and how fast the world population grows.

Under the worst-case scenarios for population growth and for carbon pollution — which many climate scientists say is looking less likely these days — the study in Monday's journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* predicts about 3.5 billion people will live in extremely hot areas. That's a third of the projected 2070 population.

But even scenarios considered more likely and less severe project that in 50 years a couple of billion people will be living in places too hot without air conditioning, the study said.

"It's a huge amount and it's a short-time. This is why we're worried," said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, who wasn't part of the study. She and other outside scientists said the new study makes sense and conveys the urgency of the man-made climate change differently than past research.

In an unusual way to look at climate change, a team of international scientists studied humans like they do bears, birds and bees to find the "climate niche" where people and civilizations flourish. They looked back 6,000 years to come up with a sweet spot of temperatures for humanity: Average annual temperatures between 52 and 59 degrees (11 to 15 degrees Celsius).

We can — and do — live in warmer and colder places than that, but the farther from the sweet spot, the harder it gets.

The scientists looked at places projected to get uncomfortably and considerably hotter than the sweet spot and calculated at least 2 billion people will be living in those conditions by 2070.

Currently about 20 million people live in places with an annual average temperature greater than 84 degrees (29 degrees Celsius) — far beyond the temperature sweet spot. That area is less than 1% of the Earth's land, and it is mostly near the Sahara Desert and includes Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

But as the world gets more crowded and warmer, the study concluded large swaths of Africa, Asia, South America and Australia will likely be in this same temperature range. Well over 1 billion people, and up to 3.5 billion people, will be affected depending on the climate altering choices humanity makes over the next half century, according to lead author Chi Xu of Nanjing University in China.

With enough money, "you can actually live on the moon," Scheffer said. But these projections are "unlivable for the ordinary, for poor people, for the average world citizen."

Places like impoverished Nigeria — with a population expected to triple by the end of the century — would be less able to cope, said study co-author Tim Lenton, a climate scientist and director of the Global Systems Institute at the University of Exeter in England.

Read more stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears .

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'We don't know how it will end': Hunger stalks amid virus

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and JACQUELYN MARTIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When all this started — when the coronavirus began stalking humanity like an animal hunting prey, when she and her husband lost their restaurant jobs overnight as the world shut down to hide, when she feared not being able to feed her family — Janeth went outside with a red kitchen towel.

It was Passover. Her pastor had told her about the roots of the Jewish holiday, about Israelites smearing a lamb's blood on their doors as a sign for the plagues to pass them by. So Janeth, an immigrant from Honduras, reached up to hang the red towel over the door of her family's apartment on the edge of the nation's capital. It was close enough, she figured, "to show the angel of death to pass over our home."

Pass us by, coronavirus.

And pass us by, hunger.

At night now, it's the worry over food that keeps Janeth's mind racing, and her heart, she says, hurting. "I spend hours thinking, thinking, about what we will do the next day, where we will find food the next day," she says weeks into the coronavirus outbreak, her family's food and cash both dwindling.

Janeth and her husband, Roberto, are part of the greatest surge in unemployment in the U.S. since the Depression, setting off a wave of hunger that is swamping food programs nationwide. The couple and every adult member of their extended family in the U.S. have lost their jobs in the economic lockdown prompted by the pandemic.

They are among the tens of millions in America — more than 1 out of every 6 workers — abruptly cut off from paychecks.

The Associated Press is withholding the couple's full names because they are in the country illegally and could face deportation. Their immigration status, their problems with English and scanty access to the Internet all combine to block them from accessing the U.S. government benefit programs that millions more newly jobless citizens are able to turn to during the outbreak.

Before the pandemic, food policy experts say, roughly one out of every eight or nine Americans struggled to stay fed. Now as many as one out of every four are projected to join the ranks of the hungry, said Giridhar Mallya, senior policy officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for public health.

Immigrants, African Americans, Native Americans, households with young children and newly jobless gig workers are among those most at risk, said Joelle Johnson, senior policy associate at the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

"They're more vulnerable to begin with and this situation has just exacerbated that situation," she said.

When the global economy clamped down, Roberto, a cook in his mid-30s, and Janeth, who keeps water glasses filled at another restaurant and is in her mid-40s, spent \$450 out of their final paychecks to stock up. Weeks later, their diminished cache includes two half-full five-pound bags of rice, an assortment of ramen noodles, a half-eaten bag of pasta, two boxes of cornbread mix, four boxes of raisins and cans of beans, pineapple, tuna, corn and soup.

"Cookies?" Roberto and Janeth's 5-year-old, gap-toothed daughter Allison still asks them, always getting a gentle "no" back. "Ice cream?"

Janeth and Roberto have cut down to one meal a day themselves, skipping meals to keep their daughter fed.

On a good day recently, after Roberto landed four hours of work preparing take-home meals for a grocery store, they had enough for what constitutes a feast these days — a can of refried beans split three ways and two eggs each, scrambled. Janeth also made tortillas from their last half-bag of masa flour.

Janeth placed aluminum foil over two of the plates; she and Roberto would eat later. Tears sprang to her eyes as she watched her daughter wolf down the meal.

"Where can we get enough food? How can we pay our bills?" she asked. Then she repeated something she and her husband emphasized again and again over the course of several days: They are hard-working people.

"We have never had to ask for help before," she said.

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Janeth and Roberto also have three adult children and, as the oldest of three sisters here, she and Roberto are trying to keep a half-dozen households in the United States and Honduras fed.

By day, they race in their second-hand pickup truck from food pantries and churches to relatives' houses. They chase tips about food giveaways or temporary jobs. They share their painstakingly acquired cartons of food with her two sisters, who themselves have a total of five young children to feed, and call their grown children with leads on food lines.

And they fight off despair. "We don't have help. We don't know how it will end," Janeth said.

On a recent day, Janeth and Roberto's breakfast is coffee and a few crackers. Allison eats cereal, a favorite provided by a food bank.

Soon after, Roberto and Allison, who is sporting pink sparkly sneakers, are among the first in line outside a DC food pantry. In line with them: a young African American man newly unemployed and seeking aid for the first time and two foreign-born nannies with their clients' children in tow. The women now are only intermittently used — and paid — by their employers and need help feeding their own children at home.

Roberto is happy to leave with a bag of bananas, some spaghetti, tomato sauce and other staples.

Another day, Roberto and Allison stay inside the truck while Janeth heads out in a cold drizzle to approach a church said to be providing food. She struggles to read the sign in English posted on the door, then calls the numbers listed. No one answers.

Later, loading their pickup truck to take food to Janeth's sisters, husband and wife dip into the pockets of their jeans to display the cash they have left — \$110 total.

That's gas money. Without that, living on the outskirts of town, there's no getting to food banks, to one-day cash jobs, to stranded relatives facing eviction and hoping for food.

On the drive to Janeth's sisters in Baltimore, Janeth hands Allison a small container of applesauce. The girl savors each taste, dipping in her finger, licking every last bit. "More?" she asks hopefully, tilting the container toward her mother.

Janeth answers regretfully, tenderly. No more.

Follow Knickmeyer and Martin on Twitter as @knickeymeyerellen and @Jacquelyn_M. For more coverage of the pandemic, visit <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

J.Crew files for Chapter 11 as pandemic chokes retail sector

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Struggling fashion brand J.Crew has filed for bankruptcy protection, the first major retailer to do so since the coronavirus pandemic forced most stores across the United States to close their doors.

More retail bankruptcies are expected in coming weeks, with Neiman Marcus and J.C. Penney also facing problems. Gap Inc. has warned it is running out of cash and is looking for an infusion.

Thousands of retail stores across the country remain closed, though some states have begun staggered restarts of their economies.

J.Crew, like a number of major retailers, was already in trouble before the pandemic. It had grown from a preppy 1990s fashion staple to an "it" brand worn by former First Lady Michelle Obama and featured at New York Fashion Week. But at some point in recent years, its fashion choices began landing with a clunk in the highly competitive retail sector.

Clothes will still be available online and the company says it will reopen stores when it's safe to do so, but industry analysts are skeptical about a second act.

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail, called the company's \$1.7 billion in long-term debt "crippling."

"Before Chapter 11, J.Crew was on a slow march to ruin," Saunders said. "This process gives the company a chance to survive. However, that survival is not just dependent on reduced debt; it requires a reinvention of the J.Crew brand."

Saunders called J.Crew fashion "samey" and believes people won't pay full price for "boring" clothes. J.Crew's roots date back to 1947, when Mitchell Cinader and Saul Charles founded Popular Merchandise Inc., which sold low-priced women's clothing. It was renamed J.Crew in 1983 and retooled as a preppy catalog to compete with those published by Lands' End and L.L. Bean.

In the 1990s, new stores popped up across the country. Mickey Drexler, who had spearheaded Gap's explosive expansion, joined in 2002 as chairman and CEO and catapulted J.Crew into a high-tier player.

Obama elevated the brand even further during her eight years at the White House, favoring casual pieces like cardigans and slim skirts. In 2011, J.Crew became the first mass fashion brand to show its designs at New York Fashion Week.

But, like many other retailers, J.Crew fell victim to seismic changes in what customers are buying and how they're buying it. In the face of the pandemic, the most vulnerable have quickly lost the ability to pay bills and are seeking relief from creditors.

March sales at U.S. stores and restaurants had their most severe plunge since 1992, when record-keeping started. Clothing sales fell more than 50%. And that's probably not the worst of it. The U.S. Commerce Department reports retail sales figures for April next week. That report will reveal the full brunt of the pandemic because most stores were closed for the entire month.

Consumers drive 70% of the U.S. economy, meaning the abrupt store closures threaten the country's overall economic health. Hundreds of thousands of retail workers have been furloughed, meaning they're probably not participating in the economy in any significant way.

J.Crew said Monday that lenders have agreed to convert \$1.65 billion of its debt into equity. It's also secured commitments for financing of \$400 million from existing lenders Anchorage Capital Group, L.L.C., GSO Capital Partners and Davidson Kempner Capital Management LP, among others.

The company was acquired by TPG Capital and Leonard Green & Partners for \$3 billion in 2011.

In its last full year of operations, J.Crew generated \$2.5 billion in sales, a 2% increase from the year before.

J.Crew had planned to spin off its successful Madewell division as a public company and use the proceeds to pay down its debt. The company said Monday that Madewell will remain part of J.Crew Group Inc.

There were 193 J.Crew stores, 172 J.Crew Factory outlets and 132 Madewell locations as of Feb. 1.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

World leaders pledge billions for virus vaccine research

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — World leaders, organizations and banks on Monday pledged 7.4 billion euros (\$8 billion) for research to find a vaccine against the new coronavirus, but warned that it is just the start of an effort that must be sustained over time to beat the disease.

The funds, pledged at a video-conference summit hosted by the European Union, fell marginally short of the 7.5 billion euros being sought, but more money could arrive in coming days. Notably absent from the event was the United States, where more than 67,000 people have died, and Russia.

Despite the shortfall, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, the target being sought Monday to help find a vaccine, new treatments and better tests for the disease would only ever amount to a "down-payment" on the tools that will be needed to fight the virus.

"To reach everyone, everywhere, we likely need five times that amount," Guterres said.

Governments have reported around 3.5 million infections and more than 247,000 deaths from the virus, according to a count by Johns Hopkins University. But deliberately concealed outbreaks, low testing rates and the strain on health care systems mean the true scale of the pandemic is much greater.

People in many countries across the globe, and notably in Europe this week, are cautiously returning to work but authorities remain wary of a second wave of infections, and a vaccine is the only real golden bullet to allow something like normal life to resume.

"In the space of just a few hours we have collectively pledged 7.4 billion euros for vaccines, diagnostics

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and treatments," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, wrapping up the event after three hours. "All this money will help kick-start unprecedented global cooperation."

The original aim was to gather around 4 billion euros (\$4.37 billion) for vaccine research, some 2 billion euros for treatments and 1.5 billion (\$1.64 billion) for testing.

The pledges were hard to track, beyond coming in various currencies. Some countries announced money for their own national research efforts combined with those they would offer to international organizations. Others also proposed a mix of loans with their funding. Pledges made toward vaccine research since Jan. 30 were also counted.

Apart from many European leaders, heads of state and government from Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Jordan, South Africa and Turkey spoke at the event, along with China's EU ambassador.

President Emmanuel Macron warned that "a race against time is underway," as he donated 500 million euros on behalf of France.

Apart from many European leaders, heads of state and government from Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Jordan, South Africa and Turkey were also due to speak, along with China's EU ambassador.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that "the race to discover the vaccine to defeat this virus is not a competition between countries, but the most urgent shared endeavor of our lifetimes."

Among the larger contributions, Japan pledged more than \$800 million while Germany offered 525 million euros. Italy and Spain, perhaps the hardest hit by the virus in Europe, each said they would provide more than 100 million euros. Switzerland, the Netherlands and Israel also pledged 378 million euros, 192 million euros and 60 million dollars, respectively.

Melinda Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said that beating the virus "will take more than making a vaccine available to the very highest bidder. It is going to take more than delivering it only to people in wealthy nations. The pandemic won't end until people everywhere can be immunized against it."

About 100 research groups are pursuing vaccines, with nearly a dozen in early stages of human trials or poised to start. But so far there's no way to predict which — if any — vaccine will work safely, or even to name a front-runner.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top expert, has cautioned that even if everything goes perfectly, developing a vaccine in 12 to 18 months would set a record for speed.

Even if a first useful vaccine is identified, there won't be enough for everyone initially. A growing number of vaccine makers say they're already starting to brew tons of doses — wasting millions of dollars if they bet on the wrong candidate but shaving a few months off mass vaccinations if their choice pans out.

Asked about the U.S. absence, which comes after it suspended funding to the World Health Organization, a senior official said that "the United States is in the process of providing \$2.4 billion in global health, humanitarian, and economic assistance towards the COVID-19 response, and we continue to ensure that the substantial U.S. funding and scientific efforts on this front remain an essential and coordinated part of this worldwide effort against COVID-19."

The official wasn't authorized to discuss the matter by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

French president Emmanuel Macron said he is confident that the U.S. will join the initiative at some point, stressing that he personally discussed the issue with President Donald Trump. Macron noted that the U.S. "is on the sidelines" but added that it doesn't compromise or slow down the project.

Sylvie Corbet in Paris, Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Matthew Lee in Washington, contributed to this report.

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Zoos turn to social media to delight, raise money amid virus

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The Phoenix Zoo, struggling like others worldwide during coronavirus closures, has found an unlikely savior in a sloth.

While Fernando may be a slow mover offline, the 4-year-old Linne's two-toed sloth has risen rapidly on the internet. Since Fernando joined Cameo, a video-sharing platform where people pay for celebrity shoutouts, the zoo has received 150 requests for a personalized clip. His popularity let the zoo boost his fee from \$25 to \$50.

"I think we've gotten more creative, kind of thinking a little bit outside the box. We're trying things we never have before," said Bert Castro, Phoenix Zoo's president and CEO.

Social media is one way zoos worldwide are engaging with people who can no longer visit — their main source of income — and raise some much-needed cash. Zoos and aquariums have brought adorable distraction by posting photos and videos of animals, but the closures mean they're still in jeopardy. While a smattering of zoos, from Utah to Germany, have started reopening with social distancing rules, there's no telling when they will reach their usual levels of visitors and revenue.

Besides jobs, the well-being of the animals is at stake.

"They can't just send their employees home and turn off the lights and lock the doors. They have to care for animals," said Dan Ashe, president of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The association's 220 U.S. zoos and aquariums, which typically host a combined 200 million people annually, all closed, Ashe said. A recent survey showed more than 60% have laid off or furloughed employees.

About 60% of its members have applied for loans through the federal coronavirus relief package intended to limit layoffs at small businesses and nonprofits.

The Phoenix Zoo, a \$1 million-a-month operation, has been losing \$80,000 a day since shuttering March 18, Castro said. The facility in the nation's fifth-largest city has been approved for \$2.7 million in loans under the federal program and has raised hundreds of thousands online for its 3,000 animals.

Castro believes behind-the-scenes Facebook Live videos make people feel more connected to the zoo. In the past month, viewership has spiked 350%, and its Instagram following is growing. Fernando's Cameo appearances may be a tiny boost, but "it's so popular we'll continue it for as long as we can," Castro said.

The Oakland Zoo in the San Francisco Bay Area recently brought back more than 200 full-time employees — at least until June — after getting loans under the federal program. It also started an online subscription program offering daily behind-the-scenes videos with animals and zookeepers. It's \$14.95 a month; \$9.95 for zoo members.

"Our objective is to just make it to the point where they allow us to reopen for business and the people can come and enjoy the animals," zoo president Joel Parrott said.

The Toronto Zoo is live-streaming moments like weigh-ins of red pandas, drawing tens of thousands of new social media followers, spokeswoman Amanda Chambers said. The strategy also helps spotlight lesser known animals.

"It's the opportunity to highlight species that often don't get high-profiled," CEO Dolf DeJong said. "For us, it's being able to talk about Blanding's turtles, an endangered species from our community that we're breeding."

California's Monterey Bay Aquarium is captivating people by live-streaming African penguins and sharks. It also created YouTube "MeditOceans" videos for meditating to sights and sounds of ocean creatures. Divers jazzed up their kelp forest maintenance routine with a dance to the Sugarhill Gang's "Jump On It" in a popular video.

The financial scramble is reverberating for zoos worldwide.

Bioparque Estrella, a safari theme park outside Mexico City, is hoping to get by with enough funding until a tentative reopening this month. It's been using social media primarily to promote reduced-price advance tickets. More than 1,000 tickets have been sold — far below the 10,000 visitors seen at Easter last year.

In Germany, the government is letting zoos reopen with social distancing restrictions. Zoos were trying

reduce costs during the closures — the biggest being staff salaries — and some sought public donations, said Volker Homes, head of Germany's Association of Zoological Gardens.

Recent reports that a cash-strapped German zoo planned to feed some animals to others sparked outrage. But Homes said last month that there's no reason to fear for any animal's safety.

In Poland, where zoos have been closed since mid-March, the lack of income from tickets is threatening their future, and they're asking people for financial support.

Private-owned zoos are in especially dire straits. The popular Zoo Safari in central Poland, known for breeding rare white lions and tigers, lost most of its income overnight. It's offering advance ticket vouchers for the 2020 and 2021 seasons to help fund care for its 600 animals. It also launched a crowdfunding page.

The ZSL London Zoo has used social media to promote itself and front-line workers. It's near several hospitals and has let medical employees use its parking lot, where many glimpse giraffes Maggie and Molly through the fence during lunch breaks, according to the zoo's Facebook page. It's shared photos and videos of the giraffes in front of a sign honoring medical workers. ___ Associated Press writers Terry Chea in Oakland, California, Frank Jordans in Berlin and Monika Scislawska in Warsaw, Poland contributed to this report. ___ Follow Tang on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ttangAP>.

With split delayed, United Methodists face a year in limbo

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Had there been no coronavirus pandemic, America's largest mainline Protestant denomination would be convening this week for a likely vote to break up over differences on same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQ pastors.

Instead, the United Methodist Church was forced to postpone the potentially momentous conference, leaving its various factions in limbo for perhaps 16 more months. The deep doctrinal differences seem irreconcilable, but for now there's agreement that response to the pandemic takes priority.

"The people who are really in trauma right now cannot pay the price of our differences," said Kenneth Carter, the Florida-based president of the UMC's Council of Bishops. "What is in our minds and hearts is responding to death, illness, grief, loss of work."

The conference was to have taken place at the Minneapolis Convention Center starting Tuesday, running through May 15. Instead, bishops are proposing to hold it there Aug. 31-Sept. 10 of next year.

The differences have simmered for years, and came to a head in February 2019 at a conference in St. Louis where delegates voted 438-384 for a proposal strengthening bans on LGBTQ-inclusive practices. Most U.S.-based delegates opposed that plan and favored LGBTQ-friendly options; they were outvoted by U.S. conservatives teamed with most of the delegates from Methodist strongholds in Africa and the Philippines.

In the aftermath of that meeting, many moderate and liberal clergy made clear they would not abide by the bans, and various groups worked throughout 2019 on proposals to let the UMC split along theological lines.

There have been at least four different proposals for how to implement a split.

The most widely discussed plan has a long name -- the Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation -- and some high-level support.

It was negotiated by 16 bishops and advocacy group leaders with differing views on LGBTQ inclusion. They were assisted by renowned mediator Kenneth Feinberg, who administered victim compensation funds stemming from the 9/11 attacks and the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Under the protocol, conservative congregations and regional bodies would be allowed to separate from the UMC and form a new denomination. They would receive \$25 million in UMC funds and be able to keep their properties.

Formed in a merger in 1968, the UMC claims about 12.6 million members worldwide, including nearly 7 million in the United States. Leaders of the various factions have avoided making predictions of how many members might leave for a new denomination.

In hopes of minimizing friction, the protocol calls for a moratorium on enforcement of bans related to

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LGBTQ issues. Most bishops seem comfortable with that proposal, although Virginia-based Bishop Sharma Lewis approved initial disciplinary proceedings against a pastor in her region who officiated at a same-sex marriage.

There have been tangible benefits for one of the protocol negotiators, the Rev. David Meredith, who entered into a same-sex marriage with his long-time partner while serving as a pastor in Cincinnati.

The bishop of Meredith's West Ohio region, Gregory Palmer, also served on the protocol team and endorsed the moratorium that freezes ongoing judicial proceedings against Meredith.

"Everything that has been a threat is now in a drawer collecting dust," Meredith said.

Some conservatives worry that further flouting of the bans will occur ahead of the rescheduled national conference.

"For any clergy to try to use this interim to willfully violate their own vows ... would demonstrate an extreme lack of integrity and self-control," said John Lomperis, who works with the conservative Institute on Religion & Democracy and will be a delegate at next year's conference.

Lomperis is among a faction of UMC conservatives, now eager to form a new denomination, who worry that bishops supporting LGBTQ inclusion will use the delay to tilt outcomes in their favor during decision-making by regional bodies.

The Rev. Tom Lambrecht, general manager of the conservative Methodist magazine Good News, said he and his allies have heard of instances where liberal pastors were appointed to lead conservative congregations and where small conservative churches were closed.

"We will be vigilant to call out such behavior after the coronavirus crisis passes," Lambrecht said via email.

Some conservatives complain that the proposed \$25 million payment to a new traditionalist denomination is unfairly small.

But the Rev. Tom Berlin of Herndon, Virginia, a supporter of LGBTQ inclusion who served on the protocol team, says the proposal is generous in allowing departing churches to keep their property.

"The majority of the wealth in the UMC is found in the real estate and bank accounts of the local churches," he said. "The protocol allows them to retain that."

Berlin says debate over LGBTQ policies "is on the back burner for now."

"Once we get out of this, we'll get back to the future of the UMC," he said. "But now, churches of all varieties are working to respond to this pandemic in positive ways."

Support for the protocol is far from unanimous, though its backers predict it will win majority support next year. One dissenting faction, known as the "liberationists," believes the proposal doesn't go far enough in curbing racism, sexism and anti-LGBTQ sentiment within the UMC.

A leaders of that faction, the Rev. Jay Williams of Union Church in Boston, hopes local churches will use the coming year to "innovate and adapt" without awaiting top-down directives.

"I hope that we might claim this moment as an opportunity to courageously confront the systemic oppressions that have plagued our denomination since its beginning," he said via email.

When the conference does convene, the African delegates will be a key voting bloc. In St. Louis, they were pivotal in approving the strengthened bans on LGBTQ-inclusive practices.

The Rev. Keith Boyette, president of the conservative Wesleyan Covenant Association and one of the protocol negotiators, has met with many African delegates. He says they have pledged support for the protocol, but want some changes – for example, giving them the option of retaining the words "United Methodist" in the name of whatever new traditionalist body they join.

Bishop John Yambasu of Sierra Leone, the lone African among the protocol negotiators, said the proposal was "by no means perfect" but seemed to be the most acceptable option.

In an email, he depicted the pandemic as "a holy call to action from God... to make make Christian disciples for the transformation of the world."

Senate secretary declines to release possible Reade report

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The secretary of the Senate has declined Joe Biden's request to release any potential documents pertaining to an allegation of sexual assault against him from a former Senate staffer, citing confidentiality requirements under the law.

Biden made the request Friday after delivering his first public comments responding to the allegation from former staffer Tara Reade that he sexually assaulted her in the basement of a Capitol Hill office building in the spring of 1993. Biden has denied the allegation.

In response, the secretary of the Senate told Biden's legal counsel in an email that after reviewing the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 and a Senate resolution regarding the release of Senate records, "based on the law's strict confidentiality requirements," the Senate legal counsel has advised the Secretary "has no discretion to disclose any such information."

The Biden campaign followed up in response to the secretary of the Senate with three additional questions, asking if they could disclose whether the records exist, if there is anyone to whom the records could be lawfully disclosed and if the Senate could release any procedures used by the office that would have overseen a sexual harassment complaint on Capitol Hill in the 1990s.

Reade has said she filed a partial report with a congressional personnel office outlining broad details of her concerns with Biden that she believes could offer proof of some of her allegations. But she said in an interview Friday with The Associated Press that she did not use the words "sexual harassment" or "sexual assault" in her complaint, but rather described an incident she said amounted to sexual harassment and the retaliation she faced afterward.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, May 5, the 126th day of 2020. There are 240 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 5, 1961, astronaut Alan B. Shepard Jr. became America's first space traveler as he made a 15-minute suborbital flight aboard Mercury capsule Freedom 7.

On this date:

In 1494, during his second voyage to the Western Hemisphere, Christopher Columbus landed in Jamaica.

In 1818, political philosopher Karl Marx, co-author of "The Communist Manifesto" and author of "Das Kapital," was born in Prussia.

In 1862, Mexican troops defeated French occupying forces in the Battle of Puebla.

In 1865, what's believed to be America's first train robbery took place as a band of criminals derailed a St. Louis-bound train near North Bend, Ohio; they proceeded to rob the passengers and loot safes on board before getting away.

In 1925, schoolteacher John T. Scopes was charged in Tennessee with violating a state law that prohibited teaching the theory of evolution. (Scopes was found guilty, but his conviction was later set aside.)

In 1942, wartime sugar rationing began in the United States.

In 1945, in the only fatal attack of its kind during World War II, a Japanese balloon bomb exploded on Gearhart Mountain in Oregon, killing the pregnant wife of a minister and five children. Denmark and the Netherlands were liberated as a German surrender went into effect.

In 1981, Irish Republican Army hunger-striker Bobby Sands died at the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland on his 66th day without food.

In 1985, President Ronald Reagan kept a controversial promise to West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl by leading a wreath-laying ceremony at the military cemetery in Bitburg.

In 1987, the congressional Iran-Contra hearings opened with former Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard V. Se-

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cord (SEE'-kohrd) the lead-off witness.

In 1994, Singapore caned American teenager Michael Fay for vandalism, a day after the sentence was reduced from six lashes to four in response to an appeal by President Bill Clinton.

In 2009, Texas health officials confirmed the first death of a U.S. resident with swine flu.

Ten years ago: Preliminary plans for a mosque and cultural center near ground zero in New York were unveiled, setting off a national debate over whether the project was disrespectful to 9/11 victims and whether opposition to it exposed anti-Muslim biases. Three people, trapped in an Athens bank torched by rioters, died during a nationwide strike against the cash-strapped Greek government's harsh austerity measures.

Five years ago: Secretary of State John Kerry made an unannounced trip to Somalia in a show of solidarity with a government trying to defeat al-Qaida-allied militants and end decades of war in the African country; Kerry was the first top U.S. diplomat ever to visit Somalia. President Barack Obama tapped Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford Jr., a highly respected combat commander, to be his next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee declared his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination.

One year ago: White House national security adviser John Bolton said the Pentagon was deploying an aircraft carrier and other military resources to the Middle East; a defense official later said there had been "clear indications" that Iran and its proxy forces were preparing to possibly attack U.S. forces in the region. A Russian airliner burst into flames while making an emergency landing in Moscow, killing 41 people; 33 others survived. "Avengers: Endgame" continued its global domination at the box office, crossing the \$2 billion mark in record time on its way to becoming the highest-grossing film ever worldwide. Eagle-eyed viewers of "Game of Thrones" on HBO spotted a takeout coffee cup on the table during a scene in which the characters drank from goblets and horns.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Pat Carroll is 93. Former AFL-CIO president John J. Sweeney is 86. Country singer-musician Roni Stoneman is 82. Actor Michael Murphy is 82. Actor Lance Henriksen is 80. Comedian-actor Michael Palin is 77. Actor John Rhys-Davies is 76. Rock correspondent Kurt Loder is 75. Rock musician Bill Ward (Black Sabbath) is 72. Actress Melinda Culea is 65. Actress Lisa Eilbacher is 63. Actor Richard E. Grant is 63. Former broadcast journalist John Miller is 62. Rock singer Ian McCulloch (Echo and the Bunnymen) is 61. NBC newsman Brian Williams is 61. Rock musician Shawn Drover (Megadeth) is 54. TV personality Kyan (KY'-ihn) Douglas is 50. Actress Tina Yothers is 47. Rhythm and blues singer Raheem DeVaughn is 45. Actor Santiago Cabrera is 42. Actor Vincent Kartheiser is 41. Singer Craig David is 39. Actress Danielle Fishel is 39. Actor Henry Cavill is 37. Rock musician Josh Smith is 37. Actor Clark Duke is 35. Soul singer Adele is 32. Rock singer Skye Sweetnam is 32. Rhythm-and-blues singer Chris Brown is 31. Figure skater Nathan Chen is 21.

Thought for Today: "Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, small minds discuss people." — Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, "father" of America's nuclear navy (1900-1986).

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