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Chicken Soup
for the Soul.

“LIFE
SHRINKS OR
EXPANDS IN
PROPORTION
TO ONE'S
COURAGE.”

-ANAÏS NIN

YOU'RE INVITED TO A DRIVE BY
BRIDAL SHOWER HONORING

Taylor Hanson

BRIDE TO BE OF BRANDON STANLEY
MAY 27 | 5-7PM | HOME OF SUE STANLEY
403 E 6TH AVE - GROTON

SOCIAL DISTANCING WILL BE PRESERVED.
PLEASE DRIVE BY TO SHOWER TAYLOR WITH
WELL WISHES OR A GIFT.

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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The Life of Sheila Faye Ives

Claremont, SD: Sheila Faye Ives, 80, of Claremont South Dakota, was called home on Saturday, May 9th, 2020.

Sheila Faye Ives, 80, of Claremont South Dakota, was called home on Saturday, May 9th, 2020.

Her Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday May 23rd at 3pm at the Ives Residence in Claremont, SD with Rev. Sara Sorenson officiating. All are welcome to attend.

Sheila took her last breath, in her home, surrounded by all of her family. The room was packed. Her husband of 60 years, all of her children, her grandchildren, her friends, and her brother were all there. The family wrapped around her bed, surrounding every side, singing one of her favorite hymns, "Blessed Assurance" as she took her last breath. It was the greatest honor of our lives to be there as we sang her way home, where she met Jesus face to face.

Sheila was born in Britton, South Dakota to Ingvald and Dorothy (Lien) Satrang on August 18, 1939. She was the second of four children and graduated from Britton High School in 1957. She married Darwin Ives on June 12, 1959. Their first home was in Minneapolis, MN before they moved back to South Dakota. Sheila was a housewife and mother until their kids were done with high school - then attended Presentation College in 1987 where she received her Associate of Nursing Degree. Her nursing career was in long-term healthcare, and she retired in 2018. Sheila was brought up in the Lutheran Faith and served as a Sunday School teacher for many years. She was also a talented seamstress, a 4-H Leader, member of the Legion Auxiliary, Band Mothers, and Circle Club. Sheila loved bowling, sewing, reading, playing cards, and being with her family.

Sheila was preceded in death by her parents, and her brother, Jerry Satrang.

Sheila is survived by her husband, Darwin Ives, along with her children: Holly (Loren) Johnson, Robyn Mullins, Dawn (Craig) Covey, Karla Bishop, and Steven (Jennifer) Ives. She also leaves behind her many grandchildren: Erin (Levi) Sanderson, Michael (Elizabeth) Mullins, Eric Johnson, Ryan Johnson, Haana (Isaac) Vander Vorst, Clint (Sarah) Covey, Carson (Lexi) Covey, Kelsey Bishop, Garret Bishop, Colton Ives, Calah Covey, Tyler Ives, and Regan Ives. In addition, she leaves behind six great-grandchildren: Marcus Mullins; Claire, Victor, and Milo Vander Vorst; Kenna and Emilia Covey. Sheila also leaves behind her siblings Caroll Jean Enderson & Terry (Kookie) Satrang.

What we will remember most about Sheila was her quick wit, her unending love for her husband, fierce commitment to her children, immense loyalty and empathy towards her family and friends, and a strength that could weather any storm. She said it and she lived it... "have a little fortitude".

Condolences may be directed to the family in care of Darwin Ives – 204 6th Ave – Claremont, SD 57432. An online guestbook and obituary are available at www.pricefuneralchapel.net.





Jean Walter's Birthday

Please join with Jean's family in celebrating her 90th birthday on May 18. Greetings may be sent to Jean Walter at 705 N 6th St, Groton, SD



Bahrs celebrate 50th Anniversary

Alvin and Donna Bahr are celebrating 50 years of marriage on June 15 and Alvin will also turn 85 on June 5th please help them celebrate with cards being sent to 40814 165th street, turton, sd 57477.

Helmer graveside service

Richard E. Helmer: December 16, 1926 – March 26, 2020
Private family graveside services will be held for Richard E. Helmer, on Saturday, May 23, 1:30 p.m. at the Andover Cemetery. Pastor Gary Compton, First Baptist Church of Aberdeen will officiate.

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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The downward trend marches on. Let's hope this is a continuing trend. I should note here that I pulled these numbers down a couple of hours earlier than I've been doing; I am attempting to move this whole process a bit earlier in the evening, and this is part of that attempt. I want you to be aware that we're looking at a bit less than 24 hours' reporting. I'll also mention that there typically is not a lot of new information that comes in this time of night, so the difference should be quite small. Nonetheless, I wanted you to have that information as you assess what we have tonight.

We're at 1,373,100 cases in the US. We're holding steady after four consecutive days of decline. NY leads with 343,705 cases, a decrease in new cases for the fifth consecutive day. NJ has 140,743 cases, which is down for the fourth consecutive day and their first day under 1000 new cases since March 25. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: IL – 83,094, MA – 79,332, CA – 70,019, PA – 61,407, MI – 47,946, FL – 41,915, TX – 41,643, and CT – 34,333. These ten states account for 69% of US cases. 3 more states have over 30,000 cases, 3 more states have over 20,000 cases, 11 more have over 10,000, 9 more + DC over 5000, 9 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 WV, TX, SC, UT, DC, VA, KS, and FL. States where new case reports are increasing include WA, MN, CA, OR, SD, ME, AR, and AL. States where new case reports are decreasing include PA, IA, MA, LA, MO, NJ, VT, and MI. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 82,161 deaths in the US. Today the number of new deaths increased slightly after a five days without an increase. NY has 27,284, NJ has 9508, MA has 5141, MI has 4674, PA has 3924, IL has 3616, CT has 3041, CA has 2850, and LA has 2281. There are 6 more states over 1000 deaths, 7 more over 500, 16 more + DC and PR over 100, and 12 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

A smartphone app that tracks people's movements has surfaced some data which might be useful in deciding which businesses to patronize as things open up. Please understand that I believe nonessential visits to businesses should be curtailed as much as possible for a some time yet; but if you're going to go out and about, there is information that may be of value to you. Businesses that are considered "super-spreaders" include gyms and fitness classes, busy corner stores, and crowded neighborhood bars. When information from the app combined with people's reports on how often they interacted with people or touched shared surfaces, as well as how much activity occurs, we can add nail and beauty salons to the list. Electronics stores are riskier than lawn and garden stores because people linger longer; the Salvation Army store is riskier than Dollar General. Concentration of people is also important: If a restaurant serves mostly a particular meal, for example, lunch, then they are higher risk at those times of day.

It appears most of the disease-spreading risk is concentrated in a small portion of the economy, so we should be able to resume economic activity with minimal risk if we choose wisely and protect those folks out there in the high-risk occupations. Other high-risk businesses include toy stores, bookstores, and sporting goods stores. Policies limiting the number of people in stores will modify these risks, along with requiring hygiene and social distancing measures, including masks. And honestly, I really don't want to hear about your freedom and your constitutional right to infect other people. You don't have one. Wear a damned mask, even if it's not required where you live. You may be shedding virus this very minute and never know it. The people you kill won't know it was you, but they'll know they're sick. Have some minimal level of consideration for your fellow citizens' right to live. That doesn't seem like a big ask.

I would like to expand on a point I made last night about death reports from Covid-19. There is a way to know we are undercounting the true number of Covid-19 deaths, and it is something I alluded to a few weeks ago, the concept of excess deaths. There's some fairly complex statistical analysis required here and research into individual deaths, but in simplest terms, excess deaths are deaths in excess of the number we would expect in any given period of time. For example, let's say in your town 480 people die per year. That's 40 per month, right? But, of course, it is highly unlikely that exactly 40 people die in each month of the year; it is far more likely that, due to all kinds of seasonal factors, more die in one month than another, year in and year out. Maybe more people die in the winter where you live due to increased car accidents

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on icy roads, heart attacks while shoveling snow, seasonal influenza and pneumonia, carbon monoxide toxicity and house fires from malfunctioning furnaces, and suicide due to the effects of short day length on depression. (I just made up all of those factors, and I'm about to make up the numbers associated with each one; I actually have no idea what months show the highest death rates in places with very cold winters. This is an example for illustration only.) So let's say the worst months for deaths are December, January, and February and the best months are June, July, and August, with spring and fall somewhere in between. If the usual number of deaths is 56 in February, 48 in March, 45 in April, and 37 in May, then if suddenly we saw 60 deaths in February, 68 in March, 93 in April, and 74 in May, you'd think something unusual was going on starting in March, wouldn't you? So would most health statisticians; they'd think it was very unusual, indeed. Those people who died in excess of the average historical number each of these months are what we call excess deaths; and those numbers would trigger some sort of effort to sort out what's causing them. And if those numbers of excess deaths happened in the middle of a pandemic that kills people, it seems reasonable to conclude some significant portion of those deaths are actually caused by this infection, doesn't it?

This is the kind of work folks are starting now, and this forms the basis for a conclusion that Covid-19 is causing more, not fewer, deaths than the official numbers indicate. What you start with is something called all-cause mortality, meaning all deaths that occur from any cause. An analysis done for just three weeks, weeks 14, 15, and 16 of the year in the UK is illustrative. Here's what it shows: For week 14, there were 6082 excess deaths out of 16,387 total deaths; of those, 3475 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, leaving a 2607 death gap. For week 15, there were 7996 excess deaths out of 18,516 total deaths; of those, 6213 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, leaving a 1783 death gap. And for week 16, there were 11,854 excess deaths out of 22,351 total deaths (the most ever recorded in a single week since comparable figures began in 1993); of those, 8758 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, leaving a 3096 death gap. The total of excess deaths during this three-week period exceeds the number of people who died on Britain's roads, in total, over the past 12 years.

Now, it is unlikely all of these unexplained excess deaths were actually directly caused by Covid-19. They are going to include people who died of something else for which they did not receive treatment because they were either unable or unwilling to go in care, those who died from domestic violence (something we know has spiked during this time), or those who died of suicide (which has also spiked). But when you consider there is no gap between excess deaths and deaths attributed to Covid-19 in hospital deaths and over half the excess deaths in care homes and at home were not listed as Covid-19 deaths, then you realize some substantial proportion of them probably were, indeed, caused by this infection. Given the state of testing in the UK at that time wasn't great, it could be the certifying doctor didn't suspect Covid-19, he didn't have enough evidence to list it on the death certificate, or he just didn't have enough time to consider properly what had caused it. These numbers should also be put in perspective when you consider some causes of death fell dramatically during this same time, which should have lowered the number of expected deaths: Influenza deaths dropped because mitigation measures targeted at Covid-19 reduced spread of influenza too; vehicular accident fatalities because driving was very much reduced; accidental deaths associated with outdoor activities were reduced because people stayed indoors; and deaths due to violent crime were reduced along with overall crime rates because people stayed home.

The conclusion that we are undercounting these deaths is strengthened by numbers from European countries. These showed that the numbers of excess deaths were far greater in countries which had big outbreaks and the numbers of excess deaths were far smaller in countries which had smaller outbreaks.

How does that translate to us here in the US? In New York City, the largest center of cases in the US, more than 27,000 people died between March 11 and April 27; this is 20,900 more than one would expect in that time period in normal times, nearly three and one-half times expected deaths. 16,673 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, leaving a gap of 4227 deaths. Also in New York City, in the 31 days ending on April 4, the number of excess deaths is nearly double the number recorded in September, 2001, the month the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center killed over 2700 people.

Again, allowing for significant drops in some causes of death, it's pretty tough to make the case we are

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overcounting Covid-19 deaths. It is also impossible to maintain the fiction that this infection is killing only the vulnerable people who would have died of something else anyhow. Now, no one thinks all 4227 are missed Covid-19 deaths, but also no one who looks at the numbers can reasonably conclude nefarious forces are at work inflating the counts to make things look worse than they are. So let's put that myth to bed, once and for all.

You can have a look at excess deaths in each state at the following link (<https://www.nytimes.com/.../coronavirus-deaths-new-york-city...>). You should be aware, if you look, that the data are not complete. Even in normal times, there is a lag in getting death reports filed, and during a time of unprecedented numbers of deaths, the lag will increase. For example, Connecticut has reported zero deaths from all causes since February 1. We all know that's not right; they're just taking longer than usual to get the reports in. What you will see is some states with few excess deaths and fewer still unexplained by the Covid-19 official numbers and others with large gaps as has New York. It is an interesting tool for those who are interested.

One last thing tonight: We now have confirmation that those supposed reinfections—the folks who recovered, tested negative, then later tested positive, giving rise to speculation they were immediately being infected again—were the result of testing failures. South Korea's CDC issued a report indicating the subsequent positive tests were, indeed, false positives, the result of the test detecting inactive remnants of viral RNA and not infectious virus causing infection. This is excellent news.

It is still looking as though SARS-CoV-2 has an immunity pattern like other coronaviruses that currently infect humans. If so, we can expect that people who get infected will be immune for at least some months, probably a few years, but likely not for life. We'll know more when we have more specific antibody tests available to use at scale. The tests which are currently widely available still give too many false positives, that is, tests which say someone has antibodies to this virus when they don't. That remains a problem in assessing how many people may currently be protected and in identifying those no longer at risk of infection as we reopen the economy.

So there's mostly good news today. We can all use a day like this—and hope for many more of them. There are some other nice things happening these days. I read a lovely story about hospitals with large numbers of cases playing a "clap-out" song for newly discharged Covid-19 patients. Health care workers are lining the halls and cheering as the patients are wheeled out and the overhead speakers play the clap-out song. Imagine what that feels like to someone who's been facing death alone, without their loved ones. What are the song choices? They vary: One I find particularly appropriate is the Beatles' "Here Comes the Sun." Another popular choice is "Gonna' Fly Now," which you probably know as the theme song from the movie, "Rocky," also striking the proper note. Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, a city very hard-hit, early and often, plays Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'," which with its reference to Detroit, seems apropos. Patrick Irwin, VP of Human Resources for the System, talked about how very difficult this pandemic has been in Detroit, calling the early days "terrifying," adding, "I'll tell you, when you see the patients walking through that tunnel, you really feel like you've contributed back to humanity." This level of caring is, for me, a comforting thought in hard times.

Time to consider what each of us is doing to provide comfort or clarity or help or caring outside our own circle these days. We're not through this thing yet, not by a long shot; and many of us are going to need some of this from time to time ourselves. For now, look for the folks you can comfort or inform or assist or care for, and extend a hand. We cannot build a better, stronger, healthier society if we're not willing to do the work—all of us. No one's going to do it for us. Time to step up.

Please stay well, and we'll talk again.

About Your Absentee Voting Ballot Request

A new rule in place this year affects your absentee ballot request. According to Groton Area School Business Manager Mike Weber, he reported to the board of education Monday night that the request is now good for the rest of the year. In other words, if you requested an absentee ballot for the June primary, you will also, automatically, receive in the mail a ballot for the general election in November.

Also on the request form is a space requesting a ballot for just the primary or municipal or school or for all of them. If you checked the all box, you will automatically receive a ballot for any upcoming election for 2020 that you are eligible to vote.

Weber reported that so far, he has received 250 absentee ballots for school board and is averaging a dozen ballots each day. In the last school board election, there was a total of 335 votes cast. Weber reported that he had run out of envelopes and had to order more which he received on Monday.

For the June 2 primary, there will be a county ballot, a Groton Area School Board ballot and a Ward 2 Groton City ballot.

In South Dakota, the County Election Official must receive your application for absentee ballot no later than 5 p.m. the day before the election. Your voted ballot MUST be received by your County Election Official on Election Day in enough time to deliver your ballot to your voting precinct before the polls close.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8	May 9	May 10	May 11
Minnesota	7,851	8,579	9,365	10,088	10,790	11,271	11,799
Nebraska	6,438	6,771	7,190	7,831	8,234	8,315	8,572
Montana	456	456	456	458	458	458	459
Colorado	17,364	17,830	18,371	18,827	19,375	19,375	19,879
Wyoming	452	479	483	490	495	504	510
North Dakota	1266	1,323	1,371	1,425	1,464	1,491	1,518
South Dakota	2,721	2,779	2,905	3,144	3,393	3,517	3,614
United States	1,204,475	1,228,609	1,256,972	1,286,833	1,309,541	1,329,225	1,347,388
US Deaths	71,078	73,431	75,670	77,280	78,794	79,525	80,397
Minnesota	+617	+728	+786	+723	+702	+481	+528
Nebraska	+355	+333	+419	+741	+403	+81	+257
Montana	+8	0	0	+2	0	0	+1
Colorado	+457	+466	+541	+456	+548	----	+504
Wyoming	+8	+27	+4	+7	+5	+9	+6
North Dakota	+41	+57	+48	+54	+39	+27	+27
South Dakota	+53	+58	+126	+239	+249	+124	+97
United States	+23,841	+24,134	+28,363	+29,861	+22,708	+19,684	+18,163
US Deaths	+2,144	+2,353	+2,239	+1,610	1,514	+731	+872
	May 12						
Minnesota	12,494						
Nebraska	8,692						
Montana	461						
Colorado	20,157						
Wyoming	513						
North Dakota	1,571						
South Dakota	3,663						
United States	1,370,016						
US Deaths	82,389						
Minnesota	+695						
Nebraska	+120						
Montana	+2						
Colorado	+278						
Wyoming	+3						
North Dakota	+53						
South Dakota	+49						
United States	+22,628						
US Deaths	+1,992						

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May 12th COVID-19 UPDATE

Charles Mix, Fall River and Lyman Counties are reported fully recovered while Corson recorded its second case. Brown County had more recovered cases than positive ones with 14 recovered and just 5 positive cases. There are 77 associated cases from DemKota out of the total 132 positive cases in the county.

There are seven more deaths in the Dakotas with five more from Minnehaha County in South Dakota and two more in North Dakota. There are 38 deaths in North Dakota and 39 in South Dakota from COVID-19.

Brown County:

Active Cases: 69 (9 less than yesterday)

Recovered: 643 (14 more than yesterday)

Total Positive: 132 (5 more than yesterday)

Ever Hospitalized: 5 (1 more than yesterday)

Deaths: 0

Negative Tests: 795 (17 conducted yesterday)

South Dakota:

Positive: +49 (3,663 total) (48 less than yesterday)

Negative: +570 (21,534 total)

Hospitalized: +8 (271 total) - 74 currently hospitalized (4 less than yesterday)

Deaths: +5 (all in Minnehaha County) (39 total)

Recovered: +122 (2209 total)

Active Cases: 1315 (78 less than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett 18, Brule +2 (71), Butte +6 (87), Campbell 14, Custer -1 (65), Dewey +12 (75), Edmunds +2 (31), Gregory 37, Haakon +1 (19), Hanson +1 (36), Harding 1, Jackson 13, Jones 6, Kingsburg +2 (92), Mellette +4 (23), Perkins +1 (9), Potter 38, Tripp 71, unassigned +95 (930).

Beadle: +1 positive (22 total)

Brown: +5 positive, +14 recovered (63 of 132 recovered)

Charles Mix: +1 recovered (5 of 5 recovered)

Clark: +1 positive (3 total)

Clay: +1 positive (9 total)

Corson: +1 positive (2 total)

Davison: +1 positive, +1 recovered (6 of 8 recovered)

Day: +5 recovered (9 of 10 recovered)

Fall River: +1 recovered (2 of 2 recovered)

Hughes: +1 recovered (11 of 15 recovered)

Lincoln: -1 positive, +6 recovered (136 of 190 recovered)

Lyman: +1 recovered (3 of 3 recovered)

McCook: +1 positive (5 total)

Minnehaha: +25 positive, +80 recovered (1851 of 2978 recovered)

Moody: +1 positive, +2 recovered (7 of 15 recovered)

Pennington: +5 positive, +2 recovered (12 of 32 recovered)

Roberts: +1 recovered (9 of 14 recovered)

Todd: +3 positive, +1 recovered (5 of 13 recovered)

Union: +3 positive, +5 recovered (32 of 56 recovered)

Yankton: +1 positive, +1 recovered

Fully recovered from positive cases (added Charles Mix, Fall River, Lyman; Lost Corson): Bon Homme, Brookings, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Codington, Deuel, Douglas, Fall River, Faulk, Hamlin, Hand, Hutchinson, Hyde, Lawrence, Lyman, Marshall, McPherson, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Sanborn, Sully, Walworth.

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 818 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 53 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,571. NDDoH reports two new deaths.

State & private labs have reported 47,832 total tests & 46,261 negatives.

877 ND patients are recovered.

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	2	1	49
Beadle	22	19	216
Bennett	0	0	18
Bon Homme	4	4	129
Brookings	14	14	428
Brown	132	63	795
Brule	0	0	71
Buffalo	1	1	20
Butte	0	0	87
Campbell	0	0	14
Charles Mix	5	5	127
Clark	3	1	67
Clay	10	6	200
Codington	15	15	577
Corson	2	1	29
Custer	0	0	65
Davison	8	6	365
Day	10	9	76
Deuel	1	1	91
Dewey	0	0	75
Douglas	1	1	37
Edmunds	0	0	31
Fall River	2	2	79
Faulk	1	1	25
Grant	3	0	65
Gregory	0	0	37
Haakon	0	0	19
Hamlin	2	2	85
Hand	1	1	30
Hanson	0	0	36
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	15	11	300
Hutchinson	3	3	119

Hyde	1	1	21
Jackson	0	0	13
Jerauld	6	5	43
Jones	0	0	6
Kingsbury	0	0	92
Lake	5	4	173
Lawrence	9	9	233
Lincoln	190	136	1805
Lyman	3	3	62
Marshall	1	1	61
McCook	5	3	129
McPherson	1	1	26
Meade	4	1	348
Mellette	0	0	23
Miner	1	1	23
Minnehaha	2978	1851	10033
Moody	15	7	124
Oglala Lakota	1	1	58
Pennington	32	12	1165
Perkins	0	0	9
Potter	0	0	38
Roberts	14	9	180
Sanborn	3	3	42
Spink	4	3	149
Stanley	8	7	49
Sully	1	1	16
Todd	13	5	138
Tripp	0	0	71
Turner	18	16	173
Union	56	32	288
Walworth	5	5	73
Yankton	31	25	560
Ziebach	1	0	17
Unassigned****	0	0	930

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	338	0
20-29 years	642	0
30-39 years	861	1
40-49 years	686	1
50-59 years	619	5
60-69 years	335	6
70-79 years	86	5
80+ years	96	21

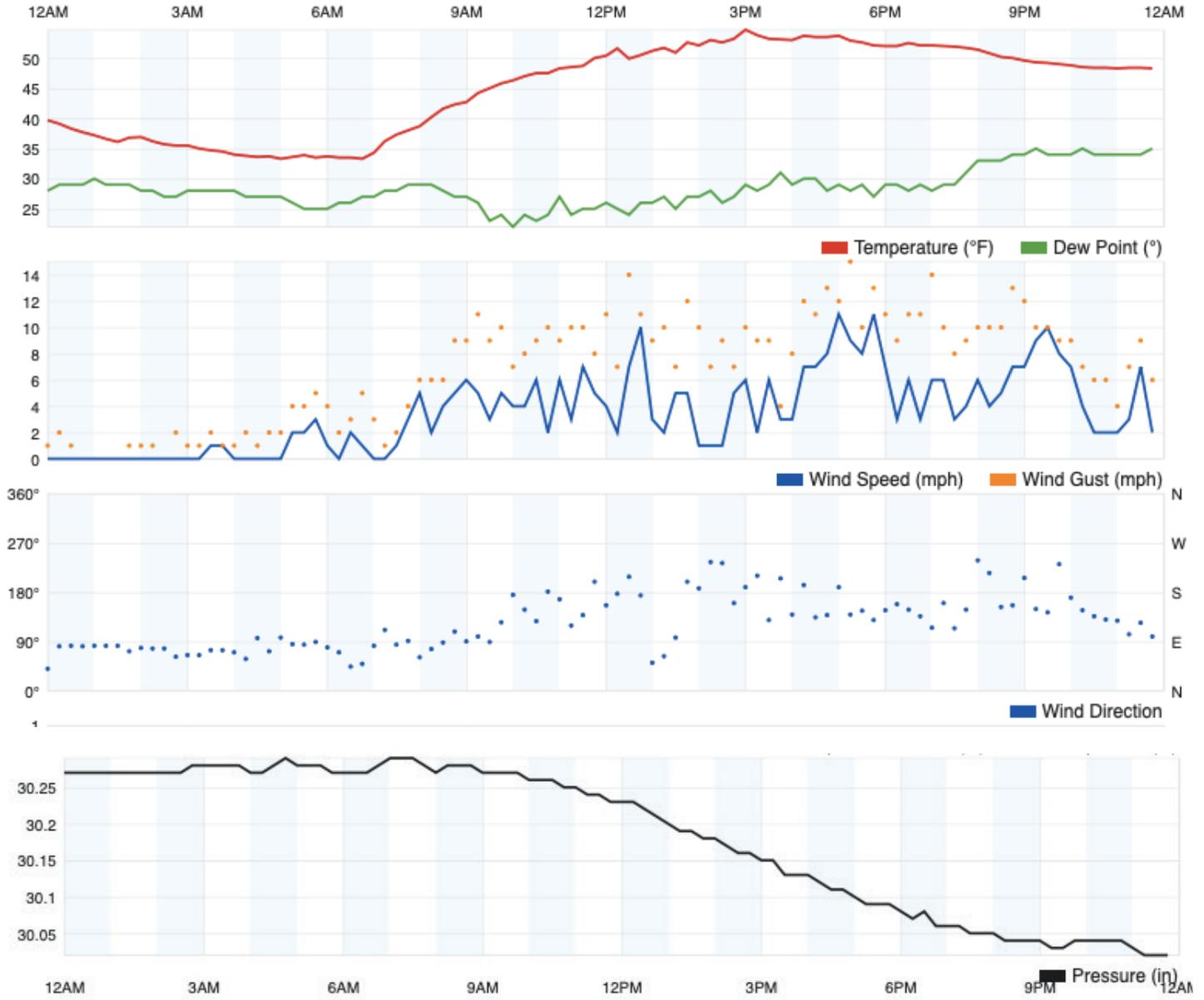
SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1658	21
Male	2005	18

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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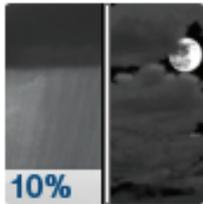
Today



Chance Showers

High: 58 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance Showers then Mostly Cloudy

Low: 43 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 67 °F

Thursday Night



Mostly Clear

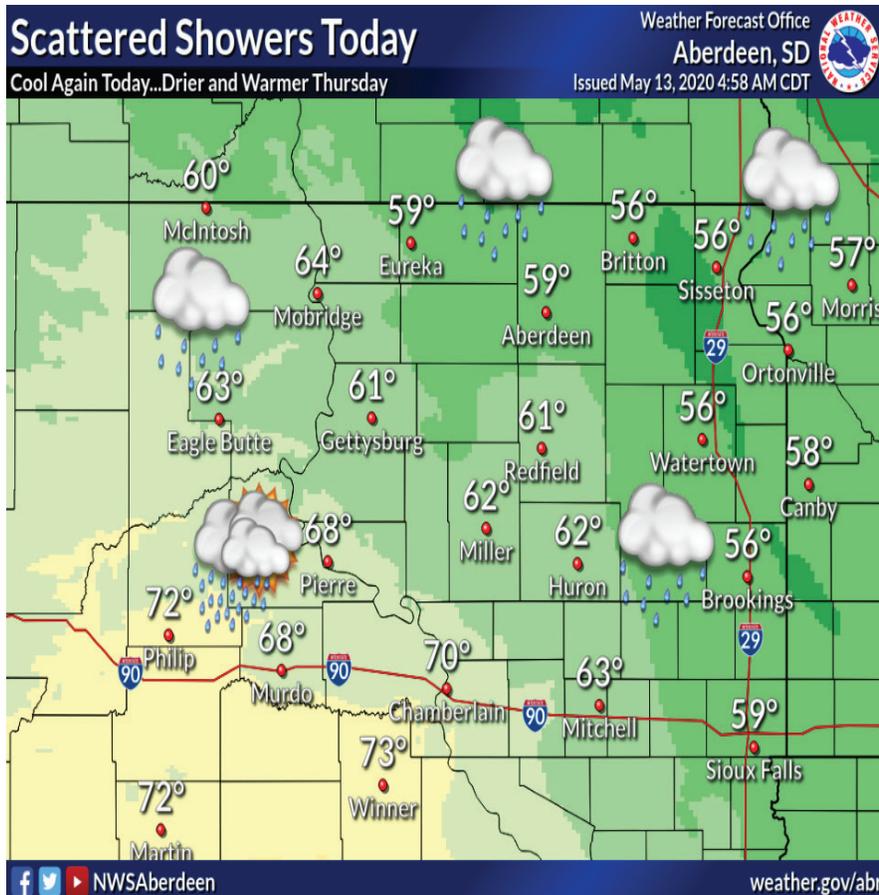
Low: 43 °F

Friday



Partly Sunny then Chance Showers

High: 64 °F



Scattered showers will once again dot the landscape across portions of the region today. This...along with cloudy skies will hold temps back below normal for another day. Southerly breezes will also kick in by midday and perhaps make it feel just a bit cooler. The one bright spot could be far western and central areas of South Dakota where some breaks in the cloud cover will be possible later today which may help some to inch close to the 70 degree mark. A brief dry spell is expected on Thursday. With some more sunshine, temps should respond closer to normal for mid-May.

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Today in Weather History

May 13, 2005: Runoff from heavy rain resulted in minor flooding along the White River from south of Belvidere to Oacoma, affecting mainly agricultural land along the river. The river rose over its banks and flooded U.S. Highway 83 south of Murdo for a short time. No property damage was reported.

1930 - A man was killed when caught in an open field during a hailstorm northwest of Lubbock TX. It was the first, and perhaps the only, authentic death by hail in U.S. weather records. (David Ludlum)

1980: An F3 tornado ripped directly through the center of Kalamazoo, Michigan, killing five people, injuring 79, leaving 1,200 homeless and causing \$50 million in damage. The tornado passed directly over the American Bank, where a barograph reported a pressure drop of 0.59 inches.

1981 - A tornado 450 yards in width destroyed ninety percent of Emberson TX. People did not see a tornado, but rather a wall of debris. Homes were leveled, a man in a bathtub was hurled a quarter of a mile, and a 1500 pound recreational vehicle was hurled 500 yards. Miraculously no deaths occurred in the tornado. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought an end to the early season warm spell in the north central U.S., but not before the temperature at Sioux City IA soared to a record warm 95 degrees. Strong southwesterly winds ahead of the cold front gusted to 52 mph at Marais MI. Evening thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail at Rockford MN, and wind gusts to 75 mph at Belmont IA. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Strong winds along a cold front ushering cold air into the northwestern U.S. gusted to 69 mph at Myton UT. Temperatures warmed into the 80s ahead of the cold front, as far north as Montana. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region during the afternoon and night. A thunderstorm at Killeen TX produced wind gusts to 95 mph damaging 200 helicopters at Fort Hood causing nearly 500 million dollars damage. Another thunderstorm produced softball size hail at Hodges TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front spawned ten tornadoes from eastern Wyoming to northern Kansas, including seven in western Nebraska. Thunderstorms forming ahead of a cold front in the eastern U.S. spawned five tornadoes from northeastern North Carolina to southern Pennsylvania. Thunderstorms over southeast Louisiana deluged the New Orleans area with four to eight inches of rain between 7 AM and Noon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1995: This outbreak produced tornadoes extending from the Mississippi River near Burlington, Iowa, to the west of Bloomington, Illinois. Two violent tornadoes, each ranked at F4 intensity, were reported. The first tornado traveled 60 miles from near Fort Madison, Iowa, to the southeast of Galesburg, Illinois producing over \$10 million damage. The town of Raritan, Illinois was hit the hardest. The second violent tornado traveled 7 miles across Fulton County from Ipava to Lewistown, Illinois producing \$6 million damage. Another strong tornado took a 25-mile path across parts of Fulton, Mason, and Tazewell Counties. The storms also produced softball-size hail south and northwest of Macomb in Illinois. Five men were injured in Lawrence County, Indiana when lightning struck one of them and traveled to the other four. There were 184 reports of severe weather, including over three dozen tornadoes.

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THE GAMBLERS

In the Middle Ages, there was a group of men who called themselves The Gamblers. Wherever there was sickness or suffering, plagues or pestilence, they would take their lives into their own hands - gamble against all odds - to help others. They willingly gambled with their lives for the good of others.

But they were not the first to do this. The Apostle Paul talks about one of his co-workers: Epaphroditus. In speaking of him, he wrote, "he risked his life for the work of Christ and he was at the point of death while trying to do for me the things you couldn't do because you were far away."

We do not know very much about Epaphroditus. We do know that he delivered money to Paul while he was in prison. We do know that he helped Paul during a time of great physical and financial need. We do know that he became sick while he was staying with Paul. And we do know that Paul trusted him to deliver a most important "thank-you" letter to the church at Philippi.

The world honors those who are recognized for being rich, athletic, wealthy, entertaining, and intelligent. But here we see God recognizing and honoring a servant. And Paul also said, "Welcome him with Christian love, great joy, and be sure to honor people like him." A simple servant, honored eternally, for taking a risk for God. What are you doing for the Lord?

Prayer: We think, Lord, of those who do for You what few are willing to do – risk their lives. Thank You for the missionaries who serve You quietly. Honor them greatly. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Philippians 2:25-30 Welcome him in the Lord's love and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away.

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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
 - **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
 - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
 - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
 - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
 - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
 - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
 - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
 - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
 - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
-
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
-
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

News from the Associated Press

Saturday classes? Schools mull ways to make up lost time

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

When students return to school after a lengthy pandemic-induced absence, the consensus is they will have lost significant academic ground. Still unresolved for governments and educators are the questions of how — or even whether — teachers should try to make up for lost learning.

Some have proposed holding evening or Saturday classes for students to catch up. A Maryland senator has proposed school year-round. In California, the governor has suggested the next school year could begin as soon as July.

But any remediation plans will be complicated by social distancing mandates that may require smaller class sizes and budget cuts that appear imminent because of falling local and state revenues. In surveys, many educators say the fall will be no time to pile on additional schoolwork.

"First and foremost, we need to recognize that we have young people in front of us who have gone through a traumatic experience," said Andres Perez, a Chula Vista, California, high school teacher who warns against moving too fast to get back on track. "And right now, I think students and teachers really want to make school something that feels meaningful, that students are excited to go back to."

Even students in schools that managed to issue devices for video lessons and assignments and transition to distance learning early on, using school-issued devices for video lessons and assignments, will have lost out from shortened sessions and limited interaction with teachers, experts say. The vast number of students still without technology in early May and those who have all but vanished from schools' radars will have fallen even further behind.

The effects of the lost learning could be felt for years.

"Even though we were closed for the last two-and-a-half months of school, it will take us literally — don't fall out of your seat — it'll take us a couple or three years to get through this," Alabama Education Superintendent Eric Mackey told the Alabama Association of School Boards.

The "summer slide" in which students typically lose some ground during their break is expected to be far worse next fall, with projections by the nonprofit Northwest Evaluation Association suggesting some students could be as much as a year behind in math.

"Students with worse educational opportunity will have worse outcomes and it occurs fairly rapidly," Andre Perry, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, said. "A month away can have a dramatic impact on outcomes, so six months will certainly show up in the classroom in the fall."

U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has said she hopes schools will test students in the fall to gauge where they are academically, particularly because this spring's standardized tests that might have provided a barometer were canceled.

To catch up, most teachers favor a business-as-usual approach, starting the next school year where they normally would, while giving targeted help to students who need it, according to an April survey of 5,500 teachers, administrators and advocates by the nonprofit Collaborative for Student Success. Administrators lean toward beginning the new year with April concepts, given where classroom instruction abruptly ended in the current one.

"Teachers always deal with this to some degree in their classrooms. There's always going to be a disparity between kids and their levels of ability and skills," said Jim Cowen, executive director of the Collaborative for Student Success. "There will obviously be an additional barrier but it's not new to them."

Still, Cowen said, it's important that schools are ready to respond to the disruption likely worsening the country's already troubling gaps in achievement affecting students from minority and low-income families.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said "that learning loss is very real," suggesting schoolchildren not wait for fall and instead proposing a return to classrooms as soon as late July. The California Federation of Teachers, while praising Newsom's overall response to the crisis, said in a statement the decision to reopen

schools should be made at the local level through collective bargaining with unions, once the number of infections has declined and testing and safety measures are in place.

In Maryland, state Sen. Paul Pinsky, a Democrat and chair of the state's Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, wants his state to consider year-round school comprising four quarters and seasonal breaks.

Adam Mendelson, a spokesman for the 74,000-member Maryland State Education Association teachers union, said the idea "clearly has major legislative, budgetary, and other legal angles that would all need to be considered, analyzed, and addressed as part of an inclusive policy conversation about what is best for our students."

Officials in Cleveland, Ohio, have said the "multi-year recovery" may include a shift toward a narrower but deeper curriculum focused on core skills. A spokeswoman for South Dakota's Department of Education, Mary Stadick Smith, says local school boards may be considering the Saturday class proposal.

Superintendent Shari Camhi of the Baldwin Union Free School District in New York's Nassau County said her focus is on retrofitting the gymnasium and renting party tents to allow for social distancing. She is awaiting guidance from state officials on whether her district can plan differently for older and younger students. That would allow for a blend of in-person and online classes for students old enough to be at home if their parents are working.

"For those students who saw a loss, we will meet them where they are and work with them and get them to where they need to be," she said.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

07-16-27-44-52, Mega Ball: 5, Megaplier: 5

(seven, sixteen, twenty-seven, forty-four, fifty-two; Mega Ball: five; Megaplier: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$248 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$77 million

South Dakota's Noem asks tribes again to talk on checkpoints

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem on Tuesday held off on her threat to sue Native American tribes that have set up highway checkpoints intended to keep the coronavirus away from their reservations, saying instead she would like to work out an agreement.

The Republican governor gave two tribes — the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe — 48 hours from Friday afternoon to remove checkpoints from state and federal highways or face a lawsuit. She said her office has been getting complaints that the checkpoints have caused a headache for people trying to enter the reservations for ranching or store deliveries. But the tribes kept the checkpoints, citing the threat of the virus, combined with their vulnerable populations and poor medical facilities, as urgent reasons to control access.

Noem said she sent a letter Tuesday to Cheyenne River Sioux chairman Harold Frazier asking him to talk through an agreement on the checkpoints on the Cheyenne River Indian reservation in the northern part of the state. She said she planned a similar letter to Oglala Sioux president Julian Bear Runner on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in the southwest corner of the state.

She described the conflict as a "sticky situation" between federal, state and tribal authorities.

"What we're looking for is clarification," Noem said.

In the letter, released by Noem's office Tuesday evening, she calls the checkpoints on state highways "unlawful" and writes they "could actually increase the risk of spreading the virus on the reservation" via

tribal interaction with travelers. She asked Frazier to "immediately adjust your policies" to drop the state highway checkpoints.

The tribes have taken a vigilant approach to the global pandemic, at times locking down their reservations, while Noem's strategy has been mostly hands-off in an effort to keep businesses afloat.

Amid fears that Native Americans could be particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus pandemic, tribes across the country have taken an aggressive approach to preventing infections by sealing borders and mandating testing. Frazier has said the Cheyenne River Sioux were worried their eight-bed hospital facility could easily be overrun.

So far, there have been only three cases confirmed between both reservations. But after two Oglala Sioux members were confirmed to have the coronavirus on Monday, the Pine Ridge reservation went into a 72-hour lockdown with only emergency travel allowed.

Meanwhile, South Dakota officials reported that COVID-19 deaths rose by five Tuesday, to 39. Forty-nine new cases were reported, bringing the state's total to 3,663.

Chase Iron Eyes, a spokesman for the Oglala Sioux president, said his office would carefully consider a request from the governor to discuss the checkpoints, but that he had not yet received a letter or notification from the governor. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Noem's letter.

Noem said Monday she had been talking to the tribes for weeks trying to resolve the checkpoints, and on Tuesday brought her tribal relations secretary, David Flute, to her regular briefing to detail those efforts. Flute, a former chairman of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, said that he had tried to reach out to both tribes last month to work out some of the complaints that state was getting with the checkpoints. Flute said that elected leaders from both tribes turned down his requests to have a conference call.

Noem's relationship with some of the tribes has been tense since she took office in 2018, mostly over a longstanding conflict about construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

Noem defended her approach to relations with the tribes, saying she has sought to open up lines of communication. But when asked by reporters whether she would proceed with the lawsuit if she can't reach an agreement with the tribes, she said, "I'm not certain about that question."

Judge: US not unreasonably delaying virus relief for tribes

By FELICIA FONSECA The Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The U.S. Treasury Department is not unreasonably delaying the release of coronavirus relief funding to Native American tribes, a federal judge ruled this week.

The department is tasked with disbursing \$8 billion to tribes that was included in a relief package approved in late March. The payments didn't start going out until more than a week after the April 26 deadline set by Congress, and 40% of the money is being withheld.

Despite that, U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, D.C., rejected an assertion that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin was "twiddling his thumbs." Congress required Mnuchin to consult with tribes and the Interior Department before sending any payments, making the job more difficult.

The Treasury Department estimated it has spent about 2,200 hours so far on the effort.

Mehta said that amount of work should have produced better results but doesn't justify court intervention. "Egregious' delay is the governing standard, and the secretary is not there quite yet, even in the midst of a public health crisis," Mehta wrote in his ruling.

The tribes can renew their motion to force the distribution of the entire \$8 billion if the Treasury Department takes more than twice the time Congress mandated, Mehta said.

"Treasury indicated as recently as last Thursday that it might not disburse the remaining funds for two months, a delay that the court's order explicitly says will not be acceptable," Keith Harper, an attorney for the tribes, said in a statement Tuesday. "We agree, and we, along with the court, will be closely following Treasury's progress and will not hesitate to renew our motion for immediate relief if Treasury continues to drag its feet."

States and local governments received funding under the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, largely based on population data.

The Treasury Department also used existing population data in issuing \$4.8 billion in payments to tribes. But the department plans to gather more data from tribes on spending and employment numbers before releasing the rest. It also is holding back an undisclosed amount calculated for Alaska Native corporations until a separate lawsuit is resolved.

Mehta has limited the distribution of the funding to tribal nations in that case while he settles the question of eligibility. Attorneys hope to have a final decision by the end of June, according to a court document filed Tuesday.

The Treasury Department and the tribes disagree over whether the corporations, which own most Native lands in Alaska under a 1971 settlement but are not tribal governments, qualify for a share of the funding.

In other related developments:

— The Interior Department's Office of Inspector General said it is investigating allegations that the federal government improperly released data that tribal governments had submitted in applying for the relief funding. A spokesperson for the Interior Department said Tuesday it requested the review. Tribes and members of Congress also had called for an investigation.

— The Inspector General's office also is looking into whether any Interior official violated ethics rules relating to the funding.

Some tribes have suggested that Tara Sweeney, who oversees the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, has personal motives in ensuring Alaska Native corporations receive funding and have sought her resignation. Sweeney worked for nearly two decades for one of the regional corporations before taking the BIA job and remains a shareholder as a birthright.

The Interior Department said Sweeney is "upholding her ethical responsibilities and complies with all laws and regulations," relying on the advice of career ethics officials.

Police: Man dies in fall at Sioux Falls construction site

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 24-year-old man died Tuesday in a fall at a downtown Sioux Falls construction site, police said.

Police were called around 10:45 a.m. about a man injured at the construction site of the First Premier Bank building. The Argus Leader reports the site is the planned national headquarters building of First Premier Bank.

The man died at the scene. Police spokesman Sam Clemens said police will not release the name of the victim because there does not appear to be a crime committed.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating the death with help from police.

Construction of the five-story building started in March 2019 and was planned to finish by November 2020, with the bank opening in 2021. Construction company Henry Carlson Co. is working as general contractor for the project and did not comment when contacted by the Argus Leader.

The Latest: Sioux Falls nursing home reports 20 total deaths

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Latest on the coronavirus outbreak in South Dakota (all times local):
2:20 p.m.

The Good Samaritan Society says at least 20 residents of the Sioux Falls Village senior living facility have died after testing positive for COVID-19.

Argus Leader reports four more residents have died. The newspaper reports it's the most number of deaths tied to a single facility in South Dakota during the coronavirus pandemic, and makes up about half of the 39 deaths overall reported by the state.

A spokesman for Sanford Health says in total, the Sioux Falls Village has had 106 confirmed cases involving residents and employees.

Statewide, the number of COVID-19 deaths in South Dakota rose by five Tuesday, to 39. Forty-nine new

cases were reported, bringing the state's total to 3,663.

The Argus Leader also reports the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in southwestern South Dakota is on lockdown until noon Mountain time Wednesday due to the coronavirus. The Oglala Sioux Tribe says the lockdown began on Monday night after the reservation's first two COVID-19 cases were reported on Monday.

The Oglala Lakota Sioux and the Cheyenne River Sioux, in northern South Dakota, are in a standoff with Republican Gov. Kristi Noem over whether the two Native American tribes can post highway checkpoints to keep the coronavirus away from their reservations.

Medical students help rural communities cope with COVID-19

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Some students at the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine are staying in rural communities to help staff hospitals and clinics during the coronavirus outbreak.

Resources can be tight in rural settings, especially if healthcare workers or their family members become ill.

Medical students Carl Lang and Riley Schaap are currently volunteering in Winner, KSFY-TV reported.

"We're in this profession to serve others, to help other patients and so I'd say that was the main reason myself and other classmates wanted to come to these rural locations to help out in," said Lang.

They are also gaining important experience.

"To learn how we can benefit our patients in the future if this were to happen again," said Lang.

"Healthcare workers may become ill, their families may become ill and we need students really to assist and fill a void in those situations," said Susan Anderson Dean of Rural Medicine at USD.

"Actually learning about how does a local community, how does a local hospital and clinic prepare for a pandemic that can be unpredictable? Because unfortunately we'll probably be in a similar situation again sometime during their career," said Anderson.

Flynn case boosts Trump's bid to undo Russia probe narrative

By ERIC TUCKER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Michael Flynn was forced from the White House, Vice President Mike Pence said he was disappointed the national security adviser had misled him about his talks with the Russian ambassador. President Donald Trump called the deception unacceptable.

Now Pence says he'd welcome Flynn back to the administration, calling him a "patriot," as Trump pronounces him exonerated.

What a difference three years makes. The Justice Department's move to dismiss the criminal case against Flynn marks another step in his transformation, in the eyes of Trump and his allies, from rogue adviser to victim of runaway law enforcement.

The dismissal rewrites the narrative of the case that Trump's own Justice Department had advanced for the last three years in a way that former law enforcement officials say downplays the legitimate national security concerns they believe Flynn posed and the consequences of the lies he pleaded guilty to telling.

It's been swept up in a broader push by Trump and his Republican allies to reframe the Russia investigation as a "deep state" plot to sabotage his administration, setting the stage for a fresh onslaught of election year attacks on past and present Democratic officials and law enforcement leaders.

"His goal is that by the end of this, you're just not really sure what happened and at some gut level enough Americans say, 'It's kind of messy,'" said Princeton University presidential historian Julian Zelizer.

Scrambling to manage the coronavirus and economic crash, Trump has been eager to shift the focus elsewhere. He has repeatedly called Flynn "exonerated" and pushed the development as evidence of what he deemed "Obamagate," an allegation the previous administration tried to undermine him during the presidential transition.

Trump has tried to rally his supporters around the claim to revive enthusiasm among voters disappointed by his handling of the pandemic. He used the first 20 minutes of a recent Fox News interview to attack the Obama administration rather than offer updates on the pandemic.

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An investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller found Russians interfered in the 2016 election on Trump's behalf, though it did not allege illegal coordination with Trump's campaign. Mueller examined multiple instances of potential obstruction of justice and pointedly noted that he was unable to exonerate Trump.

But advisers believe painting the previous administration as corrupt can distract from a pandemic crisis that has crippled the economy and killed tens of thousands of people in the U.S. and is an effective line of attack against Trump's Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, Obama's vice president, according to four current and former administration officials and Republicans close to the White House not authorized to discuss the matter by name.

The hope is to revive some of the pre-pandemic arguments to cast Trump, even now as an incumbent, as the political outsider being attacked by the establishment.

Trump has increasingly lashed out in the year since Mueller's report did not accuse him of a crime or allege a criminal conspiracy between his campaign and Russia. Revelations since then have exposed problems with early days of the FBI's probe, including errors and omissions in applications to surveil an ex-Trump campaign adviser.

Republicans have echoed the attacks and scrutiny.

National intelligence director Richard Grenell declassified a list of names of Obama officials who reportedly asked for Flynn's identity to be unredacted in intelligence documents, while Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley told the Senate the "rule of law is at risk if the federal government can get away with violating the Constitution to do what they did to Lt. Gen. Flynn."

Republicans have generated a "thick fog of propaganda," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D- Md. "Trump and his enablers in Congress have a strategy of never admitting anything and always going on the attack."

Attorney General William Barr has said dropping the case against Flynn, who pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about having discussed sanctions with the Russian ambassador during the presidential transition, was in the interests of justice. The department says the FBI had no basis for interviewing Flynn about his "entirely appropriate" calls and that any imperfect statements he made weren't material to the broader counterintelligence investigation into the Trump campaign.

But the decision stunned former law enforcement officials involved in the case, including some who say the Justice Department is rewriting history and omitting key context.

Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe said the FBI was obligated to interview Flynn about his conversations with the Russian ambassador over sanctions imposed for election interference.

And because White House officials, including Pence, inaccurately asserted that Flynn had never discussed sanctions with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak, U.S. officials were concerned Flynn could be vulnerable to blackmail since Russia also knew what was discussed.

"Mr. Flynn was set to become the national security adviser, and it was untenable that Russia — which the intelligence community had just assessed had sought to interfere in the U.S. presidential election — might have leverage over him," Mary McCord, the Justice Department's top national security official at the time, wrote in a New York Times opinion piece in which she accused Barr of misrepresenting her viewpoints.

She acknowledged an internal quarrel over whether to disclose details of Flynn's calls to the White House and about the FBI's decision to interview Flynn without alerting Justice Department leadership. But she said there was no disagreement that Flynn was a potential counterintelligence threat.

A judge has yet to rule on the Justice Department's dismissal request, opening the door Tuesday to outside individuals and groups to file briefs.

But in the meantime, Flynn's revival in Trump's orbit is perhaps not surprising.

From the moment he took the stage at the 2016 Republican National Convention and led a "Lock her up!" chant aimed at Democrat Hillary Clinton, Flynn has been exceedingly popular among many Trump supporters. For many, his forced resignation and guilty plea only added to his stature as a martyr and cause celebre.

Discussions have been held about potentially welcoming him back to a post within the administration or the reelection campaign, according to the officials. Nothing has been finalized.

Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

New clusters pop up; Europe debates summer tourist season

By LORNE COOK, ELENA BECATOROS and CHRIS BLAKE Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — New coronavirus clusters have popped up as nations struggle to balance reopening economies with preventing a second wave of infections and deaths, while in Europe, a debate erupted Wednesday over the summer travel season.

Authorities in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where the pandemic first began late last year, reportedly were pressing ahead Wednesday to test all 11 million residents for the virus within 10 days after a handful of new infections were found.

In Lebanon, authorities reinstated a nationwide lockdown for four days beginning Wednesday night after a spike in reported infections and complaints from officials that social distancing rules were being ignored.

Despite the risks that loosening restrictions could lead to infection spikes, European nations have been seeking to restart cross-border travel, particularly as the summer holiday season looms for countries whose economies rely on tourists flocking to their beaches, museums and historical sites.

The European Union unveiled a plan to help citizens across its 27 nations salvage their summer vacations after months of coronavirus lockdown and resurrect Europe's badly battered tourism industry. The pandemic has prompted border closures across Europe and shut down the lifeline of cheap local flights.

The EU's executive arm, the European Commission, laid out its advice for lifting ID checks on hastily closed borders, helping to get airlines, ferries and buses running while ensuring the safety of passengers and crew, and preparing health measures for hotels to reassure clients.

It's not clear whether EU nations will follow that advice, since they, not Brussels, have the final say over health and security matters.

Some European countries have sought bilateral agreements with their neighbors.

Austria said its border with Germany would reopen fully on June 15, and that border checks would be reduced starting Friday. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Austria was aiming for similar agreements with Switzerland, Liechtenstein and its eastern neighbors "as long as the infection figures allow."

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said his country will lift a blanket warning against foreign travel for European destinations before other places, but didn't specify when. Germany's warning against all non-essential tourist travel abroad runs until at least June 14.

"It will certainly be possible to lift the travel warning earlier for Europe than for other destinations – so long as the current positive trend in many countries solidifies," Maas said. "Freedom to travel is part of the foundation of the European project, but in times of corona, Europe must ensure more: the freedom to travel safely."

The border shutdowns have hit the travel industry hard. The Germany-based tour and hotel operator TUI said Wednesday it expects to cut thousands of jobs due to the pandemic.

TUI said it was "prepared for a resumption" and its first hotels on the German coast would reopen in the coming days. It also sees the possibility of offering holidays in Spain's Balearic islands and in Greece starting in July, the German news agency dpa reported.

As long as new infections remain relatively low, there is "no reason why one shouldn't be able to travel there," TUI CEO Fritz Jousen said – but local companies and hotels need to be open.

Norway said Wednesday it was opening its borders to citizens from EU countries who have a residence there or have family they want to visit, seasonal workers and people from the U.K., Iceland and Liechtenstein.

The tension in balancing people's safety from the virus against the severe economic fallout is playing out across the world.. Italy partially lifted lockdown restrictions last week only to see a big jump in confirmed coronavirus cases in its hardest-hit region. Pakistan reported 2,000 new infections in a single day after crowds of people crammed into local markets as restrictions were eased.

The United States' top infectious disease expert issued a blunt warning that cities and states could see more COVID-19 deaths and economic damage at the same time if they lift stay-at-home orders too quickly.

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"There is a real risk that you will trigger an outbreak that you may not be able to control," Dr. Anthony Fauci said Tuesday after more than two dozen U.S. states began to lift lockdowns.

His comments were a sharp pushback to President Donald Trump, who is pushing to right a free-falling economy that has seen 33 million Americans lose their jobs. The U.S. has the largest coronavirus outbreak in the world by far: 1.37 million infections and over 82,000 deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University that experts say understates the true toll of the pandemic.

In his Senate testimony, Fauci said more infections and deaths are inevitable as people start gathering, but how prepared communities are to stamp out those outbreaks will determine how bad the rebound is.

Fauci expressed optimism that vaccines will arrive eventually, along with more tailored treatments for COVID-19 patients. But he said it would be "a bridge too far" to expect them in time for the fall, when most schools and universities hope to reopen.

China, the first nation to put a large number of citizens under lockdown and the first to ease those restrictions, has been strictly guarding against any resurgence. In January, it put the entire city of Wuhan and the surrounding region, home to more than 50 million people, under a strict lockdown. A cluster of six new cases recently emerged, the first local infections in Wuhan since before the lockdown was eased in early April.

Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 4.2 million people and killed some 292,000, according to the Johns Hopkins tally. Experts say the actual numbers are likely far higher.

Some countries have shown real progress against the virus: New Zealand reported no new cases Wednesday for the second consecutive day.

Thailand's health authorities also reported no new confirmed cases of COVID-19 for the first time in more than two months, and no new deaths. Thai authorities have been gradually easing lockdown restrictions with restaurants in Bangkok allowed to reopen last week under social distancing rules.

South Korea said Wednesday there were no immediate plans to revive strict social distancing rules despite a spike in infections linked to Seoul nightclubs, which it has ordered to reclose.

Beccatoros reported from Athens, Greece and Blake from Bangkok. Associated Press journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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As Europe reopens, key virus protections are still elusive

By NICOLE WINFIELD and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italy's virus reopening was supposed to be accompanied by a series of measures to limit infections in the one-time epicenter of Europe's pandemic: the distribution of millions of inexpensive surgical masks to pharmacies nationwide, a pilot project of 150,000 antibody tests and, eventually, the roll-out of a contact-tracing app.

None of these is in place as Italy experiments with its second week of loosening restrictions and looks ahead to Monday's reopening of shops and, in some regions, bars and restaurants.

Italy's commissioner for the emergency, Domenico Arcuri, went on the defensive Tuesday to respond to mounting criticism of his Phase II roll-out.

He insisted "Italians know well what to do" to protect themselves, even if they don't have the tests, masks, contact-tracing or other measures that public health authorities deemed necessary for Italy to reopen in safety.

"Sometimes I make mistakes for which I expect criticism and, if necessary, reprimand, from Italians," Arcuri said. But he directed the blame at others and repeated that he was working solely in the public's interest.

Italy is by no means alone in emerging from lockdown without all its infection-prevention pillars in place.

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And no country has had a blueprint for managing either the COVID-19 outbreak or the reopening phase.

But Italy's problems epitomize the challenges many countries face as they seek to balance economic and health care needs while reassuring terrified citizens with promises that perhaps were overly optimistic.

France's pledge to "protect, test and trace" all those who come into contact with a coronavirus patient was dealt a setback Monday when the constitutional court threw out part of its new virus law. The court objected to the contact-tracing language and ordered the government to take extreme care in protecting privacy.

The law, which took effect Tuesday, calls for teams of health care workers to trace the contacts of COVID-19 patients and share that data on a government server, with or without the patients' consent.

French President Emmanuel Macron has also repeatedly pledged that France would be able to test up to 700,000 people per week. The national health authority told The Associated Press on Tuesday that France was averaging around 200,000-270,000 tests per week.

Britain, which has Europe's highest official death toll at over 32,700, has ramped up its testing from 5,000 a day in March to close to 100,000 a day now. But it abandoned contact tracing after the virus' spread overwhelmed its capacity. A contact-tracing app is in trial stages and 18,000 people are being recruited to do the tracing legwork now.

Spain, which like Italy was among the hardest-hit countries early on, is still ironing out protocols for contact tracing and has no immediate plans to roll out an app. While Spain's virus testing capacity has improved, the government has left contact tracing largely to the already stressed local health centers.

Germany, which has prided itself on its comparatively low death rate, has engaged more than 10,000 people in contact tracing. An app is planned but is still weeks away. Turkey, meanwhile, has credited its army of contact tracers for its success in slowing the virus' spread. About 5,850 teams reached out to and tested close to 470,000 people suspected of being infected.

Italy abandoned any concerted effort at contact tracing when its north got overwhelmed in late February. But health care officials say contact tracing, as well as testing, protective masks and social distancing, remain key to further reopening.

Italy's mask problem began when Arcuri, the emergency commissioner, fixed a set price — .50 euro plus tax — for surgical masks that Italy only began producing domestically in recent weeks.

Producers balked at the low price and two distributors that had promised to get 12 million masks to pharmacies ended up not having them ready. Another 19 million made it to supermarkets, but the pharmacy shelves remained bare.

Deputy Health Minister Pierpaolo Sileri acknowledged the mask distribution plan had become a "mess" after three-quarters of the 12 million masks hadn't been certified.

Arcuri also promised that Italy would distribute antibody tests to labs on May 4 for a pilot project of 150,000 people. Testing still hasn't begun. Further delays are expected as health authorities contact the 150,000 people identified as potential subjects, selected for their demographic and geographic distribution. They then must agree and schedule the appointment.

Arcuri insisted his team has "done our part" by selecting the type of test and said delays were due to review by the government's privacy guarantor.

He also said another 5 million virus test kits were being distributed to Italian regional health authorities to help boost capacity and isolate new possible clusters.

Italy was stymied during the outbreak by testing limitations, and ended up only testing those who went to the hospital or were showing strong symptoms. It has increased capacity and now leads Europe in per-capita testing, with more than 2.5 million tests conducted to date.

But regional officials say they can't conduct more tests because they didn't receive the extra reagent necessary to process the results.

Arcuri said reagent is running low worldwide, and he is now asking domestic makers to boost production "in the coming weeks and months."

Like other European governments, Italy has been racing to develop a contact-tracing app. But technical,

logistical and privacy concerns have stymied the launch.

Paolo De Rosa, technical chief in the ministry of innovation, told the Corriere della Sera newspaper that Italy's version was expected to be rolled out at the end of May.

Like many others in Europe, Italy's "Immuni" app will be based on a decentralized system using an Apple-Google software interface that experts say is better at preserving privacy. The apps use Bluetooth signals on cellphones to anonymously track users who come nearby, and send an alert if any users test positive.

De Rosa said testing would begin Friday, based on a preliminary version.

"We are working in your interests," Arcuri said. "We accept all criticism as long as it's constructive."

Corbet reported from Paris. AP reporters contributed from across Europe.

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AP Exclusive: CDC docs stress plans for more virus flareups

By **JASON DEAREN** and **MIKE STOBBE** Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Advice from the nation's top disease control experts on how to safely reopen businesses and institutions in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic included detailed instructive guidance and some more restrictive measures than the plan released by the White House last month. The guidance, which was shelved by Trump administration officials, also offered recommendations to help communities decide when to shut facilities down again during future flareups of COVID-19.

The Associated Press obtained a 63-page document that is more detailed than other, previously reported segments of the shelved guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It shows how the thinking of the CDC infection control experts differs from those in the White House managing the pandemic response.

The White House's "Opening Up America Again" plan that was released April 17 included some of the CDC's approach, but made clear that the onus for reopening decisions was solely on state governors and local officials.

By contrast, the organizational tool created by the CDC advocates for a coordinated national response to give community leaders step-by-step instructions to "help Americans re-enter civic life," with the idea that there would be resurgences of the virus and lots of customization needed. The White House said last week that the document was a draft and not ready for release.

It contains the kinds of specifics that officials need to make informed decisions, some experts said.

"The White House is pushing for reopening but the truth of the matter is the White House has just not had a comprehensive plan where all the pieces fit. They're doing it piecemeal," said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

Such detailed advice should have been available much earlier, said Stephen Morse, a Columbia University expert on the spread of diseases.

"Many different places are considering how to safely develop return-to-work procedures. Having more guidance on that earlier on might have been more reassuring to people. And it might have prevented some cases," Morse said.

From the start, CDC staffers working on the guidance were uncomfortable tying it specifically to reopening, and voiced their objections to the White House officials tasked with approving the guidance for release, according to a CDC official granted anonymity because they were not cleared to speak with the press.

The CDC's detailed guidance was eventually shelved by the administration April 30, according to internal government emails and CDC sources who were granted anonymity because they were not cleared to speak to the press. After The AP reported about the burying of the guidance last week, the White House asked the CDC to revive parts of it, which were sent back for approval, according to emails and interviews.

On Tuesday, CDC Director Robert Redfield testified before a U.S. Senate committee that the recommen-

dations would be released "soon." He provided no further details. Internal government emails show that Redfield had repeatedly sought White House approval for CDC's guidance, starting as early as April 10.

Both the CDC document and the White House's published plan recommend communities reopen in phases as local cases of coronavirus subside.

One of many differences, however, is advice for when communities should allow for the resumption of nonessential travel.

The shelved CDC guide advises communities to avoid all nonessential travel in phases of reopening until the last one, when cases are at the lowest levels. Even then, the CDC is cautious and advises only a "consideration" of the resumption of nonessential travel after 42 continuous days of declining cases of COVID-19.

The White House plan, by contrast, recommends that communities "minimize" travel in Phase 1, and that in Phase 2, after 28 consecutive days of decline, "Non-essential travel can resume."

As of Tuesday, CDC's web page on travel guidance during the pandemic still linked to the White House plan. The stricter guidance is not there.

Another stark difference in the final White House plan and that designed by epidemiologists at the CDC is the latter's acknowledgment that COVID-19 cases will likely surge after states reopen, and that local governments need to continuously monitor their communities closely.

The White House's final reopening plan lacks guidance on how local communities can track information beyond positive cases. But the CDC document offers thoughts on how to plan for where case increases might occur more quickly, using demographic information. The CDC says local leaders could take special notice of the number of households with limited English literacy in an area, how many people live in poverty or have no health insurance coverage, and even what it calls areas of "civic strain" caused by the virus, such as places where many workers were sick or lost wages due to shutdowns.

The White House plan offers few such specifics and instead provides broad guidance, such as "Protect the health and safety of workers in critical industries," and advises states to "protect the most vulnerable" by developing "appropriate policies."

On Tuesday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned that lifting stay-at-home orders too quickly could lead to serious consequences, both in deaths and economic hardship. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has continued to push states to act to right a free-falling economy.

The CDC's guidelines stress the dangers of states and regions going it alone in such perilous times. The agency advises a national approach, rather than a patchwork, because policies in one state will in time affect others.

"Travel patterns within and between jurisdictions will impact efforts to reduce community transmission too. Coordination across state and local jurisdictions is critical -- especially between jurisdictions with different mitigation needs," the report states.

Contact AP's Global Investigative Team at Investigative@AP.org

Cold cases get colder as coronavirus pandemic wears on

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Cold cases are getting colder. Detectives are struggling to connect with victims through thick masks, and investigators accustomed to wearing plainclothes are digging out their dusty uniforms for patrol duty as the coronavirus pandemic rages.

Police departments nationwide are grappling with changes the virus has wrought on their investigations, even as law enforcement agencies report major decreases in crime due to stay-at-home orders. Authorities say enough wrongdoing abounds to keep police busy, and detective work must still be in-person and hands-on, despite COVID-19. Evidence has to be collected, statements must be taken in person and death notifications need to be made face-to-face.

"You put on gloves and you put on masks and you've still got to go out there and do it," said Los Angeles

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Police Capt. Jonathan Tippet, head of the elite Robbery-Homicide Division.

Police around the country have to put some investigations on hold as they detail detectives to help out with social distance patrols, or cover for their colleagues out sick with COVID-19.

It's worrisome to former New York Police Department Sgt. Joe Giacalone, who is concerned about criminals across the country who will go undetected in the meantime.

"That becomes a bigger problem down the road," Giacalone, a former cold case detective now a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. "Investigators prevent further victimization by getting these guys off the streets."

Despite fewer detectives in bureaus, police are finding workarounds and high-profile cases are still getting the necessary attention. The Los Angeles district attorney filed an additional sexual assault charge against disgraced film mogul Harvey Weinstein in April, and investigators in New York continue to delve into an unsolved Long Island serial killer case after they revealed new evidence earlier this year.

In some cases, like cyber or financial crime, interviews can be transitioned to the phone to preserve social distancing. But others, such as sexual abuse, in-person interviews are a necessity.

For traumatized children who need to be comforted, Los Angeles County sheriff's detectives give "air hugs" and teach the kids phrases like "I love you" in sign language to overcome the impersonal nature of masks and social distancing.

"They'll do anything they can to make these kids and these victims feel safe," said Carlos Marquez, a detective division commander in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Detectives elsewhere have been forced to investigate crimes that are outside their normal specialties. In the hardest-hit part of New Jersey, investigators in the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office have been moved out of their individual squads — such as narcotics or sex crimes — into "one big detective bureau."

That bureau is now made up of three mixed 35-person platoons, which work from home part of the time. The goal is to avoid an entire specialty squad contracting — or spreading — the virus and leaving the office without an important skill set.

"We can't have the homicide squad coming in and out of the building left and right, infecting people," Chief of Detectives Robert Anzilotti said.

The Bergen detectives are trying to limit extra work that would require bringing more people into headquarters. If a crime is caught on video, there's less of a need to have a specialist analyze the perpetrator's cellphone in a digital forensic lab as an additional step, Anzilotti said.

"We're being more than thorough enough to make sure we sustain a conviction," he said. "If the phone needs to get dumped, it's getting dumped."

The coronavirus may also be indirectly responsible for more overdose deaths, investigators say.

One of the main supply chains for the chemicals to make methamphetamine and fentanyl is in Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the global outbreak. As a result, police in Suffolk County, New York, believe suppliers are cutting narcotics with agents like fentanyl to make their inventory last longer, according to Gerard Gigante, chief of detectives for the Suffolk County police.

The county's nonfatal suspected opioid overdoses spiked 69% between March 15 and April 12, as compared to the same time last year.

In Arkansas, which does not have a stay-at-home order, Cleburne County Sheriff Chris Brown said his deputies are not responding to lower-level crimes such as theft and property damage. Instead, they're doing interviews over the phone and asking the victims to document the incident.

"Email me the pictures and we'll take a report for you," he's instructed his deputies to tell residents.

His office is still executing a couple of search warrants a week and conducting raids on suspected drug dealers' homes — the county's drug of choice is methamphetamine — but deputies are working with Cleburne health officials to make sure a target's house has not been exposed to the virus.

"If the drug dealers haven't slowed down," he said, "we feel like we can't let them run rampant."

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

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at nonvirus stories in the news:

1. SPOTLIGHT ON CITY'S RACE LEGACY People who live in the small Georgia city where Ahmaud Arbery was slain say despite racial inequality, Brunswick is not the monstrous place it might appear.
2. PRESIDENT SEEKS TO CHANGE NARRATIVE WITH FLYNN CASE The Justice Department's move to dismiss the criminal case against the former national security adviser is spurring Donald Trump and his allies to reframe the Russia investigation as a "deep state" plot.
3. WHERE BIDEN NEEDS TO MAKE INROADS The presumptive Democratic nominee is viewed with skepticism among some Latinos for his ties to deportation policies during the Obama administration.
4. 'FAITHLESS ELECTORS' COME BEFORE SUPREME COURT Justices will take up the issue of whether presidential electors are bound to support the popular-vote winner in their state or can opt for someone else.
5. ATHLETIC FACILITY RETIRES 'MAMBA' NICKNAME The California sports academy previously co-owned by Kobe Bryant rebrands itself nearly four months after the basketball icon's death in a helicopter crash.

Fore! English golf courses reopen in modest lockdown easing

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The sound of a crisply struck golf ball could be heard in England for the first time in nearly two months as courses reopened Wednesday as part of some modest easing of coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

People in England are allowed to exercise more than once a day and with one person from outside their household, provided they remain two meters (around 6.5 feet) apart. Golf courses, outdoor tennis and basketball courts can reopen, and swimming is once again allowed in lakes, rivers and the sea. And those who want to go fishing can do so, too.

As well as the easing of some sporting restrictions, stores selling gardening supplies can reopen, while potential house buyers or renters can once again visit properties in person. And those people who can't work from home, such as those in construction and manufacturing, are being encouraged to return to their place of work if they can do so safely.

The lifting of some restrictions, first announced by U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday, applies only in England. The semi-autonomous governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are going more slowly and sticking with the "Stay Home" message.

The four parts of the U.K. have moved as one during the lockdown, which has been in place since March 23, but are starting to take different approaches during the easing phase.

Johnson justified the modest easing on the grounds that Britain has passed the peak of the outbreak. Over a seven-day rolling average, the U.K.'s daily death toll has fallen over the past month. The U.K. has officially recorded the most coronavirus-related deaths in Europe, more than 32,000, a toll second only to the United States.

Critics of the U.K. government say the changes to the lockdown, spelled out in a 50-page document, are confusing and potentially dangerous — especially when it comes to returning to work. The government says people should try to return to workplaces if they can't work from home, but should avoid using public transit if possible.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the government would have to take steps if too many people packed onto buses and subways.

"We are asking people to be very sensible and not flood back to public transport," he told Sky News. "Even with all the trains and buses back to running when they are, there will not be enough space."

London's Waterloo Station appeared to remain quiet during rush-hour on Wednesday morning, with only around 20 people on the main concourse at any one time.

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The changes in the guidelines have also caused some confusion beyond work-related issues, as people can't visit their relatives or friends at their homes while still being able to put in a bid to buy a home.

Fines for those who break the rules have been increased as part of a carrot-and-stick approach designed to ensure that people operate within the guidelines.

National Police Chiefs' Council chairman Martin Hewitt said officers would "continue to use common sense and discretion" in policing the new rules.

"The efforts of the public mean police officers have rarely had to enforce the government regulations so far," he said. "I am confident the vast majority will continue to do their bit and follow guidance in this next stage."

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UK on course for 'significant' recession after March slump

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. government warned Wednesday of a "significant" recession after official figures showed the economy shrank 2% in the first quarter of the year even though it included just one week of the coronavirus lockdown.

The Office of National Statistics found that the slump was getting deeper as the quarter came to an end, with output down by 5.8% in March alone, the month when curbs on everyday life started being put in place by the British government. Prime Minister Boris Johnson put the U.K. into full lockdown on March 23, days after closing pubs and restaurants and schools.

The March figure illustrates the scale of the coronavirus slump to come, with the Bank of England, for example, warning of the biggest annual slump since 1706.

"With the arrival of the pandemic, nearly every aspect of the economy was hit in March, dragging growth to a record monthly fall," said statistician Jonathan Athow.

During March, the only sectors that did grow reflected the needs of a country dealing with a pandemic - IT support, soaps and cleaning products, and the manufacture of pharmaceuticals.

The quarterly decline is the biggest recorded since the fourth quarter of 2008 at the height of the global financial crisis. Since 1955, when equivalent records began, there have only been four quarters worse.

Like others, the British economy is set for a recession of unprecedented proportions, with many economists predicting that the second quarter could see economic output shrink by a quarter, or even more.

Last week, the Bank of England warned that the British economy could fall by around 30% in the first half of the year, before a strong recovery in the second half of the year, leaving it 14% smaller by the end of 2020. Still, even with that predicted second-half recovery, the annual fall would be the biggest in over 300 years.

Much of the British economy has been mothballed over the past couple of months, with many sectors unlikely to open again for months.

In addition to the 2 million estimated to be unemployed, around 7.5 million people have become economically inactive since the lockdown via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which sees the government pay up to 80% of the salaries of workers retained, up to 2,500 pounds (\$3,075) a month. On Tuesday, the Treasury chief Rishi Sunak extended the scheme for a further four months until October though suggested that firms will have to start paying a share.

Sunak told the BBC after the release of Wednesday's figures that it is "very likely" the country will face a "significant" recession.

The government is hoping that it can reopen large parts of the economy as soon as possible in order to limit the scale of the slump. The depth of the recession — and the subsequent recovery — will depend on how long the lockdown measures remain in place.

Some of the lockdown measures are being relaxed in England on Wednesday, with those workers who

are unable to work from home, such as those in construction and manufacturing, encouraged to return to work. And a number of recreational sports, such as golf and tennis clubs, can reopen. In all cases, social distancing rules have to be observed.

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

India's financial center strains from virus amid rescue plan

By EMILY SCHMALL and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — As Indians await details of a huge coronavirus relief package Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced to jump-start the economy, the virus outbreak in the financial capital of Mumbai and elsewhere in Maharashtra state is starting to overwhelm hospitals and slums, complicating any economic recovery plan.

About a third of India's 71,865 confirmed virus cases, and nearly 40% of its 2,415 deaths, have been reported in Maharashtra, the coastal state in the center of the country that is home to Bollywood, a huge agriculture industry and India's largest stock market. The Sensex has sunk about 25% from its year-to-date high in January.

Health experts have praised Modi's government for enforcing a stringent weeks-long lockdown that has helped the nation of 1.3 billion so far avoid the kind of catastrophic rates of illness and death that have beset the United States, Britain and elsewhere. But as India's lockdown restrictions are eased, whether the country can steer its economy back on track will largely depend on how Maharashtra rebounds, experts say.

"It's a huge impact," Gurcharan Das, the former head of Procter & Gamble in India, said of the state. "I think the default position should be to open, and you only lock down by exception, because eventually I fear that the cost of the lockdown will be far greater in lives even than the disease."

India's lockdown, imposed March 25, is set to at least partially end May 18. Some restrictions on manufacturing, agriculture and self-employment were lifted May 4 to ease the burden on the poor and informal sector workers who comprise the majority of India's workforce.

Indian Railways also partially reopened to run special trains carrying migrant workers stranded in the lockdown who fled India's big cities, including Mumbai, for their village homes. At least some of the passengers carried the coronavirus with them, infection spikes in the states of Bihar and Orisha corresponding with their arrival show.

In a live address Tuesday night, Modi said the government would spend more than \$260 billion to revive the economy.

At the same time, places like Maharashtra are showing signs of distress.

The state government has ordered all private hospital doctors to spend at least 15 days treating COVID-19 patients at public hospitals, where infection rates among health care workers are growing. The government also released half of its inmate population amid outbreaks in prisons. And health officials are struggling to contain the spread of the virus in Mumbai, one of the world's most densely populated cities.

Anushaa Vijay, 31, an architect in Mumbai, said the pandemic has had a transformative effect.

"The virus has bought the liveliest city I know of to a standstill," she said.

But the narrow lanes of Dharavi, one of Asia's biggest slums, are still crowded. Prashant Pawar's neighbor, Mukund Patil, a 58-year-old diabetic street food vendor, developed a mild fever earlier this month. Two days later, he tested positive for the virus. Pawar tested negative.

Pawar accompanied Patil in the ambulance to Lokmanya Tilak Municipal General Hospital. By the time doctors could attend to him, Patil was dead.

The scenes inside the hospital left Pawar distressed.

"Its indoors were full of people. Very few people were wearing masks," Pawar said, adding that "at times I saw more than one patient being rested on a single bed."

The hospital, where many of the hundreds of COVID-19 patients from Dharavi have been treated, has

been under scrutiny since a video emerged showing four bodies shrouded in black plastic lying next to virus patients.

A member of the hospital staff, Dr. Avinash Saknure, said health facilities were "overstretched." "We are doing our best with what we have," he said.

Italy's South Tyrol invokes autonomy to pry open lockdown

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

BOLZANO, Italy (AP) — The blazing orange letters of fire spelled out a familiar message in Italy's South Tyrol province, an old call to resistance repurposed for the days of the coronavirus: "Los von Rom" and "Freiheit," German for "Away from Rome" and "Freedom."

In decades past, the words ignited on a mountainside demanded independence from Rome's rule for the province's German-language majority. Now, they vent discontent in South Tyrol, which was once part of Austria, with the uncompromising and indiscriminate lockdown that the Italian government imposed to slow the spread of the virus.

Spurred by economic pressure, the provincial governor defied Rome this week and reasserted South Tyrol's cherished autonomy, allowing restaurants, hair salons, tattoo parlors and museums to reopen Monday -- well ahead of the timetable set by Italy's government.

"We have a relatively positive situation regarding the epidemic, with a rate of contagion the lowest in Italy," said Gov. Arno Kompatscher, whose South Tyrolean People's Party has controlled the province since 1948. The party's legislators in the national parliament back Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte's government.

"We appreciated the actions of the government in the phase of emergency, where it was necessary to move in a united way," Kompatscher said. "But we are very proud and jealous of our autonomy."

While the rest of Italy watched with a mix of envy and curiosity, South Tyroleans wearing masks could browse shops again for items such as a tablecloth needed for a gift, have piercings changed by appointment and visit a hairdresser for a long-overdue haircut.

They sat in Walther Square, near Bolzano's Duomo, and ate lunch at the prescribed 2-meter (over 6 foot) distance or drank coffee in bars outfitted with Plexiglas safety screens.

Despite the province's bold stance, some business owners demurred to Rome -- for now.

Alexander Sullmann, a bar owner in the town of Neumarkt, known in Italian as Egna, said he was waiting at least a week to see if clearer safety guidelines for his industry emerge. He was particularly worried about how to enforce rules that forbid more than two people from different households at a single table.

"The province gave us the OK, but there are a lot of questions and a lot of rules are not set in stone yet," Sullmann, 30, said,

South Tyrol, or Alto Adige to Italian speakers, is an Alpine province of world-class ski resorts and neatly manicured orchards and vineyards that became part of Italy after World War I. Following a period of violence in the 1950s and 1960s, the German-speaking resistance settled down after Italy implemented the province's autonomy status, enshrining bilingualism and allowing 90% of local tax revenue to remain in South Tyrol.

The province, with a population of 520,000, today enjoys the highest gross domestic product per capita in Italy and among the highest in Europe at 42,600 euros (\$45,500). But the pandemic is forecast to contract the economy by 7%-11%, and many see the extended shutdown of commercial and social life as decisive.

The head of the region's 59,000-member chamber of commerce, Michl Ebner, backed the push for South Tyrol to go its own way on emerging from the virus lockdown.

"I understand the concept of solidarity," Ebner said. "But you cannot apply the same rules from Lampedusa to the Brenner Pass. The situations are different."

South Tyrol reported no new confirmed virus cases on Tuesday. The province so far has 2,572 confirmed cases with 290 deaths — both figures representing about 1% of Italy's totals.

Ebner pointed to a lack of discipline in Italy's hard-hit Lombardy region during the early stage of an initial lockdown, when cellphone data showed about half of residents leaving their homes.

In South Tyrol, "when the order was given not to leave home, people didn't leave their homes," he said. "If here the numbers are improving ... need to take note and award the virtuous."

Until the flaming words that appeared recently against the night sky, it had been years since fires protesting Rome's governance burned on local mountainsides.

The leader of the 6,000-strong "Schuetzen," a cultural association that aims to preserve Tyrolean customs and which sees Rome as a foreign power -- took credit for igniting the flames. Juergen Wirth Anderlan thinks the "peaceful message" made Kampatscher's push to open businesses easier to sell to Rome's minister for regional affairs.

"He could say, 'I don't have my people under control, there is something bubbling up there,'" Wirth Anderlan told the AP. "What the economic federations and tourism federations told the provincial president was probably heavier and carried more pressure than from us. We underscored that with these fires."

Wirth Anderlan said he rejects the violence of past secession moves -- although he wants to see South Tyrol become either independent or annexed by Austria. Neither position is on the mainstream provincial political agenda.

South Tyrol's governor said the best way to deal with such separatist sentiment is with strong management of the region's autonomy -- which he believes itself can be an asset to Italy.

"Alto Adige is a little Europe within Europe that is part of the Italian state, where multiple ethnic groups, cultures and languages co-exist, and which can act as a bridge between northern and southern Europe," Kompatscher said.

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Kenyan ballet student struggles in slum with no remote class

By **DESMOND TIRO** and **KHALED KAZZIHA** Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic is forcing children to stay home and learn remotely. But in the depths of Kenya's slums, 12-year-old ballet student Eugene Ochieng faces huge obstacles to remote learning: no computer, no internet access and very little space to practice.

With his ballet studio closed, he finds open spaces in Nairobi's Kibera slum, spinning and jumping in his sneakers against a backdrop of crammed metal shacks. Half a million people live in Kibera, most with no running water. Many dream of a way to escape.

Ballet isn't just a passion. It could be a way out of poverty. Ochieng discovered the dance two years ago when teachers from the non-profit Artists for Africa visited his school and showed his class a few moves. He was instantly hooked.

But when the coronavirus started spreading in Kenya the government closed all schools, including dance studios.

So Ochieng had to overcome his stage fright and find open spaces in the slum where he could practice.

But that's hardly the only challenge the virus has posed. Restrictions on movement have put millions of people out of work, including Ochieng's father, a mason, and his mother, a tailor.

"Ever since the first case of COVID-19 was announced, my father has not gone to work and there is no food," the boy said.

His mother, 38-year-old Gladys Akinyi, has encouraged his ballet dream, but now she has more pressing concerns: How to provide for five children with no regular income. "Even though I want the best for him, I just can't afford private dance classes," she said.

Her son is undeterred. He recently seized the chance to visit a Dance Centre Kenya studio in Nairobi's upmarket neighborhood of Karen, where he collected a donated pair of hand-me-down ballet shoes.

Normally, more than 500 dancers train at Dance Centre Kenya's network of studios in Nairobi, and the school works with Artists for Africa to support talented dancers from low-income families. The non-profit also sponsors a handful of scholarship students who live in a nearby boarding house so they can attend

daily classes.

When Ochieng arrived at the studio, only the scholarship students and artistic director Cooper Rust were there. Classes are now being taught remotely via videoconferencing. While there, Ochieng took the rare opportunity to join a class while Rust watched and advised the young dancers.

For Ochieng, it was a soul-lifting experience after weeks of hardship and uncertainty.

"The more privileged students ... are able to do classes virtually online with us and we are still connecting with them," Rust said.

"But with the underprivileged students in the slums like Kibera, they have a much harder time getting to those virtual classes and not a lot of computers, even if they had internet access. So not only are they missing the training, but they are also missing the personal interaction with their teachers and probably even more importantly than that, they are missing the opportunity to be able to express themselves through their favorite art."

In spite of the challenges, Ochieng does all he can to keep up his training.

"My mother is my main source of encouragement," he said. "She always tells me that things will get better. This is just a passing cloud and when it is all over, my wish is to visit my grandparents and to go back to dance school to achieve my dream of becoming a dancer."

Built for a global economy, Dubai now threatened by virus

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Dubai built a city of skyscrapers and artificial archipelagos on the promise of globalization, creating itself as a vital hub for the free movement of trade, people and money worldwide — all things that have been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, with events canceled, flights grounded and investment halted, this sheikdom in the United Arab Emirates is threatened both by the virus and a growing economic crisis. Under pressure even before the outbreak, Dubai and its vast web of state-linked industries face billions of dollars in looming debt repayments.

And though it was bailed out a decade earlier, Dubai may not be able to count on another cash infusion, given the crash in global oil prices.

"They facilitate the transport and the buying of things and the movement of people," said Karen E. Young, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute who studies Gulf Arab economies. "That's not the world we're living in right now."

Dubai's dedication to global trade is memorialized in the first sentence of the first article of its 50-Year Charter, something created last year by its ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who has overseen much of the city's growth.

"Dubai is destined to be a crossroad between East and West, and between North and South," the charter says.

Prior to the pandemic, it reached that status. Dubai International Airport for years has been the world's busiest for international travel. Its vast Jebel Ali Port ranks high globally for its cargo operations.

That economic diversity stems from the classic retelling of Dubai's story. After discovering oil reserves, but none nowhere as large as those in neighboring Abu Dhabi, then-ruler Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum warned it would be a finite resource to the city-state.

To protect against that, Dubai became a company town. The state-owned long-haul carrier Emirates flies in foreign workers and tourists alike, who buy alcohol from state-owned duty-free shops, live in housing largely built by state-linked developers and hold credit cards from state-backed banks.

The wider nexus webs out into something U.S. diplomats have called "Dubai Inc." Much of it worked, up until the pandemic.

"The aggregate of all those crises we faced in the past doesn't equal this one," said Tim Clark, president of Emirates airline, on an April 29 conference call.

For Emirates, it must wait until countries open up before filling its flights. Even then, how will airlines

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handle it when a sneeze “goes 25 feet down the cabin” or if governments enforce social distancing and require empty seats, Clark asked.

“The airline industry cannot afford to have large numbers of its seats idle,” he said. “It would be absolute economic catastrophe, worse than the current situation.”

Then there were the problems Dubai faced before the crisis. The value of Dubai’s real-estate market had already dropped 30% since 2014, when it announced it would host the Expo 2020 world’s fair. That event, on which Dubai already has spent billions, has been postponed to 2021.

U.S. tariffs on aluminum tore away 10.5% of Dubai’s exports of the metal to America. President Donald Trump’s trade war with China threatened Dubai’s shipping, as the government says some 60% of China’s exports pass through the city’s free zones to Africa and Europe.

The pandemic has simply thrown into relief how much Dubai, like the rest of the UAE, relies on global trade. Asked about the pandemic’s effect during a teleconference for the Beirut Institute, Anwar Gargash, the Emirati minister of state for foreign affairs, acknowledged: “There will be questions about globalization.”

Meanwhile, Dubai faces looming debt payments that stem from its 2009 financial crisis. By the end of this year alone, Dubai and its government-linked firms face \$9.2 billion of debt coming due, with a massive \$30.6 billion bill coming by 2023, according to London-based Capital Economics.

“Worryingly, given its own large debts, Dubai’s government is not in a strong position to provide support” to indebted firms, wrote James Swanston, an economist at Capital Economics.

The government’s Dubai Media Office did not respond to questions from The Associated Press over the upcoming debt obligations. However, officials like former Dubai finance director Nasser al-Shaikh have sought to describe the city-state’s sovereign debt as separate from those of state-linked firms, a distinction authorities also sought to make in the 2009 crisis.

But in 2009, Abu Dhabi ultimately needed to step in with a \$10 billion bailout and the Central Bank offered another \$10 billion as creditors panicked over such state-linked firms failing. Dubai at this time also changed the name of the under-construction world’s tallest building from Burj Dubai to Burj Khalifa, after Abu Dhabi ruler and UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Abu Dhabi has the reserves to easily bail out Dubai again, but may worry about encouraging reckless investments. Oil prices, the bedrock of Abu Dhabi’s economy, also have dropped dramatically in the pandemic. The cost now of credit default swaps on Dubai’s debt — a form of insurance that promises investors payouts in case of a default — already have spiked by 200% from late February, according to data firm Refinitiv.

But Dubai has faced global economic crises before, perhaps the most serious coming in the grips of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Pearls had been the region’s most-important export for some 70 years, but the financial crisis and artificial replicas crashed the prices of the one commodity local freedivers risked their lives to claw out of clams.

Seeing an opportunity in its location, Dubai soon began re-exporting tax-free gold into India — or profiting from the precious metal being smuggled, as Indian officials described it for decades. That re-exporting business lives on in the economic free zones across Dubai today.

“I do think they they will pivot again,” Young said. “They will find a new way.”

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP.

Exhaustion, uncertainty mark coronavirus survivors’ journeys

By **LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer**

An angelic voice singing “Hallelujah” echoes off the stately stone and brick canyons of a narrow Montmartre street.

Still struggling with COVID-19 complications two months after falling ill, Parisian soprano Veronica Antonelli wanted the impromptu performance from her third-floor balcony to project hope. Hours earlier, her doctor had delivered troubling news: The lung scarring that sometimes makes her too tired to sing may

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last for months. Or maybe years.

"It makes things a bit complicated, given my profession," Antonelli said sadly.

The virus that has sickened over 4 million people around the world and killed more than 280,000 others is so new that patients face considerable uncertainty about what they can expect in recovery and beyond.

"The short answer is that we're still learning," said Dr. Jay Varkey, an infectious disease specialist at Emory University in Atlanta. "What we know has been gathered mostly by anecdotal reports from COVID-19 survivors."

In support groups created on social media sites, survivors post head-to-toe complaints that read like a medical encyclopedia: anxiety, heart palpitations, muscle aches, bluish toes. It's hard to know which ones are clearly related to the virus, but the accounts help fuel doctors' increasing belief that COVID-19 is not just a respiratory disease.

Persistent exhaustion is a common theme, but every survivor's story is different, said Brandy Swayze, a coronavirus sufferer who created a Facebook survivors group after developing pneumonia. She was hospitalized in late March and early April. Her fatigue comes and goes. Insomnia is another concern.

"We're just people who have more questions than anybody else about this thing because we're going through it," said Swayze, 43, of Cabin John, Maryland.

On top of her lung damage and fatigue, Antonelli has issues with her memory and a diminished sense of taste and smell -- a common early symptom that lingers for many, which doctors say stems from the virus attacking nerves.

Two-thirds of patients in a study in Italy had a loss of smell and taste. Some reports suggest these problems last only a few weeks, but it's been almost two months for Antonelli. She said that when she asked a voice specialist when she would be able to smell again, his answer was "We know nothing. We just have to be patient. We have no solution."

Antonelli, 45, needs her stamina back to resume her offbeat career — singing opera a capella at outdoor monuments and historic sites, a profession she chose because she likes how natural environments shape her voice.

Stuck at home, she sings at her balcony when she can to bring happiness and thank health workers, grocers and others for their service during the pandemic. Some days, though, she's simply too tired to leave her bed.

In Wuhan, China, where COVID-19 emerged in December, physicians first considered it a type of pneumonia. But they came to realize "this virus is so smart. It just attacked everywhere in the body," Dr. Xin Zheng of Wuhan Union Hospital said in a livestreamed webinar this month.

Lungs, hearts, kidneys, even the brain can be affected. Some hospitalized patients develop blood clots, while others have elevated enzymes suggesting liver abnormalities.

"That's a very unique characteristic of it," said Dr. Thomas McGinn of Northwell Health hospitals in New York. He co-authored the largest U.S. study of hospitalized COVID-19 patients, and a follow-up is planned to see how they're faring in recovery.

Alex Melo, a retired marine from York, Maine, became critically ill with COVID-19 last month. He spent a few days on a ventilator for pneumonia, but also developed blood clots that threatened his heart and lungs. After two weeks in the hospital, he was sent home on blood thinners he must take for at least a few months.

The drugs make him prone to bleeding, and he worries how that will affect his work as a survival instructor for a Department of Defense contractor. But he's not ready for that work anyway. After two weeks at home, his lungs are still recovering and he can't run without getting winded.

"I need to take this slow," Melo said.

Reports from China suggest those with mild infections recover two to three weeks after first showing symptoms. For those with more serious infections, recovery may take six weeks, said Varkey, the infectious disease specialist.

But recovery may take much longer for those with the most severe infections, including patients who

spent time in intensive care on ventilators or dialysis.

Wuhan doctors have reported heart problems in a small portion of hospitalized patients, including inflammation of the heart muscle and irregular heartbeats, both of which can increase risks for heart failure, Varkey noted.

Many of the problems may be caused by the virus itself, a hyperactive immune response to the virus, the treatment involved or a combination of all three, he said.

Some survivors who had long stays in intensive care may require oxygen therapy or dialysis at home. Some may develop a condition called post-intensive care syndrome, which can include persistent muscle weakness, fatigue, attention and memory problems and anxiety. The condition has been seen in COVID-19 survivors who were put on ventilators, but it can happen after any critical illness and may be related to treatment, including sedation and prolonged bed rest.

Considering that most COVID-19 patients on ventilators don't survive, western Illinois truck driver Scott Dobbels is making a remarkable recovery.

Dobbels spent 17 days in the hospital, eight of them on a ventilator. He returned to his home in Silvis on April 20 weighing 20 pounds less and pushing a metal walker. The next day, he went just to check things out at the lumber yard where he works and returned exhausted.

"It put me back in bed for three days. Too much, too soon," he said.

At first, just brushing his teeth was an effort. After several sessions with a physical therapist, he's regaining muscle and strength. And to exercise his damaged lungs, he blows into a special inhaler several times a day.

Dobbels says he feels great, despite lingering muscle pain and some weakness, and plans to return to work May 13.

He also has lingering questions about why his case was so severe when his wife, Elizabeth, became infected but experienced only mild symptoms.

"Why me?" he said. "Why did I get it, why did I almost die, when others weren't as severely affected?"

Associated Press journalist Federica Narancio contributed to this report from Maryland.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner on Twitter: @LindseyTanner

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

Wear a mask? Even with 20,000 dead, some New Yorkers don't

By JAKE SEINER and TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Eric Leventhal felt a sneeze coming and panicked.

The Brooklynite left his cloth face mask at home for a morning run in a park last week. Walking home, he turned toward an empty street and let the sneeze out, hoping no one would notice.

Too bad for him, there's no hiding without a mask in virus-stricken New York City.

"I picked my head up and I caught eyes with a woman who was wearing a mask, an older woman," Leventhal recalled recently. "She was just kind of shaking her head."

Leventhal, 36, is caught in the middle of a debate over when and where, exactly, it is necessary to wear a mask in a city where COVID-19 has now claimed more than 20,000 lives.

Since April 17, everyone in New York state has been required to wear a face covering in any place where they can't stay at least 6 feet from people who don't live with them. Only children younger than 2 and people with a medical excuse are exempt.

Similar rules are in place in New Jersey and Connecticut, and were recently put in place in Massachusetts. The British government told people to start covering their mouth and nose in shops, buses and subway trains just this week.

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Yet, while the rule is clear, New Yorkers have adopted their own interpretation of when masks are required. It isn't unusual to see groups of park goers and essential workers — even police officers — leaving their masks dangling as they squeeze past people on sidewalks or chat with friends. They are perhaps most rarely used among people trying to exercise.

"Everything is fraught with life and death consequences, and it's just hard to grapple with that at any one moment," said Leventhal, the runner. "That's a long way of saying, I should be wearing one, probably, but it's difficult when you run, so I don't."

As warmer weather beckons people outside, more chances emerge for confrontations between mask believers and mask doubters.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who says people are fine not wearing a mask if they are out walking alone, but need to put one on if someone approaches, on Tuesday described confronting a maskless man he encountered while walking his dog.

"We were in a little bit of a disagreement and the situation, the conversation got a little tense. So I stopped the conversation," Cuomo said.

Elissa Stein, a 55-year old activist and graphic designer living in Manhattan, went as far to make T-shirts with a more profane version of the message "Wear Your Mask." Stein gets stares when she wears the shirt, but she said it's worth it given the stakes.

"It shouldn't be something that you take lightly," she said. "This is not a joke."

There are no fines, under the state rule, for not wearing a mask. Mayor Bill de Blasio has said he favors education over enforcement, pledging to distribute 7.5 million masks to the public.

There have been mixed messages from other politicians.

President Donald Trump has eschewed wearing a mask in public, though on Monday, the White House ordered anyone visiting the West Wing to wear one after some staff were infected with the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises using face coverings because they could help prevent people who have virus, but don't know it, from transmitting it to others.

The personal politics of masks caught up to Norm Scott, 63, of Brooklyn, when he got heat on one website for saying studies show the risk of the virus spreading outdoors, compared to indoors, is minimal. Scott said he merely wanted to bring perspective to the situation.

"I'm not telling people to not wear a mask," said Scott, who says he too wears one in public. But, he added, "posting on a public forums about how runners or millennials are going to infect us is ridiculous. ... I believe in social responsibility. I don't believe in social shaming."

The scenes in New York City's parks as the weather warmed up demonstrate the varying mores about covering faces in public. Among bikers and runners out one recent morning, some wore masks, some had face coverings pulled down around their necks and some — including a man running past a sign imploring park-goers to wear masks — were entirely maskless.

At a popular cupcake shop in Chelsea near the Manhattan park, a "mask required" sign on the window gave those standing in line an incentive to follow the rules — no mask, no cupcake.

In Brooklyn, Dovid Shlomo Halevi Kurtz, 69, said he doesn't feel any guilt about being barefaced. He is confident in God's plan. Also, the mask fogs up his glasses.

"I can't breathe and then I can't see, what good is that?" Kurtz said after finishing a walk in Prospect Park with gloves on, but no mask. "Should I wear it? No. I don't have (COVID-19), I'm not giving it to anybody and I'm not getting it."

Besides, he said, "It's like a car accident, God forbid, or a lightning bolt. If God wants you to have it, you'll have it. If God doesn't want you to have it, you won't have it."

Actor Jon Michael Hill, 35, had a different approach as he ran in Manhattan wearing a mask. Health concerns aside, covering his face sends a message.

"Symbolically," he said, "it's about respect."

Cuomo had a similar message for the barefaced man he encountered on his recent walk.

Masks, he said, say "I respect you. I respect your health" to the people around you.

"This mask says, 'I respect the nurses and the doctors who killed themselves through this virus to save

other people," he said. "This mask says, 'I respect the essential workers who get up every day and drive the bus, or drive the train, or deliver the food, or keep the lights on so I can stay home and I can stay safe.' And that is a statement that we should all be willing to make any day, but especially in the middle of this."

Ahmaud Arbery case puts spotlight on community's race legacy

By **RUSS BYNUM** and **AARON MORRISON** Associated Press

The people who call Brunswick, Georgia, home say it's not the monstrous place it might appear to be in the wake of the slaying of Ahmaud Arbery after a pursuit by two armed white men.

Yes, it is one of Georgia's poorest cities where much of the black working population has struggled to find opportunities for advancement and where one black resident says he walks on tip toes to avoid racist insults.

But it's also a city with a black mayor and one where longtime residents say black and white people — all the way back to the civil rights movement — have long worked together to solve thorny questions about racial equality.

Now, Arbery's slaying as well as the subsequent investigation criticized for being too slow have put Brunswick in the national spotlight and raised questions about whether recent events reflect something rotten in the coastal city's culture.

On the contrary, residents say, Brunswick has often stood out for its ability to work through troubled times peacefully, though it is far from perfect.

"I don't think a few bad white people have defined this whole community," Mayor Cornell Harvey told The Associated Press. "I'm sure there are people who have hidden feelings about race, on an individual level. But I've seen this community come together."

Arbery was killed Feb. 23 in a subdivision called Satilla Shores that is just outside the city limits but considered part of the broader Brunswick community. A white father and son told police they pursued him in their truck because they suspected him of being a burglar. An autopsy showed Arbery was killed by three shotgun blasts, and cellphone video of the shooting led to a national outcry when it hit the internet last week — both for the grisliness of the footage but also because the men had not been arrested, two months after the killing.

Gregory McMichael, 64, and Travis McMichael, 34 were charged with felony murder and aggravated assault soon after the video leaked.

There have been allegations that race played a role in delaying the arrests, and the state's attorney general announced an investigation Tuesday into how the case was initially handled, a day after he appointed the third outside prosecutor — an Atlanta-area district attorney who is black — to take over.

Brunswick, with a population of more than 16,000 residents, is more than half black. Surrounding Glynn County is more reflective of the state's racial makeup: It has more than five times as many people as Brunswick and is 63% white, 27% black and 7% Hispanic.

The Rev. John Perry III, president of the Brunswick branch of the NAACP, moved to the city 13 years ago, and was "pleasantly surprised that the people here have a great heart," he said.

But he remains concerned by socioeconomic inequality in the city. Much of Brunswick's black workforce is blue collar, he said, and many lack opportunities to move up the ladder. A recent review of median annual household income data by 24/7 Wall St. found Brunswick was Georgia's poorest city. The city has a 39% poverty rate, compared to 16.9% in the state overall.

"It's not that we don't have a black base that has gone out and educated themselves," Perry said. "Too many people have been overlooked for better opportunities."

Still, he does not think the problem is one of "racial hatred." Instead, he points to the fact that people in power tend to help people they know, and often the people in power are white.

But Ryan Marshall, a 27-year-old black man who has lived in the Brunswick area since he was a young boy, says he has experienced more direct prejudice: His co-workers have called him a racist slur "if I don't do exactly what I'm supposed to do."

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"The difference between me and Ahmaud is I live a life where I take tippy-toe steps to avoid things," such as the violent confrontation in which Arbery died, said Marshall, who was among hundreds attending a protest Friday outside the Glynn County courthouse. "I shouldn't have to live in fear."

Also at the protest was 82-year-old Robert Griffin, who moved to Brunswick in 1961 as the all-black high school's band director. Almost everything at the time was segregated, so Griffin joined the local NAACP to work toward integration.

It wasn't always easy. Griffin remembered a city official who had the public swimming pool filled with dirt rather than allowing white and black people to swim together. But the organization worked with white residents, and many places were integrated without protest or confrontation.

"We desegregated this whole county without bloodshed," Griffin said, while nearby cities had "fighting in the streets."

Even in the wake of Arbery's killing, Griffin insisted there's more unity than racial unrest in Brunswick.

"I saw a bunch of angry folks, blacks and whites" at Friday's protest, he said. "We've always had that kind of support in this community."

Johnny Cason, a 76-year-old lifelong Brunswick resident who is a city commissioner, agreed.

"This thing has broken my heart, and it's so wrong," said Cason, who is white. "But this is a great place, and the world needs to know about it."

Roxane George noted that some residents in the area fly the Confederate battle flag, a banner people associate with both racism and pride in southern heritage. But she also pointed to a recent anti-racism training she co-facilitated at the city's Robert S. Abbott Race Unity Institute.

"People in this community overwhelmingly stand ready to do what they think is needed to address" racism, said George, who is white. Ahmaud's killing "is not just an issue that people here say is one for the black community. Black, brown, white — we've all felt this was extremely hurtful."

Harvey, the mayor, agreed the city has work to do and suggested white residents could reflect on their biases: "When you see me, what do you see? What are you thinking about me?"

Bynum reported from Savannah, Georgia. Morrison reported from New York and is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/aaronlmorrison>.

Biden's VP pick isn't the biggest issue for Latino activists

By WILL WEISSERT and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden would have to do more than select a Latina running mate to win over Hispanics whose support could be crucial to winning the presidency, according to activists who are warning the presumptive Democratic nominee not to take their community for granted.

Biden is viewed with skepticism among some Latinos for his ties to deportation policies during the Obama administration. Hispanics also strongly sided with Bernie Sanders during the Democratic primary.

That presents a challenging dynamic for Biden, who is trying to build a multiracial, multigenerational coalition to take on President Donald Trump. He's promised to pick a female vice president, and many African Americans say he could lock in the black vote if he chooses a black running mate. But some Latino leaders say Biden will have to go further to win their backing.

"I'm more interested in knowing if Latinos are rooted in their campaign strategy," said Stephanie Valencia, who runs EquisLabs, a polling and data operation analyzing Latino politics.

Biden has established a committee to lead the vetting of a potential running mate that includes Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, whose family has ancestral roots in Mexico. His short list of possible candidates is believed to feature two Latinas, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto.

Neither has the national profile of two black women thought to be among the finalists, California Sen. Kamala Harris and Stacey Abrams, the former Democratic nominee for governor in Georgia. They're also less well known nationally than Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren or Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer,

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who are white.

Mayra Macías, executive director of the political advocacy group Latino Victory, said Grisham and Cortez Masto, as well as other highly qualified Hispanics, have largely been overlooked in the speculation around Biden's choice.

"For us, it was a glaring omission to not see Latinas included in the conversation from the onset," said Macías, whose group endorsed the Democratic primary's lone Hispanic candidate, former Obama administration housing chief Julián Castro, before eventually switching to Biden.

Macías said Hispanic candidates bring a cultural sensitivity and expertise that result in better mobilization of the community's voters. And that means their perspective shouldn't be ignored by Biden advisers, regardless of the running mate pick.

"It's a matter of respect for our community," Macías said.

Trump, who has recently escalated his hard-line immigration rhetoric, isn't expected to win much Latino support in November. Still, Biden needs Hispanics to turn out for him, not stay home.

"If the calculus is which vice president helps us with which community, then you have to dig deeper and farther than an approach that may land as pandering," said Lorella Praeli, the Latino outreach director for Hillary Clinton's campaign.

In 2016, Clinton considered Castro as a running mate but ultimately opted for a more traditional choice in Sen. Tim Kaine, a white man from Virginia. Domingo Garcia, head of the civil rights activist group the League of United Latin American Citizens, said beyond the vice presidential pick, Biden "has to avoid the trap that Hillary Clinton fell into."

"She just assumed everybody was against Trump and that would be enough," Garcia said, adding that Clinton "did not address her policies to stir Latino turnout and did not invest enough."

Hispanic activists say they have been speaking quietly to Biden's campaign. But those efforts have been less public than the open lobbying of some of their African American counterparts, especially amid the vice presidential search.

Some cultural hurdles may be at work.

While no voting bloc is a monolith, Hispanic Americans' wide array of backgrounds makes consensus more difficult. A Mexican American voter in Texas often has different political motivations than someone with Cuban roots in Florida or a person from Puerto Rico who now lives in Pennsylvania.

"All the issues that are important to all Americans are also important to Latinos," said Veronica Escobar, a first-term congresswoman from El Paso, on the Texas-Mexico border. During a "Todos Con Biden" virtual outreach event, she ticked off health care, jobs and the environment, as well as immigration.

That's true for African Americans, too. But House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn's endorsement in South Carolina was widely credited with mobilizing Southern black voters, triggering Biden's Democratic primary resurgence. Sanders used strong Latino support to win in places like Nevada and California — though Biden cutting into that lead with Latinos helped the former vice president in Florida and Arizona.

Still, no Hispanic leader helped secure Biden's comeback as much as Clyburn.

Biden also doesn't have the deep personal ties with the Hispanic community that he does with African Americans. His home state of Delaware is nearly a quarter black compared to about 10% Hispanic. His outrage at discrimination against African Americans in the city of Wilmington helped launch his public service career, and he frequently notes his tenure as the vice president to Barack Obama, the first black president.

More than 32 million Hispanics will be eligible to vote on Election Day — surpassing black voters as the nation's largest nonwhite bloc. But while 90% of African Americans voted Democratic in 2018, only 66% of Hispanics supported the party, according to AP VoteCast, a wide-ranging survey of voters.

Latino voters could be critical in battleground states such as Florida and Arizona. Still, African Americans and whites tend to vote in greater numbers. And black voters may prove pivotal in a broader swath of states this year ranging from Georgia and North Carolina to Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Matt Barreto, co-founder of the Democratic-aligned polling firm Latino Decisions, noted that Sanders, who like Biden is a white man in his late 70s, was able to excite Latino voters not because of his race

but because of his progressive positions. Vice presidential picks with a more populist approach could win similar support among Latinos, Barreto said.

"I wouldn't be surprised if you had someone like Abrams come out swinging on immigration, and Latinos might go 'yeah, I like that,'" Barreto said.

Riccardi reported from Denver.

GOP senators give Democrats' \$3T relief bill a cold shoulder

By LISA MASCARO and ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi unveiled a more than \$3 trillion coronavirus aid package, a sweeping effort with \$1 trillion for states and cities, "hazard pay" for essential workers and a new round of cash payments to individuals.

The House is expected to vote on the package as soon as Friday. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said there is no "urgency." The Senate will wait until after Memorial Day to consider options.

"We must think big, for the people, now," Pelosi said Tuesday from the speaker's office at the Capitol.

"Not acting is the most expensive course," she said.

Lines drawn, the latest pandemic response from Congress will test the House and Senate — and President Donald Trump — as Washington navigates the extraordinary crisis with the nation's health and economic security at stake.

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But the political peril of doing nothing during an election year could prove challenging for Congress and the White House. As states experience flareups of virus outbreaks, and more than 30 million Americans remain unemployed in the shutdown, the near-term health and economic outlook remains daunting.

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"What is it going to take for Mitch McConnell to wake up and see the American people need help, and they need it now?" Schumer said.

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"I don't think we have yet felt the urgency of acting immediately," McConnell told reporters earlier this week at the Capitol.

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At least a dozen Capitol police officers and other staff have tested positive for the virus, and at least one senator, Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, is in isolation at home after exposure from a staff member who tested positive. Other lawmakers have cycled in and out of quarantine.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Matthew Daly and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington, Nick Riccardi in Denver, Colo., and Michael Schneider in Orlando, Fla., contributed to this report.

Basement-bound Biden campaign worries some Democrats

By **BILL BARROW** and **STEVE PEOPLES** Associated Press

Joe Biden has no foreseeable plans to resume in-person campaigning amid a pandemic that is testing whether a national presidential election can be won by a candidate communicating almost entirely from home.

The virtual campaign Biden is waging from Wilmington, Delaware, is a stark contrast with President Donald Trump, who is planning travel despite warnings from public health experts about the coronavirus's spread. It also intensifies the spotlight on how Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, will manage his campaign, with some in his party fretting that his still-developing approach isn't reaching enough voters.

For now, Biden and his aides are brushing back hand-wringing from Democrats and mockery from Republicans who argue that the 77-year-old is "hiding in his basement."

"Voters don't give a s--- about where he's filming from," campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon told The Associated Press. "What they care about is what he's saying and how we connect with them."

Biden was more diplomatic in assessing the situation on Tuesday.

"The idea that somehow we are being hurt by my keeping to the rules and following the instructions that (have) been put forward by doctors is absolutely bizarre," he told ABC's "Good Morning America."

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O'Malley Dillon took the helm of Biden's campaign in mid-March, just as coronavirus shutdowns commenced. She recently beefed up the campaign's digital and finance teams and said she'll unveil battleground state leadership in coming weeks. She also pointed to budding "partnerships" that include the national party's battleground state program.

But those moves haven't prevented critiques from prominent Democrats, including the architects of President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, who question Biden's digital savvy and capacity to build the national vote-by-mail effort that might be necessary to win during a pandemic.

Obama allies David Plouffe and David Axelrod wrote in a recent New York Times op-ed that Biden's home studios resemble "an astronaut beaming back to earth from the International Space Station." They encouraged Biden to make wider use of platforms from Facebook and Twitter to Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok.

In a similar piece, Lis Smith, media strategist behind Pete Buttigieg's 2020 campaign, touted the virtues of local-market media and using celebrities more on other platforms.

Yvette Simpson, who leads the progressive group Democracy for America, said she's "very concerned" she cannot see "how we're going to engage people." She said the campaign has squandered time since Biden took command of the primary in early March.

House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, a close Biden friend whose endorsement helped spur his run of primary victories, said he's "very worried" about Democrats building a voter turnout operation that balances in-person voting with absentee balloting.

Clyburn, however, emphasized that it's not Biden's place to worry over the details.

"His job is to be the candidate," Clyburn said.

To some degree, the naysaying reflects Democrats' desperation to beat Trump – who holds a clear early lead in fundraising and organizing – and the reality that Biden emerged from a haphazard primary campaign and must now play catch-up.

Tara McGowan, founder and CEO of the Democrat-aligned digital firm ACRONYM, credited the campaign with making progress. "You can't just snap your fingers and create an entirely different culture in their campaign," she said.

Clyburn argued there's been a turnaround, especially in fundraising. "Winning is a great tonic," he said.

Biden raised \$46.7 million in March, and in April he combined with the Democratic National Committee to raise \$60.5 million. Trump and the Republican National Committee have far outraised Democrats this cycle, and they have more than \$250 million cash on hand, but Biden's April total nearly pulled even with Trump's monthly total of \$61.7 million.

Ersine Bowles, one of Biden's fundraisers and a former chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, said the question isn't whether Biden will catch Trump in total fundraising – he won't – but whether he will have the resources to build a winning campaign.

"People are giving to make sure he does," Bowles said.

From inside the campaign, the outside worries seem as much about timing and perception as about reality: The April and May fundraising windfall is just now being put into hiring. Biden has ramped up his social media presence, including a recent Instagram appearance with soccer star Megan Rapinoe and an economic speech on NowThis, a digital news medium targeting younger voters.

O'Malley Dillon said she has "zero concern that we're not at pace."

Critics, Biden allies say, also gloss over how Biden's core pitch – touting his experience and empathy, making a moral and competence case against Trump, and promising to "rebuild the middle class" – won over Democratic primary voters even before the coronavirus upended daily life. Now, Biden's argument against Trump is sharpened but stems from the same roots, with recent polling suggesting it's reaching voters.

"Joe's got the right message," Clyburn said.

Indeed, days before his co-signed critique was published, Plouffe appeared at a Biden fundraiser that pulled in more than \$1 million. On that call, Plouffe agreed with O'Malley Dillon that Trump's turbulent

presidency alongside Biden's candidacy means "an expanded map" of battleground states.

Trump is answering with a daunting reelection behemoth.

On a call with reporters Tuesday, the president's daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, called it the "largest field and data program" in GOP campaign history. And while O'Malley Dillon has spent two months building a general election campaign in a new digital environment, Brad Parscale has long been established in his role as Trump's campaign manager.

The Trump campaign hasn't had to worry about money, with the president pulling in more than \$700 million so far this cycle.

"The Trump campaign never skipped a beat" when the emphasis shifted to digital, Lara Trump said.

And now the president wants to return to a conventional travel schedule. He travels next on Thursday to Pennsylvania, and aides say he wants to travel at least once a week.

Biden, meanwhile, is "anxious to go out and campaign" but is staying home "to set an example ... with this health and economic crisis."

"This is not politics," Biden said. "This is life."

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Julie Pace and Will Weissert in Washington contributed to this report.

Trump-backed Tiffany wins Wisconsin congressional race

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Tom Tiffany, a state senator endorsed by President Donald Trump, easily won a special congressional election Tuesday in a heavily conservative, rural Wisconsin district, cheering Republicans even as Democrats argued the victory revealed vulnerabilities for the president among his base.

Tiffany's win over Democrat Tricia Zunker in northern Wisconsin's 7th District comes in the state's second election amid the coronavirus pandemic the past five weeks. Tiffany will replace former reality TV star Sean Duffy, a Republican who retired in September. The district has been vacant since Duffy's retirement.

Trump won Wisconsin by less than a point, but carried the district by 20 points, in 2016. Tiffany's win over Zunker was about 6 points less than that, based on preliminary results. Tiffany rejected Democrats' argument that the smaller margin was a sign that Trump's support was waning.

"Any time you lose by 14 points, I don't think that's a moral victory," Tiffany said. "This is a decisive victory here."

The win is in a district that Trump will need to once again win big if he hopes to again carry Wisconsin, a state he won by less than a point in 2016. Tiffany's big victory also helps to erase the taste of a loss by a conservative Wisconsin Supreme Court justice in last month's election, a race that boosted Democrats' confidence.

"Tonight was a win for President Trump and Tom Tiffany that demonstrates the enthusiasm behind our president across Wisconsin," said Trump campaign spokeswoman Anna Kelly.

Wisconsin Democratic Party spokeswoman Courtney Beyer said the results showed a drastic swing for Democrats, even though Zunker lost by about 14 points.

"For Trump to win reelection, red areas have to get redder to balance out blue areas getting bluer," she said.

Zunker said the race "laid the groundwork for this seat to turn blue in November."

Zunker, president of the Wausau School Board, was trying to become the first Native American from Wisconsin elected to Congress. She pulled in big-name endorsements including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, but the numbers were against her. The district has been under Republican control since 2011 and was redistricted to more heavily favor Republicans.

There was uncertainty over whether holding a special election in the middle of the pandemic would affect the outcome. Election clerks said they were prepared, about 20% of registered voters had voted absentee, and there were no calls to delay or alter the election like there were before Wisconsin's presidential primary last month.

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Unlike Wisconsin's April 7 presidential primary, during which mask-wearing voters endured long lines at congested polling sites in Milwaukee and elsewhere, there were no widespread calls to delay or alter voting in the special election. The 18,800-square-mile district is mostly rural and hasn't yet been badly hit by COVID-19, with less than 2% of all positive cases in the state and less than 2.5% of all deaths.

Mary Thompson, 64, of Kronenwetter, a village in Marathon County, said she felt safe as she cast her vote for Tiffany on Tuesday, calling herself a "stubborn, very patriotic person." She said she felt she had to vote in-person to honor ancestors who served in the military.

Peggy Stalheim, 69, a retired public health nurse in Medford, voted absentee for Zunker. Even though no coronavirus cases had been recorded in her county, Stalheim said she wasn't going to risk voting in person. Her 92-year-old mother-in-law lives at her house.

Tiffany, 62, was born on a dairy farm in the district and ran a tourist boat business for 20 years. Joining the Legislature in 2011, he was a close ally of then-Republican Gov. Scott Walker and voted to pass the anti-union law, Act 10. He also voted in favor of legalizing concealed carry and moving the state forestry division to northern Wisconsin and pushed to locate an open-pit mine in northern Wisconsin that ultimately never came to the state.

With Tiffany's win, Republicans hold five of Wisconsin's eight seats in Congress. Tiffany will serve through the end of the year, but will have to run again in November to serve a full two-year term.

Associated Press writer Carrie Antlfinger contributed to this report from Milwaukee.

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Nebraska primary voters avoid polls, shatter mail-in record

By GRANT SCHULTE Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska's primary voters mostly steered clear of polling sites Tuesday while shattering the state record for absentee voting with nearly 400,000 mail-in ballots in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Republican President Donald Trump and presumptive Democratic challenger Joe Biden sailed to easy victories in the election, the first in-person primary since a heavily criticized election in Wisconsin five weeks ago in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. So did Republican U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse, who faced a GOP primary challenge because of his previous criticism of Trump. Sasse will face Chris Janicek, the owner of an Omaha cake-baking company, who won a nine-way Democratic primary Tuesday night.

In a closely watched Democratic primary for an Omaha-based congressional district, voters chose progressive Kara Eastman over a more conservative candidate. Eastman will once again face Republican Rep. Don Bacon, as she did in 2018.

In Nebraska's Republican-dominated 3rd Congressional District, Rep. Adrian Smith easily won the GOP nomination for an eighth term. Smith will face Democrat Mark Elworth Jr., who was uncontested for his party's nod.

Officials had encouraged people to vote by mail, though Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts and Secretary of State Bob Evnen both pledged to forge ahead with an in-person primary even though many other states have rescheduled theirs or switched to all-mail voting. Voters easily broke the previous mail-in voting record of around 70,000 in 2018, which includes people who requested early ballots and voters in early rural counties who receive them automatically.

Polling sites in the Omaha suburb of Papillion reported lower in-person turnout than normal. At First Lutheran Church, voters who walked into the basement polling station had plenty of space to cast their ballots.

Michael Rabe, 68, of Papillion, said he wanted to vote in person because he doesn't trust mail-in voting

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but believes he has a civic duty to cast a ballot. Rabe wore a mask into the polling site, only to realize he was the only voter there at the time. The self-described "hardcore Republican" said he was most interested in voting for Matt Innis, the long-shot primary challenger to Sasse.

"I didn't like that when President Trump got into office, Sasse opposed him," Rabe said after voting. "I was not a Trump supporter when he was running, but now that he's our president, I am."

Douglas County Election Commissioner Brian Kruse, who oversees polling sites in Omaha, said in-person turnout was unusually low. He said overall turnout was still strong because of the huge number of mail-in ballots received, but polls saw very few in-person voters.

A possible shortage of poll workers prompted Ricketts ordered members of the Nebraska National Guard to provide on-call help at short-staffed polling sites in eight counties, including the Omaha and Lincoln areas. He said Guard members would be dressed in civilian clothes, not their normal uniforms.

Ricketts also waived a state law that requires poll workers to live in the county where they serve, largely because of a poll worker shortage.

This year's primary was fairly low-key but included a high-profile race among Democrats who want to unseat Bacon of Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District. The Omaha-area district is one of the few in Republican-led Nebraska where Democrats are competitive.

Eastman defeated Omaha lawyer Ann Ashford and Omaha business owner Gladys Harrison to win the Democratic primary. Eastman had positioned herself as a progressive, while Ashford pitched herself as a moderate. Harrison touted herself as a unifying voice but hasn't raised nearly as much money or gotten as much attention.

Randall Crutcher, 45, voted at Papillion Middle School Tuesday morning because he and his wife forgot to request early, mail-in ballots. He wore a mask as he walked inside, only to find the polling site virtually empty except for poll workers.

Crutcher said he had been an independent for most of his adult life and holds conservative views on spending, but re-registered as a Democrat two years ago because of the GOP's support of President Donald Trump.

He said he liked both Democratic candidates in the 2nd Congressional District race, but voted for Eastman because of her life story, including her struggles to care for her ailing mother. On the campaign trail, Eastman often discusses her mother's inability to afford prescription drugs to fight her cancer.

"She has built-in empathy," Crutcher said. "That's something we all need right now."

Follow Grant Schulte on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GrantSchulte>

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

Fauci warns: More death, econ damage if US reopens too fast

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's top infectious disease expert issued a blunt warning Tuesday that cities and states could "turn back the clock" and see more COVID-19 deaths and economic damage alike if they lift coronavirus stay-at-home orders too fast -- a sharp contrast as President Donald Trump pushes to right a free-falling economy.

"There is a real risk that you will trigger an outbreak that you may not be able to control," Dr. Anthony Fauci warned a Senate committee and the nation as more than two dozen states have begun to lift their lockdowns as a first step toward economic recovery.

The advice from Fauci and other key government officials — delivered by dramatic, sometimes awkward teleconference — was at odds with a president who urges on protests of state-ordered restraints and insists that "day after day, we're making tremendous strides."

Trump, whose reelection depends to a substantial degree on the economy, talks up his administration's

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record with the virus daily.

Underscoring the seriousness of the pandemic that has reached Congress and the White House, Fauci and other experts testified from their homes. Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander chaired the hearing from the study in his cabin in Tennessee, although several committee members attended in person in an eerily empty Capitol Hill chamber, masked and sitting 6 feet apart.

The tension in balancing people's safety from the virus, which is still surprising doctors with the sneaky ways it can kill, against the severe economic fallout is playing out in many other countries, too. Italy partially lifted lockdown restrictions last week only to see a big jump in confirmed COVID-19 infections in its hardest-hit region. And Lebanon relaxed a national lockdown late last month but said Tuesday the restrictions are being reinstated for the rest of the week after a spike in reported infections.

More infections and deaths are inevitable as people again start gathering, but how prepared communities are to stamp out those sparks will determine how bad the rebound is, Fauci told the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

"There is no doubt, even under the best of circumstances, when you pull back on mitigation you will see some cases appear," Fauci said.

Move too quickly and "the consequences could be really serious," he added. It not only would cause "some suffering and death that could be avoided, but could even set you back on the road to try to get economic recovery."

With more than 30 million people unemployed in the U.S., Trump has been pressuring states to reopen. A recent Associated Press review determined that 17 states did not meet a key White House benchmark for loosening restrictions — a 14-day downward trajectory in new cases or positive test rates. Yet many of those have begun to reopen or are about to do so, including Alabama, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Utah.

Of the 33 states that have had a 14-day downward trajectory, 25 are partially opened or moving to reopen within days, the AP analysis found. Other states that have not seen a 14-day decline, remain closed despite meeting some benchmarks.

Fauci expressed optimism that eventually vaccines will arrive, along with treatments in addition to the one drug that so far has shown a modest effect in fighting COVID--19. But it would be "a bridge too far" to expect them in time for fall when schools hope to reopen, he said.

For now, "all roads back to work and back to school go through testing," said Alexander, the Republican committee chairman.

Although Trump declared this week, "we have met the moment, and we have prevailed" in increasing and improving virus testing, Republican senators on the panel were noticeably less sanguine.

A lack of testing has dogged the U.S. response from the beginning, when a test developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ran into numerous problems. Utah Sen. Mitt Romney said the U.S. may finally have outpaced testing leader South Korea but that country has far fewer deaths because it started testing early.

"I find our testing record nothing to celebrate whatsoever," Romney said.

Trump administration "testing czar" Adm. Brett Giroir said the U.S. could be performing at least 40 million to 50 million tests per month by September. That would work out to between 1.3 million to 1.7 million tests per day. Harvard researchers have said the U.S. must be doing 900,000 by this Friday in order to safely reopen.

And a test only tells if someone is infected that day — they could catch the virus the next day. Pushed by Alexander on how the nation's 100,000 schools and 5,000 colleges could reopen in August, Giroir expressed confidence there would be enough tests for schools to devise safe strategies, perhaps by testing a certain number of students every few days.

Worldwide, the virus has infected nearly 4.2 million people and killed over 287,000 — more than 80,000 deaths in U.S. alone, the world's highest toll. Fauci said U.S. deaths likely are higher than the official count.

While Fauci has become the trusted science voice for millions of Americans, Sen. Rand Paul expressed

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frustration with his cautions. The Kentucky Republican said Fauci was not the "end all" in knowledge about the coronavirus and it's "kind of ridiculous" to suggest children shouldn't go back to school -- something Fauci never said.

"We don't know everything about this virus and we really better be pretty careful, particularly when it comes to children," Fauci said.

While children do seem less susceptible, doctors in New York are investigating about 100 youngsters whose COVID-19 may be linked to a rare and dangerous inflammatory reaction. Three have died.

COVID-19 is devastating nursing homes as well, with infections and deaths soaring among residents and their caregivers.

"If we are able to get masks to everybody in the White House, I hope we can get masks to every nursing home employee who needs it," said Sen. Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., who also asked why those vulnerable populations were having a hard time getting tested when employees in contact with Trump get a daily test.

The White House recently recommended that states test all nursing home residents and staff within the next two weeks.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., blasted the Trump administration for "criminally vague" guidance on how states can safely reopen their economies. He pressed CDC Director Robert Redfield on why detailed recommendations prepared by agency experts had been shelved, as reported by The Associated Press. Redfield replied that those recommendations should appear on the agency's website soon.

Three of Tuesday's experts, Fauci, Redfield and Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Stephen Hahn, are in "modified quarantine" after two White House staffers recently became infected but they're allowed to attend critical administration meetings, masked and keeping their distance.

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

Pelosi unveils \$3T virus bill, warns inaction costs more

By LISA MASCARO and ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi unveiled a more than \$3 trillion coronavirus aid package Tuesday, a sweeping effort with \$1 trillion for states and cities, "hazard pay" for essential workers and a new round of cash payments to individuals.

The House is expected to vote on the package as soon as Friday. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said there is no "urgency." The Senate will wait until after Memorial Day to consider options.

"We must think big, for the people, now," Pelosi said from the speaker's office at the Capitol.

"Not acting is the most expensive course," she said.

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But the political peril of doing nothing during an election year could prove challenging for Congress and the White House. As states experience flareups of virus outbreaks, and more than 30 million Americans remain unemployed in the shutdown, the near-term health and economic outlook remains daunting.

The Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer of New York, warned that Trump and Republicans risk the same path as Herbert Hoover, the former president roundly criticized for failing to act to stem the Great Depression.

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Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Matthew Daly and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington, Nick Riccardi in Denver, Colo., and Michael Schneider in Orlando, Fla., contributed to this report.

Biden plans to stay home, testing limits of virtual campaign

By **BILL BARROW** and **STEVE PEOPLES** Associated Press

Joe Biden has no foreseeable plans to resume in-person campaigning amid a pandemic that is testing whether a national presidential election can be won by a candidate communicating almost entirely from home.

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"The idea that somehow we are being hurt by my keeping to the rules and following the instructions that (have) been put forward by doctors is absolutely bizarre," he told ABC's "Good Morning America."

O'Malley Dillon took the helm of Biden's campaign in mid-March, just as coronavirus shutdowns commenced. She recently beefed up the campaign's digital and finance teams and said she'll unveil battleground state leadership in coming weeks. She also pointed to budding "partnerships" that include the national party's battleground state program.

But those moves haven't prevented critiques from prominent Democrats, including the architects of President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, who question Biden's digital savvy and capacity to build the national vote-by-mail effort that might be necessary to win during a pandemic.

Obama allies David Plouffe and David Axelrod wrote in a recent New York Times op-ed that Biden's home studios resemble "an astronaut beaming back to earth from the International Space Station." They encouraged Biden to make wider use of platforms from Facebook and Twitter to Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok.

In a similar piece, Lis Smith, media strategist behind Pete Buttigieg's 2020 campaign, touted the virtues of local-market media and using celebrities more on other platforms.

Yvette Simpson, who leads the progressive group Democracy for America, said she's "very concerned" she cannot see "how we're going to engage people." She said the campaign has squandered time since Biden took command of the primary in early March.

House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, a close Biden friend whose endorsement helped spur his run of primary victories, said he's "very worried" about Democrats building a voter turnout operation that balances in-person voting with absentee balloting.

Clyburn, however, emphasized that it's not Biden's place to worry over the details.

"His job is to be the candidate," Clyburn said.

To some degree, the naysaying reflects Democrats' desperation to beat Trump – who holds a clear early lead in fundraising and organizing – and the reality that Biden emerged from a haphazard primary campaign and must now play catch-up.

Tara McGowan, founder and CEO of the Democrat-aligned digital firm ACRONYM, credited the campaign with making progress. "You can't just snap your fingers and create an entirely different culture in their campaign," she said.

Clyburn argued there's been a turnaround, especially in fundraising. "Winning is a great tonic," he said.

Biden raised \$46.7 million in March, and in April he combined with the Democratic National Committee to raise \$60.5 million. Trump and the Republican National Committee have far outraised Democrats this cycle, and they have more than \$250 million cash on hand, but Biden's April total nearly pulled even with Trump's monthly total of \$61.7 million.

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Erskine Bowles, one of Biden's fundraisers and a former chief of staff to President Bill Clinton, said the question isn't whether Biden will catch Trump in total fundraising – he won't – but whether he will have the resources to build a winning campaign.

"People are giving to make sure he does," Bowles said.

From inside the campaign, the outside worries seem as much about timing and perception as about reality: The April and May fundraising windfall is just now being put into hiring. Biden has ramped up his social media presence, including a recent Instagram appearance with soccer star Megan Rapinoe and an economic speech on NowThis, a digital news medium targeting younger voters.

O'Malley Dillon said she has "zero concern that we're not at pace."

Critics, Biden allies say, also gloss over how Biden's core pitch – touting his experience and empathy, making a moral and competence case against Trump, and promising to "rebuild the middle class" – won over Democratic primary voters even before the coronavirus upended daily life. Now, Biden's argument against Trump is sharpened but stems from the same roots, with recent polling suggesting it's reaching voters.

"Joe's got the right message," Clyburn said.

Indeed, days before his co-signed critique was published, Plouffe appeared at a Biden fundraiser that pulled in more than \$1 million. On that call, Plouffe agreed with O'Malley Dillon that Trump's turbulent presidency alongside Biden's candidacy means "an expanded map" of battleground states.

Trump is answering with a daunting reelection behemoth.

On a call with reporters Tuesday, the president's daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, called it the "largest field and data program" in GOP campaign history. And while O'Malley Dillon has spent two months building a general election campaign in a new digital environment, Brad Parscale has long been established in his role as Trump's campaign manager.

The Trump campaign hasn't had to worry about money, with the president pulling in more than \$700 million so far this cycle.

"The Trump campaign never skipped a beat" when the emphasis shifted to digital, Lara Trump said.

And now the president wants to return to a conventional travel schedule. He travels next on Thursday to Pennsylvania, and aides say he wants to travel at least once a week.

Biden, meanwhile, is "anxious to go out and campaign" but is staying home "to set an example ... with this health and economic crisis."

"This is not politics," Biden said. "This is life."

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Julie Pace and Will Weissert contributed from Washington.

This story has been corrected to show that Clyburn is the House majority whip, not the minority whip.

Brazil cities lurch to lockdowns amid virus crisis red flags

By DAVID BILLER and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Faced with overwhelmed hospitals and surging coronavirus deaths, Brazilian state and city governments are lurching forward with mandatory lockdowns against the will of President Jair Bolsonaro, who says job losses are more damaging than COVID-19.

The movements of Brazilians have been completely restricted in fewer than two dozen cities scattered across the vast nation of 211 million — even though Brazil's death toll stands at more than 12,000, Latin America's highest.

While public health experts are demanding bolder action, most governors and mayors have not imposed mandatory stay-at-home orders. Their apparent reluctance comes amid Bolsonaro's relentless message for Brazilians to defy regional and local public health efforts to stop the virus' spread.

Stricter lockdowns are needed because Brazilian doctors are now being forced to choose who lives and dies and triage situations could generate social unrest if they increase, said Miguel Lago, executive director of Brazil's non-profit Institute for Health Policy Studies, which advises public health officials.

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"We need to avoid a total disaster," he said.

Lago said mandatory lockdowns across much of the country would help: "It is late in terms of avoiding hospital collapse, but certainly it isn't too late to avoid a bigger catastrophe."

Brazil had more than 177,000 confirmed cases on Tuesday, with the actual figure believed to be much higher because of limited testing. Many intensive care hospital units are full and cemeteries are increasingly overwhelmed with bodies.

Bolsonaro, who called the virus a "little flu," has insisted for more than a month that governors are stoking economic carnage with voluntary quarantine recommendations and urges Brazilians to go about their everyday. He reiterated criticism of governors Tuesday for ignoring his decree that gyms, barbershops and beauty salons should be treated as essential services.

Amid Bolsonaro's rejection of coronavirus danger, most of the country's 27 governors have criticized his stances but none have imposed mandatory statewide lockdown measures recommended by experts. Instead, the governors have either applied selective lockdowns in cities or deferred to mayors to make those decisions.

Governors had been hoping the virus would not spread in Brazil's warm climate, but their response is also a reflection of Brazil's political landscape because the governors depend on mayors to endorse re-election campaigns.

Many worry that imposing mandatory lockdowns could hurt local leaders in this year's municipal election, decreasing support for incumbent governors in their 2022 campaigns, said Thiago de Aragão, director of strategy of the Arko Advice political consultancy.

But as the death toll rose from less than 7,000 to more than 10,000 last week, local authorities began adopting stricter anti-virus measures.

The riverside community of Tefe in the Amazon region was among the first, with a lockdown decree specifying criminal charges for residents leaving home except for visits to hospitals, pharmacies and supermarkets. The mayor imposed it because only about half of Tefe's 60,000 residents complied with an earlier recommendation by the governor of Amazonas state to take virus precautions.

Those who did not comply "think they're immortal, that they won't get it," Tefe Mayor Normando Bessa de Sá said on Facebook.

Over the next three days, the governors of the northern and northeastern states of Maranhao, Para and Ceara decreed lockdowns for their capital cities as intensive-care units filled with COVID-19 patients.

Despite the new lockdowns, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo still don't have mandatory stay-at-home-orders at the state or city level — even though they are the hardest hit places in Brazil.

Lockdowns "should have been imposed at least three weeks ago, when the epidemic was already increasing, but not at this speed that it is now," said Margareth Dalcolmo, a respiratory physician and researcher with the widely respected Oswaldo Cruz Foundation biological research group.

"I gave that recommendation more than once," said Dalcolmo, among the experts on a COVID-19 panel that advises Rio's governor.

Rio Gov. Wilson Witzel has decreed non-binding quarantine recommendations and commerce restrictions through the end of May. He pledged to make police available so the state's 92 mayors can enact lockdowns, instead of imposing them himself.

In another example of Brazil's scattershot local lockdowns, Rio de Janeiro Mayor Marcelo Crivella on Monday prohibited non-residents from entering 11 neighborhoods and ordered the closure of all businesses except supermarkets and pharmacies in the teeming slums called favelas.

"People still haven't perceived the need to avoid gatherings, stay home," Crivella complained.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms including fever and cough. The risk of death is greater for the elderly and people with other health problems.

The cities of Niteroi and Sao Goncalo near Rio on Monday authorized fines and criminal charges for violating stay-at-home orders. Niteroi police took the temperatures of those entering the city, and put a man and his two dogs inside a police van after he allegedly refused to show documents to justify being out of his home.

In Sao Paulo state, Gov. João Doria last month urged but did not require residents to self-quarantine while

shutting down schools and most businesses. Nearly 70% of the state's 44 million people initially complied, but that dropped below 50% in recent weeks, according to cellphone carrier data provided by the state.

Doria, a presidential hopeful, saw his popularity increase as he challenged Bolsonaro. But police stopped enforcing his recommendations after Bolsonaro criticized the handcuffing and detention of a middle-aged woman exercising in a park who resisted removal.

With noncompliance rising, Doria said last week that "if we need to step up to a lockdown, we will not hesitate."

Sao Paulo's mayor this week limited vehicles circulating in the city to 50% of the normal flow. Television images showed long lines of people entering crammed buses with standing room only in clear violation of social distancing guidelines.

Public health analysts from the Imperial College London, whose COVID-19 research has guided global policymakers, last week called Brazil's anti-virus efforts "partially successful."

"In the absence of the introduction of further control measures that will more strongly curb transmission, Brazil faces the prospect of an epidemic that will continue to grow exponentially," they wrote.

Savarese reported from Sao Paulo

Virus conspiracy-theory video shows challenges for big tech

By **AMANDA SEITZ** and **BARBARA ORTUTAY** Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — One by one, tech companies across Silicon Valley scrambled to take down a slickly produced video of a discredited researcher peddling a variety of conspiracy theories about the coronavirus. It was all too late.

The 26-minute documentary-style video dubbed "Plandemic," in which anti-vaccine activist Judy Mikovits promotes a string of questionable, false and potentially dangerous coronavirus theories, had already racked up millions of views over several days and gained a massive audience in Facebook groups that oppose vaccines or are protesting governors' stay-at-home orders.

Its spread illustrates how easy it is to use social media as a megaphone to swiftly broadcast dubious content to the masses, and how difficult it is for platforms to cut the mic.

Mikovits' unsupported claims — that the virus was manufactured in a lab, that it's injected into people via flu vaccinations and that wearing a mask could trigger a coronavirus infection — activated a social media army already skeptical of the pandemic's threat.

Amid uncertainty and unanswered questions about a virus that has upended everyone's lives, and a growing distrust of authoritative sources, people shared the video again and again on the likes of YouTube, Facebook and Instagram until it took on a life of its own even after the original was taken down.

"The other video has already been deleted by YouTube. ... Let's get it to another million! Modern day book burning at its finest," read one post on a private Facebook group called Reopen California.

"Once it's available, it has an infinite lifespan," said Ari Lightman, a professor of digital media at Carnegie Mellon University.

In a matter of days, two of Mikovits' books became best-sellers on Amazon. Conservative radio talk show hosts and dozens of podcasts available on platforms like Apple began airing the audio from "Plandemic" to their listeners. Fringe TV streaming channels invited Mikovits on for interviews.

Mikovits did not respond to The Associated Press' request for comment.

Her sudden fandom and notoriety come nearly a decade after she pushed a discredited theory that a virus in mice known as XMRV causes chronic fatigue syndrome. Other researchers were unable to recreate her findings.

She was later fired from a medical institute and then arrested in 2011 on felony charges of stealing computer equipment and data belonging to her former employer. She wrongly claims in the recent documentary that she was held without charges, though the felony charges were later dropped.

Efforts by social media platforms to delete and ban "Plandemic" have given rise to further dubious claims

and theories about a supposed coverup by tech companies regarding how the coronavirus started and is spread.

"It sort of increases its fandom or allegiance among followers and adds credence to their rallying cry that there's a conspiracy theory out there that people are trying to shut down," Lightman said.

Facebook said it is removing full versions of the video that include Mikovits' suggestion that masks can make you sick, because that claim could "lead to imminent harm." YouTube and Vimeo both said it violated their rules on harmful misinformation. Twitter said Monday it had prevented "Plandemic" from being displayed prominently and trending on the platform.

Michael Coudrey, CEO of Yukosocial.com and a verified Twitter user popular among supporters of Donald Trump, said that while he's not anti-vaccine and does not believe in conspiracy theories, he doesn't think the platforms should wipe out the video.

"Information is continuously being updated about the virus," said Coudrey, who has more than 256,000 followers. "Censoring a doctor's opinion sets a very dangerous and unnecessary precedent."

Facebook user Benjamin Romberger first saw the video when three friends posted it last week.

"I immediately groaned and thought, 'Oh no, not another video filled with false information that I will have to spend time and energy explaining basic science, biology and medicine to others,'" said Romberger, a Southern California resident.

He sent information debunking the video to his friends and flagged it to Facebook, but it was still up the next morning.

Clips of the video are still possible to find on some of the major platforms with just a few clicks, and the full version is readily available on lesser-known sites notable for lax policies on questionable or harmful material.

"Imagine a flood of more and more of these things," said Tristan Harris, a former Google ethicist and co-founder of the Center for Humane Tech. "The solution isn't just, 'Gosh, we need to get better at taking this stuff down after a million people saw it.'"

AP writer David Klepper contributed to this story from Providence, R.I.

AP Exclusive: CDC docs stress plans for more virus flareups

By JASON DEAREN and MIKE STOBBE Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Advice from the nation's top disease control experts on how to safely reopen businesses and institutions in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic included detailed instructive guidance and some more restrictive measures than the plan released by the White House last month. The guidance, which was shelved by Trump administration officials, also offered recommendations to help communities decide when to shut facilities down again during future flareups of COVID-19.

The Associated Press obtained a 63-page document that is more detailed than other, previously reported segments of the shelved guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It shows how the thinking of the CDC infection control experts differs from those in the White House managing the pandemic response.

The White House's "Opening Up America Again" plan that was released April 17 included some of the CDC's approach, but made clear that the onus for reopening decisions was solely on state governors and local officials.

By contrast, the organizational tool created by the CDC advocates for a coordinated national response to give community leaders step-by-step instructions to "help Americans re-enter civic life," with the idea that there would be resurgences of the virus and lots of customization needed. The White House said last week that the document was a draft and not ready for release.

It contains the kinds of specifics that officials need to make informed decisions, some experts said.

"The White House is pushing for reopening but the truth of the matter is the White House has just not had a comprehensive plan where all the pieces fit. They're doing it piecemeal," said Dr. Georges Benjamin,

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executive director of the American Public Health Association.

Such detailed advice should have been available much earlier, said Stephen Morse, a Columbia University expert on the spread of diseases.

"Many different places are considering how to safely develop return-to-work procedures. Having more guidance on that earlier on might have been more reassuring to people. And it might have prevented some cases," Morse said.

From the start, CDC staffers working on the guidance were uncomfortable tying it specifically to reopening, and voiced their objections to the White House officials tasked with approving the guidance for release, according to a CDC official granted anonymity because they were not cleared to speak with the press.

The CDC's detailed guidance was eventually shelved by the administration April 30, according to internal government emails and CDC sources who were granted anonymity because they were not cleared to speak to the press. After The AP reported about the burying of the guidance last week, the White House asked the CDC to revive parts of it, which were sent back for approval, according to emails and interviews.

On Tuesday, CDC Director Robert Redfield testified before a U.S. Senate committee that the recommendations would be released "soon." He provided no further details. Internal government emails show that Redfield had repeatedly sought White House approval for CDC's guidance, starting as early as April 10.

Both the CDC document and the White House's published plan recommend communities reopen in phases as local cases of coronavirus subside.

One of many differences, however, is advice for when communities should allow for the resumption of nonessential travel.

The shelved CDC guide advises communities to avoid all nonessential travel in phases of reopening until the last one, when cases are at the lowest levels. Even then, the CDC is cautious and advises only a "consideration" of the resumption of nonessential travel after 42 continuous days of declining cases of COVID-19.

The White House plan, by contrast, recommends that communities "minimize" travel in Phase 1, and that in Phase 2, after 28 consecutive days of decline, "Non-essential travel can resume."

As of Tuesday, CDC's web page on travel guidance during the pandemic still linked to the White House plan. The stricter guidance is not there.

Another stark difference in the final White House plan and that designed by epidemiologists at the CDC is the latter's acknowledgement that COVID-19 cases will likely surge after states reopen, and that local governments need to continuously monitor their communities closely.

The White House's final reopening plan lacks guidance on how local communities can track information beyond positive cases. But the CDC document offers thoughts on how to plan for where case increases might occur more quickly, using demographic information. The CDC says local leaders could take special notice of the number of households with limited English literacy in an area, how many people live in poverty or have no health insurance coverage, and even what it calls areas of "civic strain" caused by the virus, such as places where many workers were sick or lost wages due to shutdowns.

The White House plan offers few such specifics and instead provides broad guidance, such as "Protect the health and safety of workers in critical industries," and advises states to "protect the most vulnerable" by developing "appropriate policies."

On Tuesday, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned that lifting stay-at-home orders too quickly could lead to serious consequences, both in deaths and economic hardship. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has continued to push states to act to right a free-falling economy.

The CDC's guidelines stress the dangers of states and regions going it alone in such perilous times. The agency advises a national approach, rather than a patchwork, because policies in one state will in time affect others.

"Travel patterns within and between jurisdictions will impact efforts to reduce community transmission too. Coordination across state and local jurisdictions is critical -- especially between jurisdictions with different mitigation needs," the report states.

Contact AP's Global Investigative Team at Investigative@AP.org

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

Thousands of new coronavirus infections are being reported daily, many of them job-related, even as President Donald Trump urges people to return to work.

There are plenty of new infections outside the workplace, including in nursing homes, and among retired and unemployed people. Yet all of the 15 U.S. counties with the highest per capita infection rates between April 28 and May 5 are homes to meatpacking and poultry-processing plants or state prisons, according to data compiled by The Associated Press.

There's been a spike of new infections among construction workers in Austin, Texas, where that sector recently returned to work. Even the White House has proven vulnerable, with positive coronavirus tests for one of Trump's valets and Vice President Mike Pence's press secretary.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned Congress Tuesday that if the country reopens too soon during the coronavirus pandemic, it will bring "needless suffering and death." Fauci was among the experts who testified before a Senate panel.

— As the pandemic stretches on, a new type of internet matchmaking is helping hospitals get scarce supplies. Numerous online platforms and charity projects have popped up to match hospitals in need with exchanges, loans or donations of personal protective equipment, ventilators and even doctors.

— Homeland Security Investigations, an arm of the Department of Homeland Security, is leading a nationwide crackdown on people seeking to use the virus to perpetrate frauds, from selling counterfeit products to fake cures. It has opened over 370 cases and so far arrested 11 people in an effort it calls "Operation Stolen Promise."

— Faced with overwhelmed hospitals and surging coronavirus deaths, Brazilian state and city governments are lurching forward with mandatory lockdowns against the will of President Jair Bolsonaro, who says job losses are more damaging than COVID-19.

— The economic paralysis caused by the coronavirus led in April to the steepest month-to-month fall in U.S. consumer prices since the 2008 financial crisis — a 0.8% drop that was driven by a plunge in gasoline prices. On Tuesday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi unveiled a more than \$3 trillion coronavirus aid package that would provide nearly \$1 trillion for states and cities, "hazard pay" for essential workers and a new round of cash payments to individuals. Top GOP senators flatly rejected the House bill.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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

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

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

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

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

ONE NUMBER:

— 5: A fire at St. George Hospital in St. Petersburg, Russia, killed five coronavirus patients. Emergency officials said all five had been put on ventilators. Russia has reported more than 220,000 confirmed cases and 2,009 deaths — but international health experts say those numbers undercount the country's outbreak.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— RECLINER DJs: Retirees in multiple states have become volunteer DJs for a new online radio hour known as "Radio Recliner." The 60-minute show began airing last month, starting with retirees in middle Tennessee, recording from their recliners while quarantined.

— HOME OFFICES TO STAY: When workers around the world eventually return to their desks, they'll find many changes due to the pandemic. For a start, fewer people will go back to their offices as the coronavirus crisis makes working from home more accepted, health concerns linger and companies weigh rent savings and productivity benefits.

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

Local prosecutors under investigation in Georgia slaying

By JEFF MARTIN and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The Georgia prosecutors who first handled the fatal shooting of a black man, before charges were filed more than two months later, were placed under investigation Tuesday for their conduct in the case, which has fueled a national outcry and questions about whether the slaying was racially motivated.

Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr announced that he asked the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and federal authorities to investigate how local prosecutors handled the killing of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery, who was pursued by a white father and son before being shot on a residential street just outside the port city of Brunswick. Arbery's relatives have said he was merely jogging through the subdivision at the time.

Gregory and Travis McMichael were not charged with murder until last week, after the release of a video of the Feb. 23 shooting.

"Unfortunately, many questions and concerns have arisen" about the actions of the district attorneys, Carr said Tuesday in a statement. As a result, the attorney general asked the GBI to review the matter "to determine whether the process was undermined in any way."

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said federal prosecutors have asked Carr to share any results. Federal officials are also considering whether hate crimes charges are warranted.

Gregory McMichael told police he and his grown son armed themselves and pursued the young man because they thought he matched the description of a burglary suspect.

Brunswick Circuit District Attorney Jackie Johnson defended her office's involvement, which she insisted was minimal because the elder McMichael worked for her as an investigator before retiring a year ago. That relationship required the office to step away from the case.

"I'm confident an investigation is going to show my office did what it was supposed to and there was no wrongdoing on our part," Johnson told The Associated Press in a phone interview Tuesday.

Johnson said Glynn County police contacted two of her assistant prosecutors on the day of the shooting, seeking legal advice. She said her assistants immediately responded that they could not get involved because of the conflict of interest.

Asked if anyone in her office told police not to arrest the McMichaels or suggested the shooting may have been justified, Johnson said, "Absolutely not." She said it was the police who brought up self-defense during their call.

"The police represented it as a burglary case with a self-defense issue," Johnson said. Police were seeking "guidance on how to proceed and whether to make an arrest. Our office could not advise or assist them because of our obvious conflict."

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Johnson said she reached out to neighboring Waycross Circuit District Attorney George Barnhill, asking if his office could advise Glynn County police. Because it was a fatal shooting, she said, "I didn't want the case to stall."

The attorney general ended up appointing Barnhill to take over on Feb. 27, four days after the shooting. But in his letter Monday asking the GBI to investigate possible misconduct by the prosecutors, Carr said he was never told that Barnhill had already advised police "that he did not see grounds for the arrest of any of the individuals involved in Mr. Arbery's death."

Weeks after Carr appointed him to the case, and just a few days before recusing himself April 7, Barnhill wrote that the McMichaels "were following, in 'hot pursuit,' a burglary suspect, with solid first hand probable cause, in their neighborhood, and asking/telling him to stop."

"It appears their intent was to stop and hold this criminal suspect until law enforcement arrived. Under Georgia Law this is perfectly legal," Barnhill advised in the undated letter, to Glynn County police Capt. Tom Jump. County officials released the letter last week.

Johnson said she could not recall if she had told Carr's office that she enlisted Barnhill's help before recusing herself. Barnhill had the case for about a month before he stepped aside under pressure because his son works for Johnson as an assistant prosecutor. The phone at Barnhill's office in Waycross rang unanswered Tuesday.

Tom Durden, the district attorney in nearby Hinesville, next took the case and had it for more than three weeks before the video became public and he called in the GBI. On Monday, Carr replaced him with Cobb County District Attorney Joyette M. Holmes, one of only seven black district attorneys in Georgia.

She's based in Atlanta, far from the coastal community where the shooting happened, and is "a respected attorney with experience, both as a lawyer and a judge," said Carr, a Republican.

According to the police report, Gregory McMichael said Arbery attacked his son before the younger McMichael shot him. The autopsy showed Arbery was hit by three shotgun blasts. All three shots can be heard on the video, which clearly shows the final shot hitting Arbery at point-blank range before he staggers and falls face down.

Gregory McMichael, 64, and Travis McMichael, 34, have been jailed since Thursday. Neither had lawyers at their first court appearances. With courts largely closed because of the coronavirus, a grand jury cannot be called to hear the case until mid-June.

According to personnel records obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press, the elder McMichael worked for Johnson's office from November 1995 through May 2019. He consistently got good performance reviews.

But in 2014, the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council notified the district attorney's office that in five years since 2005, Gregory McMichael had either failed to do enough training hours or failed to take mandatory firearms or use-of-deadly force classes, documents show. The result was that he had technically lacked arrest powers since Jan. 1, 2006 — a situation that could have made Johnson and her office liable for any improper actions by McMichael during that time, according to a memo in the file.

In submitting a training waiver to remedy the situation, McMichael said it was a "great embarrassment."

Documents in the file show he again failed to complete mandatory training in 2018 and relinquished his certification, serving out his final few months with the district attorney's office as a non-sworn liaison to law enforcement agencies in one of the counties in the judicial circuit.

Bynum reported from Savannah, Georgia. Associated Press writer Kate Brumback in Atlanta contributed reporting.

Supreme Court appears likely to reject Trump immunity claim

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday appeared likely to reject President Donald Trump's claim that he is immune from criminal investigation while in office. But the court seemed less clear about exactly how to handle subpoenas from Congress and the Manhattan district attorney for Trump's tax,

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bank and financial records.

The court's major clash over presidential accountability could affect the 2020 presidential campaign, especially if a high court ruling leads to the release of personal financial information before Election Day.

The justices heard arguments in two cases by telephone Tuesday that stretched into the early afternoon. The court, which includes six justices age 65 or older, has been meeting by phone because of the coronavirus pandemic.

There was no apparent consensus about whether to ratify lower court rulings that the subpoenas to Trump's accountant and banks are valid and should be enforced. The justices will meet by phone before the end of the week to take a preliminary vote on how those cases should come out, and decisions are expected by early summer.

On the same day Trump's lawyers were telling the court that the subpoenas would be a distraction that no president can afford, Trump found the time to weigh in on a long string of unrelated issues on Twitter, about Elon Musk reopening Tesla's California plant in defiance of local authorities, the credit he deserves for governors' strong approval ratings for their handling of the virus outbreak, the anger Asian Americans feel "at what China has done to our Country," oil prices, interest rates, his likely opponent in the November election and his critics.

The justices sounded particularly concerned in arguments over congressional subpoenas about whether a ruling validating the subpoenas would open the door to harassing future presidents.

"In your view, there is really no protection against the use of congressional subpoenas for the purpose of preventing the harassment of a president," Justice Samuel Alito said to Douglas Letter, the lawyer for the House of Representatives.

Justice Stephen Breyer said he worried about a "future Sen. McCarthy," a reference to the Communist-baiting Wisconsin senator from the 1950s, with subpoena power against a future president.

But in the case involving Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.'s subpoena for Trump's taxes, the justices showed little interest in the broadest argument made by Jay Sekulow, Trump's lawyer, that a president can't be investigated while he holds office.

Trump had said he would make his tax returns public but hasn't done so, unlike every other president in recent history.

"President Trump is the first one to refuse to do that," Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said early in the arguments.

The cases resemble earlier disputes over presidents' assertions that they were too consumed with the job of running the country to worry about lawsuits and investigations. In 1974, the justices acted unanimously in requiring President Richard Nixon to turn over White House tapes to the Watergate special prosecutor. In 1997, another unanimous court allowed a sexual harassment lawsuit to go forward against President Bill Clinton.

In those cases, three Nixon appointees and two Clinton appointees, respectively, voted against the president who chose them for the high court. The current court has two Trump appointees, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

Trump's lawyers drew on law review articles Kavanaugh wrote to buttress their arguments that the president needs to be protected from investigations.

The justice, though, seemed more interested in how to balance the competing interests at play. "And the question then boils down to, how can we both protect the House's interest in obtaining information it needs to legislate but also protect the presidency?" Kavanaugh asked.

Appellate courts in Washington and New York have ruled that the documents should be turned over, but those rulings have been put on hold pending a final court ruling. The appellate decisions brushed aside the president's broad arguments, focusing on the fact that the subpoenas were addressed to third parties asking for records of Trump's business and financial dealings as a private citizen, not as president.

House committees want records from Deutsche Bank and Capital One, as well as the Mazars USA accounting firm. Mazars also is the recipient of a subpoena from Vance.

Two congressional committees subpoenaed the bank documents as part of their investigations into Trump

and his businesses. Deutsche Bank has been one of the few banks willing to lend to Trump after a series of corporate bankruptcies and defaults starting in the early 1990s.

Vance and the House Oversight and Reform Committee sought records from Mazars concerning Trump and his businesses based on payments that Trump's then-personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, arranged during the 2016 presidential race to keep two women from airing their claims of extramarital affairs with Trump.

Trump sued to block the subpoenas. He is being represented by personal lawyers at the Supreme Court, and the Justice Department is supporting the high-court appeal.

Associated Press writer Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

AP Exclusive: Chicago morgue coping despite surge in deaths

By MICHAEL TARM Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago area's chief medical examiner starts her day with a numbers problem: how to manage three times the number of deaths as before the coronavirus pandemic with the same number of pathologists.

On a recent morning when The Associated Press got exclusive access to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office for the day, Dr. Ponni Arunkumar scanned a list of 62 new death cases. The average last year was 20 a day.

"We've never gone through anything like this," she said of the workloads.

Forty of the 62 cases were coronavirus deaths. The oldest to die was a 105-year-old whose obituary described her as a White Sox fan who loved dancing. The youngest was a 53-year-old man who was jailed for allegedly blinding someone in one eye during a barroom brawl.

Medical examiners worldwide face similar challenges, and some are buckling under the emotional strain. But there was no sign of that at the Cook County facility, where employees seemed to be coping well with the historic surge in deaths. The pandemic has only deepened their sense of camaraderie, said the office's director of fatality management, who oversees a temporary morgue set up off-site to handle the influx of corpses.

"We lean on each other," Victoria Raspante said.

The 45-year-old Arunkumar has an air of calm about her. Soft-spoken and quick to smile, she has a knack for keeping those she supervises at ease.

According to figures updated Tuesday, her office has handled 5,323 cases already this year, 2,551 of them COVID-19 deaths since the first confirmed coronavirus death in mid-March. It had 6,254 deaths for all of 2019. Her 18 pathologists have sometimes worked 12-hour days, seven days a week.

The hope was that stay-at-home orders would sharply reduce gun deaths in Chicago, which has had more homicides than Los Angeles and New York combined for successive years. A drop-off in killings would help keep caseloads at more manageable levels.

That hasn't happened.

The office has had 111 homicide cases since mid-March when the pandemic began in the county compared to 113 over the same period last year. One of the 22 non-COVID cases this day is a 21-year-old man who was killed in a drive-by shooting as he sat on a porch.

At 8:30 a.m., Arunkumar and six fellow pathologists began autopsies on shooting victims and others whose cause of death wasn't clear.

She pointed to a bullet hole in the shoulder of the man who was killed in the drive-by, his bloody clothes nearby. Another pathologist retrieved the bullet through the wound.

Between autopsies, Arunkumar walked into the facility's main morgue, where around 250 bodies lined rows of floor-to-ceiling shelving. It was filled to capacity.

Downstairs, Rebeca Perrone stacked 24 boxes of unclaimed cremated remains on shelves that already had 500 others. Some of those cremated were homeless. Others lived alone, estranged from their families.

More remains are going unclaimed these days — a sign that more families can't afford the \$250 collec-

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tion fee because of the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic, said Perrone, who arranges funerals for the unclaimed dead and helps poorer families find resources for burials.

Perrone refused to complain about her heavier workloads. Her job sometimes includes informing relatives that a loved-one has died.

"It's actually nice to be able to talk to someone on the worst day of their life and say, 'This is what we can do to help,'" she said.

On the second floor, investigative-unit chief Christopher Kalka said his 27 investigators were also putting in long hours. People who witness suspicious deaths are now asked whether the deceased complained of losing their sense of smell or taste, which are possible symptoms of COVID-19.

All homicides require an autopsy. Most COVID-19 deaths don't, as a hospital records review is considered sufficient.

Not all COVID-19 cases are clear cut. Pathologists concluded in one man's death that the virus didn't directly kill him, but that it affected his balance. He then fell and broke his hip, causing fatal complications.

Doing fewer autopsies in COVID-19 cases reduces staff exposure to the virus. Risk of infection from the dead is low since it is often transmitted via spray from a sneeze or cough. No one who works at the office has tested positive.

Staff didn't conduct an autopsy on the inmate who was allegedly involved in the barroom brawl. They gave his body a swab test like the ones given to the living to confirm the presence of the virus, though they did it in a room with reduced air pressure so that viruses can't seep out.

His body was wheeled into a smaller refrigerated unit for coronavirus deaths, an orange biohazard tag affixed to his body bag.

At an afternoon conference call to talk through the day's cases, Arunkumar sat alone with other pathologists phoning in. Pathologists mostly review records from home these days to reduce the risk of spreading the virus at the office.

One said she had more than 80 cases to review, including many COVID-19 cases.

"This is absurd," she said without anger.

Upgrades at the office in recent years have helped avert crippling backlogs during the pandemic. Changes included putting records online. That's enabled staff to work from home and clear cases faster.

A key to operations now is a perishable-goods warehouse that was converted to a temporary morgue. National Guard troops unloaded bodies on the day the AP visited. Medical examiner's office staffers measured and photographed the bodies at the loading dock before soldiers took the body bags to one of three rooms the combined size of a football field. They laid them gently on specially constructed scaffolding.

One room held 130 bodies, but the site can hold up to 2,000. Two of the three rooms were mostly empty — an encouraging sign amid the grimness.

Raspante worked seven-day weeks for several weeks at the makeshift morgue before recently getting days off. When her kids ask about her job, she doesn't tell them she's among the dead all day, every day.

"I tell them that I help hospitals learn why people get sick," she said.

Death is in the job description, but that doesn't mean those who work at the medical examiner's office are unmoved by the surge in dead, Arunkumar said. They cope by checking on each other more. Staff also adhere to a strict rule: Treat the dead with the respect they'd want extended to their own loved-ones.

Doing that "makes it easier to handle what we are doing," she said.

Associated Press writer Don Babwin and video journalist Noreen Nasir contributed to this report.

'Bombshell' concert stream will reunite cast of 'Smash'

By **MARK KENNEDY** AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The cast of "Bombshell," the fictional Broadway musical about Marilyn Monroe, is coming together again to aid those confronting the coronavirus.

Actors including Katharine McPhee, Debra Messing and Megan Hilty will reunite May 20 to present a

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stream of the one-night-only 2015 Broadway concert of the musical within the TV show "Smash," The Associated Press has learned. It will be seen on People.com, PeopleTV and the magazine's Facebook page and Twitter.

"I do remember how exciting it was that night," said McPhee, who went on to star in "Waitress" on Broadway. "I have great memories of just being so elated to be there."

The evening will be introduced by two-time Academy Award winner Renée Zellweger and will involve memories, stories and comments from the original cast.

In addition to McPhee, Messing and Hilty, the reuniting — and self-isolating — cast includes Christian Borle, Jaime Cepero, Will Chase, Brian d'Arcy James, Jack Davenport, Ann Harada, Jeremy Jordan, Andy Mientus, Leslie Odom Jr., Krysta Rodriguez and Wesley Taylor.

"It's really just an insight for all the people who love the show and gives them a chance to kind of relive it with us and hear stories that perhaps they never knew," said McPhee, who was working on the Netflix comedy "Country Comfort" when the pandemic hit.

In the series, Hilty and McPhee played feuding actresses hoping to play Monroe on Broadway. Messing and Borle were the book-and-song writing team, Davenport was the quick-to-scream director, and Huston was the feisty lead producer. Original songs were written by the songwriting team of Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman.

"Smash" ended its TV run in 2013 and the cast reunited for a one-night only "Bombshell In Concert" at the Minskoff Theater in front of 1,600 people two years later, which became one of the most successful fundraisers ever for The Actors Fund. The stream of that concert also will encourage viewers to donate to the organization.

In the past seven weeks, the Fund has distributed more than \$10.1 million in emergency financial assistance — more than five times it normally provides in a year.

"I think people are going to be really excited when they realize that it's going to be open to everybody who ever wanted to see it," said McPhee. "It just felt so exciting to be reliving something that we all loved and cherished so much."

"Smash," with first-rate songs and a studded cast, is looked back on fondly by many Broadway fans. "I think it was a little ahead of its time," McPhee said. "It was just something that was so different."

Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>

Counterfeit masks reaching frontline health workers in US

By JULIET LINDERMAN and MARTHA MENDOZA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — On a day when COVID-19 cases soared, healthcare supplies were scarce and an anguished doctor warned he was being sent to war without bullets, a cargo plane landed at the Los Angeles International Airport, supposedly loaded with the ammo doctors and nurses were begging for: some of the first N95 medical masks to reach the U.S. in almost six weeks.

Already healthcare workers who lacked the crucial protection had caught COVID-19 after treating patients infected with the highly contagious new coronavirus. That very day an emergency room doctor who earlier texted a friend that he felt unsafe without protective supplies or an N95 mask, died of the infection. It was the first such death reported in the U.S., according to the American College of Emergency Physicians.

But the shipment arriving that night in late March wasn't going to solve the problem. An Associated Press investigation has found those masks were counterfeits — as are millions of medical masks, gloves, gowns and other supplies being used in hospitals across the country, putting lives at risk.

EDITOR'S NOTE -- This story is part of an ongoing investigation by The Associated Press, the PBS series FRONTLINE and the Global Reporting Centre that examines the deadly consequences of the fragmented worldwide medical supply chain.

Before the pandemic, federal trade law enforcement agencies were focused on busting knockoffs such

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as luxury goods and computer software, mostly from China. As America fell sick, the mission shifted to medical supplies. To date, Operation Stolen Promise, spearheaded by Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, has netted 11 arrests and 519 seizures. And yet counterfeit goods continue to pour in — not just masks, but also mislabeled medicines, and fake COVID-19 tests and cures, according to the agency.

"It's just unprecedented," said Steve Francis, HSI's assistant director for global trade investigations. "These are really bad times for people who are out there trying to do the right thing and be helpful, and they end up being exploited."

The story of how one brand of counterfeits has infiltrated America's supply chains illustrates how the lack of coordination amid massive shortages has plunged the country's medical system into chaos.

EAR LOOPS

AP identified the counterfeit masks when reviewing film of the Los Angeles shipment. The telltale sign: these masks had ear loops, while authentic ones have bands that stretch across the back of the head, making for a tighter fit.

The blue and yellow boxes being unloaded in a Southern California warehouse bore the name of the Chinese factory Shanghai Dasheng. The masks inside were stamped as if approved by the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health — signifying they had been certified by the U.S. government as safe for workers in health care settings. N95 masks filter out 95% of all airborne particles, including ones too tiny to be blocked by looser fitting surgical masks.

But the day before they arrived, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a very specific warning: all Shanghai Dasheng N95 masks with ear loops were counterfeit.

Ear loop masks are less expensive to manufacture because the straps are attached with glue to the face covering, while headbands on genuine N95s, also called respirators, must be stitched, stapled or soldered to establish a tighter seal over the nose and mouth.

And even if the electrocharged fibers in the fabric are the same, masks with ear loops are not as effective because tiny airborne droplets carrying the virus can get sucked through the cracks.

"Fluid follows the path of least resistance: If someone is breathing and the respirator doesn't have a good fit, it will just go around," said infectious disease expert Shawn Gibbs, the dean of Texas A&M University's school of public health.

AP tracked other shipments of Shanghai Dasheng ear loop N95 masks as they entered the vast U.S. medical system. Shipping labels and invoices, certified letters and interviews with more than a dozen buyers, distributors or middlemen pointed to the corporate headquarters and busy factory of Shanghai Dasheng Health Products Manufacture Company.

The company did not respond to AP's queries about its masks. And AP could not independently verify if they are making their own counterfeits, or, as the CDC said in a published warning, someone is using Shanghai Dasheng's certification numbers "without their permission."

The CDC separately told AP it has been in talks with Shanghai Dasheng about authenticity issues.

"Recently, NIOSH has received reports stating there is product being obtained directly from the Shanghai Dasheng factory, labeled as NIOSH-approved, with ear loops," said agency spokeswoman Katie Shahan in an email to the AP. Shahan said Shanghai Dasheng's N95s with ear loops are counterfeit.

On their own website, Shanghai Dasheng warns: "WE DON'T HAVE ANY DISTRIBUTORS, DEALERS OR BRANCH FACTORIES. BEWARE OF COUNTERFEIT!"

Florida-based importer Mark Kwoka said he believes the Shanghai Dasheng masks with ear loops that he obtained came from their factory, based on information he received from his partners in China.

"This is kind of getting out of control," said Kwoka, who made a career in bridal gown design and manufacturing in China but turned to masks earlier this year.

On a recent spring day, hawkers outside the guarded gates of the factory were offering to take orders for U.S.-approved, medical-grade N95s. It wasn't clear whether the sellers were getting their products from inside. A security guard told a reporter that he believed the sellers were peddling counterfeits, but

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police at a nearby station weren't able to confirm that. The security guard ordered the journalists to leave. Shanghai Dasheng is one of the largest manufacturers of authentic N95s in the world and one of only a handful in China certified to make NIOSH approved, U.S. medical-grade N95s.

In normal times, Shanghai Dasheng was the gold standard for N95s, according to several brokers who work in China. But in the rush of this pandemic, several said cheaper masks are proliferating.

Meanwhile, Shanghai Dasheng is holding itself up as a vital part of the pandemic response.

Just days into a weeklong New Year celebration in January, company chairman Wu Shengrong called back employees and then joined cleaners, cooks and a skeleton crew of workers for long days and nights on assembly lines. Eleven days into the manufacturing blitz, Shengrong invited in a group of journalists and said his company had bumped daily mask production from 40,000 to 70,000, and aimed for 200,000 once back at full strength.

"I am not a learned man," Shengrong said at the time, "but as a Communist Party member and army veteran, I am a patriot and Dasheng is just a drop of water in China's ocean of private enterprises."

THE FRONT LINES

One recipient of the Shanghai Dasheng ear loop masks was Direct Relief, an international humanitarian aid organization in Southern California.

Like other buyers AP contacted, Direct Relief at first thought the factory inadvertently sent the wrong mask model and set aside the entire shipment. But after reading the CDC's warnings, CEO Thomas Tighe said they had come to believe they were counterfeit and reported them to the federal government.

"It's a little scary that it had gone through what we understood was an aggressive customs investigation for export, and an aggressive customs import by the U.S. and still got through," Tighe said. "It's been a real lesson."

Direct Relief has since caught even more poorly constructed masks donated to their warehouse.

Even for those looking out for fakes, it has been difficult to keep up with changing federal guidelines for medical-grade masks.

Citing an acute shortage of N95 masks, government officials relaxed standards in March. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced that other, unapproved medical masks with ear loops were appropriate for COVID-19 care.

But government testing of newly arrived models found most were substandard, and on May 7 the agency banned mask imports from 65 Chinese factories.

Shanghai Dasheng is among 14 that remain on the approved list.

For more than four weeks, millions of masks now considered inadequate for medical protection entered the U.S. and are now in use.

Meanwhile state and local governments, hospitals, private caregivers and well-wishers have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the flawed masks. Before the pandemic, N95 masks sold for about 60 cents each. Today they're priced as high as \$6 apiece.

"It's terrible, just terrible," said David Schildmeier, spokesman for the Massachusetts Nursing Association.

He said Lawrence General Hospital, which had solicited mask donations online, handed out ear loop Shanghai Dasheng-labeled masks to as many as 40 nurses in a COVID-19 unit before someone noticed.

In West Virginia, the state passed the masks to thousands of paramedics and firefighters, prison guards and hospital workers. State officials knew of the CDC warnings about Shanghai Dasheng's ear loops, but dismissed concerns saying that, with a proper fit, they would be safe.

In a letter to first responders, Jeff Sandy, the state's secretary for Military Affairs and Public Safety, said he reviewed the packaging and the masks, checked with the vendor, the importer, the Chinese exporter and — through a lawyer — Shanghai Dasheng itself. He wrote he is certain the 50,000 N95 masks with ear loops that the state provided are "genuine products" that provide adequate protection.

Some first responders disagree.

"While trusting the equipment to protect them, our members may have unknowingly placed themselves in situations that put them at further risk," said West Virginia State Firemen's Association President Jerry

Loudin.

Some of the masks were purchased by charities or well-intentioned community members who held online fundraisers.

One Southern California marketing consultant, frustrated with reports that frontline medical workers didn't have N95 masks, had a client who makes custom, re-keyable locks in China. That client said he had sources who could get legitimate N95s, and so she launched a fundraiser, and within weeks delivered a shipment of the Shanghai Dasheng ear loop masks to caregivers.

The consultant, Wendy Chou Le, said the nurses she gave them to near Los Angeles have been grateful and didn't raise concerns.

Tyler Alvare, a pediatric physician's assistant in Alexandria, Virginia, had run his own fit tests on the masks when they arrived. But after talking to the AP and reviewing the federal warnings, he said he grabbed all the Shanghai Dasheng ear loop masks he had left and notified everyone he gave them to.

He said the government should have taken responsibility for providing enough protective equipment as soon as the shortage of masks became apparent instead of having every medical provider figure it out themselves.

"It's really outside of our area of expertise," he said.

But even experts were caught off guard.

Franco Sogliocca, Mount Sinai procurement director, was working 18-hour days, seven days a week, to keep enough safety supplies in the hospital system's ERs and ICUS as COVID-19 overwhelmed New York. He was searching, ordering and hustling for N95s, and was planning to buy from Shanghai Dasheng.

"Our sourcing lead said, 'Wait a minute guys, this is something we don't want,'" Sogliocca said.

Associated Press writers Erika Kinetz in Rieti, Italy, Anthony Izaguirre in Charleston, West Virginia, Dake Kang in Beijing, and AP researcher Si Chen in Shanghai contributed to this story.

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Why prospect of deflation could pose a threat to US economy

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The economic paralysis caused by the coronavirus led in April to the steepest month-to-month fall in U.S. consumer prices since the 2008 financial crisis — a 0.8% drop that was driven by a plunge in gasoline prices.

And excluding the normally volatile categories of food and energy, so-called core prices tumbled 0.4%, the government said in its monthly report on consumer inflation. That was the sharpest such drop on records dating to 1957.

The business shutdowns, reduced travel and shrunken consumer spending that the virus has caused have likely sent the U.S. economy into a severe recession. The resulting drop in economic activity is exerting a powerful downward force on prices throughout the economy.

Tuesday's report raises the prospect of deflation, a prolonged drop in prices and wages that typically makes people and companies reluctant to spend and can prolong a recession. Not since the Great Depression of the 1930s has deflation posed a serious economic threat in the United States.

"If deflation becomes embedded in the economy, it can be difficult to uproot," said Gus Faucher, chief economist at PNC Financial Services.

Over the past 12 months, overall prices have risen a scant 0.3%, the smallest year-over-year increase since 2015. Core inflation has increased 1.4%, the lowest pace since 2011. With consumer prices falling, concerns have arisen that the United States might succumb to a debilitating bout of deflation for the first time in decades.

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The fact that falling prices tend to cause worry among economists and policymakers may strike many people as puzzling. Here are some questions and answers:

WHAT EXACTLY IS DEFLATION?

Deflation is a broad and prolonged decline in prices and wages and often in the value of homes or other assets. During deflationary periods, broad barometers like the Consumer Price Index that the government issued Tuesday will show consistent price changes below zero. And for two months now, that is what the CPI has shown: The index fell 0.4% in March and 0.8% in April. The trend is likely to persist as the virus depresses economic growth and consumer spending and thereby exerts downward pressure on prices.

AREN'T FALLING PRICES GOOD? PEOPLE CAN BUY MORE THINGS WITH LESS MONEY, RIGHT?

It's true that households can make their paychecks go further when prices are flat or falling. And with tens of millions of people suddenly out of work, this means that at least their unemployment benefits will stretch further. The 20% drop in gasoline prices in April, for example, will provide a welcome benefit to motorists. All that said, economists fear that sustained price declines would hinder, not help, economic growth.

HOW?

The main reason is that falling prices typically make consumers and businesses delay spending. Why buy now, after all, if you can purchase the products you want — from furniture and appliances to cars, boats and computer equipment — at even lower prices three or six months from now? Collectively, such delays slow consumer spending, which drives about 70% of U.S. economic activity. Consider the economy's 4.8% annual contraction during the January-March quarter. That quarterly decline, the worst since the 2008 financial crisis, was led by a broad pullback in consumer spending.

Deflation also tends to hold down wages and to make the inflation-adjusted cost of a loan more expensive for borrowers. And in keeping borrowing and spending persistently weak, deflation can prolong a recession.

HAS THE U.S. EVER ENDURED A PERIOD OF DEFLATION?

Yes, but not for nearly nine decades, since the Great Depression. During the Depression, falling prices meant that farmers couldn't receive sufficient payments for their crops. This caused millions of families to lose their farms to banks after they failed to make their mortgage payments. More recently, some other economies, notably Japan's, have been bedeviled by deflation. Beginning in the 1990s, Japan struggled, often in vain, to keep inflation from falling. As a consequence, Japan suffered through more than two decades of anemic economic growth.

WHAT CAN U.S. POLICYMAKERS DO TO AVOID THAT FATE?

The Federal Reserve has responded aggressively and on multiple fronts to try to counter the economic damage inflicted by the coronavirus shutdowns. The Fed has cut its benchmark interest rate to a record low near zero, where it had stood for seven years after the financial crisis. The central bank is also spending trillions of dollars — more than it ever has, by far — to buy Treasury and mortgage bonds to try to keep short and longer-term rates as low as possible to support borrowing and sustain the economy. The Fed has also unveiled numerous programs that are intended to facilitate a smooth and continual flow of credit, which is essential to the financial system.

WILL ALL THOSE EFFORTS BE ENOUGH?

No one knows for sure. The Fed's broad efforts, which in a normal economy would likely accelerate inflation, may or may not be enough to keep prices from falling. Yet if consumers and businesses avoid spending at anything near normal levels for many more months in light of continued shutdowns, persistent unemployment and fears about the virus, a bout of deflation would become more likely. Most analysts have said they believe that sustained economic growth won't resume until sometime next year, perhaps after a vaccine or an effective drug therapy is available and can be widely distributed.

Elon Musk becomes champion of defying virus stay-home orders

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

Tesla CEO Elon Musk has emerged as a champion of defying stay-home orders intended to stop the

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coronavirus from spreading, picking up support — as well as critics — on social media.

Among the supporters was President Donald Trump, who on Tuesday morning tweeted that Tesla's San Francisco Bay Area factory should be allowed to open despite local health department orders that it stay closed except for minimum basic operations.

"It can be done fast & safely," the president tweeted, joining many of Musk's 34 million Twitter followers who back the defiance.

Among Musk's biggest critics is California Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, who used an expletive to describe the CEO after his threats to relocate his operations to Texas or Nevada. She said the company is disregarding worker safety and bullying public officials.

Tesla's factory reopened Monday with Musk practically daring local authorities to arrest him. The plant apparently continued operations on Tuesday. The company met a Monday deadline to submit a site-specific plan to protect worker safety, which the Alameda County Public Health Department is reviewing, said county spokeswoman Neetu Balram.

The restart defied orders from the county health department, which has deemed the factory a nonessential business that can't fully open under virus restrictions. The department said Monday it warned the company was operating in violation of the county health order, and hoped Tesla will "comply without further enforcement measures" until the county approves a site-specific plan required by the state.

"We look forward to reviewing Tesla's plan and coming to agreement on protocol and a timeline to reopen safely," the statement read.

State law allows a fine of up to \$1,000 a day or up to 90 days in jail for operating in violation of health orders.

The plant in Fremont, a city of more than 230,000 people south of San Francisco, had been closed since March 23. It employs about 10,000 workers.

Public health experts have credited the stay-home orders with slowing the spread of novel coronavirus, helping hospitals handle an influx of cases. The coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people. But it has killed more than 80,000 people in the U.S., with the death toll rising.

Alameda County was among six San Francisco Bay Area counties that were the first in the nation to impose stay-at-home orders in mid-March. Gov. Gavin Newsom has repeatedly said that counties can impose restrictions that are more stringent than state orders.

The order in the Bay Area has been extended until the end of the month, but the counties plan to allow some limited business and manufacturing starting May 18, the same day Detroit automakers plan to reopen auto assembly plants. Some auto parts plants were to restart production this week.

The Detroit automakers' 150,000 U.S. workers are represented by the United Auto Workers union, which has negotiated for added safety precautions. Tesla's workers do not have a union.

Musk, whose company has sued Alameda County seeking to overturn its order, threatened to move Tesla's manufacturing operations and headquarters from the state.

Tesla contends in the lawsuit that Alameda County can't be more restrictive than orders from Newsom. The lawsuit says the governor's coronavirus restrictions refer to federal guidelines classifying vehicle manufacturing as essential businesses that are allowed to continue operating.

No agency appeared ready to enforce the order against Tesla. County sheriff's Sgt. Ray Kelly said any enforcement would come from Fremont police. Geneva Bosques, Fremont police spokeswoman, said officers would take action at the direction of the county health officer.

County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, who represents Fremont, said he's been working on the issue for weeks trying to find a way for Tesla to reopen in a way that satisfies the health officer. He said officials were moving toward allowing Tesla to restart May 18, but he suspects Musk wanted to restart stamping operations to make body parts needed to resume assembling electric vehicles.

Tesla has a plan to maintain worker safety, including the wearing of gloves and masks, installing barriers between workers and maintaining social distancing. Haggerty said the company initially pushed back on checking employee temperatures before boarding a company bus to get to work. But Tesla relented, he

said, and agreed to check workers.

Krisher reported from Detroit. AP Reporters Janie Har and Juliet Williams in San Francisco and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

US choir outbreak called 'superspreader event' in report

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

SHORELINE, Wash. (AP) — Disease trackers are calling a choir practice in Washington state a superspreader event that illustrates how easily the coronavirus can pass from person to person.

The act of singing itself may have spread the virus in the air and onto surfaces, according to a report from Skagit County Public Health published Tuesday.

"One individual present felt ill, not knowing what they had, and ended up infecting 52 other people," said lead author Lea Hamner, calling the outbreak a tragedy.

Two choir members died of COVID-19 after attending the March 10 practice of the Skagit Valley Chorale. The rehearsal was held nearly two weeks before the state's stay-at-home order.

Other superspreader events are known: A Chicago cluster of 16 cases, including three deaths, stemmed from a funeral and a birthday party. South Korea is investigating an outbreak linked to nightclubs reopening earlier this month.

The singers sat 6 to 10 inches apart in different configurations during the 2 1/2 hour rehearsal at a church in Mount Vernon, Washington, about 60 miles north of Seattle, according to the report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Choir members had no physical contact, although some snacked on cookies and oranges or helped stack chairs, they told investigators. The virus could have spread when exhaled droplets landed on those items.

Another theory? A fine mist of virus particles emitted during singing could have contributed, the report suggests. Some people emit more particles than others and such emissions can happen with loud talking or, possibly, singing.

The virus is thought to primarily spread through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

The singers felt their first symptoms — cough, fever, muscle pain or headaches — one to 12 days after the practice. The sick singers' average age was 69 and most were women, nearly matching the demographics of choir practice attendees.

Understanding how the coronavirus spreads is important for preventing and tracking the disease it causes. The CDC recommends avoiding large groups, wearing cloth masks in public and staying at least 6 feet apart from others.

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Detroit-area residents lift spirits with costumed parades

By MIKE HOUSEHOLDER Associated Press

FERNDALE, Mich. (AP) — Sarah Ignash spends her days looking after dogs in normal times. With her business temporarily shuttered because of the coronavirus, though, she's taken to walks on the wild side through her Detroit suburb with dancing bears, bipedal zebras and the like.

Ignash, whose business in nearby Roseville specializes in boarding, grooming and day care for dogs, is one of the roughly two dozen members of the Ferndale T-Rex Walking Club who have been donning inflatable costumes for feel-good jaunts during these stressful times.

"It's so much fun. Nobody can really see, (because) I have my mask on. And when I walk, I'm just smiling from ear to ear," the 42-year-old Ignash said before donning her pink unicorn get-up and leading Monday's impromptu parade.

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It was the club's seventh walk since it formed in March. The members' full-body inflatable costumes run the gamut from dancing hippos, sharks and bears to a cheerful Pikachu, Stay Puft Marshmallow Man and Mr. Potato Head. And, of course, there's a T-Rex.

They trek single-file along sidewalks to thematically appropriate tunes such as the Bangles' "Walk Like an Egyptian," and "Walk the Dinosaur" by Was (Not Was).

"The purpose of the group is to just do something a little bit out of the ordinary," said Ignash, the group's leader and founding member.

Most members of the T-Rex Walking Club also belong to the Elks lodge in Ferndale, and they adhere to a strict set of guidelines.

"We do not tell anybody where we're going to walk, where we're meeting or the time that we're going to walk," said Ignash, adding that their costumes are fully enclosed and that every member also wears a mask while inside.

Plus, socially distancing is no problem for them.

"A lot of us are very large and we have very long tails," Ignash said. "So, maintaining social distancing is very easy in these."

While the club members get a kick out of their parades, the idea is to bring a little bit of cheer to their fellow residents who remain under quarantine as part of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's stay-at-home order.

"That's just really why we're doing it. It's just something that's very unexpected. And people need something a little bit different to break up the day, I think," Ignash said.

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

Russian president's spokesman hospitalized with coronavirus

By **DARIA LITVINOVA** Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has been hospitalized with the coronavirus, the latest in a series of setbacks for President Vladimir Putin as Russia struggles to contain the growing outbreak.

"Yes, I've gotten sick. I'm being treated," Peskov, a key Putin aide, told the Interfax news agency on Tuesday.

Also infected was Peskov's wife, Olympic ice dancing champion Tatyana Navka. She told reporters that Peskov's condition was "satisfactory" and that the couple decided to enter the hospital so as not to expose the rest of their family.

"He brought it (the virus) from work," Navka was quoted as saying by the Daily Storm online outlet.

Peskov, 52, has been Putin's spokesman since 2008 but began working with him in the early 2000s.

The Tass news agency quoted Peskov saying he last saw Putin in person "more than a month ago."

Reporters from the Kremlin pool said on Twitter that Peskov was last seen in public on April 30 at a meeting with Putin. It was not clear whether the two were in the same room because Putin has been conducting his meetings via teleconference in recent weeks from his residence in Novo-Ogaryovo, outside Moscow.

Peskov is not the only top government official to come down with the coronavirus. Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin revealed April 30 that he had tested positive for the virus. The next day, Construction and Housing Minister Vladimir Yakushev, was hospitalized with it, and Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova said last week she was self-isolating after getting infected.

The announcement of Peskov's hospitalization came a day after Putin said Russia was slowing the outbreak and announced he was easing some of the nationwide lockdown restrictions.

But new questions are being raised about just how successful the response has been. Health officials reported thousands of new infections, many health care workers are falling ill with the virus amid complaints that protective gear is in short supply, and deadly fires have broken out at two hospitals for virus patients, apparently from defective breathing machines.

Mishandling the health crisis could hurt Putin's public approval after more than 20 years in power. It

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has been declining since 2018, when he rolled out an unpopular reform that raised the retirement age for Russians, and it is currently at its lowest since 2013.

"If we start to see mass infections and it turns out that this was a wrong move ... it will hit the government's ratings hard," former Kremlin speechwriter turned political analyst Abbas Gallyamov told The Associated Press. "People will definitely connect it this his (Putin's) decision" to ease restrictions, he added.

Russia has reported more than 232,000 confirmed coronavirus cases and more than 2,100 virus-related deaths as of Tuesday. Hours before Putin made a televised speech Monday about ending the partial economic lockdown, health officials reported a daily record of over 11,600 new cases.

"Let's remember this," opposition politician Alexei Navalny tweeted after Putin's speech. "Putin lifted nationwide restrictions aimed at curbing the epidemic on the day when a record has been set in new infections. W for 'wisdom.'"

On Tuesday, health officials once again reported almost 11,000 new infections.

Because of the outbreak, the 67-year-old Putin had to postpone a nationwide vote last month on changes to the constitution that would pave the way for him to stay in office until 2036, if he desires.

On Tuesday, health officials said they were investigating the safety of ventilators after the fires in intensive care units, apparently because the breathing machines malfunctioned. Killed a total of six people in the past four days.

A fire Tuesday at St. George Hospital in St. Petersburg killed five patients on ventilators. Another blaze Saturday at the Spasokukotsky Hospital in Moscow killed one patient. Both hospitals had been repurposed for treating coronavirus patients, and in both cases, faulty Russian-made ventilators were reported to have started the fires.

The government says hospitals have enough ventilators to deal with the outbreak, and Putin said Monday that only "a small fraction" of Russia's ventilator stockpile is being used.

However, doctors in hospitals outside big cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg have been complaining about not enough ventilators or their poor quality, as well as about sweeping shortages of protective equipment.

Peskov regularly dismissed those complaints at his daily briefings and maintained that Russian hospitals are well-stocked with everything they need, attributing reports of shortages to isolated incidents that were quickly addressed by the government.

He has been the Kremlin's feisty voice in denying Russia's involvement in various international scandals, such as the inference in the 2016 U.S. election, the poisoning of Russia's ex-spy Sergei Skripal in the U.K., and recent allegations of Russian security services plotting to poison Czech officials.

Peskov's infection has raised questions anew about the spread of the virus to top government officials.

In late March, Putin was photographed shaking hands with Dr. Denis Protsenko, head of Moscow's top hospital for coronavirus patients. The next week, Protsenko was reported to have been infected with the virus.

"Who did you think of in terms of 'Who's next?' when you read the news about Peskov?" opposition politician Leonid Volkov tweeted Tuesday. "And why was Putin (on your mind)?"

Associated Press producer Tanya Titova contributed.

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

VIRUS DIARY: Luck (good for now) is her isolation soundtrack

By LISA J. ADAMS WAGNER Associated Press

EVANS, Ga. (AP) — I woke up this morning to the sounds of birds instead of sirens.

Rather than dodging potholes and swearing at all the incompetent drivers complicating my 10-mile commute to the office, I spent the 45 minutes leading up to my work shift watching the steam from my coffee

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curl in the air as the branches of a tall pin oak, lifted by a morning breeze, fanned me with a thousand feathery leaves.

Luck brought me here.

When I got married in September, it was with the understanding that my husband and I would — for the foreseeable future — continue to live two hours apart: I in a city just outside Atlanta, where my office is located, he on a cul-de-sac in a quiet, rural subdivision outside Augusta, Georgia.

The work-at-home order in response to the coronavirus changed that. At least for now, I am living on the cul-de-sac, in a house on an acre of land that is a mini-paradise. I'm moved by the backyard bushes bursting with fuchsia azaleas, dizzy with the scents of pine and freshly cut grass, lulled by the wind in the trees and the constant chatter of birds who haven't heard we're in the middle of a pandemic.

COVID-19 has stolen too many lives and jobs, stretched resources too thin, isolated too many. It has swept us all up in a wave of sadness, desperation, grief and uncertainty.

And, perversely, it has allowed me this unexpected gift. It's sheer luck. I did nothing to deserve it.

This is a lesson I have spent a lifetime teaching myself during bad luck's frequent visits: when I was sexually assaulted at knifepoint; mugged by box cutter-wielding thugs; and involved in several serious car crashes, one of which left me with a dislocated hip.

It's what I told myself when I watched helplessly over the years as illness and violence ended the lives of two siblings, a niece and nephews, and a brother-in-law — and what I am repeating like a mantra right now as I wrestle with the hard, horrible fact that one of my sisters is losing her battle with cancer.

For as long as I can remember, I have spent the first conscious minutes of every day wondering what piece of bad news might be headed my way. But it also works the other way: Just days and weeks ago came the exuberant announcements that two new great-nieces had been born. I am the last of 14 children and an aunt, great-aunt, and great-great-aunt many times over. How lucky is that?

Luck, too, helped me find the man I would marry, after decades of enduring but ultimately doomed relationships.

Luck was with me on a recent morning before dawn as I lay curled in a ball on the floor next to our garage moments after a tornado warning shrieked over my cellphone. The lightning, winds and rain were strong and terrifying and toppled giant trees nearby, but we weren't hit.

So, yes, I know that — for the most part — luck is on my side right now. And I also know that can change.

I am well aware that when this self-quarantining thing is all over, I will have to trade my existence as a newlywed in this bucolic backyard of birds and breezes for potholes and unskilled drivers. Ambulances and cop cars, not birds, will be my siren songs once more.

That's OK. For now, I will continue to start my days in the pin oak's shade, marveling at the resilience of a 20-year-old tree that has been pushed, pulled and shaken — but never broken — by passing storms.

"Virus Diary," an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus saga through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. See previous entries here. Follow AP South Desk Editor Lisa J. Adams Wagner on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/LisaJoans>

Like it or not, National League designated hitters limber up

By BEN WALKER AP Baseball Writer

Before all the self-proclaimed purists forecasting the destruction of baseball strategy and the very sanctity of the sport as we know it go berserk bemoaning the inclusion of a designated hitter in the National League this season, remember this:

In a most remarkable October full of huge momentum swings, the pivotal blow that decided last year's World Series was delivered by, yep, the NL DH.

OK, that clang resonating off the right field foul screen at Minute Maid Park — courtesy of Howie Kendrick's home run in Game 7 for the visiting Washington Nationals — probably won't drown out the wailing of longtime National League fans over the plan to play this virus-delayed season with a (gasp!) DH in both

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circuits.

And it certainly won't quell the debate that's raged since April 6, 1973, when Ron Blomberg of the New York Yankees stepped to the plate at Fenway Park as Major League Baseball's first DH (and drew a bases-loaded walk from Luis Tiant).

To many NL fans, the simple scribble of "DH" on the lineup card sullies the whole stadium. To lots of AL fans, the mere sight of a pitcher touching a Louisville Slugger is a total affront to the diamond.

No matter, that's part of the proposal MLB owners are making to players — a full-time DH in the National League, same as the AL. This year, only.

Jim Riggleman has managed and coached in each league and seen both sides.

"During this abbreviated season I'm OK with it," he wrote in an email Monday.

"In general, I think the NL game is a much better game. The pitcher's AB is not the point. It's all the ramifications that the pitcher hitting has on the strategy of the game. More interesting game and tougher game to manage with pitcher hitting," he said.

With that, let's take a meaty cut at what this might mean as NL DHs get limber with the lumber:

WHO'S UP?

Kyle Schwarber (Cubs), Nick Castellanos (Reds) and Dominic Smith (Mets) made it to the majors with their bats, not gloves. They'd be natural fits.

Christian Yelich (Brewers), Yoenis Céspedes (Mets) and Hunter Pence (Giants) are coming off injuries. The DH spot would give them a break from the daily grind.

Kevin Cron (Diamondbacks) hit 38 homers in Triple-A and six more for Arizona. With first baseman Christian Walker coming off a breakout season, Cron could have a new slot.

Justin Turner (Dodgers), Ryan Braun (Brewers) and Jay Bruce (Phillies) are among older players who might see time there. The Nationals (Ryan Zimmerman, Starlin Castro, Eric Thames and Kendrick) and the Rockies (Daniel Murphy and Ian Desmond) could rotate. Nick Markakis and Adam Duvall would benefit in a crowded Braves outfield.

OUCH!

Max Scherzer, Masahiro Tanaka and Adam Wainwright are among the aces in recent years to be injured either batting or running the bases. With a stop-and-go spring training and a desire to ramp up quickly to regular-season speed, no one wants to see pitchers get sidelined doing something besides throwing.

Who does this rule hurt? Start with Madison Bumgarner, the power-hitting pitcher who signed with Arizona. He loves to hit and once toyed with entering the All-Star Home Run Derby. The Diamondbacks would probably rather put up someone paid to bat.

Jacob deGrom, Clayton Kershaw and Stephen Strasburg likely will keep excelling. But their ERAs are likely to take a hit — those NL lineups will look a little more imposing.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Sonny Gray (Reds), Sandy Alcantara (Marlins) and Chris Paddack (Padres) all start for teams that struggle to score runs. With the DH, managers might let them stay in longer, instead of pulling them for a pinch-hitter.

Yasiel Puig doesn't have a team. He combined for 24 homers and 84 RBIs with Cincinnati and Cleveland last year and remains a free agent.

Matt Adams (Mets), Logan Morrison (Brewers) and Greg Bird (Rangers) signed minor league deals in the offseason and, if they prove they've still got pop, could be low-priced options. NL rosters were pretty full when the shutdown came in March, but now there figures to be rejiggering.

SPEAKING OF STATS

For every entertaining home run trot by the likes of a Bartolo Colon, don't forget: Pitchers hit a whopping .128 overall last year. NL twirlers were better at the dish — they hit .131, while their AL counterparts flailed at .087.

There aren't many like Shohei Ohtani out there. Nelson Cruz, Edwin Encarnación, J.D. Martinez and Miguel Cabrera are easy DH fits in the AL. The NL side will be more of a scramble.

With extra playoff teams, no doubt guys like Jorge Soler, Daniel Vogelbach and Corey Dickerson could

become trade targets come October or whenever the deal deadline is set.

The move to NL DHs will surely wind up sacrificing one part of the game that traditionalists love to tout: bunting.

NL teams put down an average of 35 sacrifice bunts last year, led by the Dodgers with a majors-high 55 (they also led the NL with 279 home runs). AL teams averaged just 16, and the Angels had the fewest with only four.

Pitchers bunt the most — when they disappear from the plate, so will a big piece of strategy that's been around forever.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Cubicle comeback? Pandemic will reshape office life for good

By **KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer**

LONDON (AP) — Office jobs are never going to be the same.

When workers around the world eventually return to their desks, they'll find many changes due to the pandemic. For a start, fewer people will go back to their offices as the coronavirus crisis makes working from home more accepted, health concerns linger and companies weigh up rent savings and productivity benefits.

For the rest, changes will begin with the commute as workers arrive in staggered shifts to avoid rush hour crowds. Staff might take turns working alternate days in the office to reduce crowding. Floor markings or digital sensors could remind people to stand apart and cubicles might even make a comeback.

"This is going to be a catalyst for things that people were too scared to do before," said John Furneaux, CEO of Hive, a New York City-based workplace software startup. The pandemic "gives added impetus to allow us and others to make changes to century-old working practices."

Hive plans to help employees avoid packed rush hour subway commutes by starting at different hours, said Furneaux, who tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies. In Britain, the government is considering asking employers to do the same.

At bigger companies, senior executives are rethinking cramming downtown office towers with workers. British bank Barclays is making a "long-term adjustment in how we think about our location strategy," CEO Jes Staley said. "The notion of putting 7,000 people in a building may be a thing of the past."

That is already happening in China, where lockdowns started easing in March. Beijing municipal authorities limited the number of people in each office to no more than 50% of usual staffing levels, required office workers to wear face masks and sit at least 1 meter (3.3 feet) apart.

At a minimum, the COVID-19 crisis could be the death knell for some recent polarizing office trends, such as the shared workspaces used by many tech startups to create a more casual and creative environment. Cubicles and partitions are making a return as the virus speeds the move away from open plan office spaces, architects say.

Design firm Bergmeyer is reinstalling dividers on 85 desks at its Boston office that had been removed over the years. That "will return a greater degree of privacy to the individual desks, in addition to the physical barrier which this health crisis now warrants," said Vice President Rachel Zsembery.

There's no rush to return. At Google and Facebook, employees will be able to work remotely until the end of the year. Other firms have realized they don't even need an office.

Executives at San Francisco teamwork startup Range had given notice on their office because they wanted someplace bigger. But when California's shelter in place order was issued, they instead scrapped their search and decided to go all remote indefinitely, a move that would save six figures on rent.

"We were looking at the writing on the wall," said co-founder Jennifer Dennard.

One upside of having an all-remote workforce is that the company can hire from a broader pool of candidates beyond San Francisco, where astronomical housing costs have priced out many. But Dennard said the downside is that it eliminates the "chaotic interruptions" - the chance encounters between staff

members that can spark creativity, so the company is planning more online collaboration.

Good Brothers Digital, a public relations firm in Wales, also ditched its office space in downtown Cardiff. Director Martyn John said productivity is just as high as it was before the pandemic forced them to work from home, so he decided to give up the company's office space to save on rent, one of his biggest expenses.

Why drag employees into the office if they're happier working from home, he reasons.

"People are just going to expect it now."

Many changes are expected to remain in place even after the COVID-19 threat ends, as companies prepare for new disease outbreaks or other emergencies.

The work from home trend will only continue to accelerate, according to consultancy Gartner.

After the pandemic, 41% of employees expect to work remotely at least some of the time, up from 30% before the outbreak, according to 220 human resources executives it surveyed. Workers who do return will likely welcome wearing office attire once again as a signal things are going back to normal, Gartner said.

Not all companies can go fully remote, especially big corporations with thousands of staff. Even so, they're thinking carefully about who should return to the office and who can and should continue to work from home.

At Dell, more people are going to work from home but "we're still going to need offices," because some jobs are best done there, said Chief Digital Officer Jen Felch. She cited customer support staff, who can access more resources at the office to diagnose equipment problems.

More than 90% of Dell's 165,000 full-time global staff are working remotely during the pandemic, compared with 30% before it started. Once lockdown ends, she estimates that number will be above 50%.

The outbreak is also going to force companies to take hygiene much more seriously.

"The amount of people cleaning and sanitizing an office is going to shoot through the roof," said Brian Kropp, Gartner's chief of human resources research.

Extra attention will go to places like conference rooms, which will have to be cleaned between uses, bringing added disruption, he said.

Or companies could do away with in-person meetings altogether.

"What's the point of sanitizing everybody's desk if you're getting them all in the same room," said Hive's Furneaux, who said he's thinking carefully about how to hold events such as "all-hands meetings" for his 70 staff. "We might get the weird scenario of in-office conference calls."

High tech solutions will play a role, such as sensors to remind people to maintain social distancing, said Joanna Daly, vice president for corporate health and safety at IBM.

Existing industrial sensor technology could easily be adapted to offices, said Daly.

One possible example: "We'd want our phones to buzz if we got closer than 2 meters while we were having a conversation," she said.

Follow Kelvin Chan at twitter.com/chanman

Couples turn to 'minimonies' to salvage wedding plans

By **LEANNE ITALIE** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Couples trying to salvage weddings put on hold by the coronavirus are feeding a fresh trend in the bridal industry: the "minimony."

Rather than wait, they're getting hitched alone or with a few local loved ones looking on at a safe social distance as other guests join virtually. Then they plan to reschedule larger celebrations when allowed.

"We were about to put a \$15,000 deposit down on a venue when coronavirus hit," said Kate Whiting, 35, in Northern California's tiny Lake Almanor Peninsula. "Why would I want to wait to marry my best friend?"

The 300-guest wedding of her dreams, and those of her 40-year-old fiance, Jake Avery, will happen once a COVID-19 vaccine is in place. For now, a close friend recently ordained will marry them in their yard June 6.

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Their approach, born of necessity, is a play on micro weddings, the first choice for some couples looking for a more intimate experience or unable to afford splashier affairs.

Before the pandemic so dramatically changed lives, 20,000 to 30,000 weddings happened every weekend in the U.S., with more than 550,000 originally planned for April, May and June this year, according to data from the wedding planning site TheKnot.com.

Worldwide, 93% of couples whose weddings are impacted by the virus are rescheduling, with only 7% canceling altogether, the site said.

The average cost of weddings pre-pandemic was teetering at just under \$34,000, and the average guest count at 131.

Nicole Ochoa and Brad Wilkinson, both 27, had an initial guest list of 200-plus before choosing to go micro for their July nuptials. Really, really micro. The Sonoma County, California, couple decided on fewer than a dozen guests for the wedding on a ranch near home that overlooks estate vineyards.

"We just really wanted it to be personal," Ochoa said. "I hope that other people can pause and consider this as an option. It feels like the wedding industry and wedding trends have turned into such a show."

Guest lists of 50 or fewer accounted for just 8 percent of U.S. weddings last year, down from 10 percent the year before, according to The Knot, which surveys more than 25,000 couples annually. Weddings with 51 to 150 guests encompassed 54 percent of couples.

Kristen Maxwell Cooper, editor in chief of The Knot, said couples who want to keep their original plans but worry that virus restrictions will drive their guest counts down might consider "shift weddings."

Once conditions allow, she said, "They can host their ceremony with a group of 25 of their guests while live-streaming to the rest of their loved ones, followed by a reception with the same group who attended the ceremony for a few hours before the next group of guests arrive."

With the second of three deposits due on their venue, Ochoa and Wilkinson are in the process of asking for a "force majeure" clause in their contract so they can get their money back in case virus restrictions remain in place.

"If the venue denies our request, we've decided to keep the date and get married in Nicole's parent's Sonoma County backyard," Wilkinson said.

Ochoa added: "We would be incredibly sad if we can't be married at the venue we fell so hard for, but there's something pretty magical about the thought of walking across the lawn in my dress with my Dad, too."

Vendors focused on micro weddings and organized elopements have seen an uptick in interest since the virus struck, but some couples were ahead of that curve.

Melissa Todd, 50, and Jeffrey Hall, 59, used PopTheKnot.com for their \$7,000 elopement with seven guests. They married last November in Chicago, where they live, and wanted to do something quick.

"I'm just one of those people who never dreamed of a big elaborate wedding," Todd said. "I'm pretty mellow."

Pop the Knot makes use of downtime at venues around the country. It operates in nine cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta and Austin, Texas.

"We already were quite busy, but sadly we have been receiving a ton of emails from clients that had their weddings canceled due to COVID and are now wanting to do a small pop-up," said owner and wedding planner Michele Velazquez.

SimplyEloped.com offers low-cost packages in destinations including the Florida Keys, Lake Tahoe and New Orleans.

"Since the coronavirus outbreak, I've had numerous couples come to me every day with similar stories: They're canceling their big wedding due to travel complications, not wanting to assemble a big group of people or other virus-related problems," said the site's editor, Karen Norian.

"These couples are heartbroken, not just about the financial losses, but the thought of pushing their marriages out to some ambiguous future date is devastating," she said.

Renee McCarthy, 33, and her husband, Ryan McCarthy, live in San Diego and wed at Temecula Creek

Inn in Temecula, California, in March 2019, with 24 guests attending.

"We both wanted to focus on the guests we did have there, our families and closest friends" Renee said. "Even for a small wedding it was overwhelming trying to put it together, but we couldn't be happier with how our wedding turned out."

Suspect arrested in 1988 death of American man in Sydney

By DENNIS PASSA Associated Press

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — More than 30 years after American mathematician Scott Johnson died after falling off a cliff in Sydney, a man has been charged with his death in an apparent gay hate crime that police believe was one of many over several decades in Australia's largest city.

New South Wales state police said Tuesday that a 49-year-old man who they did not name has been charged with murdering the 27-year-old Sydney-based Johnson in 1988.

They said the man was arrested at a property in Sydney's northern suburbs. He was taken to a local police station for questioning, and was later charged with murder. He was refused bail and is scheduled to appear in court on Wednesday.

Three inquests were held into Johnson's death after he was found at the base of a cliff near Manly's North Head on Dec. 10, 1988. In the first inquest, his death was ruled a suicide. The second inquest, in June 2012, returned an open finding.

However, the third inquest, in 2017, found that Johnson fell from the cliff top as the result of violence by an unidentified attacker who perceived him to be gay.

A 1 million Australian dollar (\$647,000) reward for information leading to an arrest in the case was offered in 2018, and Johnson's family in March pledged to match that amount.

New South Wales state Police Commissioner Mick Fuller said in a statement Tuesday that he had been in contact with Johnson's brother Steve in Boston to inform him of the arrest.

"Making that phone call this morning is a career highlight — Steve has fought so hard for so many years, and it has been an honor to be part of his fight for justice," Fuller said.

Steve Johnson said in a statement that his brother symbolizes those who lost their lives to homophobic-inspired violence.

"It's emotional for me, emotional for my family, my two sisters and brother who loved Scott dearly, my wife and three kids who never got to know their uncle," Johnson said.

"He courageously lived his life as he wanted to. I hope the friends and families of the other dozens of gay men who lost their lives find solace in what's happened today and hope it opens the door to resolve some of the other mysterious deaths of men who have not yet received justice," he said.

Johnson said his brother graduated at the top of his class at CalTech and later studied at Cambridge and Harvard universities before moving to Australia.

A 2018 police review of 88 suspicious deaths from 1976 to 2000 revealed that 27 men were likely murdered for their homosexuality by gangs, with cases peaking in the late 1980s and early '90s.

ACON, New South Wales' leading sexuality and gender-diverse health organization, said it has been a long and difficult process for Johnson's family and friends.

"While this is a significant development in this particular case, it highlights the need for ongoing investigation, truth-telling and the delivery of justice for so many other gay men and trans people, who were murdered or bashed in similar cases," ACON's chief executive, Nicolas Parkhill, said in a statement.

As Trump urges reopening, thousands getting sick on the job

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Even as President Donald Trump urges getting people back to work and reopening the economy, an Associated Press analysis shows thousands of people are getting sick from COVID-19 on the job.

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Recent figures show a surge of infections in meatpacking and poultry-processing plants. There's been a spike of new cases among construction workers in Austin, Texas, where that sector recently returned to work. Even the White House has proven vulnerable, with positive coronavirus tests for one of Trump's valets and for Vice President Mike Pence's press secretary.

The developments underscore the high stakes for communities nationwide as they gradually loosen restrictions on business.

"The people who are getting sick right now are generally people who are working," Dr. Mark Escott, a regional health official, told Austin's city council. "That risk is going to increase the more people are working."

Austin's concerns will likely be mirrored in communities nationwide as the reopening of stores and factories creates new opportunities for the virus to spread.

To be sure, there are plenty of new infections outside the workplace — in nursing homes, and among retired and unemployed people, particularly in densely populated places such as New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia and urban parts of New Jersey and Massachusetts.

Yet of the 15 U.S. counties with the highest per-capita infection rates between April 28 and May 5, all are homes to meatpacking and poultry-processing plants or state prisons, according to data compiled by the AP.

The county with the highest per-capita rate was Tennessee's Trousdale County, where nearly 1,300 inmates and 50 staffers recently tested positive at the privately run Trousdale Turner Correctional Center.

In the federal prison system, the number of positive cases has increased steadily. As of May 5, there were 2,066 inmates who'd tested positive, up from 730 on April 25.

The No. 2 county on AP's list is Nobles County in Minnesota, which now has about 1,100 cases, compared to two in mid-April. The county seat, Worthington, is home to a JBS pork processing plant that employs hundreds of immigrants.

"One guy said to me, 'I risked my life coming here. I never thought something that I can't see could take me out,'" said the Rev. Jim Callahan of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Worthington.

Nebraska's Dakota County, home to a Tyson Foods meat plant, had recorded three cases as of April 15, and now has more than 1,000. There have been at least three COVID-19 deaths, including a Muslim woman from Ethiopia who was among 4,300 employees at the Tyson plant.

"These are sad and dangerous days," the imam of a regional Islamic center, Ahmad Mohammad, told the Siouxland News.

In northern Indiana's Cass County, home to a large Tyson pork-processing plant, confirmed coronavirus cases have surpassed 1,500. That's given the county — home to about 38,000 residents — one of the nation's highest per-capita infection rates.

The Tyson plant in Logansport, Indiana, was closed April 25 after nearly 900 employees tested positive; it resumed limited operations Thursday after undergoing deep cleaning and installation of Plexiglas workstation barriers. Company spokeswoman Hli Yang said none of the 2,200 workers would return to work without being tested.

Also hard hit by recent infections are counties in Virginia, Delaware and Georgia where poultry-processing plants are located.

In New York, the hardest-hit state during most of the pandemic, a new survey suggests that factors other than the workplace were involved in many recent cases.

The survey of 1,269 patients admitted to 113 hospitals over three recent days confounded expectations that new cases would be dominated by essential workers, especially those traveling on subways and buses. Instead, retirees accounted for 37% of the people hospitalized; 46% were unemployed.

"We were thinking that maybe we were going to find a higher percentage of essential employees who were getting sick because they were going to work, that these may be nurses, doctors, transit workers. That's not the case," said Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

In Pennsylvania, of 2,578 new cases between May 4 and May 6, more than 40% were people living in long-term care facilities. Health officials in Pittsburgh's Allegheny County said of the 352 new cases between April 20 and May 5, 35% were residents in long-term care facilities and 14% were health care workers.

Though the elderly continue to account for a disproportionate share of COVID-19 cases, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the age ratio is changing. In January-February, 76% of cases involved people 50 or older. Since March, only about half the cases are of that age range,

Many health workers were among the earliest Americans to test positive. They continue to be infected in large numbers.

Gerard Brogan, director of nursing practice for the California Nurses Association, says as many as 200 nurses a day tested positive in California recently. Nationwide, he says the National Nurses United had tallied more than 28,000 positive tests and more than 230 deaths among health workers.

Among those recently testing positive was Dr. Pramila Kolisetty of Scarsdale, New York, who has a rehab and pain management practice in the Bronx and is married to a urologist.

Even after New York imposed an extensive lockdown, she went to her office two to three times a week while trying to transition to telemedicine.

"It took time for us to get ourselves organized," she said. "We can't just close the office and say, that's it."

Some of her staff fell sick with COVID-19, and she started feeling symptoms a few weeks ago. After testing positive, she isolated at home and is now practicing telemedicine.

Cuomo, the New York governor, said individual decisions could help slow the pace of new infections.

"Much of this comes down to what you do to protect yourself," Cuomo said at a recent briefing. "Everything is closed down, the government has done everything it could. ... Now it's up to you. Are you wearing a mask, are you doing the hand sanitizer?"

AP data journalist Andrew Milligan in New Haven, Connecticut, and reporters Rick Callahan in Indianapolis, Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia, Deepti Hajela and Mike Stobbe in New York, and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed.

2 Hispanic churches and too many tears: 100 COVID-19 deaths

By **LUIS ANDRES HENAO** and **DAVID CRARY** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One is a Roman Catholic church in Queens; the other, a Lutheran church in Manhattan. But the COVID-19 pandemic has united the two Hispanic congregations in grief.

Between them, they have lost more than 100 members to the coronavirus, and because of lockdown rules, they lack even the ability to mourn together in person.

Many in their communities have vulnerabilities — jobs classified as essential during the pandemic, at workplaces ranging from hospitals to supermarkets, with pressure to keep working even at the risk of exposure. And many are undocumented immigrants who lack access to healthcare.

The death toll has neared 40 among the roughly 400 congregants who join Spanish-language services at Saint Peter's Church, a Lutheran congregation, in midtown Manhattan. The church serves Hispanic immigrants from across the city, and the dead come from across Latin America. Congregation president Christopher Vergara says it's been a challenge simply to relay word of the deaths back to their homelands.

The toll has been even higher at Saint Bartholomew Catholic Church in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens. Its pastor, the Rev. Rick Beuther, says at least 63 parishioners have died from the virus, possibly dozens more.

"The last eight, 10 weeks has been a real tsunami, a disaster for us here, between sickness, death, unemployment and just lack of services for the undocumented," Beuther said.

On a typical Sunday, before the pandemic, Beuther says about 5,500 people — mostly undocumented Latinos — would attend Masses at Saint Bartholomew.

Now, with in-person services canceled, he tries to stay in touch by calling dozens of parishioners daily and liaising with chaplains who visit those who are hospitalized.

In both congregations, many live in crowded apartments that heighten the risk of exposure and offer no option for isolation and self-quarantine.

"It brought a lot of stress," Beuther said. "Anyone who was coughing or sneezing in an apartment, they'd

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be afraid that the rest of the group would ask them to leave.”

Both churches have launched extensive food assistance programs for needy parishioners, including an elaborate door-to-door delivery program which Saint Peter’s conducts across four of New York’s five boroughs. Some members of Saint Peter’s have contributed to help grieving families pay for cremation or burial services.

With the Saint Peter’s church building closed during the pandemic, the Rev. Fabián Arias has been conducting services online from his home in the Bronx -- taking time to read out the names of the recently deceased. He also has conducted a few funerals in funeral homes that allow only a handful of mourners at a time.

On Saturday and Sunday, for the first times during the pandemic, Arias performed funeral services in private homes — donning a surgical mask and gloves to join the mourning families.

On Monday, he was back at a funeral home, leading a service for Argentine-born musician Héctor Miguel Cabaña, who died from COVID-19 last week at the age of 74. He had played guitar and piano with several bands in venues around New York.

“It’s very hard for our community,” Arias said. “For all Latinos, when our people die, they receive a blessing. We say the last goodbye and pray together. It’s very important for us.”

Saint Peter’s is among five Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations serving Hispanics in the New York area that have been hard hit by the coronavirus, according to the regional bishop, Paul Egensteiner. He said the challenges are particularly severe at Saint Peter’s because of the large numbers of undocumented immigrants.

“Many of them are reluctant to go to the hospital, wondering will they get treated, will they get deported,” he said.

The Hispanic congregation now based at Saint Peter’s dates back to 1950, when it was formed in East Harlem to serve Lutherans in the growing Puerto Rican community. The congregation steadily diversified to include Latin Americans of other backgrounds. In 2012, due to financial difficulties, it relocated from East Harlem to Saint Peter’s Church, which also serves offers English-language services.

Arias, 56, a native of Argentina, has been the congregation’s pastor since 2003. He knows that a sense of community is crucial.

“In difficult moments, it’s important that we are together,” he said. “Of course that doesn’t mean physically together, but we can be close on the phone, on the computer.”

Some congregation members, he said, want to reopen Saint Peter’s and resume in-person services. But it is too soon, too dangerous.

“It’s not what God would want,” he said. “God wants to protect life.”

AP photographer John Minchillo and AP video journalist Emily Leshner contributed to this report.

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Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, May 13, the 134th day of 2020. There are 232 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On May 13, 1940, in his first speech as British prime minister, Winston Churchill told Parliament, “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.”

On this date:

In 1568, forces loyal to Mary, Queen of Scots were defeated by troops under her half-brother and Regent of Scotland, the Earl of Moray, in the Battle of Langside, thwarting Mary’s attempt to regain power almost

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a year after she was forced to abdicate.

In 1607, English colonists arrived by ship at the site of what became the Jamestown settlement in Virginia (the colonists went ashore the next day).

In 1914, heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis was born in Lafayette, Alabama.

In 1916, one of Yiddish literature's most famous authors, Sholem Aleichem, died in New York at age 57.

In 1917, three shepherd children reported seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary near Fatima, Portugal; it was the first of six such apparitions that the children claimed to have witnessed.

In 1918, the first U.S. airmail stamp, costing 24 cents and featuring a picture of a Curtiss JN-4 biplane, was publicly issued. (On some of the stamps, the "Jenny" was printed upside-down, making them collector's items.)

In 1958, Vice President Richard Nixon and his wife, Pat, were spat upon and their limousine battered by rocks thrown by anti-U.S. demonstrators in Caracas, Venezuela.

In 1972, 118 people died after fire broke out at the Sennichi Department Store in Osaka, Japan.

In 1981, Pope John Paul II was shot and seriously wounded in St. Peter's Square by Turkish assailant Mehmet Ali Agca (MEH'-met AH'-lee AH'-juh).

In 1985, a confrontation between Philadelphia authorities and the radical group MOVE ended as police dropped a bomb onto the group's row house, igniting a fire that killed 11 people and destroyed 61 homes.

In 1992, the Falun Gong movement had its beginnings in the northeastern Chinese city of Changchun.

In 1994, President Bill Clinton nominated federal appeals Judge Stephen G. Breyer to the U.S. Supreme Court to replace retiring Justice Harry A. Blackmun; Breyer went on to win Senate confirmation.

Ten years ago: Three Pakistani men who authorities say supplied funds to would-be Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad (FY'-sul shah-ZAHD') were arrested in a series of raids in New England. President Barack Obama met with police officers who responded to the attempted car-bombing, greeting them at the New York Police Department's high-tech Real Time Crime Center.

Five years ago: The House voted 338-88 to end the National Security Agency's bulk collection of Americans' phone records and replace it with a system to search the data held by telephone companies on a case-by-case basis. (The measure was passed by the Senate and signed into law by President Barack Obama.) Prosecutors and defense attorneys made their final appeals to the jury that would decide the fate of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR' tsahr-NEYE'-ehv) as jurors began deliberating whether the Boston Marathon bomber should get life in prison or the death penalty. (The jury voted unanimously for death.)

One year ago: Sending Wall Street into a slide, China announced higher tariffs on \$60 billion in U.S. goods in retaliation for President Donald Trump's latest penalties on Chinese products; the Dow industrials finished more than 600 points lower. Doris Day, the sunny blond actress and singer who starred in comedic roles opposite Rock Hudson and Cary Grant in the 1950s and 1960s, died at her California home at the age of 97. Actress Felicity Huffman pleaded guilty in the college admissions bribery scheme; she admitted paying an admissions consultant \$15,000 to have a proctor correct her older daughter's answers on the SAT. (Huffman would serve 12 days of a two-week prison sentence.)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Buck Taylor is 82. Actor Harvey Keitel is 81. Author Charles Baxter is 73. Actress Zoe Wanamaker is 72. Actor Franklyn Ajaye is 71. Singer Stevie Wonder is 70. Former Ohio Gov. John Kasich (KAY'-sihk) is 68. Actress Leslie Winston is 64. Producer-writer Alan Ball is 63. Basketball Hall of Famer Dennis Rodman is 59. "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert (kohl-BEHR') is 56. Rock musician John Richardson (The Gin Blossoms) is 56. Actor Tom Verica is 56. Singer Darius Rucker (Hootie and the Blowfish) is 54. Actress Susan Floyd is 52. Contemporary Christian musician Andy Williams (Casting Crowns) is 48. Actor Brian Geraghty is 45. Actress Samantha Morton is 43. Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., is 43. Former NBA player Mike Bibby is 42. Rock musician Mickey Madden (Maroon 5) is 41. Actor Iwan Rheon is 35. Actress-writer-director Lena Dunham is 34. Actor Robert Pattinson is 34. Actress Candice Accola King is 33. Actor Hunter Parrish is 33. Folk-rock musician Wylie Gelber (Dawes) is 32. NHL defenseman P.K. Subban is 32. Actress Debby Ryan is 27.

Thought for Today: "To want to be the cleverest of all is the biggest folly." — Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916).

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