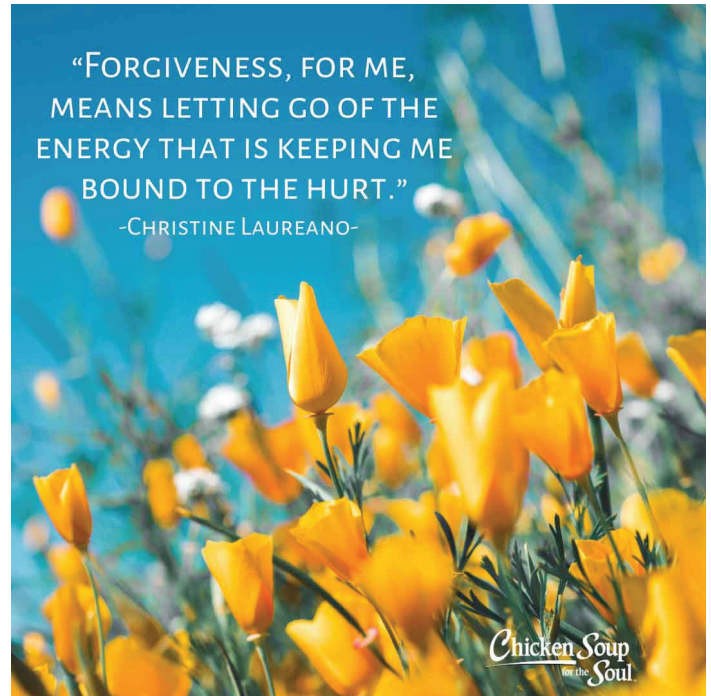


Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 1 of 79

- [1- Taylor Hanson Bridal Shower](#)
- [1- Schuring visits students](#)
- [2- Vold Auction Ad](#)
- [3- Jean Walter's Birthday](#)
- [3- Bahrs celebrate 50th Anniversary](#)
- [3- Helmer graveside service](#)
- [3- No Spring Soccer](#)
- [4- Covid-19 Update by Marie Miller](#)
- [8- Groton students receive honors during virtual State FFA Convention](#)
- [8- South Dakota American Legion Baseball 2020 season back on](#)
- [9- Area COVID-19 Cases](#)
- [10- May 13th COVID-19 UPDATE](#)
- [12- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [13- Weather Pages](#)
- [16- Daily Devotional](#)
- [17- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [18- News from the Associated Press](#)



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.



Last week of school good byes. Groton Area Elementary Junior Kindergarten teacher Alexa Schuring stopped to say hi to her student Emery Blackwood. She sent her off with a sign of encouragement and best wishes for a fantastic summer! Emery is the daughter of Katie Kesterson. (Courtesy Photo)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 2 of 79

Vold Auctioneers & Realty

Lenling Inventory Liquidation Sale, Claremont, SD

ONLINE ONLY SALE

May 22-27, 2020



Trailers, Vehicle, Lawn Mower, Scooter

Enclosed 8'x20' Roadmaster Specialty Trailer (Has lighting and outlets inside)
18' Dressen Custom Trailer with ramps • John Deere 116 lawn mower • Honda Express Scooter
1981 Mercury cougar XR-7 • C1500 truck for parts only

Plumbing Supplies

Plastic sump pump hose • PVC pipe of many sizes and lengths • Urinal (NEW)
3 toilets (2 new, 1 used) • 3 toilet seats • Pipe insulation • Flexible tubing
Many various PVC connectors (too many to count) • Porcelain sink
Misc. fittings and shut off valves • 3 hydrants (1 new, 2 used) • Many faucets and drains
Homeguard sump pump • Many brass fittings of various sizes • Hose clamps (too many to count)
Ritchie waterer parts

Electrical and Heating Supplies

Thermador wall heater (NEW) • Energy-Mate wood burner for boiler
Various types and sizes of electrical wire (several partial roles and several new roles)
Homemade wire unwinders • Approximately 30 to 40 breaker boxes (some used, some new)
Glass insulators • Gear for climbing electrical poles • Fuses (too many to count)
Outlets (too many to count) • Light switches (too many to count) • Electrical boxes (too many to count)
• Light bulbs • Electric motors • Duct work and stove pipe (many pieces)

Tools, Garage and Shop supplies

Milwaukee right angle drill • Black and Decker cordless drill • Black and Decker bench grinder
5 ton hydraulic bottle jack • Makita grinder • 2 Milwaukee heavy duty rotary hammer drills
Black and Decker electric drill • Watsco vacuum pump • Drill bits • 40 pc tap and die set
Circular saw • Pipe threaders • Cable crimper • Acetylene tank and torch
Rockwell Jawhorse (new) • Echo Chainsaw • 2 wooden saw horses • 8' wooden A frame ladder
2 wheel dolly cart • Appliance cart • 2 wood storage bins • Red Devil Paint shaker
Plastic tub • Wood carts with wheels • Small chain bind • Ball hitches
Hard hats and welding mask • Portable air compressor • Metal storage bin
Empty oil barrel with hand pump • Insulation blower with hose • Many yard tools
Arrow wood burning stove • Metal shelving • Wood tool box • Many wood storage bins
Several metal work benches with top half shelving

Collectibles, Neon Beer Signs, Pepsi Cola Pop Machine

3 large wooden crates • Wood crate with dividers • 2 copper wash tubs
Fuller-Warren wood burning stove • Vintage scale • 2 collectible hardware scales
Singer sewing machine (treadle machine) • 4 neon beer signs • 7up light up sign
Zima electric reflective display • Water filter crock • Window shade cutter and shades
Many collectible tins • 2 wooden barrels • Vintage folding chairs
Pepsi Cola Pop Machine for glass bottles • National Cash Register

Boat, Outdoors and Sporting/Fishing

Slick Craft Boat and Shoreland'r trailer • 3 sets of cross country skis • Earthquake garden tiller
Go cart (needs work, comes with many spare parts) • 3 bikes • Brinkman Propane Grill
Coleman folding table • Tent (3 room, believe all poles and stakes are there)
Coleman air mattress • Fishing reels • Fish cleaning board • Fishing net
Several fishing rods and reels • Tackle boxes • Ice fishing poles • Minnow buckets

Store Displays and Office Equipment

2 glass display cases • Several display/work benches • 2 office desks
Several metal filing cabinets • Maytag dryer • Microwave • Hot dog cooker



Register and Bid
at HiBid.com



Auctioneer's Note:

Gary Lenling has passed away and Marian is selling the business inventory. Take advantage of this opportunity to stock up on plumbing and electrical supplies for your business, home, office, or farm!
Call for viewing. Pick up dates are Friday, May 29th and Saturday, May 30th, 2020 from 1-4 p.m. both days.

TERMS: Payment of cash, check, or CC must be made before removal of items. Nothing removed before settlement.

Statements made sale day take precedence over all advertising. Printed material was taken from sources believed to be correct but is not warranted. Any warranties are between seller and buyer. Sellers or Vold Auctioneers are not responsible for accidents. Subject to additions and deletions.

Vold Auctioneers & Realty, Inc.

Bill Jensen, Auctioneer
PO Box 31 - Britton, SD 57430
605-448-0048

www.voldrealty.com - www.ag4bid.com



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.

No Spring Soccer

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately Groton Soccer will not be having a Spring/Summer 2020 season. If you had previously registered and paid, you will be contacted for refund. See you all next Fall! Thanks, GSA Board.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 4 of 79

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Things are steady to slightly higher today. I'm not worried, but I would like the decreases to resume.

We're at 1,417,600 cases in the US. Numbers are a bit higher today. NY leads with 348,192 cases, holding steady for a second day. NJ has 142,704 cases, which is slightly up. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: IL – 88,081, MA – 80,497 (same as yesterday for cases and deaths, so I'm thinking there were no reports filed today), CA – 73,672, PA – 63,158, MI – 49,489, TX – 44,102, FL – 43,202, and MD – 36,021. These ten states account for 68% of US cases. 3 more states have over 30,000 cases, 4 more states have over 20,000 cases, 11 more have over 10,000, 8 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 IL, MD, CA, CT, TX, OH, FL, and CO. States where new case reports are increasing include VA, AR, SD, and ME. It is interesting and a hopeful sign that only 4 states are even listed as increasing. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, MI, NJ, GA, MA, LA, PA, and IN. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 85,438 deaths in the US. Today the number of new deaths held steady for the third day. NY has 27,617, NJ has 9946, MA has 5315, MI has 4787, PA has 4298, IL has 3945, CT has 3219, CA has 3033, and LA has 2351. Yesterday, all of these states reported fewer than 200 new deaths and nearly half reported fewer than 100. Today, only one was over 200. This feels like progress. There are 7 more states over 1000 deaths, 6 more over 500, 16 more + DC and PR over 100, and 12 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

A few weeks ago, we talked briefly about a study done in Paris on sewage. You will recall scientists found sewage from neighborhoods with cases of infection contained some viral RNA and used detection of that to track outbreaks. Well, apparently that idea has caught on with some other folks too. A team of Michigan State University researchers is collaborating with the Great Lakes Water Authority and the Detroit Water and Sewage Department to collect and analyze samples of metro Detroit wastewater in the hope they will be able to detect new Covid-19 outbreaks before sick people even realize they've been infected. This sort of work has been done successfully in the past to detect hepatitis A outbreaks a week or more before they became evident to health care facilities. This kind of early warning system could provide valuable time for the health care system to prepare and public health authorities to prevent further spread. In the early days of this pandemic, this could have saved hundreds or even thousands of lives. Rather than relying on thousands of test kits and the capacity to run the tests after samples have been collected, this needs only access to wastewater and the ability to analyze samples. Similar efforts are underway in Massachusetts, central California, and around the globe. This is a very promising avenue for providing useful information to public health authorities.

And now, I have some pretty good news for everyone who is not a colossal jerk. If you happen to be a colossal jerk, you'll probably want to just skip over this next; but if you're not one, then stay tuned.

First, some preliminary stuff. Remember a long while back when we talked about reproduction number, R_0 ? Just in case you're a little hazy on the details after all this time, here's a quick review: R_0 is the average number of people infected by one infected person in a susceptible population the first time it is transmitted. That initial group of infected people is what's called generation 0. So an R_0 of 3 means each infected person will infect 3 others, each of whom will also infect 3 others, etc. The way this works is that at an $R_0 > 1$, each infected person spreads it to more than 1 other person, so the numbers of new infections will grow and you get an epidemic; at an $R_0 = 1$, each infected person spreads it to just 1 other person, so the numbers of new infections will remain stable; and at an $R_0 < 1$, each infected person spreads it to

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 5 of 79

less than one other person, so the numbers of new infections will fall, and the infection will eventually peter out, although that can take a while, depending how many cases you had before this happens. Now R_0 is a characteristic of the pathogen upon first transmission, so it doesn't change. It is also important to note that R_0 is estimated and can never be perfectly known; that's why it's frequently stated as a range.

Nowadays, we're hearing folks talk about whether the R_0 is falling now that we're doing all kinds of things to tamp down this pandemic. Since R_0 only applies to first transmission and can't change, that's not technically correct, and a purist would get all excited about this mistake. So for the purists in the room, there's another term for the changing reproduction number as we go along: We can call it R_t (for reproduction number at a given time) or R_e (sometimes R_{eff} , for effective reproduction number). Following an executive decision, I'm going to use R_e in this discussion.

So how big a deal is this whole reproduction number in the scheme of things? What does it tell us? Well, we can use it to help model an outbreak's possible trajectory—to tell us how bad it's going to get and how fast it will get there. Let's say that 1000 people have a seasonal flu whose R_0 is estimated at 1.3. This doesn't seem bad—not that much over 1.0, right? Look what happens: Those 1000 people would be expected to infect 1300 people. That second generation would go on to infect another 1690. It adds up fast: By the 10th generation with a generation time around 3 days, about a month later you're looking at 42,621 cases. That's bad and fast.

Because of the way the number of cases multiplies, small changes in R_e make a large difference in outcome. As Angela Merkel explained to her country in mid-April, "We are now at about a reproduction factor of 1, so one person is infecting another one. If we get to the point where everybody infects 1.1 people, then by October we will reach the capacity of our health care system," the point where you have more hospital patients than hospital capacity and death rates spike drastically as a result. At R_e of 1.2, Germany would reach that threshold in July; at R_e of 1.3, it would happen in June. So this is a big-deal number.

We're thinking the R_0 for Covid-19 was somewhere around a catastrophic 4.7-6.6; this number was calculated based on what was seen in the early days in Wuhan. No wonder that blew up so fast. When it hit our shores, most estimates place the R_e somewhere around 2.0-2.5, which if you compare it to that 1.3 example above, is while better than in Wuhan, still a huge problem. At the moment in the US overall, with all of our mitigation efforts, it's probably sitting just below 1 according to the estimators I've consulted. That means it's still with us, and if we get sloppy, it's going to roar back up over 1, which is territory we do not wish to revisit—once should have been enough for anyone. Now there are places in the US where the R_e is below 1 and other places where it's above 1; you can see this by looking at whether the number of new cases is getting bigger or smaller in a place each day, although it's smart to look not at each individual day (since there can be reasons for a momentary one- or two-day spike or drop—like a lot of tests getting done or a temporary lack of test kits), but rather to look at trends over a few-day period.

What will run that R_e up? Anything that enhances transmission, going out in crowds, for example What will drive it down? Anything that slows transmission like exercising precautions.

It also helps to realize, once you have a lot of cases, a drop in R_e will take a fair while to work its way through the system before you see an appreciable decline in numbers of cases. In late April, Italy had pushed its R_e down to 0.8 with draconian restrictions; at that time, South Korea was reporting about 10 new cases per day. At the same point, Italy had reported 15,918 new cases over the past 5 days, which is a reasonable estimate of how many people would still have been infectious. Starting with those nearly 16,000 cases and at an R_e of 0.8, it would take 26.8 more generations of the virus for Italy to reach that same level of 10 new infections per day seen in South Korea. At 4 days per generation, this would take around 100 days, which brings us to early August. And this applies only if they keep the lockdown in place;

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 6 of 79

if they don't, then the Re's going to rise. See the problem? They seriously needed ways to keep the Re under control as they eased up on the lockdown.

So none of this looks like good news, right? And yet I promised you some good news for all the non-jerk folks in the crowd. So here it is: There's a way to push Re down so that as you ease restrictions, you don't drive it back up over 1 again. Now, I will not be recommending a free-for-all with packed bars every weekend, crowded restaurants, and the resumption of huge stadiums full of fans cheering your favorite team--not yet, anyway. But since we're determined to open things back up, wouldn't it be nice to have some way we can all gang up on this virus and hold the Re as low as possible? Turns out there's a relatively inexpensive, not very difficult, and accessible-to-everyone way we can do that.

It's a mask. A homemade cloth mask, not a fancy N95 or even a surgical mask. Seriously!

I just finished reading a paper by a team of researchers who did an evidence review of what we know about the effectiveness of face masks in reducing transmission and altering the course of an epidemic of a respiratory infection. They were careful to account for the fact that homemade masks are less effective than medical ones and for the fact that not all respiratory viruses spread along the same parameters. They reviewed the fact that not only coughing and sneezing, but also breathing and talking (especially loud talking), spread Covid-19. They also accounted for the fact that asymptomatic (no symptoms ever) and presymptomatic cases (people who are going to have symptoms, but don't yet have them) are responsible for transmission. They evaluated particle size, filtration effects, and the environmental context, and here's what they found.

The first thing we're worried about here is respiratory droplets, fairly large moist droplets expelled from the nose and mouth, and secondly, we're worried about their dried-up, shriveled form in aerosols. The droplets, being large and heavy, don't hang in the air long, but settle fairly rapidly. There's more of a problem when those droplets dry up, which makes them lighter and gives them a tendency to float about for longer and travel farther. The first big news is that, if your mask captures these moist droplets—which is easier because they're big, then there's nothing out there to dry up and become an aerosol. They found almost none of the stuff you're ejecting when you talk or cough comes out already aerosolized, so if you trap the moist droplets in the mask, then the aerosol is an almost negligible problem.

They cited a tiny study (and tiny means it's not as reliable as we'd like) which showed that 96% of coronavirus particles are blocked by cotton at a distance of 8". Now the coronaviruses under study here were the ones that cause colds, not the one that causes Covid-19, but there is good reason to believe they'll operate the same way. A different study from the SARS outbreak (also from a highly similar coronavirus) a number of years ago in Hong Kong showed wearing masks in public, frequent handwashing, and disinfection around the house cut the rate of infection in half, even after they accounted for some sloppiness in following the precautions.

And they presented a formula for calculating the effect on Re of mask-wearing. The work says wearing masks reduces the Re by a factor equal to $[1 - (e)(pm)]^2$, where e is the efficiency of the mask and pm is the percentage of the population wearing them in public. For my math nerd friends who want to play along, here's their example: starting Re = 2.4, e = 50%, and pm = 50%. So $[1 - (0.5)(0.5)]^2 = 0.56$, which when multiplied by 2.4 yields an Re = 1.35. That is a huge reduction when only half the population wears relatively poor masks. Use that same factor on our current overall Re of around 1.0, and you drop it all the way to 0.56. Now, we know loosening restrictions is going to drive Re up; but this gives you some room to move, doesn't it? What if more of us wore masks? Run that percentage of the population wearing masks in public up to 80%, and you could drive that $R_0=1$ down around 0.36. Who wouldn't be willing to wear a mask if it meant more safely opening the economy, that is, without killing a whole bunch

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 7 of 79

of people who otherwise wouldn't have to die? Only a colossal jerk, that's who. This is why we excused them from the conversation earlier; we already know their answer.

Masks are cheap, and I know people who are busily sewing them and giving them out to folks who can't afford them. They're easy to wear and to launder. You only would have to wear them while you're out shopping or whatever, not 24/7. And they can save lives—thousands of them.

So, if you're getting impatient about the economy (and you're not the only one), look how easily you could drive that Re down far enough to make it safer to ease up. We don't have to make a trade-off between further economic pain and further medical pain. We don't have to pay for the economy with dead bodies. All we have to do is commit to wearing masks in public. Now while the rest of us think about that, the colossal jerks in the crowd can tell me all about your freedoms again. I'm listening, I promise.

We're almost through another week of this. Things look as though they may be turning around, but we need to remember the peak is the half-way point, not the end. So there's some time left to go, quite a lot of it, actually. I think it will help though if we see things getting better instead of worse every day and if we feel a sense of agency—like there is something we can do about all this. Now you have that means at hand, both in your own decisions and in your attempts to persuade the people around you to make good decisions too.

What we're really talking about here is coming together while apart, a theme we talked about a while back. I've seen examples of that in the past few weeks. Best one was the Easter service at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. The service, of course, was online because congregations are not supposed to be meeting these days. And even when they can meet again, there will still be a loss: singing.

There have been a couple of outbreaks in church choirs who, despite practicing proper distancing and all the precautions, still had members getting sick and dying. It soon became evident that singing transmits this virus more efficiently than most activities—makes sense when you think about all that deep breathing and forceful expulsions of air from the lungs. A recent webinar for members of the American Choral Directors Association made the recommendation that choral singing be avoided for 1-2 years or until a vaccine is available. This constitutes a loss for singers and for listeners as well.

But there was singing at the National Cathedral's Easter service, lots of it—with a full orchestra, no less. How? Software. Everyone recorded his or her individual part and submitted it, and then some wizard knitted them together into a beautiful performance. If you can make music together while apart, why can't we build a better world together while apart? We can find ways to build something special in our time apart so that, when we finally come back together, we have something worth meeting over. Let's get to work.

Keep yourself well. We'll talk again.

Groton students receive honors during virtual State FFA Convention

State FFA Degree: Caitlynn Barse & Jamesen Stange

Agriscience Fair: Samantha Pappas - First Place, Plant Science Category Division 5

Goat Production Proficiency: Tessa Erdmann - 3rd place

Meat Evaluation: Kansas Kroll - 8th place individual

Caitlynn Barse was also elected to serve as a 2020-2021 State FFA Ambassador.

South Dakota American Legion Baseball 2020 season back on

WATERTOWN – Thursday, May 14, 2020.

The 2020 Baseball saga took another turn last night. As all should know, the letter received from National Headquarters shut down all National sponsorship and involvement in American Legion baseball for the 2020 season. There was a section in the letter that was open to interpretation as to whether local baseball could be supported or not. Yesterday, we received better interpretation on that section of the letter. With the new information, the Department Executive Committee had an emergency meeting and approved the following motion: "to sanction a 2020 South Dakota American Legion Baseball Program to be administered by Sponsoring Posts, coaches and managers. That these teams follow the guidelines recommended by the State Athletic Commission which states "Teams must abide by Local, State and National COVID19 Policies, have insurance and have permission from City officials to play".

This means as long as the following guidelines are met, baseball can be played as American Legion Baseball:

1. South Dakota American Legion Baseball 2020 Form #2 must be signed and submitted by the player and parent/guardian. There is a copy of the form attached to this email and the form is available on the South Dakota American Legion website under programs and baseball. https://www.sdlegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/SD-player_indemnification-2020.pdf
2. Post/Team must obtain insurance and provide proof of insurance prior to practicing and playing. Teams will have until June 10 to produce proof of insurance. K & K, who did National insurance, can still be used for local insurance. Post/Teams can use them or find another company. Copies of proof of insurance must be sent to South Dakota American Legion Department Headquarters as soon as possible. Here is a link to K&K Insurance. <https://www.kandkinsurance.com/sites/Sports/Pages/Amateur-Sports-TLA.aspx>
3. Teams must submit a roster to State HQ by June 10th which will be forwarded to National Headquarters Americanism Director.
4. Develop and approve local rules for playing baseball. It is recommended SD American Legion Rules be used to play.

The Department Executive Committee is extremely happy a solution was developed to play Legion Baseball. After all, in that South Dakota is the birthplace of American Legion Baseball, it is only fitting we have a Legion Baseball season for 2020.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 9 of 79

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	1,266	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	May 13	May 14				
Minnesota	12,494	12,917	13,435				
Nebraska	8,692	9,075	9,416				
Montana	461	462	462				
Colorado	20,157	20,475	20,838				
Wyoming	513	523	529				
North Dakota	1,571	1,647	1,712				
South Dakota	3,663	3,732	3,792				
United States	1,370,016	1,390,764	1,417,889				
US Deaths	82,389	84,136	85,906				
Minnesota	+695	+423	+518				
Nebraska	+120	+383	+341				
Montana	+2	+1	0				
Colorado	+278	+318	+363				
Wyoming	+3	+10	+6				
North Dakota	+53	+76	+65				
South Dakota	+49	+69	+60				
United States	+22,628	+20,748	+27,125				
US Deaths	+1,992	+1,747	+1,770				

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 10 of 79

May 14th COVID-19 UPDATE

Tripp County recorded its first positive case while Lyman fell from the fully recovered category and Spink was added back in. Four more from Minnehaha County died from COVID-19. Brown County has 11 new positive cases with 40 negative tests and 7 more recovered in the county.

Brown County:

Active Cases: +4 (79)

Recovered: +7 (675)

Total Positive: +11 (154)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (6)

Deaths: 0

Negative Tests: +40 (866)

South Dakota:

Positive: +60 (3,792 total) (2 less than yesterday)

Negative: +569 (22,681 total)

Hospitalized: +9 (290 total) - 85 currently hospitalized (6 more than yesterday)

Deaths: +4 (all Minnehaha) (43 total)

Recovered: +70 (2437 total)

Active Cases: 1312 (14 less than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests (lost Tripp): Bennett +1 (19), Brule +3 (82), Butte +4 (92), Campbell 14, Custer +1 (68), Dewey +7 (95), Edmunds +2 (34), Gregory +2 (41), Haakon -1 (18), Hanson 37, Harding 1, Jackson 15, Jones 6, Kingsburg +1 (94), Mellette +1 (26), Perkins 8, Potter +1 (39), unassigned +79 (1036).

Brown: +11 positive, (13 more from DemKota bringing that facility total to 95 with 45 being fully recovered - these numbers do not keep up with the county numbers as investigation is ongoing) +7 recovered (75 of 154 recovered)

Charles Mix: +1 positive (5 of 7 recovered)

Clark: +1 positive (1 of 4 recovered)

Clay: +1 recovered (8 of 11 recovered)

Davison: +1 positive (6 of 9 recovered)

Grant: +1 positive (2 of 5 recovered)

Hughes: +1 recovered (12 of 15 recovered)

Lincoln: +2 positive, +7 recovered (146 of 195 recovered)

Lyman: +1 positive (3 of 4 recovered)

Minnehaha: +33 positive, +48 recovered (1940 of 3050 recovered)

Moody: +1 recovered (9 of 17 recovered)

Pennington: +4 positive (14 of 40 recovered)

Roberts: +3 positive (10 of 17 recovered)

Todd: -1 positive (5 of 13 recovered)

Tripp: First positive case

Union: +1 positive, +3 recovered (37 of 57 recovered)

Yankton: +1 positive, +1 recovered (26 of 34 recovered)

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

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 1,366 total completed tests today for COVID-19, with 67 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,712.

State & private labs have conducted 50,311 total tests with 48,599 negative results.

1,007 ND patients are considered recovered.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 11 of 79

County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	2	1	51
Beadle	22	19	224
Bennett	0	0	19
Bon Homme	4	4	132
Brookings	14	14	453
Brown	154	75	866
Brule	0	0	82
Buffalo	1	1	24
Butte	0	0	92
Campbell	0	0	14
Charles Mix	7	5	133
Clark	4	1	74
Clay	11	8	212
Codington	16	15	603
Corson	2	1	29
Custer	0	0	68
Davison	9	6	389
Day	10	9	84
Deuel	1	1	95
Dewey	0	0	95
Douglas	1	1	39
Edmunds	0	0	34
Fall River	2	2	83
Faulk	1	1	26
Grant	5	2	68
Gregory	0	0	41
Haakon	0	0	18
Hamlin	2	2	93
Hand	1	1	31
Hanson	0	0	37
Harding	0	0	1
Hughes	15	12	319
Hutchinson	3	3	128

Hyde	1	1	21
Jackson	0	0	15
Jerauld	6	5	44
Jones	0	0	6
Kingsbury	0	0	94
Lake	5	4	178
Lawrence	9	9	246
Lincoln	195	146	1907
Lyman	4	3	68
Marshall	1	1	62
McCook	5	3	135
McPherson	1	1	27
Meade	5	1	352
Mellette	0	0	26
Miner	1	1	24
Minnehaha	3050	1940	10433
Moody	17	9	134
Oglala Lakota	3	1	59
Pennington	40	14	1249
Perkins	0	0	8
Potter	0	0	39
Roberts	17	10	199
Sanborn	3	3	45
Spink	4	4	146
Stanley	8	7	51
Sully	1	1	16
Todd	13	5	159
Tripp	1	0	80
Turner	18	16	180
Union	57	37	312
Walworth	5	5	73
Yankton	34	26	582
Ziebach	1	0	18
Unassigned****	0	0	1036

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

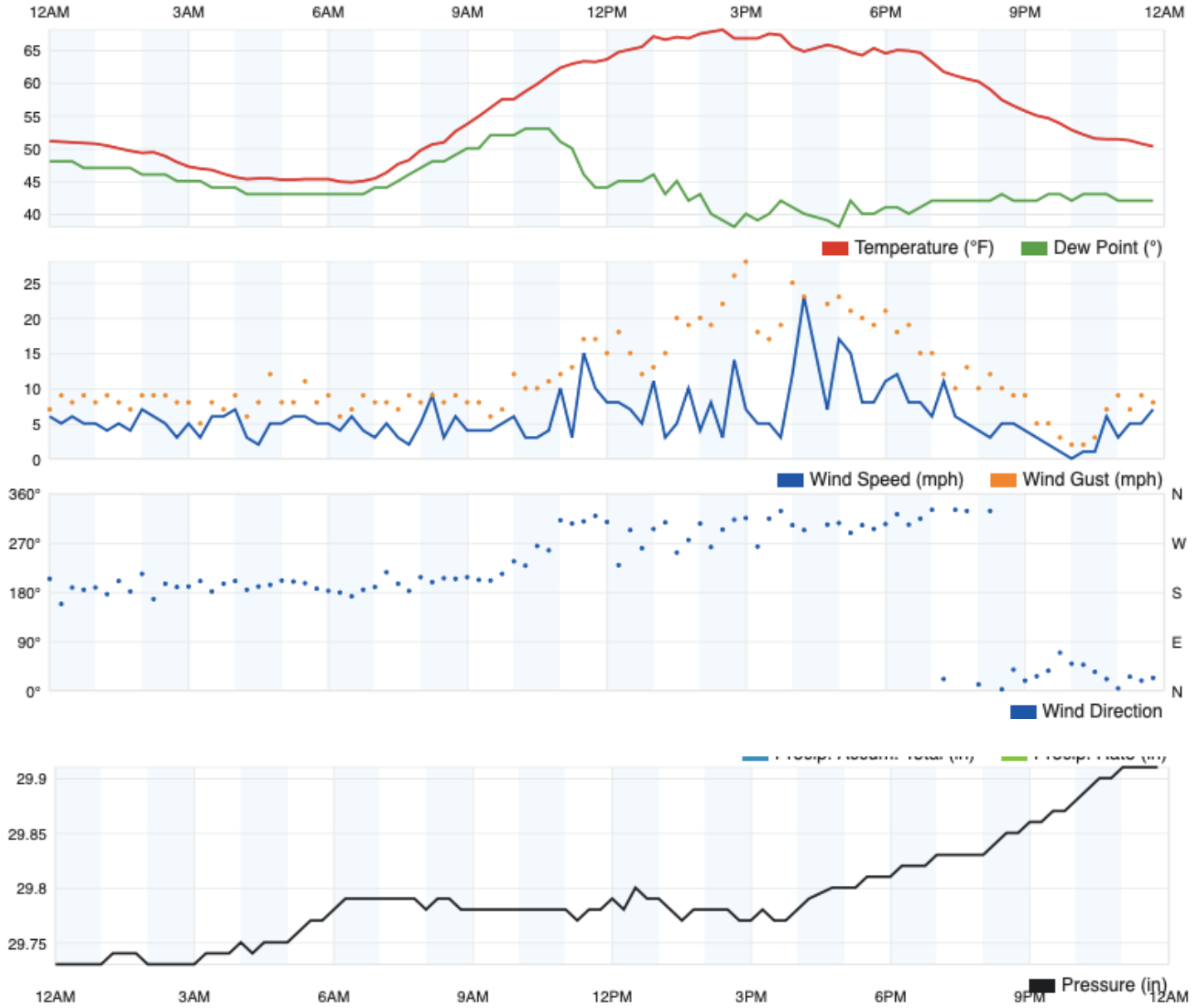
Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1729	22
Male	2063	21

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	347	0
20-29 years	671	0
30-39 years	888	1
40-49 years	704	1
50-59 years	649	6
60-69 years	347	7
70-79 years	87	5
80+ years	99	23

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 12 of 79

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 13 of 79

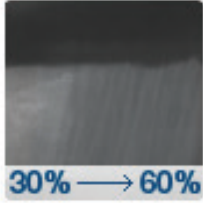
Today



Increasing Clouds

High: 68 °F

Tonight

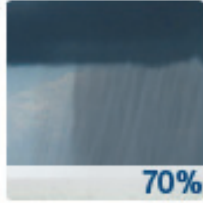


30% → 60%

Chance Showers then Showers Likely

Low: 49 °F

Saturday



70%

Showers Likely

High: 59 °F

Saturday Night



30%

Chance Showers

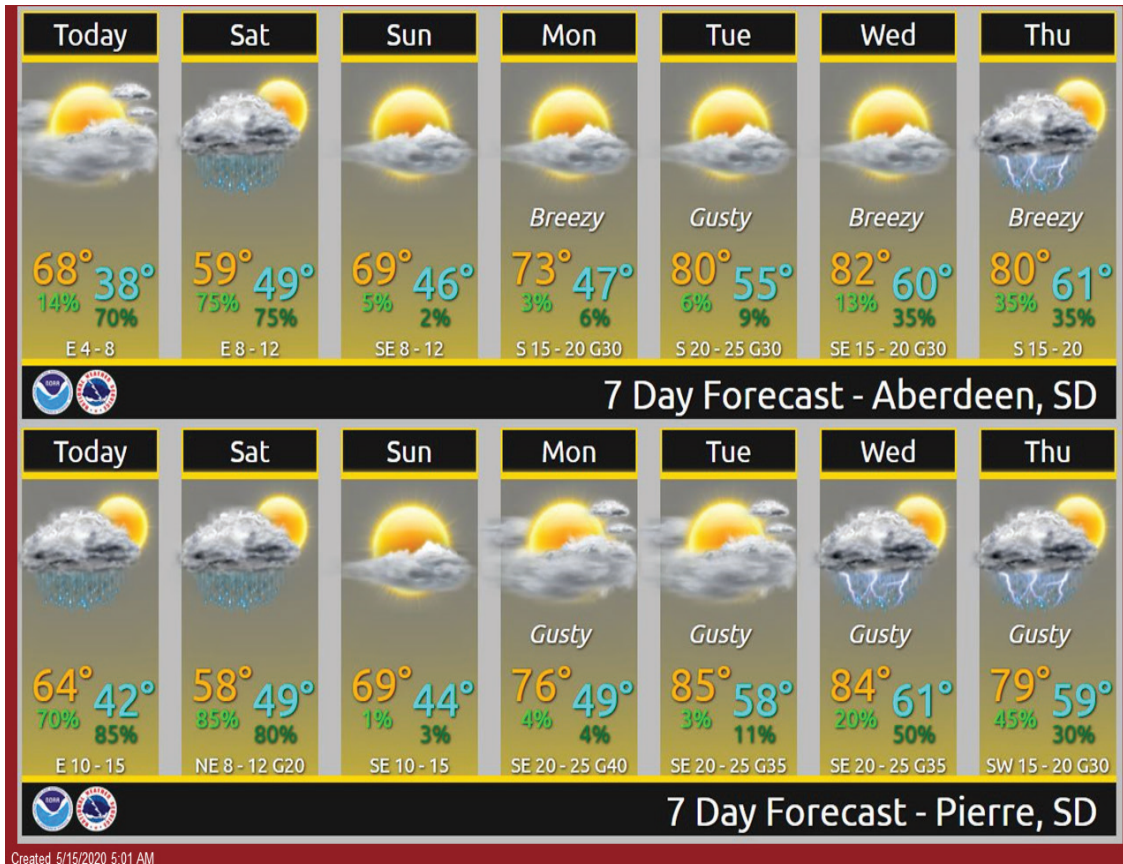
Low: 47 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 69 °F



With the exception of tonight and Saturday, a potentially cool and cloudy and rainy day, the seven day forecast is shaping up to be rather decent. Beyond Saturday, a good portion of the forecast is dry for most of the area. Look for breezy to windy warm conditions on Monday through Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 14 of 79

Today in Weather History

May 15, 1964: A two-day rainfall event ended with 3.57 inches at Rapid City. Damage to roads and bridges was reported in the northern Black Hills.

1834 - The Northern Atlantic Coast States were in the midst of their greatest May snowstorm of record. The hills around Newbury, VT, were covered with two to three feet of snow. (David Ludlum)

1896: An estimated F5 tornado struck Sherman, Texas, killing 73 people; 60 of them in downtown. Tornado victims were found as far as 400 yards away from their original location. A trunk lid was carried 35 miles by the twister.

1957: An F4 tornado killed 20 people in Silverton, Texas. A 5,000-pound gasoline storage tank was reportedly carried 1.5 miles and dropped into a lake. Residents said the tornado "looked like red sand, boiling and rumbling."

1968: Also, an F5 tornado moved through Butler, Chickasaw, Floyd, Franklin, and Howard Counties in northeast Iowa. The tornado touched down northeast from north of Hansell, passing east of Aredale and Marble Rock, before devastating Charles City. The tornado grew more massive and intense as it approached Charles City. The huge funnel passed directly through town, destroying 337 homes, and causing about \$30 million in damage. The tornado continued to the northeast hitting Elma. From there the tornado turned to the north and dissipated south of Chester, 4 miles south of the Minnesota border. Nearly 2000 homes were damaged or destroyed. All 13 deaths occurred in Floyd County. 450 injuries were reported in Floyd County and 12 injuries in Howard County. Another F5 tornado moved north-northeast from southwest of Oelwein to Maynard and east of Randalia in Fayette County, IA. Homes were leveled and swept away in both Oelwein and Maynard. The warning sirens had sounded for only 15 seconds before the power failed in Oelwein. Nearly 1000 homes were damaged or destroyed along the path, and 34 people had to be hospitalized. Almost 1,000 families were affected. In addition to these F5 tornadoes, an F2 tornado touched down 6 miles south of Cresco, IA and two weak F1 tornadoes touched down in Dodge County, MN. Also, baseball size hail fell in Fayette County, IA.

1972: The worst ice jam flooding of memory for long-time residents took place along the Kuskokwim River and Yukon River in Alaska. It was the first time since 1890 that the two rivers "flowed as one." The towns of Oscarville and Napaskiak have been entirely inundated.

1987 - Unseasonably warm weather returned to the north central U.S. Seven cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Janestown, ND, with a reading of 96 degrees. Thunderstorms in Utah produced five inches of rain south of Bicknell. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced wind gusts to 80 mph in Oklahoma County, and baseball size hail at Pawnee. Hail piled up to a depth of 18 inches south of Pawnee. Hail damage in Oklahoma was estimated at close to 25 million dollars. Thunderstorms in the Upper Midwest produced golf ball size hail around Cleveland, OH, and wind gusts to 83 mph at Angola, IN. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along and north of a stationary front produced severe weather in the south central U.S. Thunderstorms spawned eleven tornadoes, and there were 145 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Softball size hail caused 2.1 million dollars damage at Sherman, TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Central Plains Region and Oklahoma to Indiana and western Kentucky. Thunderstorms spawned fifteen tornadoes, including seven in Oklahoma, and there were 165 reports of large hail or damaging winds. A tornado killed one person, injured a dozen others, and caused four million dollars damage at Stillwater, OK. Another tornado injured eight persons at Foyil, OK. Thunderstorms in Oklahoma also produced wind gusts to 92 mph at Oologah Lake, and softball size hail at Canton and north of Oakwood. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

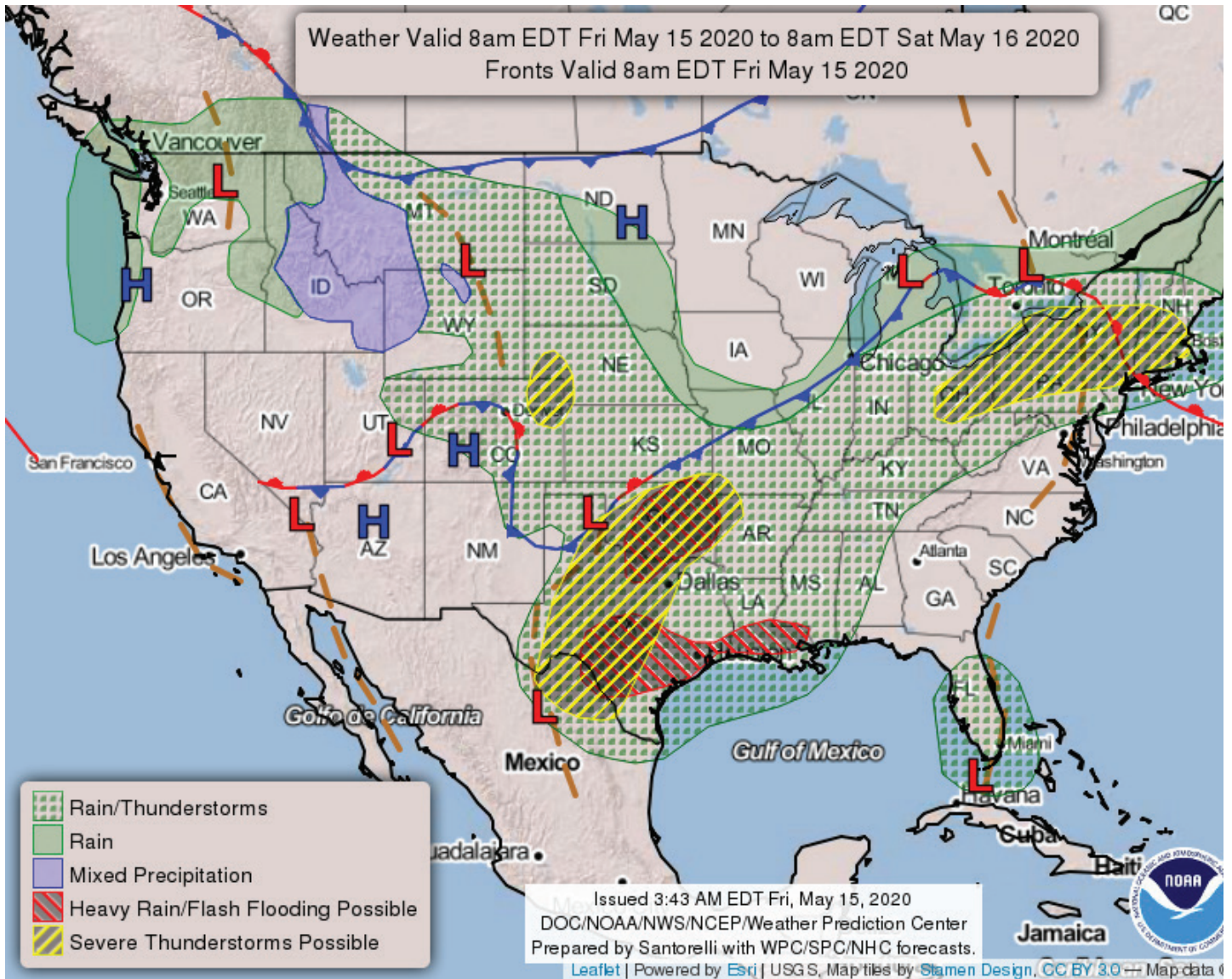
Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 15 of 79

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 68.1 °F
Low Temp: 44.8 °F
Wind: 28 mph
Precip: .00

Record High: 103° in 1931
Record Low: 23° in 2014
Average High: 69°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in May.: 1.43
Precip to date in May.: 2.38
Average Precip to date: 5.46
Precip Year to Date: 4.28
Sunset Tonight: 8:58 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:02 a.m.



Issued 3:43 AM EDT Fri, May 15, 2020
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Santorelli with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts.
Leaflet | Powered by Esri | USGS, Map tiles by Stamen Design, CC BY 3.0, Map data ©

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 16 of 79



THIS ISN'T WORKING EITHER!

It was "Mom's Day-A-Way" and Jake and Dad were having the time of their lives. As soon as she left, the games began and were non-stop until it was time for lunch.

After lunch, it was time for a nap. But the activities of the morning were so intense that Jake could not settle down. Shades were drawn and lights out were not enough. He'd climb out of his bed and looked for his Dad, expecting the fun and games to begin again.

Finally, in desperation, Dad decided to lay down with Jake, thinking that if he set an example, Jake would allow his eyes to become heavy, and fall asleep and he would be rescued.

After a few moments, Jake sat straight up in bed and said proudly, "Dad, this isn't working either, is it?"

God, in His eternal wisdom, planted a conscience in everyone's heart - a moral compass that signals what is right or wrong. It is a universal fact, that no matter where we go in the world, from one culture to another, people know deep inside what is right and what is wrong. All societies have laws that keep people together and set limits on what is appropriate or how to treat others.

And even though we, as well as others, know what is right and what is expected of us, we still - at times - desire to do what is wrong. God has planted His standards in everyone's heart, and when any heart becomes troubled - for whatever reason - it is His Holy Spirit doing His work to convict us of our unrighteousness and to turn to the Lord's standards of right and wrong.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your "early warning signals" that alert us to Your standards. Make our hearts very sensitive to Your laws and convict us when we do wrong. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. Romans 2:15

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 17 of 79

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

Female inmate dies at Minnehaha County Jail

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The cause of death of a woman at the Minnehaha County Jail has not yet been determined.

Jordin Lea Eichmann, 31, was found unresponsive in her cell early Wednesday, according to Warden Mike Mattson. Jail, medical staff and paramedics could not revive her.

Mattson said she had been booked into the jail that morning on a misdemeanor charge related to child support. Authorities say foul play is not suspected in her death.

The Argus Leader reports a Facebook page for Emily's Hope Sober Living house says Eichmann was the mother of three who was waiting on a spot reserved her her at the treatment facility.

Authorities: Man died after shootout with Rapid City police

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a man who was involved in a shootout with police in Rapid City has died.

The Attorney General's Office said the man died Thursday morning, a day after police say a routine traffic stop quickly escalated into a shootout.

Police said that the traffic stop happened Wednesday evening at a Highway 44 intersection. After the vehicle pulled over, a man got out and began shooting at officers, striking a squad car.

Police Chief Karl Jegeris said officers returned fire.

The Attorney General's Office hasn't released the man's name and the names of the officers.

The officers began a routine traffic stop "and it was nothing close to routine," Jegeris said, adding that "clearly the suspect was intending to shoot a police officer."

There were two others in the vehicle who have been interviewed, but Jegeris said they seemed very deceptive when questioned, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"This is Police Week," Jegeris said. "This Friday we will be having a memorial service for officers who died in the line of duty, including two of our own in Rapid City. This type of conduct and behavior is uncalled for but we are ready to address it and today the outcome was in our favor."

Jegeris said he didn't know the purpose of the traffic stop or which seat the suspect was sitting in.

The Division of Criminal Investigations will investigate the shooting and the attorney general will determine whether the shooting is justified or not. That report is expected in about 30 days.

South Dakota plans mass testing in elder care facilities

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials are planning to test everyone in nursing homes and assisted living facilities over the next month, Gov. Kristi Noem announced Thursday.

The Department of Health will be working with facilities that care for the elderly to test over 26,000 people in the coming weeks. Nursing homes have been most susceptible to deaths from COVID-19, with one Sioux Falls facility recording 20 deaths, according to the Argus Leader.

"It's a foundation for us and our response moving forward," said Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon.

The state has acquired more supplies needed for tests, allowing them to hold mass testing events. Health officials also plan to conduct random testing among vulnerable people to try to catch infections before they spread.

Malsam-Rysdon said the state is also planning to hold mass testing events in Native American tribal communities, starting with a mass testing event with the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate next week.

Noem has feuded with two tribes over coronavirus checkpoints they set up on federal and state highways last month to keep unnecessary visitors off the reservations. On Friday, she threatened to sue the Chey-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 19 of 79

enne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe if they did not remove highway stops within 48 hours. The governor backed away from that plan this week, offering to negotiate on the issue if they would take them off of U.S. and state highways. Noem said both tribes responded to letters she sent, saying they would consider the plan. But they have not taken down the checkpoints.

Still, Noem said it was encouraging they didn't reject the plans outright. She said she hoped the conflict could be settled out of court.

"We are working through our process," Noem said. "I'm hopeful that we can come to a resolution."

But the Rosebud Sioux Tribe announced on Wednesday it will be setting up highway checkpoints to enforce a lock down on the reservation after 14 people tested positive for the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, health officials recorded four more COVID-19 deaths and 60 new confirmed coronavirus cases on Thursday.

The new figures bring the state's death toll to 43 and its confirmed case count to 3,792. State officials said the count does not reflect the total number of infections because many people may not display symptoms or have not sought testing if their symptoms are mild.

All of the deaths reported Thursday were in Minnehaha County, the state's most populated area. About 80% of cases in the state have come from the county.

The economic fallout from the global pandemic has also continued to cause layoffs in the state, according to the Department of Labor and Regulation. State officials reported that 5,131 people made new claims for unemployment last week. A total of 23,791 people are receiving unemployment benefits, according to the latest available count.

"About eight weeks ago, it was like a light switch was flipped," said Labor Secretary Marcia Hultman. "Claims instantly and to a degree never-before-seen began to hit our system."

Pine Ridge man pleads guilty to fatally bludgeoning brother

RAPID CITY, S. D. (AP) — A Pine Ridge man has pleaded guilty in federal court to killing his brother. Lawrence Pourier, 52, entered the plea Wednesday to voluntary manslaughter in a plea agreement with prosecutors.

Pourier had been charged with second-degree murder in the bludgeoning death of his brother, Eric Pourier. KOTA-TV says Pourier admits getting in a fight with his brother at a home near Porcupine last January. A statement signed by the defendant says he hit his brother on the back and head with a pipe at least 20 times. The cause of his brother's death was blood loss due to blunt force trauma.

The plea agreement says both sides will recommend a sentence of 10 years in prison.

FDA approves COVID-19 trial after successful emergency use of umbilical stem cells from RESTEM

CORONA, Calif., and MIAMI and SIOUX FALLS, S.D., May 14, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- RESTEM, a leading cell-based therapeutics company, announced today it has received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a 60-patient Phase I/IIa study using umbilical cord mesenchymal stem cells to treat patients with severe cases of COVID-19. The study will be the first of its kind in the U.S.

"We are excited to launch this study and demonstrate the potential of our patented umbilical cord lining stem cell (ULSC) technology," said Dr. Rafael Gonzalez, senior vice president of research & development for RESTEM. "Based on the properties of our cells and targeted treatments, our breakthrough technology has shown promise to help those suffering from COVID-19 complications."

This treatment has already shown promising results in patients in the U.S. hospitalized with COVID-19 who also had developed acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). These patients were previously treated at Miami Cancer Institute, part of Baptist Health South Florida, under the care of principal investigator Guenther Koehne, MD, PhD, deputy director of the Miami Cancer Institute. The patients, who were all on ventilators, were treated with umbilical cord mesenchymal stem cells under an emergency approval from

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 20 of 79

FDA, and two have now been discharged from the hospital.

The randomized, placebo-controlled and blinded study will look at whether this may be a safe and effective treatment for patients hospitalized with severe cases of COVID-19.

The multicenter phase I/IIa study, officially known as the Systemic Umbilical Cord Cells to Ease Severe Syndrome with COVID-19 (SUCCESS) trial, will be completed in collaboration with Baptist Health South Florida in Miami, Florida and Sanford Health in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for COVID-19 patients who have developed ARDS.

This study will be a collaborative effort between multiple institutions including Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Baptist Health South Florida, Sanford Health, and a biotechnology lab, RESTEM.

The study is expected to start enrolling patients from Baptist Health South Florida and Sanford Health this week.

"Based on the initially observed improvement of the patients treated, we are now looking forward to enrolling these severely ill patients onto the clinical trial. We are grateful to the FDA to have this clinical trial reviewed and approved in a timely manner during this difficult time," said Dr. Guenther Koehne who is also the chairman of the Department of Translational Medicine at Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (HWCeM) at Florida International University and the principal investigator of this clinical trial.

Sanford Health will also be a key strategic partner for this study. "We're excited to bring a potentially breakthrough treatment to our patients with the most severe cases of COVID-19," said David A. Pearce, PhD, president of innovation and research at Sanford Health. "It's a privilege to partner with RESTEM on this groundbreaking approach, which has already shown remarkable promise."

RESTEM's cells are grown from umbilical cord tissue by a proprietary process that allows millions of doses to be replicated rapidly. The SUCCESS trial will identify COVID-19 ARDS patients who could best benefit from ULSC and will develop randomized placebo-controlled evidence about the ability of these cells to heal patients with this disease.

Patients will be able to participate in the SUCCESS clinical trial both at Miami Cancer Institute and at Sanford Health.

Media Contacts: Georgi Morales Pipkin, Baptist Health 786-596-6534 Georgi.Pipkin@BaptistHealth.net
David Duckenfield, RESTEM 305-609-1653 duck@balsrapr.com

Angela Dejene, Sanford Health (218) 280-0148 Angela@dejenecommunications.com

About RESTEM RESTEM is a leading-edge biotechnology firm dedicated to the discovery and development of cell-based therapeutics and tools that aid in the treatment of human degenerative disorders. The company focuses on improving the quality of life for those who suffer from disabling diseases of the immune system and other severe infirmities. With over 12 years of research and development on umbilical cord lining stem cells (ULSCs), which have properties of mesenchymal stem cells, RESTEM has emerged as a major contributor to cell-based therapy treatments based on the unique properties of its patented cell technology.

About Sanford Health Sanford Health, one of the largest health systems in the United States, is dedicated to the integrated delivery of health care, genomic medicine, senior care and services, global clinics, research and affordable insurance. Headquartered in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the organization includes 44 hospitals, 1,400 physicians and more than 200 Good Samaritan Society senior care locations in 26 states and nine countries. Nearly \$1 billion in gifts from philanthropist Denny Sanford have transformed how Sanford Health improves the human condition. For information, visit sanfordhealth.org or Sanford Health News.

About Miami Cancer Institute Miami Cancer Institute brings to South Florida access to personalized clinical treatments and comprehensive support services delivered with unparalleled compassion. No other cancer program in the region has the combination of cancer-fighting expertise and advanced technology—including the first proton therapy center in South Florida, Latin America and the Caribbean, and one of the only radiation oncology program in the world with each of the newest radiation therapies in one

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 21 of 79

place—to diagnose and deliver precise cancer treatments that achieve the best outcomes and improve the lives of cancer patients. The Institute offers an impressive roster of established community oncologists and renowned experts, clinical researchers and genomic scientists recruited from the nation's top cancer centers. Selected as Florida's only member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer (MSK) Alliance, Miami Cancer Institute is part of a meaningful clinical collaboration that affords patients in South Florida access to innovative treatments and ensures that the standards of care developed by their multidisciplinary disease management teams match those at MSK.

Miami Cancer Institute is part of Baptist Health South Florida, the largest healthcare organization in the region, with 11 hospitals, more than 23,000 employees, 4,000 physicians and 100 outpatient centers, urgent care facilities and physician practices spanning across Miami-Dade, Monroe, Broward and Palm Beach counties. Baptist Health has internationally renowned centers of excellence in cancer, cardiovascular care, orthopedics and sports medicine, and neurosciences. In addition, it includes Baptist Health Medical Group; Baptist Health Quality Network; and Baptist Health Care On Demand, a virtual health platform. A not-for-profit organization supported by philanthropy and committed to its faith-based charitable mission of medical excellence, Baptist Health has been recognized by Fortune as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For in America and by Ethisphere as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies. For more information, visit BaptistHealth.net/Newsroom and connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

View original content: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/fda-approves-covid-19-trial-after-successful-emergency-use-of-umbilical-stem-cells-from-restem-301059158.html>

SOURCE Sanford Health

Europe relaxing virus restrictions but cases flare elsewhere

By DAVID RISING, ELAINE KURTENBACH and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany and several other European countries where the coronavirus spread has slowed were moving ahead Friday with relaxing border restrictions, while flare-ups in Mexico and elsewhere served as a reminder the pandemic is far from over.

Slovenia, which has been gradually easing strict lockdown measures, declared that the spread of the virus is now under control and that European Union residents could now enter from Austria, Italy and Hungary.

Germany, meantime, was preparing to open its border entirely with Luxembourg at midnight, and increase the number of crossings open from France, Switzerland and Austria. Travelers will still need to demonstrate a "valid reason" to enter Germany and there will be spot checks, but the goal is to restore free travel by June 15.

Germany's states have also agreed to drop a mandatory 14-day quarantine for travelers entering from the European Union and several other European countries, including Britain, said Armin Laschet, the governor of the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

"Germany will only overcome the corona crisis if European freedom of movement for people, goods and services is fully restored," Laschet said.

Germany has seen more than 170,000 COVID-19 infections and nearly 8,000 deaths, but more than 150,000 people have recovered and the country has been seeing fewer than 1,000 new cases per day.

In northern Europe, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania removed travel restrictions between the Baltic nations, which Estonian Prime Minister Juri Ratas called "another step toward normal life."

Austria and Switzerland were also moving ahead with easing some border restrictions, and Austria reopened all cafes and restaurants.

"I have been having breakfast at this café for about 100 years," said Helmut Gollner, a former literature professor who was one of the first guests Friday morning at Vienna's Cafe Sperl. "My wife always made great breakfast but it's a different atmosphere here with the newspapers and so on."

Restaurants were reopening in more German states Friday as well, and the country was to resume professional soccer on Saturday after a two-month hiatus.

The Bundesliga plans five games with no fans present and other precautions, including the Ruhr derby

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 22 of 79

between Borussia Dortmund and Schalke.

In Sydney, many cafes and restaurants opened again Friday as New South Wales, Australia's most populous state, granted permission for them, as well as places of worship, to reopen with up to 10 people so long as distancing rules are in place.

Many Catholic churches across the state opened for private prayer, confession and small-scale Masses. "The celebration of Mass is the highest form of Catholic worship and to not be able to physically gather these past two months has been very difficult," Sydney's Archbishop Anthony Fisher said in a statement.

In Japan, some schools, restaurants and other businesses started to reopen after the country lifted its national coronavirus emergency, while keeping in place restrictions in limited urban areas like Tokyo where risks remain.

As countries move ahead with relaxing restrictions, the head of the World Health Organization's Europe office, Dr. Hans Kluge, warned that distancing guidance and other protective measures were more important than ever.

"It's very important to remind everyone that as long as there is no vaccine and effective treatment, there is no return to normal," he said on French radio Europe-1.

"This virus won't simply disappear, so the personal behavior of each of us will determine the behavior of the virus. Governments have done a lot, and now the responsibility is on the people."

Worldwide, there have been more than 4.4 million coronavirus infections reported and 300,000 deaths, while nearly 1.6 million people have recovered according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

A first case was confirmed among the 1 million refugees from Myanmar living in dire, overcrowded conditions in southern Bangladesh. Another, a local person living in the Cox's Bazaar district, also tested positive, refugee commissioner Mahbub Alam Takukder said.

Aid workers have been warning of the potential for a serious outbreak if the virus reaches the camps, and teams were activated to treat patients and trace, quarantine and test people they may have encountered.

Somalia's official death toll hit 53, but aid groups and authorities say that figure could be far too low in a country with one of the world's weakest health systems, after three decades of civil war.

Ahead of Mexico's plan to partially reopen key industries such as mining, construction and auto plants on May 18, authorities sounded a note of concern as the country reported its largest one-day rise in coronavirus case numbers.

There were 2,409 new COVID-19 test confirmations Thursday, the first time that number has exceeded 2,000 in one day.

"We are at the moment of the fastest growth in new cases," said Assistant Health Secretary Hugo López-Gatell. "This is the most difficult moment."

Deaths have neared 4,500 and there were signs that hospital capacity was nearing its limit in Mexico City, the hardest-hit area. The Health Department reported that 73% percent of the city's general-care hospital beds were full; the percentage was lower for intensive-care beds, but that was partly because of the expansion of improvised ICU units at hospitals and other venues.

In Brazil, news website G1 reported that 900 people in Rio de Janeiro were waiting for an intensive-care bed in one of the state's overwhelmed units. President Jair Bolsonaro warned of looming "chaos" as he once again lambasted governors and mayors who introduced lockdowns in cities to limit spread of the new virus.

"I'm sorry, many will die, but even more will if the economy continues to be destroyed by these measures," Bolsonaro told journalists in Brasilia on Thursday. "These lockdowns, closing everything, is the path to failure. It will break Brazil."

Colombian President Ivan Duque has ordered all residents of the Amazonas Department, near the border with Brazil, to stay inside except to buy food or get medical care. Local hospitals are being overwhelmed as cases rise in a vulnerable part of the Amazon, home to many indigenous groups.

In the U.S., the Grand Canyon National Park was reopening Friday to allow visitors in for day trips but not overnight.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 23 of 79

As a number of regions in New York were to reopen, Gov. Andrew Cuomo urged local governments to keep a close eye on key metrics, and that people and businesses were complying with distancing rules.

Amid those and other reopenings, protests and debate persisted over how quickly to end shutdowns.

With more than 1.4 million infections and more than 85,000 deaths, the U.S. has the largest outbreak in the world by far.

Kurtenbach reported from Beijing; Biller from Rio de Janeiro. Associated Press journalists from around the world contributed to this report.

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

The Latest: Tokyo reveals 3-step plan to reopen businesses

By The Associated Press undefined

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

TOP OF THE HOUR:

- Europe is relaxing coronavirus restrictions, but cases are flaring in Mexico and elsewhere.
- France's president acknowledges mistakes in reforms of the healthcare system, which was quickly overwhelmed by the virus crisis.
- Britain says 27% of the people who died in care homes until May 1 had confirmed or suspected coronavirus infections.
- First virus case reported in crowded camps for Rohingya refugees.

TOKYO — The governor of Tokyo, one of several prefectures still under a coronavirus state of emergency, says that she plans to reopen businesses in three phases in the Japanese capital as it prepares for a possible end to the restrictive measures later this month.

Yuriko Koike said Friday that Tokyo will be able to ease restrictions once new cases per day fall below 20, among other indicators. If figures deteriorate, social and economic activity will have to be scaled back again, she said.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced the end of the state of emergency in all but eight of the country's 47 prefectures. Restrictions are still in place, for example, in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Hokkaido, where experts say risks remain.

Abe said he will have another experts' meeting next week to decide if the emergency can be removed entirely.

Under the roadmap, business activities will resume in three steps, starting with the lowest-risk facilities like museums and libraries, Koike said. In phase two, theaters will be allowed to reopen and business hours for restaurants and bars will be extended. The final phase will apply to all but cluster-prone facilities such as night clubs.

Japan has registered about 16,200 coronavirus cases and 710 deaths.

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron has acknowledged mistakes in reforming the national hospital system, which has faced years of cost cuts and whose once-renowned facilities have struggled to treat tens of thousands of virus patients.

Senior doctors faced off Friday with Macron when he visited a leading Paris hospital, demanding more investment and a rethink of a medical system that found itself quickly overwhelmed by the virus crisis.

"For months I was asking for equipment, and we had three days to fight against the virus," said Martin Hirsch, head of the Paris hospital network.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 24 of 79

As the virus raced across France in March, Macron had to deploy the military to move patients and doctors around the country to relieve saturated hospitals.

Macron's government announced a plan last year to address growing concerns about hospital job cuts and equipment shortages, but acknowledged Friday: "We undoubtedly made a mistake in the strategy."

"It was a great strategy, but we should have done it 10 years ago," he told frustrated doctors at Pitie-Salpetriere Hospital.

Macron promised to kick off a new investment plan while the virus crisis is still raging, without offering details.

French authorities say more than 27,000 people with the virus have died in hospitals and nursing homes.

VILNIUS, Lithuania — The prime ministers of the three Baltic nations said the first coronavirus wave is under control in their region. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania formally removed travel restrictions between them Friday.

"We are the first in the European Union to open our borders to each other's citizens," Lithuanian Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis said. "But we remain cautious and responsible and are protecting the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian space."

In a joint video, Latvian Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins called it "a very important day" while his Estonian counterpart Juri Ratas said it was "another step toward our normal life."

They spoke hours before the three former Soviet republics' foreign minister gathered in the Latvian capital of Riga to sign a document, formally reopening the borders between the three EU members which are home to around six million inhabitants.

Baltic citizens and residents have been able to move freely between the three EU nations since Thursday midnight. People returning from countries outside the region will still be required to self-isolate for two weeks.

LONDON — Official British statistics show that more than 12,000 residents of nursing homes have died with confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

The Office for National Statistics says 12,526 care home residents in England and Wales died with confirmed or suspected coronavirus infections between the start of the outbreak and May 1. That's 27% of the 45,899 total deaths of care-home residents during the period.

Britain has struggled to get a full picture of the scale of the epidemic in nursing homes. At first, the government recorded only COVID-19 deaths that occurred in hospitals, though that has now changed.

The country's official death toll stands at 33,614, the highest number of coronavirus deaths in Europe.

PRAGUE — The Czech government is planning to further ease its restrictive measures adopted due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Health Minister Adam Vojtech said Friday that sports, cultural and other public events for up to 300 people will be allowed from May 25, up from the current 100.

Vojtech said that if outbreak developments make it possible, the number will increase to 500 on June 8 and to 1,000 on June 22.

Hotels and tourist camps are reopening also on May 25, along with public swimming pools and aqua centers, the same day when bars, restaurants and cafes can start serving customers inside.

Children's summer camps will be allowed under strict conditions, Vojtech said.

The Czech Republic has registered 8,352 coronavirus cases and 293 deaths. Since May 1, it has identified fewer than 100 new cases a day.

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia — Slovenia has become the first European country to proclaim an end to the coronavirus epidemic at home.

The European Union state's government said Friday the COVID-19 spread is under control and there is

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 25 of 79

no longer a need for extraordinary health measures.

The government says EU residents are free to cross into Slovenia from Austria, Italy and Hungary at predetermined checkpoints, while most non-EU nationals will have to undergo a mandatory 14-day quarantine in what is a major step for the small Alpine country as it accelerates the easing of restrictions.

The first coronavirus case in Slovenia was recorded on March 4, a returnee from neighboring Italy. The nationwide epidemic was proclaimed on March 12.

By May 13, there were 1,467 confirmed cases and 103 deaths in Slovenia.

DHAKA, Bangladesh — Authorities have reported the first coronavirus case in the crowded camps for Rohingya refugees in southern Bangladesh, where more than 1 million people are sheltered.

The person from the Rohingya community and a local person who lives in the Cox's Bazar district who also tested positive have been isolated, Mahbub Alam Talukder, the country's refugee commissioner, said Thursday.

Teams have been activated for treatment of the patients as well as tracing people they might have encountered and quarantining and testing of those contacts, Louise Donovan, a spokeswoman for the U.N. refugee agency, told The Associated Press.

Aid workers have been warning of the potential for a serious outbreak if the virus reached the camps. The dense crowding with plastic shacks standing side by side housing up to 12 residents each mean the refugees would be dangerously exposed to the virus.

PARIS — The head of WHO's Europe office, Dr. Hans Kluge, says the future of the pandemic will depend on everyone's actions.

"It's very important to remind everyone that as long as there is no vaccine and effective treatment, there is no return to normal," he said on French radio Europe-1 on Friday. "This virus won't simply disappear, so the personal behavior of each of us will determine the behavior of the virus."

"Governments have done a lot (to limit the virus), and now the responsibility is on the people," he added. "Before we said that public health is important for the economy. Now we have seen that without health there is no economy, there is no national security."

NEW DELHI — The World Bank has approved \$1 billion in emergency response to support India's efforts at providing social assistance to poor and vulnerable households severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A bank statement says the move will increase its total commitment to India to \$2 billion. A \$1 billion package was announced last month for India's health sector.

An immediate allocation of \$750 million will help scale-up cash transfers and food benefits to provide robust social protection for essential workers involved in coronavirus relief efforts and benefit migrants and informal workers, the bank statement said late Thursday.

A second influx of \$250 million will deepen the social protection package in fiscal year 2021, it said.

Half of India's population earns less than \$3 a day. More than 90% of India's workforce is employed in the informal sector, without access to significant savings or workplace-based social protection benefits such as paid sick leave or social insurance, the statement said.

On Tuesday, India's federal government announced an economic rescue package of 20 trillion rupees (\$260 billion) to tide over a massive economic crisis created by the pandemic. Millions of migrant workers have fled big Indian cities to their village homes as they could find no work.

BERLIN — Germany's most populous state has lifted a requirement for people arriving from other European countries to self-quarantine for 14 days, and other regions are expected to follow.

The rule expired in the western region of North Rhine-Westphalia at midnight. The state government said in a statement that Germany's states agreed with the federal government on Thursday to exempt travelers from other countries in the European Union, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 26 of 79

Britain and that they will implement that decision over the coming days.

Interior Minister Horst Seehofer recommended earlier this week that states lift the quarantine rule for travelers from Europe – but maintain it for those from elsewhere.

A court in North Rhine-Westphalia's northern neighbor, Lower Saxony, already suspended the rule for that state earlier this week.

On Friday night, Germany plans to end two-month-old checks on its border with Luxembourg and loosen them somewhat on its borders with Austria, Switzerland and France – though it doesn't plan to restore free travel across its borders until mid-June.

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan is resuming domestic flights starting Saturday, ending a ban that was imposed in March.

Abdul Sattar Khokhar, spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority, said no decision on international flights has been made.

Pakistan reported 33 more deaths from the coronavirus in the previous 24 hours, raising its fatalities to 803 amid more than 37,000 cases. It has experienced a steady increase in coronavirus-related deaths and infections since the government eased a lockdown on Monday.

Authorities say the increase in infections is mainly because many people have failed to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

BEIJING — China's foreign minister says the country has brought the coronavirus outbreak under control and he lashed out at foreign politicians he accused of having "insisted on politicizing the epidemic, labeling the virus, and smearing the World Health Organization."

Wang Yi's comments carried by the official Xinhua News Agency appeared directed at the United States, where President Donald Trump's administration has repeatedly castigated China for allegedly covering up the initial outbreak and has suspended payments to the WHO over what it calls a pro-China bias and failure to effectively deal with the pandemic.

Other countries, including Australia, have also urged an independent investigation into the origin of the pandemic, calls that China has furiously rejected.

Under head of state and ruling Communist Party leader Xi Jinping's leadership, China has been able to "put the outbreak under control through arduous efforts and has been gradually resuming economic and social life while undertaking prevention and control measures on a regular basis," Wang was quoted as saying in a phone call Thursday with the foreign ministers of Hungary, Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

China has "overcome its own difficulties, offered support and assistance to relevant countries, shared prevention and control experiences and treatments without reservation, and facilitated various countries' purchase of anti-epidemic supplies in China," Wang said.

Attempts to politicize the pandemic and smear the WHO are "a serious violation of international moral principles and undermine international anti-epidemic efforts," Wang added.

SYDNEY — Many cafes and restaurants opened again Friday in Sydney as some coronavirus restrictions were lifted, although rainy weather and ongoing fears appeared to keep patronage relatively low.

Australia's most populous state of New South Wales began allowing cafes, restaurants and places of worship to reopen with up to 10 people on the condition they adhere to social distancing rules. Pubs and clubs were also permitted to open, but only for dining.

State Premier Gladys Berejiklian warned people to take personal responsibility, saying that easing restrictions in some other countries had backfired.

"Let's please do our part in keeping everybody safe so that all of us can keep moving forward so that we never, ever go backwards," Berejiklian told reporters in Sydney. "That's really, really critical."

Many Catholic churches across the state opened for private prayer, confession and small-scale Masses.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 27 of 79

BANGKOK — Authorities in Thailand are allowing malls and swimming pools to reopen and lifting other restrictions imposed in March to combat the coronavirus.

The reopenings on Sunday have conditions, including keeping cinemas closed and limiting use of public swimming pools to one hour per person.

Beauty parlors and art galleries and museums will also be allowed to reopen.

Curfew hours have been shortened by one hour to 11 p.m.-4 a.m., but travel between provinces remains discouraged and international commercial passenger flight arrivals remain banned.

Thailand earlier this month allowed an initial easing of restrictions, including the reopening of restaurants and parks. With one exception, the country had only single digit increases in new cases since April 27. It announced seven new cases on Friday, for a total of 3,025 including 56 deaths.

SINGAPORE -- An American cargo pilot who admitted to "poor judgment" in breaking a quarantine order to buy medical supplies became the first foreigner imprisoned in Singapore for breaching its restrictions meant to curb the coronavirus.

Lawyer Ronnie Tan said FedEx pilot Brian Dugan Yeargan was sentenced to four weeks after he pleaded guilty to leaving his hotel room for three hours to buy masks and a thermometer.

Singapore has the largest outbreak in Southeast Asia with 26,000 cases. More than 90% of those infected are foreign workers living in crowded dormitories, while the government recently began easing restrictions for the local population.

The tiny city-state has strict penalties for those who breach quarantine rules. The lawyer said Friday he would apply for the sentence to be shortened for good behavior.

LONDON — The British government has agreed to provide 1.6 billion pounds (\$1.95 billion) in emergency funding for London's vast public transit network, after the city's mayor warned the system would collapse without a rescue plan.

Ridership on the city's buses, trams, subways and local trains -- and income for operator Transport for London -- has plummeted since the country entered a lockdown on March 23 to slow the spread of the coronavirus, and TFL has cut back on services and closed some stations.

As the lockdown gradually eases, the government wants the network to run a full schedule again so that people can begin to return to work while observing social distancing.

The rescue plan, made up of a 1.1 billion pound (\$1.3 billion) grant and a 500 million pound (\$610 million) loan, comes with strings attached. The government says London Mayor Sadiq Khan must agree to hike fares, allow government representatives on the TFL board and allow the government to review TFL's finances and structure.

Khan belongs to the opposition Labour Party and has often clashed with the Conservative government. He said "this was not the deal I wanted. But it was the only deal the government put on the table and I had no choice but to accept it to keep the Tubes and buses running."

LONDON — The British government's scientific advisors are to meet with teachers' unions to discuss the gradual re-opening of schools in England in the coming weeks.

Teachers are worried about the phased re-opening of classes amid concerns that the risk of infection from COVID-19 is still too great. Other parts of Britain have no plans to re-start schools.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson arranged Friday's meeting to brief teachers' representatives on "the scientific advice underpinning our approach."

Williamson has tried to reassure teachers and parents that the return to classes would be "controlled and careful" and include protective measures, such as keeping class sizes small.

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

House to vote Friday on more virus aid, despite GOP skeptics

By **ANDREW TAYLOR** and **ALAN FRAM** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Democratic-controlled House is pressing ahead Friday with votes on another massive rescue bill that would pump almost \$1 trillion to state and local governments, renew \$1,200 cash payments for individuals, and extend a \$600 weekly supplemental federal unemployment benefit.

The first four coronavirus response bills were bipartisan measures that passed by sweeping votes, but Friday's measure — with a \$3 trillion-plus price tag that exceeds the prior bills combined — promises to pass largely along party lines.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has loaded the 1,815-page measure with a slew of Democratic priorities, including funding to cover rent payments and utility bills, "hazard pay" for essential workers, and grants to thousands of municipal governments grappling with sagging revenues.

But it's earned a White House veto threat and a scathing assessment from top Republicans like Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who called it "a totally unserious effort." Few Republicans are expected to vote for the bill tomorrow despite popular provisions like help for the Postal Service and local schools, \$1,200 payments to most Americans, and \$175 billion to help homeowners and renters stay in their homes.

The legislation comes as the country continues to struggle with the health and economic crisis caused by the highly contagious virus, which has claimed more than 85,000 lives in the U.S. and caused at least 36 million people to lose their jobs. Just Thursday, the government reported that almost 3 million people filed jobless claims last week.

The response has been an unprecedented wave of deficit-financed federal aid aimed at propping up businesses, supporting household balance sheets, and pay for a massive health system response. On Wednesday, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell urged lawmakers to act further, warning that the economic shock is "significantly worse" than any downturn since the Great Depression.

The government's budget was supposed to be \$4.6 trillion even before the pandemic hit. The response so far has added almost \$3 trillion to that, but hasn't arrested the economy's drop. That's made GOP defense hawks uneasy about the prospect of more aid. And polls show Republican voters think the government is generally doing enough.

Republicans are now calling for a "pause" before considering more aid, reflecting disunity between conservatives who feel enough has been done and more pragmatic lawmakers who favor steps like rescuing the Postal Service from looming insolvency, while delivering cash to revenue-starved state and local governments.

Underscoring the stakes, it's also becoming clear that the next coronavirus response bill will probably be the last.

"I think the bill we pass in June will likely be the last major bill," said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo. "There may be some effort to pass a bill in September or October but it will get increasingly difficult."

The House Democrat's bill ignores Trump's demand for a cut in the Social Security payroll tax. It also does not replenish the Payroll Protection Program that's been a favorite of Republicans and their business allies.

The measure is likely to pass Friday along party lines, though Rep. Kendra Horn, D-Okla., announced her opposition on Thursday, while New York Republican Peter King says he will support it.

The earlier bills, debated as the magnitude of the crisis was becoming clear, featured sweeping votes and debates notable for their bipartisanship and sense of common purpose. Now, disagreements about re-opening the economy, which appear to cleave along party lines, have crept into the debate.

At a Capitol news conference, Pelosi, D-Calif., lambasted Republicans who've said they want to hold off for now on more relief spending. "It's amazing to me how much patience and how much tolerance someone can have for the pain of others," she said.

Pelosi told reporters she believed both parties "and even down Pennsylvania Avenue" — a reference to the White House — understand "the hardships Americans are feeling." She called the Democratic proposal "our offer" and said while she's had no recent negotiations with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, the

administration's chief bargainer, "I'm sure that they'll come with something."

White House officials quickly released a statement of their own. It said the legislation Pelosi unveiled Tuesday is "more concerned with delivering on longstanding partisan and ideological wishlists than with enhancing the ability of our Nation to deal with the public health and economic challenges we face."

McConnell said later Thursday on Fox News that there was a "high likelihood" Congress would do another bill and said it would include GOP-sought language limiting legal liability for companies reopening for business. But he added, "it's not going to be a \$3 trillion left-wing wish."

Auto workers' tenuous return a ray of hope in jobs crisis

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Defying a wave of layoffs that has sent the U.S. job market into its worst catastrophe on record, at least one major industry is making a comeback: Tens of thousands of auto workers are returning to factories that have been shuttered since mid-March due to fears of spreading the coronavirus.

Until now, it was mostly hair salons, restaurants, tattoo parlors and other small businesses reopening in some parts of the country. The auto industry is among the first major sectors of the economy to restart its engine.

About 133,000 U.S. workers — just over half of the industry's workforce before the pandemic — are expected to pour back into assembly plants that will open in the coming week, according to estimates by The Associated Press. In addition, parts-making companies began cranking this week to get components flowing, adding thousands more workers.

Looming in the background is an economy decimated by the pandemic. Nearly 3 million laid-off U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week, raising the total seeking aid in the past two months to about 36 million. Although some states have begun to let selected businesses reopen, workers are still reporting difficulty getting unemployment benefits. Freelance, gig and self-employed workers are struggling.

Even the auto sector won't see a full return to normal yet, and if people don't start buying vehicles again, workers could be sent home. Yet automakers say there's enough pent-up demand, especially for pickup trucks, to get factories humming again.

That could help states slow the drain on their unemployment benefit funds. In Michigan, where over one-third of the labor force sought benefits, the fund fell from \$4.6 billion before the pandemic to \$4.1 billion on April 30, said Jeff Donofrio, director of the state Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. Some returning auto employees could work part-time and get still some unemployment benefits, but federal programs could cover part of their payments, he said.

At Ford, where about 47,000 U.S. factory workers will return by next week, there's optimism that consumer demand will accompany them. Chief Operating Officer Jim Farley said the company, using data collected from new Ford models from the past two years, is seeing sales recover.

In Europe, China and the U.S., Ford has found a correlation between the number of trips people take and auto sales, with trips increasing as restrictions eased.

"We started to see in early April a change where people started to take more trips," Farley said Thursday. "The (sales) decline stopped and our retail sales improved a lot."

Auto sales in China, where the virus peaked before the U.S., could be a harbinger of things to come. China sales fell just 2.6% in April from a year earlier, compared with a 48% free-fall in March. Production at many plants is nearly back to normal after being shut down in January and February. Volkswagen, Honda, Mercedes and Ford reported no virus cases among employees since reopening. Fiat Chrysler had two, but said the workers never entered factories.

Things are worse in Europe, where sales plummeted 55% in March and some factories are running at only 40% of capacity. The pandemic has affected over 1.1 million European auto industry workers, almost half the sector's manufacturing jobs. Most are getting paid through government support. A survey of auto parts suppliers shows that a third of executives believe it will take at least two years for the industry to recover.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 30 of 79

U.S. sales fell 46% in April as the virus took hold, but analysts are forecasting a smaller decline of 30% in May. Sales have been juiced by huge incentives, with some automakers offering 0% financing for as long as seven years.

Pickup trucks are giving automakers the most hope, said Jeff Schuster, senior vice president at LMC Automotive, a consulting firm. Through April, total auto sales were down 21%, but pickups were only off 4%, he said.

Yet Schuster says automakers could be a little too optimistic about sales overall. "Those consumers who are still unemployed are not likely to be making auto purchases," he said.

Some U.S. automakers, like General Motors, are restarting slowly, only bringing back workers on one shift in factories, some of which ran around the clock before the pandemic. Others, like Subaru in Indiana, have a full complement of employees.

Although companies are taking precautions, one big virus outbreak at an auto plant could send the industry back into hibernation. And the industry could face parts supply interruptions from Mexico, where the government wants to reopen factories despite rising virus cases.

Automakers in the U.S. are requiring employees to fill out questionnaires daily to see if they have symptoms, taking temperatures with no-touch thermometers before workers enter buildings, and requiring gloves, masks and face shields. They've also tried to keep at least six feet between workers, staggered time between shifts so workers don't interact, and put up plexiglas barriers when possible.

All the steps were tested on U.S. workers who volunteered to make protective gear and breathing machines while they were laid off. Automakers say they know of no virus cases among workers in the effort.

But Phil Cuthbertson a worker at GM's transmission plant in Toledo, Ohio, who will return Monday, said he has mixed feelings.

"I just don't want the whole thing to be pushed on us to go back if it's not safe," he said.

Cindy Estrada, United Auto Workers vice president for Fiat Chrysler, said she's been impressed by the companies' safety commitment. But she's sure some workers, especially in the hard-hit Detroit area, will be fearful because family members or co-workers have had COVID-19. At least 25 UAW members employed by Detroit automakers have died from the virus, although no one is sure if they caught it at a factory.

The union will be watching in case workers get infected, though there's no magic number for when it will try to close a factory, Estrada said.

"If something looks like it's becoming a hot spot, then we need to act quickly and make adjustments," she said. "No one wants to see that happen."

AP reporters Joe McDonald in Beijing, Carlo Piovano in London, Jonathan Mattise in Nashville, Tenn.; John Seewer in Toledo, Ohio; Mike Householder in Ypsilanti Township, Michigan; David Eggert in Lansing, Michigan; and Mary Esch in Albany, N.Y.; contributed to this report.

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. WHO'S KEY TO TRUMP'S REELECTION The president's advisers are concerned about a drop in support among seniors, a group vital to his hopes of winning a second term this November.
2. 'IT'S A DERELICTION OF DUTY' Joe Biden says that if he wins the presidency, he would not use his power to pardon Donald Trump or stop any investigations of Trump and his associates.
3. TYPHOON LEAVES EXTENSIVE DAMAGE IN PHILIPPINES Ferocious wind and rain left at least one dead and damaged hundreds of structures, along with rice and corn fields.
4. NFL PLAYERS ACCUSED OF ARMED ROBBERY Giants cornerback DeAndre Baker and Seahawks cornerback Quinton Dunbar pulled out guns and stole cash and other valuables at a party in South Florida, authorities say.
5. FLAVOR OF THE WEEK HAS NEW MEANING A Hong Kong shop is offering "tear gas" flavor ice cream,

with the main ingredient black peppercorns, a vivid reminder of what demonstrators faced during pro-democracy protests last year.

1st COVID-19 case detected in Rohingya camps in Bangladesh

By JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — The first coronavirus case has been confirmed in the crowded camps for Rohingya refugees in southern Bangladesh, where more than 1 million are taking shelter.

The infected Rohingya and a local Bangladeshi who lives in the Cox's Bazar district who also tested positive have been isolated, Mahbub Alam Talukder, the country's refugee commissioner, said Thursday.

Teams have been activated to treat the patients as well as trace people they may have encountered, Louise Donovan, a spokeswoman for the U.N. refugee agency, told The Associated Press.

Nationwide, Bangladesh has confirmed 18,863 cases, including 283 fatalities. But the toll is thought to be higher since adequate testing facilities are lacking in the South Asian nation of 160 million people.

Aid workers have been warning of the potential for a serious outbreak if the virus spread into the densely populated camps. Donovan said Thursday that 108 Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar have been tested for the coronavirus since the beginning of April.

With about 40,000 people per square kilometer (103,600 per square mile) living in plastic shacks side by side, the 34 camps have more than 40 times Bangladesh's average population density. Each shack is barely 10 square meters (107 square feet) and many are packed with up to 12 residents.

Some refugees remained worried, saying they lacked access to clean water and protective equipment.

"Here in the camps it's difficult to protect our health from the virus because there are so many people in a small place," said Ro Sawyeddollah, a camp resident and executive director of the Rohingya Students Union.

The U.N. and the government said about 1,200 beds for isolating and treating COVID-19 patients were being readied just outside the camps at Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, and more were planned.

Aid agencies and rights groups have been demanding Bangladesh's government withdraw restrictions on using mobile phones and internet in the camps. Authorities had suspended internet use for security reasons, and recent reports said armed groups among the refugees were allegedly involved in kidnappings and smuggling of drugs.

"Because of COVID-19, people can't meet one another, so it's impossible to share any messages or information without the internet," said Ro Sawyeddollah.

Daniel P. Sullivan, a human rights advocate for aid group Refugees International, said the lack of accurate information is fueling misinformation, and "rumors abound in the camps that COVID-19 is always fatal or that the faithful will be safe."

Most of the Rohingya have fled Myanmar since August 2017, when Myanmar's military launched counterinsurgency operations in response to rebel attacks. Security forces have been accused of mass rapes, killings and burning thousands of homes.

Authorities in Myanmar have long considered the Muslim Rohingya to be migrants from Bangladesh, even though their families have lived in the Buddhist-majority country for centuries. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982, effectively rendering them stateless. They are also denied freedom of movement and other basic rights including education.

Associated Press writer Victoria Milko in Jakarta, Indonesia, contributes to the report.

Online graduations still bring stars to the virtual lectern

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

This year's college graduates won't get to take their triumphant walk across the stage. They won't get to toss their caps amid a sea of classmates. Instead, they have to settle for online ceremonies while their diplomas are mailed home. But at least one aspect of the traditional graduation ceremony is being salvaged

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 32 of 79

for the class of 2020: the celebrity keynote address.

As scores of U.S. colleges host virtual graduation ceremonies amid the coronavirus pandemic, many are recruiting famous figures to give commencement speeches over their laptops instead of the lectern. In the first weeks of graduation season, schools have landed speeches from big names including Tom Hanks, Pharrell Williams and Tom Brady. Others are promising appearances from comedians, authors, civil rights leaders and politicians.

At the same time, a growing number of companies are stepping in with their own star-studded events celebrating college graduates across the nation.

On Friday, Facebook is hosting a "Graduation 2020" event with commencement speeches from Oprah Winfrey, Awkwafina, Lil Nas X and Simone Biles, among others. YouTube is offering a "Dear Class of 2020" celebration headlined by Barack and Michelle Obama, with additional speeches from Lady Gaga, Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai and the K-Pop supergroup BTS.

A separate online event will celebrate graduates at historically black colleges, with speeches from Barack Obama and a host of other stars.

It's all meant to take the sting out of losing such a memorable moment. Schools across the U.S. started canceling or postponing traditional ceremonies in March, to the dismay of graduates who had hoped to celebrate years of hard work. In their addresses, some speakers have used the moment to offer a lesson on life's curve balls and the need to adapt.

In a video message for Texas A&M University's law school, actor Rainn Wilson told graduates he was sorry they couldn't share "big group hugs and high fives and kisses on the cheek." But he also said students can learn from that disappointment.

"It may also teach a very valuable life lesson not to take anything for granted. To know that things can and will change all the time," Wilson said. "The world out there can be incredibly difficult and fraught, and plans change all the time."

Tom Hanks, who survived COVID-19, told graduates at Wright State University that their lives will forever be divided into time before and after the coronavirus pandemic, in the same way that past generations had their lives marked by wars.

"You have finished Wright State during the great reset, the great reboot," Hanks said in a video message. "You chosen ones are going to form the new structures and define the new realities, and make the new world — the world after all that we have been through."

Hanks' message was delivered as a surprise to graduates at the Ohio school. Other colleges have similarly kept quiet about their celebrity speeches until they were shared online, including at Virginia's Norfolk State University, which tapped singer and producer Pharrell Williams to give a virtual address.

"Even if this is not the norm, you guys and girls still deserve all the praise," Williams said in his message. "You stuck it through, you made it and today's your day. And man, you made it at a really crazy time in life."

Some colleges are keeping the same speakers they previously lined up for campus ceremonies, including at Harvard University, which will offer a message from Marty Baron, editor of The Washington Post, and at Ohio State University, which broadcast a virtual address from Apple CEO Tim Cook.

While most campus ceremonies have been canceled or postponed, President Donald Trump recently said he plans to deliver an in-person address at the Military Academy at West Point on June 13. The academy says it's bringing 1,000 cadets back to the Annapolis, Maryland, campus for the event.

Trump's presumptive Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, is scheduled to give remarks at a virtual graduation event for Columbia University's law school.

Other political figures recruited to deliver virtual speeches include House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who will speak to graduates at Smith College in Massachusetts, and Dr. Deborah Birx, the Trump administration's coronavirus response coordinator, who gave a video address for New York's Houghton College.

The virtual celebrations have a different look from school to school, with some preparing videos that are recorded in advance and then shared online. Others are holding live events over video conference, in some cases produced by companies promising to replicate the traditional graduation experience.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 33 of 79

Some are passing up on celebrity speeches, though, saying the online events aren't meant to be an exact replica of the campus event. At Rice University, officials are hosting an online event with no guest speaker. Instead, the school hopes to bring graduates back for a belated ceremony on campus with the previously announced keynote speaker, New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof.

And some others are skipping online events entirely. Officials at the University of California, Berkeley, say they surveyed students and found it was their "clear preference" to pass on a virtual celebration and aim for a campus celebration later. A message from the university said it's "too early at this stage of the pandemic to finalize when and how we will mark this milestone."

Typhoon leaves 1 dead, extensive damage in Philippine towns

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Typhoon Vongfong's ferocious wind and rain left at least one dead and damaged hundreds of coronavirus isolation facilities and homes, along with rice and corn fields in five hard-hit eastern towns alone, a governor said Friday.

Gov. Ben Evardone of Eastern Samar province, where the typhoon slammed ashore, said some residents were weeping in desperation after their houses were destroyed or blown away in the towns he inspected. One distraught villager who lost his home slashed his wrist but was treated in time, he said.

A man bled to death after he was hit by glass shards in a school building he was trying to open to take shelter in, Evardone said.

"The damage I saw was very extensive. The roof of one church was ripped off completely, its iron bars twisted badly by the typhoon," Evardone told The Associated Press by telephone.

He said that he and his group of military, police and local authorities failed to travel to two towns hit by the typhoon, Jipapad and Maslog, due to fallen trees on the road. Cellphone and two-way radio communications to the far-flung areas were down and Evardone appealed to the military to deploy a helicopter to inspect and carry out food drops if army troops were not be able to reach the area by Saturday.

In the outlying region of Bicol, northwest of Eastern Samar, more than 145,000 people were riding out the weakening typhoon in emergency shelters on Friday after a mass evacuation that was complicated and slowed by the coronavirus.

Vongfong weakened into a severe tropical storm after hitting land Thursday and was blowing northwest toward the populous main northern island of Luzon, government forecasters said.

The typhoon's maximum sustained wind speed dropped to 110 kilometers (68 miles) per hour with gusts of 150 kph (93 mph) but it remains dangerous especially in coastal and low-lying villages, forecasters said. Vongfong was expected to blow out of the country's north on Sunday.

Office of Civil Defense Director Claudio Yucot said the evacuations took time because workers needed to wear masks and protective suits and could not transport villagers to shelters in large numbers as a safeguard against COVID-19.

"Our ease of movement has been limited by COVID," Yucot told AP by telephone from Albay province in the Bicol region, which has had dozens of coronavirus infections, including four deaths, and remains under quarantine. "In the evacuation centers, there are more challenges."

In an evacuation room, which could shelter up to 40 families before, only four families could be accommodated now. The occupants should know each other and are required to report any infected person, Yucot said.

The coast guard said more than 600 cargo truck drivers and workers were stranded due to the travel suspension. All were required to wear masks and prohibited from mingling.

The typhoon hit as the Philippines struggles to deal with coronavirus outbreaks, largely with a lockdown in Luzon that is to be eased this weekend, except in metropolitan Manila and two other high-risk areas. The rest of the country will be placed in less restrictive quarantine, and crucial businesses will partially reopen starting next week.

The Philippines has reported nearly 12,000 infections, including 790 deaths, among the highest in South-

east Asia.

Iraqi doctor's fight with virus lays bare a battered system

By **SAMYA KULLAB** Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Dr. Marwa al-Khafaji's homecoming after 20 days in a hospital isolation ward was met by spite. Someone had barricaded her family home's gate with a concrete block.

The message from the neighbors was clear: She had survived coronavirus, but the stigma surrounding the disease would be a more pernicious fight.

The young physician was catapulted into the front lines of Iraq's battle with the virus in early March. The Associated Press followed her tale from inside a squalid quarantine room to her return to the streets of her childhood, where she found piercing glares had displaced greetings.

Her struggles mirror those of Iraq's battered health system, laid bare by the pandemic: Hospitals without supplies, medical staff intimidated by an unknown disease, and widespread stigma associated with infection.

Fear of stigma — driven by religious beliefs, customs and a deep mistrust of the health system — has been a main driver of the pandemic in Iraq, doctors say, as people hide their illness and avoid seeking help.

At least 115 people have died among more than 3,030 confirmed coronavirus cases across Iraq, according to Health Ministry statistics. The daily rate of cases jumped after curfew hours were shortened for the holy month of Ramadan, from 29 on April 22 to 119 on Wednesday. Officials fear a flare-up would be catastrophic.

Iraqi officials described the ministry's response as adequate and said Iraq was spared the exponential rise in cases seen in neighboring Iran and Turkey.

Ministry spokesman Saif al-Badr blamed the spread on people who had symptoms or came from an affected country and "didn't disclose these facts due to arrogance."

But Khafaji's story, as well as interviews with half a dozen doctors and nurses, reveal a haphazard response with no comprehensive strategy from a hobbled government that until recently had only caretaker status. "Inside quarantine, the future felt uncertain," Khafaji said. "Outside it's no different."

In mid-March, Khafaji, 39, grew alarmed when her elderly mother, Dhikra Saoud, showed signs of respiratory distress. The virus had just started to hit Iraq and had yet to leave its mark on the city of Karbala where she lives.

But the doctor connected the dots. Days before, her father showed mild flu-like symptoms that she treated at home. Now her mother was presenting the same, but in acute form.

She was certain it was coronavirus. But at three different hospitals, doctors refused to test her mother. At the time, the limited test kits were rationed for those who had been to Iran.

At each hospital visit, Khafaji's mother was afraid the neighbors would hear where she was. "I beg you. Take me home," she said.

Her symptoms worsened, until a tearful Khafaji pleaded to a physician friend at 3 a.m.: Please, "give my mother the test." He agreed.

On March 19, policemen came to the house to take both mother and daughter to the hospital. Both had tested positive. Here again was a repercussion of the stigma: People often refuse to be quarantined, so police are sent to force them.

Khafaji knew the shortcomings of the system she worked in. Inside quarantine, she experienced it from the eyes of a patient.

On the first day, Khafaji's mother looked at the squalid ward in disgust. "You have brought me to a prison," she said.

The quarantine zone of the Imam Hussein teaching hospital was a communal ward, with patients separated by metal screens. The floors were cracked, mold bloomed in the shared bathroom, dust coated surfaces despite daily cleanings.

Khafaji was no stranger to hardship: The mother of a 5-year-old, she recently divorced a husband who shot her in the leg following a domestic dispute. She asked the staff for cleaning materials and scrubbed

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 35 of 79

the room and bathrooms herself.

When the sheets and blankets remained unwashed for days, she threw hers out in protest.

Iraq's centralized health system, largely unchanged since the 1970s, has been ground down by decades of wars, sanctions and prolonged unrest since the 2003 U.S. invasion, with little investment from successive governments.

There are eight physicians and 1.4 hospital beds per 10,000 people. The country of 38 million has at most 600 ventilators, a Health Ministry official said. One Karbala doctor, Assel Saad Saleh, said his hospital sees 1,000 patients a day, well over triple its capacity.

"Patients get angry with lack of supplies, drugs and testing kits," he said.

The patients who flowed into the quarantine during Khafaji's stay reflected the course of the virus in Iraq. First came pilgrims returning from Iran, then those from Syria. Finally, patients with no travel history whatsoever.

Khafaji took solace in routine.

At 8 a.m. she woke her mother, served breakfast and waited for the doctor's morning check to see what treatment or testing he might order. She often interjected with her own medical opinion. When one doctor proscribed a patient nebulizer therapy twice daily, she said it was needed every hour.

At night, given the doctor shortage, Khafaji monitored patients and reported changes to nurses who checked in only every six hours, trembling as they approached virus patients.

She stood aghast when an emergency physician told her he didn't know how to intubate a patient's airway.

"They are untrained," she said. "And they are afraid of us."

On her worst day she suffered fatigue, headache and a high fever.

"My eyes were like rocks," she said.

On April 10, Khafaji and her mother tested negative for the virus and could leave.

But another crisis awaited: the cement blocks that neighbors had erected, blocking their home's front and back gates.

Even after they were removed, things weren't the same.

When her son goes to play in the garden, Khafaji hears other mothers calling their children back into the house.

By May, she was back putting in 12-hour shifts at the hospital on an \$800 a month stipend, the average physician's salary in Iraq. At her request, she works in the waiting room, helping diagnose potential virus patients.

"Everyone has a limit," she said. "I haven't reached it till now."

Associated Press writer Qassim Abdul-Zahra contributed from Baghdad.

Years of conflict leave Somalia ill-equipped to fight virus

By **ABDI GULED** and **MOHAMED SHEIKH NOR** Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Years of conflict, instability and poverty have left Somalia ill-equipped to handle a health crisis like the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, no one really knows how many cases of COVID-19 it has.

The uncertainty has led to fear, confusion and panic even after authorities have tried to keep the public informed about the outbreak.

The official count of cases is now above 1,200, with 53 deaths, according to figures from Johns Hopkins University.

But some aid groups — and even authorities leading the fight — have warned that official figures could be far too low in a country with one of the world's weakest health systems after three decades of civil war and attacks by Islamic insurgents, as well as recurring humanitarian crises.

"We are not dismissing the fact that the death toll could be a lot higher than publicized," Mohamed Mohamud Ali, the head of Somalia's COVID-19 task force, told The Associated Press.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 36 of 79

The numbers for the country are stark.

There is only one well-equipped quarantine facility for a population of more than 15 million people.

"Staff are reporting that people with symptoms are being told to stay home to save the limited health resources for those who become severely ill, showing that the official count is far off from reality," said Richard Crothers, the International Rescue Committee's country director, in remarks earlier this month.

Others who think they are infected often are too scared to even approach some clinics, adding to the unease in the population.

Somalia was one of the last nations in Africa to have the capacity to test for the virus. Just over 2,700 tests have been carried out, according to the World Health Organization.

Mogadishu Mayor Omar Mohamud Mohamed touched off a panic early this month when he estimated almost 500 deaths in the capital in less than two weeks. Then, Somalia's information minister, Mohamed Abdi Hayir, warned that everyone who dies would be referred to as a COVID-19 victim.

The health ministry quickly dismissed the remarks as "unproven" and "unsupported."

Still, Ali described the spread of the virus as "a speeding car with a failed brake."

About the only advantage Somalia might have is the relative youth of its population, he said.

"Our capacity to deal with all cases in the country is limited, and we are afraid that trying to do so would make us overstretched, which could lead to negligence in handling the cases we have now," Ali said.

Somalia's plight is echoed in other war-shattered countries where a fragile corps of health workers faces overwhelming odds.

"In places like Syria, Yemen and Libya, where health care infrastructure has been significantly damaged by ongoing conflict, mounting an effective response against COVID-19 poses an extremely difficult challenge," the United Nations has said. Aid groups have warned that those seeking shelter from fighting in crowded, squalid camps could find little escape from the virus if it arrives.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has pleaded for a global cease-fire to allow exhausted health workers to better deal with pandemic.

In Somalia, restrictions on flights and the difficulties of traveling in a country threatened by the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group have left large regions without easy access to basic aid, let alone intensive care facilities.

"It has been extremely difficult to access these areas with humanitarian support during this long period of restriction and lockdown," the WHO said this week.

That has led some communities to take matters into their own hands.

Residents of Beledweyne in central Somalia set up their own quarantine measures. "We cannot wait for the government any longer," said Shafi'i Mohamed, a local infectious disease specialist. "We had to do something."

Evacuating patients to the capital "is not an option for now, since that could further contribute the spread of the virus," said Ali, the COVID-19 task force leader.

But he urged communities to share information, saying authorities would still try to reach affected areas. "Fear is the problem here," he said.

At Martini Hospital, the main facility treating COVID-19 patients in Mogadishu, health care workers have received little training, and they have raised concerns about their personal safety. One of its nurses died of the disease this week.

"The hospital has only 76 beds, among them 20 ICU beds," said Dr. Abdirisak Yusuf. "The hospital cannot cover the needs of the population of people in Mogadishu. That is why we need to be planning to open other hospitals. I am very worried that the hospital will be overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients."

Hundreds of messages about virus prevention have been posted across Mogadishu, including in the crowded settlements of thousands of people displaced by drought and instability. Aid groups fear what will happen if the virus spreads among the country's 2.6 million displaced people, many with poor access to water and sanitation.

Meanwhile, workers in one of Mogadishu's largest cemeteries are preparing for more funerals.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 37 of 79

Gravedigger Ali Dhere said they were burying 15-25 bodies a day, "and this has never happened before." Many families do not even register the death, simply burying their relatives on the day they die in accordance with Islamic customs. While data on the outbreak is badly needed, the cause of death remains unknown.

Guled reported from Nairobi, Kenya.

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

Outside US, top scientists steer debate away from politics

By DEREK GATOPOULOS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — President Donald Trump is never far from a public spat with his government's top expert on the pandemic, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the most recent flare-up occurring this week over the pace of reopening schools.

Among U.S. allies, however, many leaders are happy to step away from the spotlight to leverage experts' ability to counter misleading information and appeal across political boundaries to gain public compliance for health restrictions.

"The particular features of a pandemic give new dimensions to questions of trust," said Terry Flew, a professor of communication at Queensland University of Technology.

"Experts who understand the subject and politicians prepared to listen to them, become vitally important. In most countries, this is happening. Hopefully, it marks a return of confidence in experts."

Here's a look at some other scientists around the world leading national public safety efforts.

GREECE: SOTIRIOS TSIODRAS

Announcing the news of a deadly disaster isn't a job many public figures look forward to. Sotirios Tsiodras has done it on some 50 occasions, updating Greeks on the progression of the pandemic in live televised briefings.

A Harvard-trained scientist and father of seven, Tsiodras spends some Sunday mornings as a cantor in the Orthodox Church and is the soft-spoken chief Health Ministry virologist. Added to the daily death toll are tips on how to maintain a healthy diet, explanations of how some countries are better-positioned to carry out mass testing, and warnings on the dangers of domestic abuse when living in prolonged confinement.

It's made Tsiodras Greece's most popular person: One opinion poll gave a 94.5% approval rating to the 55-year-old professor of medicine and infectious diseases. His appeal is helping lockdown enforcement and keeping infection rates low.

CANADA: THERESA TAM

The Hong Kong-born Chief Public Health Officer of Canada delivers straight-to-camera, no-nonsense advice in a series of government TV ads, as well as heading public briefings. She has been joined in the public health ad campaign by Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, and Hayley Wickenheiser, the ice hockey star who is in her final year of medical school.

Tam, 55, is credited with helping maintain high compliance levels with stay-at-home orders. National politicians rushed to her defense after criticism from Alberta Premier Jason Kenney of the speed of approval for testing methods.

Tam's popularity recently inspired a limited-edition line of T-shirts that include a portrait of the scientist.

SPAIN: FERNANDO SIMON

With its high death toll and fiercely politically charged environment, Spain has turned to veteran epide-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 38 of 79

miologist Fernando Simon to head the national response.

The 57-year-old quickly won praise for his easygoing style at daily news conferences, his preference for open-necked shirts, and sweaters over dark suits endearing him to many. Internet memes poke fun at his bushy eyebrows, and he is parodied on comedy shows. Spanish media report that he is stopped on the street for his autograph.

But that folksy approach has backfired among more conservative sections of society, some of whom view him as flippant and note statements he made in the early stages of the pandemic when he appeared to play down the risk to the public.

GERMANY: LOTHAR WIELER

The head of the Robert Koch Institute, Germany's federal disease control agency, is a professor of microbiology and epidemiology and has led a campaign praised by European colleagues for rapid testing rollout and early introduction of restrictions.

The 59-year-old career scientist has also helped Germans take a partial break from their defense of fiercely protected civil liberties and participate in a data-sharing program that will help policymakers study the pandemic and target resources. The program was adapted to address concerns over centralized data storage ____ SWEDEN: ANDERS TEGNELL

The 64-year-old Tegnell worked with World Health Organization programs to fight outbreaks of Ebola and other diseases. Now, he is an outlier among his elite fellow virologists, having challenged the conventional view on how to contain the pandemic.

He has steered a Swedish public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic that has been markedly different to other European countries, relying primarily on voluntary social distancing instead of strict state-imposed lockdown measures.

Defenders of Tegnell argue that his approach has been misunderstood and it shares the social distancing goal of other countries but has been adapted to the local health care conditions and legal system.

Sweden's alternative view has done little to dent Tegnell's popularity: the bespectacled scientist has recently appeared as a tattoo design.

IRELAND: TONY HOLOHAN

Ireland's Chief Medical Officer for the past 12 years, Tony Holohan, is also seen as a calming presence. Holohan has appeared on popular late-night talk shows to explain the need for lockdown measures, favoring a cautious approach to easing tied to meeting virus-suppression milestones.

His down-to-earth style has made Holohan a popular figure in Ireland. Irish caricature artist Niall O'Loughlin, who gave the balding Holohan a superman appearance, says he been flooded by email requests for free prints. "I still find it utterly bizarre why so many people would want a picture of Tony Holohan on their wall," O'Loughlin wrote on Twitter. "No offense Tony (-:"

Barry Hatton in Lisbon, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, and Menelaos Hadjicostis in Nicosia contributed. ____ Follow Gatopoulos at <http://www.twitter.com/dgatopoulos>

Surf's up and so are new beach rules to prevent virus spread

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) — They arrived at the beach by car, skateboard and on bare feet. They carried Frisbees, cameras and surfboards. They wore running shorts, yoga pants and wetsuits.

Many wore masks.

That was the starkest difference this week apart from a moment in time in March that seems hard to conjure now — before beaches closed and face masks seemed like an extreme and maybe even ineffective protection from coronavirus.

No longer. Masks are now required at Los Angeles County beaches, which reopened Wednesday, to

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 39 of 79

join counterparts in other states that have allowed a somewhat limited return to famed stretches of sand. "You get some side eyes if you don't wear a mask," said Tom Ventura, who sported a light blue face covering with white polka dots while cooling down after his morning run Thursday in Santa Monica.

Along the California coast and in states known for silky sands, warm waters and ample sun, the surf is up along with a new set of rules posted in the time of the coronavirus pandemic.

Beachgoers in LA County have to remain active — walking, running or swimming. No sunbathing. No picnics. No volleyball. Parking lots, piers and a popular 22-mile (35.4-kilometer) bike path that strings together Santa Monica, Venice, Manhattan, and Torrance beaches are also closed.

Similar rules are in place throughout the state, as well as in Florida and Hawaii, though masks are not required at many beaches. Tanning and even picnics are permitted in some places, though people are generally told to only spend time with family members and not gather in large groups.

While beaches in South Florida — Miami and Hollywood — remain closed, beaches Pinellas County on the Gulf of Mexico allow chairs and towels in the sand, but limit groups to no more than 10 people. Signs urge people who don't live together to remain 6 feet (1.8 meters) apart.

"I think it's a little much, especially being outside with the sun and everything," said Britt Mask, a Georgia man on vacation with his family at Indian Rocks Beach, near Clearwater, Florida. "I understand why it's being done."

In Hawaii, exercise is allowed on beaches on Oahu, but Honolulu police warned people sitting on the sands of Waikiki that they needed to be in the water or moving along.

Beaches closed in many places as stay-at-home orders got stricter after people, who were allowed to exercise, took the opportunity to escape confinement and flocked to the coast on balmy weekends. Public health officials were concerned large gatherings could allow the virus to spread.

Andrew Noymer, a public health professor at the University of California, Irvine, said it was sensible to start reopening beaches and see how it goes. People should make their own risk assessment, but he said the sun helps kill germs and the virus is less likely to spread in the ocean.

"We have to start reopening the United States slowly and smartly. We can't just keep everyone locked inside for 12 months," Noymer said. "If we can't run on the beach then how on Earth can we go to a restaurant or a movie theater?"

A day into the Los Angeles reopening Thursday, turnout was lighter than the day before.

"Yesterday was like the first get-out-of-jail-free card," said Peter Moore, who was wearing a white hospital-style mask and walking with his wife and dog. "If they open up the parking lots, we'll see if people are sitting on top of each other. There's a lot of sand out there."

Redondo Beach police were called when a group of volleyball players tried to string up their own net where county nets were removed in March, said Nicole Mooradian, of the Department of Beaches & Harbors. They insisted to maintenance workers that the game was allowed under recreation rules, but relented and left with their ball after officers intervened.

Some of the beach rule signs posted on lifeguard towers had to be replaced after being vandalized or stolen, Mooradian said.

Otherwise, the biggest challenge for lifeguards was reminding people they needed to wear masks, said Pono Barnes, a spokesman for LA County Fire Department.

Surfer Lana Song, who was overjoyed to be back in the water after the closure upended her morning ritual and led to her gaining 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms), was confused about the mask rule that applies on land but not water. She didn't know where she would put a mask while riding waves.

It's supposed to be worn between the car and the water, Mooradian said. But no surfer was witnessed doing that and another surfer gave Song plenty of distance as she rinsed her board off under a shower.

Mlak Sahli, a student from Saudi Arabia studying public health, said it felt liberating to return to the beach for the first time in months even though a police officer shooed her and a friend for sitting on the beach.

A small group of surfers were treated to a rare sight when a pod of about 20 dolphins surfaced and swam by, said Peter Lockwood.

Lockwood said he wasn't concerned about catching the virus in the water.

"Not a chance. There was so much air moving there and no one wants to be that close," he said. "Everyone wants their own wave."

Associated Press writers Curt Anderson in St. Petersburg, Florida, and Jennifer Sinco Kelleher in Honolulu contributed to this report.

Lives Lost: Holocaust survivor reclaimed Nazi-looted artwork

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — With the Nazis murdering Jews and ransacking their property outside on the infamous nights of Kristallnacht in 1938, 13-year-old David Toren sat in the sunroom of his wealthy great-uncle in Germany admiring a favorite painting depicting two men on horseback on a beach.

Within a year, Toren would be smuggled out in one of the final Kindertransports, a series of rescues for Jewish children organized by several European countries. Left behind, his family would perish in the death camps and their vast art collection would be seized by Nazis and later traded by unscrupulous dealers.

Toren would serve in the Israeli pre-state militia before moving to America with less than \$100 to his name. He went on to build a successful law practice with an office on the 54th floor of the World Trade Center. Many of the early-life possessions he kept there were destroyed in the 9/11 attacks, carried out before he arrived to work that day.

But even as a degenerative eye condition robbed him of his sight later in life, the images of his past never escaped him, and he embarked on a quest to reclaim some of what was lost. He sued the government of Germany for his great-uncle's collection and in 2015, after a lengthy saga, recovered the Max Liebermann work "Two Riders on the Beach" that so moved him in his youth.

"He regarded it as justice and felt very strongly about it," said his son, Peter Toren. "The art is something that was taken from his family and it was something there was a possibility of getting back. He couldn't get back all the lives that were exterminated."

Toren died on April 19 in his Manhattan home from symptoms of the coronavirus. He was 94. He left behind his son Peter and two grandchildren.

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

Born Klaus-Gunther Tarnowski in Breslau, now part of Poland, Toren and his family at first seemed immune to the rise of the Nazis. His father, a decorated World War I veteran, was a prominent lawyer who was allowed to practice even after the Nazis forbade most Jews from doing so and he published poetry and wrote plays that were performed at local theaters.

But eventually he too was taken away to a concentration camp and came back three weeks later "a broken man," according to Peter Toren. He and his wife eventually died in Auschwitz.

Toren's great-uncle, the wealthy Jewish industrialist and art collector David Friedmann, was forced to flee and the Nazis pillaged his extensive collection. Many of the works ended up in the hands of Hildebrand Gurlitt, a notorious German art dealer who traded in what the Nazis called "degenerate art" — works deemed inferior because they were un-German, Jewish or Communist or, as is the case with Impressionist and other Modernist works, did not employ traditionally realistic forms. Still, they were happy to sell the works to help fund their war machine.

Much of Gurlitt's collection remained unseen for decades and experts feared they had been lost or destroyed. But a vast horde resurfaced by surprise in 2012 when German authorities raided a Munich apartment belonging to his son Cornelius while investigating him for tax evasion. Paintings by artists including Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Henri Matisse were discovered.

The reclusive Cornelius Gurlitt, who said he had inherited much of the art from his father, kept more than 1,200 works in his Munich apartment and 250 more in Salzburg, Austria. The discovery brought renewed

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 41 of 79

attention to the many unresolved cases of looted art that was never returned to original Jewish owners or their descendants. Cornelius Gurlitt died in 2014 at age 81, designating Switzerland's Kunstmuseum Bern as the sole heir to a collection worth billions of dollars.

Friedmann's daughter Charlotte died in Auschwitz, leaving Toren as the only descendant to stake a claim. After reclaiming "Two Riders on the Beach," Toren tracked down another piece that had oddly made its way to Israel. After a lengthy negotiation he got back "Basket Weavers" as well, an Impressionist work depicting five boys weaving baskets out of straw.

Peter Toren said his father spent his final years pursuing the art collection and further efforts were ongoing to acquire more than 50 documented antiques seized from Friedmann's collection.

Despite his background, Toren had no problem using his language skills to cultivate German clients in New York, even those with Nazi connections. As a patent attorney, he once represented a Bavarian farm machinery company with ties to the infamous Nazi doctor Josef Mengele.

"I asked my father how he could deal with Nazi clients and he told me that if he didn't do the work someone else would," Peter Toren said, before adding. "And he charged such clients an unofficial 25% Nazi surcharge."

Toren's grandson, Ben, said his grandfather pursued the art collection in retirement with the same "un-sentimental" focus and tenacity as he did in his law career.

"The artwork thing gave him a new lease on life," he said. "He very strongly felt that these paintings were his paintings and it gave him a lot of purpose."

"But he never presented himself as being any kind of victim and he never asked for any pity," he quickly added. "He was always fairly stoic in his demeanor, in how he carried himself. His life experience required of him to have a rock-solid exterior. That's how he presented himself to the world."

Follow Aron Heller at www.twitter.com/aronhellerap

Tensions rise as Texas governor readies to lift more rules

By **PAUL J. WEBER** and **JIM VERTUNO** Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Two weeks into the reopening of Texas, coronavirus cases are climbing. New outbreaks still crop up. And at Guero's Taco Bar in Austin, which offers the occasional celebrity sighting, a log of every diner and where they sat is begrudgingly in the works.

"It seems like a huge invasion of privacy," said owner Cathy Lipincott, who is nonetheless trying to comply with Austin's local public health guidelines by asking, but not requiring, customers to give their information.

Few states are rebooting quicker than Texas, where stay-at-home orders expired May 1. With cases still rising, including single-day highs of 1,458 new cases and 58 deaths Thursday, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has defended the pace by emphasizing steadying hospitalization rates and pointing out that Texas' 1,200 deaths are still behind similarly big states, including California and Florida.

But on the cusp of even more restrictions ending Monday, including gyms cleared to reopen, a political confrontation is growing over attempts by big cities to keep some guardrails. The dispute underscores the gulf between Democrats who run city halls and GOP leaders who call the shots in the capital in Texas, where unlike in other states, the governor's orders supersede all local mandates during the pandemic.

The renewed tensions comes at a moment when Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, warned Congress this week of "needless suffering and death" if the U.S. moves too quickly. Nevertheless, Wisconsin's courts tossed out the state's stay-at-home orders, throwing communities into chaos as some bars opened immediately while strict local restrictions are kept elsewhere.

In Georgia, Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms has also expressed unease with the speed that Republican Gov. Brian Kemp has reopened the state. Oklahoma lawmakers, irritated by local officials who imposed stricter measures during this health crisis, passed a House bill Thursday that would weaken the power of cities during the next one.

And in Texas, Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton this week lashed out at the cities of Dal-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 42 of 79

las, Austin and San Antonio over what he called "unlawful" local orders that are tougher than restrictions prescribed by Abbott, and threatened lawsuits if the cities don't back off. The warning came one day after El Paso pleaded to postpone easing up on any more lockdown measures in light of the number of COVID-19 cases there surging 60 percent over the past two weeks.

"Unfortunately, a few Texas counties and cities seem to have confused recommendations with requirements and have grossly exceeded state law to impose their own will on private citizens and businesses," Paxton said.

City leaders said their local orders, which include more stringent emphasis on face coverings in public and restaurant protocols that aren't strictly enforced, don't conflict. El Paso County Judge Ricardo Samaniego said he made his case to the governor in a phone call, asking for a few more weeks to assess data and reduce cases before more restrictions are lifted, but believes he won't get an answer until Abbott's public announcement Monday.

"I'm not fighting his plan, I'm fighting his timing," Samaniego said. "It looks like it would work for us months from now."

The spat is a reversal from the early days of the outbreak in Texas, when Abbott gave cities and counties wide latitude to issue restrictions as they saw fit. But Abbott has since taken the reins over how quickly Texas will reboot, which last week included moving up the reopening of hair salons following complaints from conservatives. Testing for most of May has fallen well short of Abbott's stated goal of 30,000 per day, although testing numbers have surged in recent days, according to state health officials.

Overflow hospitals set up in Dallas and Houston were dismantled without ever being used, which Abbott has pointed to as a reminder that the virus has not overwhelmed Texas. But experts still worry.

"They see the decline going in and they pat themselves on the back and say, 'Look at the good work we've done, now we can let this happen and open up things,'" said Dennis Perrotta, a retired state epidemiologist in Texas. "And then we get slammed with a second peak."

In Austin, restaurants have grumbled over recommendations to log dine-in customers for the purposes of contact tracing, coupled with a warning that health officials otherwise might have to publicly out eateries if outbreaks spread. Some restaurateurs saw that as a threat, but at The Peached Tortilla, owner Eric Silverstein says his industry has to do what it takes to reopen.

"We have no choice," he said. "You kind of have to going back to doing some form of business."

A few blocks away at Brentwood Social House, a neighborhood coffee shop, owner Suzanne Daniels isn't so sure. Though her competitors have reopened, her indoor seating remains closed, and she doesn't know when she'll feel safe to follow them.

"It feels early," Daniels said. "In my gut, it doesn't feel right or good."

Associated Press writers Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City and Cedar Attanasio in El Paso contributed to this report.

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

Had enough of 'Contagion'? Here are some warm blanket movies

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

When many were rushing to rewatch "Contagion," the eerily prophetic 2011 Steven Soderbergh film about the outbreak of an easily transmitted virus, I was searching for more comforting escapes. I reached for "North by Northwest" the way a baby grasps for a pacifier.

Even in a pandemic, it's incredibly hard to watch "North by Northwest" without a perpetual grin on your face. Its jauntiness, buoyed by Bernard Herrmann's score, can outlast any calamity. The one we find ourselves in now doesn't feel so dissimilar to the blindsiding, why-me mystery Cary Grant stumbles into. We were just standing there, minding our own business, when suddenly a crop duster on the horizon turned

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 43 of 79

and headed straight for us.

What to watch has been one of the most common quandaries of quarantine. For me, even "Groundhog Day" hits too close to home right now. But less obvious movies can also take on surprising relevancy.

I had forgotten, for example, that "Hud," Martin Ritt's 1963 black-and-white western, involves an outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease. Just when you're agog at Patricia Neal or swooning at Paul Newman (both refugees unto themselves), the film suddenly steps out of 1960s Texas and into today. Newman's Hud, standing over dead livestock, decries a larger injustice: "This country is run on epidemics, where you been?"

The Depression spawned some of the most effervescent movies ever made. Moviegoers, yearning for escape, flocked to lavish musicals, delirious screwball comedies and shadowy film noirs.

That movie diet is as good now as it was then.

Since then, "escapism" has become big business and the domain of superheroes. But escape comes in many forms. Even the most challenging films transport, enveloping you in another world, another life -- something that when so much is cut off from us feels like a lifeline.

In that spirit, here are some films, old and new, that can provide some comfort through their elan, humanity and wit. Warm blankets come in all sizes; comfort food in many flavors.

— "My Man Godfrey": Most of the best screwballs of the Depression unleashed a wild, freewheeling farce on American high society. In this 1936 classic, William Powell plays a vagrant plucked off the street by a wealthy sponsor (Carole Lombard). As in the best screwballs, the animal kingdom makes an occasional cameo. Here, it's a goat and a gorilla impression. In "Bringing Up Baby," it's a leopard. In "The Awful Truth," a dog. Powell, star of "The Thin Man" movies, is, as ever, a tonic — or, if you prefer, a cocktail (Streaming on Amazon Prime).

— "You'll Never Get Rich": Like Powell, Fred Astaire is one of those Break-in-Case-of-Emergency movie stars, capable of providing a lift in any time. He's better known for his pairings with Ginger Rogers, but in this 1941 wartime musical, Rita Hayworth is his dancing partner. She nearly blows him off the screen (Available for digital rental).

— "Out of the Past": The noirs of the '40s might not seem like the stuff of warm blankets, but the best of them — "Laura," "Double Indemnity," "Gilda," "The Asphalt Jungle" -- craft such an intoxicating bed of post-war alienation and fatalism that you can just lay down in them. Jacques Tourneur's 1947 "Out of the Past," with Robert Mitchum, Jane Greer and Kirk Douglas, has a smoky structure, nearly entirely told in flashback, that makes it seem unknowable and new every time. (Available for digital rental)

— "The Nice Guys": A much more recent detective tale and a whole lot more ridiculous. Shane Black's 2016 comedy, with Ryan Gosling and Russell Crowe as private investigators in '70s Los Angeles, is part-noir, part-screwball. It's irresistible mainly for Gosling's all-out slapstick performance. Not just a B-side to his more lauded dramatic work, it's the best thing he's ever done (Available for digital rental).

— "I Know Where I'm Going!": Little in movies reaches the sublimity of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's films ("The Red Shoes," "A Matter of Life and Death," "The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp") and their 1945 romantic adventure, set on the Western Isles of Scotland, is maybe the most purely infectious. Wendy Hiller plays a woman who, traveling to her fiancé, is trapped by stormy weather on the Isle of Mull -- a stay that awakens her to the charms of the wind-swept isle's life, including a local naval officer (Roger Livesey). A movie to wrap your arms around (Streaming on the Criterion Channel).

— "Nobody's Fool": The pleasures of this late Paul Newman film, adapted from the Richard Russo novel, are endless. Set in wintry upstate New York, Robert Benton's film radiates warmth, comically but affectionately dramatizing the small-town struggles of Newman's aged handyman and an exceptional cast of characters, including his landlady (Jessica Tandy, one of her last films), his one-legged lawyer (Gene Saks) and his rival (a never-better Bruce Willis) (Streaming on Amazon Prime).

— "The Daytrippers": For whatever reason, I've found Parker Posey supremely reassuring during the pandemic. I just can't imagine her taking anything from anybody, or a global infectious disease. She's part of an ensemble in this 1996 comedy by Greg Motolla alongside Liev Schreiber, Anne Meara, Stanley Tucci and others. It's very much a '90s New York indie film, full of talk and deadpan humor, as a family

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 44 of 79

navigates a Manhattan odyssey in a station wagon. A marathon of Posey movies ("Kicking and Screaming," "Best in Show") may be in order (Streaming on Criterion Channel).

— "Ikiru": The time is never wrong for the supreme humanism of Akira Kurosawa's "Ikiru" but it's especially right right now. For a filmmaker better known for his samurai films, this 1952 movie is more straightforwardly about life and death; the title translates as "To Live." It's about an aging bureaucrat (Takashi Shimura) who learns he has stomach cancer and is plunged into an existential crisis about how to spend his remaining days. It will make you yearn for a swing set (Streaming for free on Kanopy).

— "Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad": "Can I interest you in a nightcap?" "No thank you, I don't wear them." (Streaming on Netflix),

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Hong Kong shop offers 'tear gas' flavor ice cream

By NADIA LAM and ALICE FUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Tear gas is among the new flavors at a Hong Kong ice cream shop.

The main ingredient is black peppercorns, a reminder of the pungent, peppery rounds fired by police on the streets of the semi-autonomous Chinese city during months of demonstrations last year.

"It tastes like tear gas. It feels difficult to breathe at first, and it's really pungent and irritating. It makes me want to drink a lot of water immediately," said customer Anita Wong, who experienced tear gas at a protest. "I think it's a flashback that reminds me of how painful I felt in the movement, and that I shouldn't forget."

The flavor is a sign of support for the pro-democracy movement, which is seeking to regain its momentum during the coronavirus pandemic, the shop's owner said. He spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid repercussions from the pro-Beijing government.

"We would like to make a flavor that reminds people that they still have to persist in the protest movement and don't lose their passion," he said.

He tried different ingredients, including wasabi and mustard, in an effort to replicate the taste of tear gas. Black pepper, he said, came closest to tear gas with its throat-irritating effects.

"We roast and then grind whole black peppercorns and make them into gelato, the Italian style. It's a bit hot, but we emphasize its aftertaste, which is a sensation of irritation in the throat. It just feels like breathing in tear gas," the 31-year-old owner said.

More than 16,000 rounds of tear gas were fired during the protests, according to Hong Kong authorities, many in densely populated districts where narrow streets are filled with small restaurants and apartment blocks.

The protests began over proposed legislation that would have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China to face charges. While the bills were withdrawn, demonstrations continued over concerns Beijing is eroding the civil liberties granted to the former British colony when it was returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

The ice cream shop also provides a space for people to express their views about the movement, including the use of sticky notes that featured in the "Lennon walls" that appeared throughout the territory at the height of the demonstrations.

Such expressions date back to the 2014 Occupy Central protests, when a major stairway leading to the Hong Kong government headquarters was plastered with thousands of notes carrying messages of support.

At about \$5 a serving, tear gas ice cream has been a hit. Prior to social distancing regulations over the coronavirus outbreak, the shop's owner said he was selling 20-30 scoops per day.

The demonstrations have mostly died away as the city fights the coronavirus, but there are widespread expectations that larger actions may emerge during the summer. Already, police have been out in force to deter large gatherings and the government is pressing ahead with legislation that would make it a crime to mock the Chinese national anthem.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 45 of 79

Virus tests hospitals in pockets of US as some states reopen

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, REGINA GARCIA CANO and MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP) — From a hospital on the edge of the Navajo Nation to the suburbs of the nation's capital, front-line medical workers in coronavirus hot spots are struggling to keep up with a crushing load of patients while lockdown restrictions are lifting in many other parts of the U.S.

Governors are starting to slowly reopen some segments of their local economies, pointing to evidence that COVID-19 deaths and new hospitalizations are peaking or starting to recede in their states. But a government whistleblower warned Thursday that the U.S. faces its "darkest winter in modern history" unless leaders act decisively to prevent a rebound of the virus.

While many state and local officials see modest signs of progress in the pandemic fight, coronavirus outbreaks are testing public health networks in pockets of the U.S.

Among them is a suburb of Washington, D.C. The head of a hospital system in Maryland's Prince George's County, a majority black community bordering the city, said the area's intensive care units "are bursting at the seams." Meanwhile, a civil rights group's lawsuit claimed the county's jail failed to stop an "uncontrolled" coronavirus outbreak and isolated infected prisoners in cells with walls covered in feces, mucus and blood.

"I would say we are the epicenter of the epicenter," said Dr. Joseph Wright, interim CEO of University of Maryland Capital Region Health.

The hospital in Gallup, New Mexico, is on the front lines of a grinding outbreak on the Navajo Nation that recently prompted a 10-day lockdown with police setting up roadblocks to discourage non-emergency shopping.

Medical workers last week staged a protest over inadequate staffing and to urge the CEO of Rehoboth McKinley Christian Hospital to resign. The departure last week of the hospital's lung specialist has limited its ability to treat COVID-19 patients, as people with acute respiratory symptoms are transported to Albuquerque some two hours away. About 17 nurses were cut from the hospital's workforce in March, at least 32 workers have tested positive for the virus and its intensive care unit is at capacity.

"My staff is physically exhausted, emotionally exhausted and they are suffering from moral injury," chief nursing officer Felicia Adams said.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Rick Bright, a vaccine expert who alleges he was ousted from a high-level scientific post after warning the Trump administration to prepare for the pandemic, told a congressional panel that the U.S. lacks a plan to produce and fairly distribute a coronavirus vaccine when it becomes available.

Asked by lawmakers if Congress should be worried, Bright, who wore a protective mask while testifying, responded: "Absolutely."

President Donald Trump dismissed Bright in a tweet Thursday as "a disgruntled employee." The White House has launched what it calls "Operation Warp Speed" to produce, distribute and administer a vaccine once it becomes available.

Bright's testimony follows a warning this week from Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert, that rushing to reopen could "turn back the clock" and lead to more suffering and death, complicating efforts to revive the economy.

The U.S. has the largest outbreak in the world by far: over 1.4 million infections and nearly 85,000 deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, the virus has infected more than 4.4 million and killed over 300,000. Experts say the actual numbers are likely far higher.

The pressure is on to staunch job losses in the U.S. after unemployment soared to 14.7% in April, the highest since the Great Depression. Another nearly 3 million applied for unemployment benefits last week as more companies slashed jobs.

Roughly 36 million people have now filed for jobless aid in the country in the two months since the coronavirus first forced millions of businesses to close, the U.S. Labor Department said Thursday.

Many states are lifting lockdowns, leading to tentative resummptions of commerce, but there are frus-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 46 of 79

trations among some people still living under tough restrictions. In Michigan, hundreds of people, some armed, protested Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's stay-at-home order in heavy rain outside the state Capitol on Thursday, while about 500 people rallied outside the residence of Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz.

But elsewhere, Richmond, Virginia, opted out of the state's gradual reopening for now citing an increase in cases and the city's large minority population, and Kansas delayed reopening bars and bowling alleys.

Even in places that have relaxed restrictions, hospitals continue to operate on an emergency footing.

Georgia provided a network of hospitals with extra nurses so exhausted employees could take some time off and recover. The Northeast Georgia Health System, which operates four hospitals, is still struggling to buy the disposable protective gowns it needs. It has assigned workers to collect and sanitize suits so they can be reused, and volunteers are sewing gowns and masks.

"That's our most critical need," said Tracy Vardeman, the health system's chief strategy officer. "We're going through as many as 6,000 a day."

The system's largest hospital serves a county at the epicenter of the state's poultry industry. About one-third of Hall County's residents are Hispanic or Latino, a demographic that has accounted for up to 60% of the system's COVID-19 patients. Officials are taking virus testing to a grocery store in the heart of the Hispanic community.

"I think there is increasing realization that this is a severe issue and we cannot take it lightly," said Dr. Antonio Rios, a leader of the hospital system's affiliated physicians' group.

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan has announced the first stage of reopening beginning Friday evening, but Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks said Thursday that a local order would extend through June 1.

Wright, the hospital CEO in Prince George's County, said the three emergency departments his medical system operates are steadily seeing upward of 70 new COVID-19 confirmed and suspected patients every day.

Officials say the community has been particularly affected in part because it is a gateway to the District of Columbia and many of its 909,000 residents are essential workers who continue to go to jobs every day. That largely mirrors the scenario in Queens, the epicenter of New York's outbreak.

"We are certainly still very much in a very busy phase of this surge," Wright said.

In China, where the pandemic originated, it has now been a month since authorities announced any new deaths from the coronavirus. The National Health Commission reported four new cases in the northeastern province of Jilin, where a cluster of uncertain origin has been detected in recent days.

China has maintained social distancing and bans on foreigners entering the country, but has increasingly opened up the world's second-largest economy to allow both large factories and small businesses to resume production and dealings with customers.

But hot spots in other parts of the world continued to flare up.

Mexican health officials said Thursday they had recorded their largest one-day rise so far in confirmed coronavirus cases, 2,409, and that the country is at its "most difficult" moment of the pandemic. It was the first time new cases exceeded 2,000 on a single day in Mexico, though in percentage terms, the 6% increase was not the biggest.

Garcia Cano reported from Washington; Lee reported from Santa Fe, New Mexico. Associated Press writers Jeff Amy in Atlanta, and Christopher Rugaber and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington contributed.

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

Officials release edited coronavirus reopening guidance

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

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. health officials on Thursday released some of their long-delayed guidance that schools, businesses and other organizations can use as states reopen from coronavirus shutdowns.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention posted six one-page “decision tool” documents that use traffic signs and other graphics to tell organizations what they should consider before reopening.

The tools are for schools, workplaces, camps, childcare centers, mass transit systems, and bars and restaurants. The CDC originally also authored a document for churches and other religious facilities, but that wasn’t posted Thursday. The agency declined to say why.

Early versions of the documents included detailed information for churches wanting to restart in-person services, with suggestions including maintaining distance between parishioners and limiting the size of gatherings. The faith-related guidance was taken out after the White House raised concerns about the recommended restrictions, according to government emails obtained by The Associated Press and a person inside the agency who didn’t have permission to talk with reporters and spoke on condition of anonymity.

On Thursday, a Trump administration official also speaking on condition of anonymity said there were concerns about the propriety of the government making specific dictates to places of worship.

And Roger Severino, director of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human Services, said “protections against religious discrimination aren’t suspended during an emergency. This means the federal government cannot single out religious conduct as somehow being more dangerous or worthy of scrutiny than comparable secular behavior.”

President Donald Trump has championed religious freedom as a way to connect with conservative evangelical voters and has shown eagerness for in-person religious services to restart. He consulted interfaith leaders last month for suggestions on how to reopen and said on a recent Fox News town hall that “we have to get our people back to churches, and we’re going to start doing it soon.”

The CDC drafted the reopening guidance more than a month ago and it was initially shelved by the administration, the AP reported last week.

The agency also had prepared even more extensive guidance — about 57 pages of it — that has not been posted.

That longer document, which the AP obtained, would give different organizations specifics about how to reopen while still limiting spread of the virus, including by spacing workers or students 6 feet apart and closing break rooms and cafeterias to limit gatherings. Many of the suggestions already appear on federal websites but they haven’t been presented as reopening advice.

Some health experts and politicians have been pushing for the CDC to release as much guidance as possible to help businesses and organizations decide how to proceed.

“They want to be able to tell their own employees the guidance of the federal government,” Dr. Tom Inglesby, director of the Center for Health Security at Johns Hopkins University, said at a congressional hearing Wednesday. “They want to be able to tell their customers, ‘We’ve done everything that’s been asked of us.’”

The guidance relates to another document released by the Trump administration on April 17. That phased-in reopening plan broadly outlines how to move away from stay-at-home orders, school closures and other measures designed to stop the spread of the new coronavirus that has caused more than 1.3 million reported U.S. illnesses and more than 80,000 deaths.

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, a New York Democrat, on Wednesday offered a resolution — blocked by Republicans — to encourage release of all the documents.

“America needs and must have the candid guidance of our best scientists unfiltered, unedited, uncensored by president Trump or his political minions. The CDC report on reopening the country is an important piece of that guidance,” Schumer said.

The decision tools have been undergoing review by different federal officials, and they’ve been edited from earlier versions.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 48 of 79

For example, an earlier draft of the one-page document on camps obtained by the AP asked organizers if their program would limit attendance to people who live nearby. If the answer was no, the camp was advised not to reopen. That local attendance limitation was dropped and was not in the version posted Thursday.

And in that document and others, language has been dropped that asked if the organization is in a community that is still requiring significant disease mitigation. If the answer was yes, the organization was advised not to reopen.

Many of the changes provide more wiggle room than what was in the initial versions.

For example, in the document for people who run child care centers, the older version obtained by the AP stated that CDC recommended "checking for signs and symptoms of children and staff." The new guidelines add "as feasible" to the end.

Similar new language about feasibility appears in sections about promoting healthy hygiene such as hand washing and employees wearing cloth masks.

Dearen reported from Gainesville, Florida. AP reporters Mary Clare Jalonick, Zeke Miller and Elana Schor contributed to this report.

NFL players accused of armed robbery at South Florida party

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Police in South Florida are trying to find New York Giants cornerback DeAndre Baker and Seattle Seahawks cornerback Quinton Dunbar after multiple witnesses accused them of an armed robbery at a party, authorities said Thursday.

Miramar police issued arrest warrants for both men Thursday on four counts each of armed robbery with a firearm. Baker faces an additional four counts of aggravated assault with a firearm. The residential community is located between Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

Baker, 22, and Dunbar, 27, were attending a cookout at a Miramar home Wednesday night when a fight broke out, and Baker pulled out a handgun, the warrant said. Baker, Dunbar and two other men began robbing other people at the party of thousands of dollars in cash, watches and other valuables, witnesses told investigators.

Police said the four men then fled the home in three vehicles: a Mercedes Benz, a Lamborghini and a BMW. Witnesses said the vehicles were parked in a way that would make it easy to leave quickly, leading detectives to believe the robbery was planned. No injuries were reported.

Baker and Dunbar are both from Miami.

Baker was one of three first-round draft picks the Giants had last season. He was the 30th pick overall out of Georgia. He played in all 16 games, starting 15. He had 61 tackles and no interceptions. He was the last of the three New York picks in that first round.

"We are aware of the situation. We have been in contact with DeAndre," the Giants said in a statement. "We have no further comment at this time."

Dunbar signed with the Washington Redskins as an undrafted free agent out of Florida in 2015 and was traded to the Seahawks in March. He started 11 games last season, making 37 tackles and four interceptions.

"We are aware of the situation involving Quinton Dunbar and still gathering information," the Seahawks said in a statement. "We will defer all further comment to league investigators and local authorities."

Dunbar spent Thursday morning on a video conference with the Seattle media for the first time since being traded from Washington to the Seahawks in March.

"You just want to feel wanted at the end of the day. ... I just hope to repay them with the way I carry myself as a person," Dunbar said on the video conference.

Burr steps aside as Senate intelligence chair amid FBI probe

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Republican senator with access to some of the nation's top secrets became further entangled in a deepening FBI investigation as agents examining a well-timed sale of stocks during the coronavirus outbreak showed up at his home with a warrant to search his cellphone.

Hours later, Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina stepped aside Thursday as chairman of the powerful Senate Intelligence Committee, calling it the "best thing to do." Burr has denied wrongdoing.

"This is a distraction to the hard work of the committee and the members, and I think that the security of the country is too important to have a distraction," Burr said. He said he would serve out the remainder of his term, which ends in 2023. He is not running for reelection.

The search warrant marked a dramatic escalation in the Justice Department's investigation into whether Burr exploited advance information when he unloaded as much as \$1.7 million in stocks in the days before the coronavirus caused markets to plummet. Such warrants require investigators to establish to a judge that probable cause exists to believe a crime has occurred.

The warrant was confirmed by two people familiar with the matter, including a senior department official. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss an ongoing investigation.

Burr faces no public accusations by the government that he exploited inside information received during briefings. But the search warrant immediately affected the standing inside Congress of the influential Republican, who has earned bipartisan support for leading a congressional investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential campaign — work that sometimes rankled President Donald Trump and his supporters.

News of the warrant also underscored the public scrutiny surrounding the stock market activities of multiple senators and their families around the same time.

On Thursday, a spokesman for Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said she was asked "some basic questions" by law enforcement about sales her husband made and had voluntarily answered questions.

Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler, a new lawmaker from Georgia, and her husband dumped substantial portions of their portfolio and purchased new stocks around the time Congress was receiving briefings on the seriousness of the pandemic. Loeffler has said she had no involvement in the trades and said they were managed by third-party advisers.

A spokesperson said Loeffler has forwarded documents to the Justice Department, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Senate Ethics Committee "establishing that she and her husband acted entirely appropriately and observed both the letter and the spirit of the law."

In Burr's case, the search warrant was served on a lawyer for him, and FBI agents went to the senator's home in the Washington area to retrieve the cellphone, the Justice Department official said. The decision to obtain the warrant was approved at the highest levels of the department, the official said.

Alice Fisher, a lawyer for Burr, noted that Burr called for an ethics inquiry into the stock sales once they were disclosed. She said the senator has "been actively cooperating with the government's inquiry, as he said he would."

"From the outset, Senator Burr has been focused on an appropriate and thorough review of the facts in this matter, which will establish that his actions were appropriate," Fisher said in a statement.

Trump, speaking to reporters at the White House before traveling to Pennsylvania on Thursday, said he was unaware that Burr was leaving his intelligence post.

"I know nothing about it — never discussed it with anybody," Trump said. "That's too bad."

Senate records show Burr and his wife sold between roughly \$600,000 and \$1.7 million in more than 30 transactions in late January and mid-February, just before the market began to dive and government health officials began to sound alarms about the virus. Several of the stocks were in companies that own hotels.

Burr has acknowledged selling the stocks because of the coronavirus but said he relied "solely on public news reports," specifically CNBC's daily health and science reporting out of Asia, to make the financial

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 50 of 79

decisions.

Senators did receive a closed-door briefing on the virus on Jan. 24, which was public knowledge. A separate briefing was held Feb. 12 by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, of which Burr is a member. It's unclear if he attended either session.

He was first elected to the Senate in 2004 and chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee as it conducted its own investigation into Russian election interference in the 2016 presidential election. The committee last month issued a report supporting the conclusion by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia had interfered on Trump's behalf.

As chairman, Burr has access to the most sensitive classified information that is provided to Congress. Along with Republican and Democratic leadership and the top lawmakers on the House Intelligence Committee, Burr is part of the group of eight lawmakers in Congress who receive the highest level classified briefings.

His decision to leave the chairman position surprised fellow committee members.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said he respected Burr's decision, adding that "he's entitled to a presumption of innocence just like anybody else."

"The best I can tell, he is trying to do the right thing by the Senate, and I appreciate it," Cornyn said.

It's unclear who will take Burr's place. The next several Republican members in seniority are already chairmen of other committees, though they could choose to switch.

Next in seniority is Idaho Sen. James Risch, who told reporters on Thursday that he didn't know whether he would keep his current perch as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or move to the intelligence panel.

Following him is Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, who heads the Senate Small Business Committee. He said that he wasn't aware that Burr was stepping aside and that the decision on who takes over was up to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

Maine Sen. Susan Collins, chairwoman of the Senate Aging Committee, is third in line.

The Los Angeles Times first reported the search warrant.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaró, Colleen Long and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

A congressional watchdog agency has agreed to investigate the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' oversight of homes for aging veterans following a surge of coronavirus deaths at the state-run facilities.

The Government Accountability Office said in a letter Thursday that it will conduct a review into the VA's oversight of care at state veterans homes after a request by a group of Democratic U.S. senators.

Veterans homes are owned and operated by the states, but the VA pays for veterans to receive care in them and inspects them each year to ensure they are up to the agency's standards.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

— The world's largest cruise company said it is laying off hundreds of employees due to the coronavirus pandemic. Carnival Corp. said the majority of affected employees in the U.S. will be in Florida, California and Washington state but it did not reveal the number of job eliminations in other states or countries.

— Whistleblower Dr. Rick Bright warned that the U.S. still lacks a comprehensive battle plan against the coronavirus in critical areas like masks, testing, treatments and vaccines. He told Congress that the "window of opportunity is closing." He says the country needs a coherent strategy that will get supplies and medicines to where they're most needed.

— Denver Mayor Michael Hancock said thousands of city employees, including himself, will be furloughed

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 51 of 79

for eight days this year to help close what is expected to be a \$226 million budget gap caused by the coronavirus, joining mayors across the country that have made the same move or are thinking about it.

— Dental practices in France are cautiously reopening and accepting appointments after the French government eased restrictions on some businesses, services and public activity. Yet getting back to work in the age of coronavirus requires extra precautions because respiratory droplets are a way the virus spreads among people.

— The government of Panama said 43 migrants have tested positive for the novel coronavirus and 119 others who came in contact with them are in quarantine at a relief station near the border with Colombia. Panama's national migration office did not specify the nationalities of the infected migrants, but they were detected near a border crossing used by migrants from Africa, Haiti and southern Asia to reach the United States.

— Lawyers for the baseball players' union have asked Major League Baseball to submit a slew of financial documents that detail the industry's finances, a person familiar with the request told The Associated Press. The type of financial disclosure the union asked for is more common during overall collective bargaining talks, which play out for many months or years, rather than the limited negotiation time available now.

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.

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:

— 200 BILLION: The pandemic will cost the insurance industry over \$200 billion, according to Lloyds of London, who estimated that its own payouts are now on a par with the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks or the combined impact of hurricanes Harvey, Maria and Irma in 2017. Lloyds, which as an insurance market pays out to insurers affected by disasters, says it expects to pay between \$3 billion and \$4.3 billion to insurance companies to help them cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

IN OTHER NEWS:

— "FAIRY TALE": Matt Damon described living in Ireland during the country's coronavirus lockdown as like being in a "fairy tale." The Hollywood star and his family were in Dublin, where he had been filming Ridley Scott's "The Last Duel," before travel restrictions were imposed worldwide.

— TEAM TO BEAT: The coronavirus pandemic has changed almost everything about soccer in Germany except Bayern Munich's chances of winning. The seven-time defending champions will still be the team to beat when Bundesliga play resumes on Saturday in empty stadiums.

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

'It's impossible': NY nursing homes fret about testing order

By JENNIFER PELTZ and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As calls grow nationwide for mandatory coronavirus testing in nursing homes, New York facilities are sounding alarms about the state's ambitious new demand to test roughly 185,000 work-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 52 of 79

ers twice a week.

Administrators worry there won't be enough kits for an estimated 370,000 tests a week on workers at nursing homes and other adult care facilities, nearly double the total of tests done statewide now on people in all walks of life. The homes also have questioned who will cover an expense estimated around \$100 to \$150 per test, though the state suggested Thursday the homes could send workers to free state testing sites.

"It's the right thing to do, it's a good idea, we support it, but the logistics of it and the cost of it need to get thorough consideration," said Neil Heyman, who heads the Southern New York Association of about 60 New York City-area nursing homes. He and the heads of four other nursing home umbrella groups told Gov. Andrew Cuomo in a letter Wednesday that "there are a myriad of practical problems that will make it impossible to comply."

Cuomo, a Democrat, says the testing requirement may be "a pain in the neck," but it's necessary.

"We have to be able to say ... when this is over, that we did everything we could to protect people," he said Thursday on WAMC-AM radio.

The COVID-19 virus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people. But it has killed over 30,000 people in nursing homes and long-term care facilities nationwide — including nearly 5,600 in New York, more than in any other state, according to an Associated Press tally.

West Virginia in late April required testing for all nursing home residents and workers. Other states dispatched the National Guard to help with testing. Some New York homes and their local governments made their own arrangements for blanket testing, sometimes with state help.

But the state didn't require it until Cuomo issued an order Sunday, amid criticism from residents' relatives, watchdogs and some politicians over his approach to protecting what he has called "the most vulnerable people in the most vulnerable place."

The next day, the White House recommended, but didn't order, testing for all nursing home residents and staffers in the next two weeks. Several states, including Texas and Pennsylvania, have since taken steps to demand or encourage coronavirus testing in nursing homes.

New York's order instructs nursing home operators "to test or make arrangements for testing" all staffers twice a week — unlike in West Virginia, for instance, where the state health department and National Guard carried out the testing of 28,000 residents and workers.

New York homes that don't comply can face thousands of dollars in fines or lose their licenses. Employees who refuse to get tested can be barred from working until they do.

Nursing home residents' advocate Richard Mollot applauded New York's order.

"I do think that there will be challenges to implementation for some at the beginning," said Mollot, executive director of the Long Term Community Care Coalition. But he noted that the federal government has provided some relief funds.

"Nursing homes can and should utilize them to pay for resident care and safety, including any unanticipated expenses that might arise from the need for testing," Mollot said.

But nursing homes fret that the state is setting the bar too high.

The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine, which represents more than 50,000 professionals in the field, is "very concerned," executive director Chris Laxton said.

Besides the question of paying for the tests, the requirement "threatens to make staff shortages, already unsustainable, completely unworkable, and will quickly overwhelm commercial labs," Laxton said.

The state Health Department said Thursday that lab capacity and other issues are still being worked on. Many details will be left to nursing homes and county governments, but the department said it was working to make sure nursing homes have access to free testing at 31 state-run sites.

Still, the head of a group representing about 400 New York nursing homes and assisted living centers said the state National Guard should help provide testing on the facilities' own premises — and the federal government should help pay for it.

"Without immediate and urgently needed funding, nursing homes are at a significant disadvantage in

responding to this unprecedented health crisis," said Stephen Hanse, president of the New York State Health Facilities Association and the New York State Center for Assisted Living.

Some areas were already getting started with the new testing.

Officials in suburban Rockland County delivered state-provided testing kits Thursday to eight nursing homes.

"We are doing everything in our power to help protect residents," said County Executive Ed Day, a Republican. "We know how difficult and worrying this situation is."

Associated Press investigative researcher Randy Herschaft and video journalist Joe Frederick in New York and writer Marina Villeneuve in Albany contributed.

Graham to probe Russia investigation; won't call Obama

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham said Thursday his committee is opening a wide-ranging inquiry into the Russia investigation, but rejected President Donald Trump's call to bring in former President Barack Obama to testify.

"I am greatly concerned about the precedent that would be set by calling a former president for oversight," said Graham, a South Carolina Republican and staunch Trump ally. "No president is above the law. However, the presidency has executive privilege claims against other branches of government."

Graham noted the surprising nature of his announcement, saying: "To say we are living in unusual times is an understatement."

The U.S. has a sitting president accusing the former president "of being part of a treasonous conspiracy to undermine his presidency," Graham said. "We have the former president suggesting the current president is destroying the rule of law" by dismissing a case against Trump's first national security adviser, Michael Flynn. "All of this is occurring during a major pandemic."

The Judiciary Committee will first delve into the Justice Department's decision to dismiss its prosecution of Flynn, as well as actions by the Obama administration to view Flynn's name in intelligence reports during the Russia probe, Graham said.

"We must determine if these requests were legitimate," Graham said, referring to requests by top Obama administration officials to "unmask" Flynn's name. The requests are common, including during the Trump administration, which has made thousands of "unmasking" requests.

Graham also said the committee will look into potential abuses of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, during a probe of former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page. The FBI identified Page during the early days of its investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 campaign and secretly targeted his electronic communications.

A federal watchdog later concluded that the FBI made significant errors and omissions in applications it made to a U.S. foreign intelligence court for the authorization to eavesdrop on Page. Those mistakes prompted internal changes within the FBI and spurred a congressional debate over whether the bureau's surveillance tools should be reined in.

"My goal is to find out why and how the system got so off the rails," Graham said.

The Judiciary Committee also will look at whether Robert Mueller should have been appointed as special counsel in the Russia probe. The decision to appoint Muller was made in 2017 by then-Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein after Trump fired FBI Director James Comey.

"Was there legitimate reason to conclude the Trump campaign had colluded with the Russians?" Graham asked.

Graham's announcement comes as Trump and his GOP allies begin a broad election-year attack on the foundation of the Russia investigation, including declassifying intelligence information to try to place senior Obama administration officials under scrutiny for routine actions.

The effort has been aided by the Justice Department decision to dismiss the Flynn prosecution, essentially

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 54 of 79

rewriting the narrative of the case in a way that former federal law enforcement officials say downplays the legitimate national security concerns they believe Flynn's actions raised. Flynn pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about conversations with the Russian ambassador to the United States during the presidential transition period.

Trump and his Republican allies are pushing to reframe the Russia investigation as a "deep state" plot to sabotage his administration, setting the stage for a fresh onslaught of attacks on past and present Democratic officials and law enforcement leaders.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer railed against Republicans' renewed focus on Flynn and the Russia investigation.

"We're in the middle of a public health and economic crisis, and Senate Republicans are diving head-first into the muck, pursuing diversionary, partisan conspiracy theories to prop up President Trump when President Trump should be focusing on solving this crisis," Schumer said.

Hearings by the Judiciary Committee will start in early June, Graham said.

Trump tweeted Thursday that Graham should call Obama to testify. "Do it @LindseyGrahamSC, just do it," Trump tweeted. "No more Mr. Nice Guy. No more talk!"

Both Trump and Obama are welcome to come before the committee "and share their concerns about each other," Graham said. "If nothing else it would make for great television. However, I have great doubts about whether it would be wise for the country."

Senate votes to renew federal surveillance powers

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate has passed legislation that would extend a set of expired federal surveillance tools designed to help law enforcement officials track suspected terrorists and spies, moving one step closer to reviving them.

The legislation passed the Senate 80-16 on Thursday. The bill is a bipartisan compromise that has the support of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The Justice Department, which had been part of the negotiations, said it appreciated that the expired authorities had been reauthorized but expressed disappointment with the tweaked version of the bill that ultimately passed.

It's unclear how quickly the legislation can become law. The House passed the bill in March, but will have to pass it again due to a change in the Senate. The House has been holding votes on a limited basis due to the coronavirus pandemic.

President Donald Trump has said he will support the compromise, but GOP senators who are longtime skeptics of federal surveillance have tried to change his mind. They want him to veto it.

The bill would renew the expired surveillance authorities and impose new restrictions to try to appease civil liberties advocates in both parties.

The provisions at issue allow the FBI to get a court order for business records in national security investigations, to conduct surveillance without establishing that the subject is acting on behalf of an international terrorism organization, and to more easily continue eavesdropping on a subject who has switched cellphone providers to thwart detection.

"The attorney general and members of Congress have worked together to craft a compromise solution that will implement needed reforms while preserving the core national security tools," McConnell said on the Senate floor Wednesday. "These intense discussions have produced a strong bill that balances the need for accountability with our solemn obligation to protect our citizens and defend our homeland."

McConnell urged senators to vote against amendments altering the bill. He said the legislation was already a "delicate balance" and warned changing it could mean the underlying provisions won't be renewed.

"We cannot let the perfect become the enemy of the good when key authorities are currently sitting expired and unusable," McConnell said on the Senate floor before the vote.

But senators adopted one amendment anyway, with more than three-fourths of the chamber supporting it. Another amendment came just one vote short of the 60 votes needed.

The successful amendment, from Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah and Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy

of Vermont, would boost third-party oversight to protect individuals in some surveillance cases. It was adopted 77-19.

In a statement, Justice Department spokesman Marc Raimondi said the department appreciates the Senate's vote but that, as amended, the legislation "would unacceptably degrade our ability to conduct surveillance of terrorists, spies and other national security threats."

The proposal that fell just short of 60 votes would have prevented federal law enforcement from obtaining internet browsing information or search history without seeking a warrant.

"Should law-abiding Americans have to worry about their government looking over their shoulders from the moment they wake up in the morning and turn on their computers to when they go to bed at night?" said Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon. "I believe the answer is no. But that's exactly what the government has the power to do without our amendment."

Wyden co-sponsored the proposal with Republican Sen. Steve Daines of Montana. Julian Sanchez, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, a think tank, said the near-adoption of the amendment "suggests a sea change in attitudes" about surveillance.

A third amendment, by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., a longtime skeptic of surveillance programs, was soundly defeated 11-85. It would have required the government to go to a traditional federal court, instead of the secretive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, to get a warrant to eavesdrop on an American in a national security investigation.

The congressional debate coincides with internal efforts by the FBI and Justice Department to overhaul their surveillance procedures after a harshly critical inspector general report documented a series of problems in the FBI's investigation into ties between Russia and the 2016 Trump campaign.

The report identified significant errors and omissions in applications that were submitted in 2016 and 2017 to monitor the communications of former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

Though the problems revealed by the Russia investigation relate more to the accuracy of surveillance applications than to the effectiveness of the expired tools at issue Thursday, they nonetheless drew additional scrutiny to the government's spy powers as well as concerns from some in Congress that those authorities should be reined in.

The FBI has announced steps designed to ensure that the application process is more accurate and thorough, and that information that cuts against the premise of the requested surveillance is fully disclosed to the court.

Wisconsin governor warns of 'massive confusion' after ruling

By SCOTT BAUER and TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers warned Thursday of "massive confusion" after the state Supreme Court tossed out the Democrat's stay-at-home order and Republicans said they may leave it up to local governments to enact their own rules for combating the coronavirus pandemic.

The court's order threw communities into chaos, with some bars opening immediately while local leaders in other areas moved to keep strict restrictions in place to prevent further spread of the virus.

If Wisconsin is to have a statewide plan, Evers will have to work with the same Republicans whose lawsuit resulted in Wednesday's Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling. After a Thursday meeting with Evers, Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos said the two sides may not be able to reach agreement and that a statewide policy might not be needed.

"Apparently they believe that different rules are OK," Evers said of Republicans. "I can't imagine another state that is in this predicament."

Vos downplayed the concern.

"We already know that local health departments have the ability to utilize their power, which is already there to deal with those situations if they feel it's unsafe," Vos said.

Wisconsin is one of several states where governors have run into increasing resistance from Republican legislators over coronavirus restrictions. Democratic governors in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Louisiana

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 56 of 79

have faced a mix of legislation and lawsuits aiming to curtail their power. And in Kansas on Wednesday, Republicans resisted the Democratic governor's request to extend a disaster declaration.

It's not clear whether any of those states will see as thorough a move as in Wisconsin, where Republican legislative leaders have long been able to count on help from the conservative-dominated state Supreme Court.

Vos said he had faith that the "vast majority" of Wisconsin businesses would act responsibly and open with precautions, such as ensuring customers keep at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from each other.

That wasn't the case at some bars Wednesday night. Nick's Bar in Platteville, in far southwest Wisconsin, posted a 30-second video that showed it teeming with people without masks. Bars in Appleton and Kaukauna in northeast Wisconsin, and others across the state, also were packed.

The party may be short-lived in Appleton, where an order took effect at 8 a.m. Thursday continuing the state's "safer at home" order. Other communities were taking similar steps, including Madison, Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha County and Brown County, home to Green Bay.

Evers' legal counsel Ryan Nilsestuen said the court's order made it unclear whether the state health secretary could quickly respond to future health emergencies, including a spike in COVID-19 cases.

"The court didn't provide any clarity or guidance on how to move forward," he said, calling that "very problematic."

Still, some heralded the ruling as the beginning of a return to normalcy.

Tom Diehl, president of the Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions, runs the Tommy Bartlett Exploratory and water ski show in Lake Delton in Sauk County, one of the state's tourist destinations.

Next week, he plans to open an indoor attraction featuring some 175 interactive exhibits, including a mock-up of a Russian space station capsule. Diehl said he will have hand sanitizer available and ask visitors to keep their distance from each other.

"If Home Depot, Walmart and Costco can do it safely, we can do it safely as well," he said.

Steven Whitehurst, 29, of Waukesha, a Milwaukee suburb, went to a sit-down restaurant Thursday for the first time in two months.

"It was super surreal, I won't lie," he said. "It didn't feel real or right, but it also felt very comfortable."

Not everyone was moving quickly to reopen.

Wisconsin Restaurant Association Chairwoman Joanne Platzkill, co-owner of Za 51 Pizzeria and Draganetti's Ristorante in Altoona in Eau Claire County, said she will continue offering only takeout for now. It will take time to bring back laid-off workers, rearrange seating to accommodate social distancing guidelines and order more food. Outdoor seating may open next week at 25% capacity, she said.

Wisconsin tribes will keep their casinos closed at least through May 26, Shannon Hosley, president of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, said.

The Wisconsin ruling drew praise from President Donald Trump, who called it a "win" in a Twitter post on Thursday and added: "Its Democrat Governor was forced by the courts to let the State Open. The people want to get on with their lives. The place is bustling!"

Evers announced later Thursday that his administration had begun working toward a new administrative rule for managing the coronavirus crisis, a process he had warned could take weeks and might lead nowhere. A notice made clear the new rule would mirror much of Evers' earlier recommendations.

As of Thursday, Wisconsin had more than 11,200 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 434 deaths, according to the state Department of Health Services.

Associated Press writers Gretchen Ehke in Milwaukee, Doug Glass in Minneapolis and David Eggert in Lansing, Michigan, contributed to this report.

Whistleblower: US still lacks virus plan, Americans at risk

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and RICHARD LARDNER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite White House claims, the U.S. still lacks a comprehensive battle plan against the coronavirus in critical areas including masks, testing, treatments and vaccines, whistleblower Rick Bright warned Thursday in testimony before a House committee. "Our window of opportunity is closing," he declared.

The nation could face "the darkest winter in modern history" if the virus rebounds, the government vaccine scientist told lawmakers. Bright's appearance came after his ouster last month as head of a Health and Human Services biodefense agency, an action he alleges was retaliation by the Trump administration.

"We need still a comprehensive plan, and everyone across the government and everyone in America needs to know what that plan is, and what role they play," he told the House Energy and Commerce Committee. "There are critical steps that we need to do to prepare ... we do not still have enough personal protective equipment to manage our health care workers ... we still do not have the supply chains ramped up for the drugs and vaccines, and we still don't have plans in place for how we distribute those drugs and vaccines. We still do not have a comprehensive testing strategy."

At the White House, President Donald Trump said Bright looked like an "angry, disgruntled employee," and Bright's boss, HHS Secretary Alex Azar, said, "Everything he is complaining about was achieved."

"So this is like somebody who was in a choir and is now trying to say he was a soloist back then," Azar added.

Trump, said later, at a Pennsylvania medical equipment distributor, that the U.S. is ramping up production of COVID-19-related items and that his goal "is to produce everything America needs for ourselves and then export to the world, including medicines."

Bright spoke in measured tones and rarely raised his voice during five hours of questioning. He didn't question the fact that there's now an all-out effort, financed by billions in taxpayer dollars, to procure masks and other supplies, develop better tests and treatments and discover an effective vaccine. His point was that those efforts aren't being fitted together in a coherent strategy that will get supplies and medicines to where they're most needed to protect people and prevent shortages and price gouging.

Asked by Rep. Joe Kennedy, D-Mass., if administration officials have prepared the country for the "moment we are in" and the months ahead, Bright responded, "I think we have a lot of work to do to be prepared."

Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., asked if he should be concerned that Americans will have problems getting access to a vaccine when it's available. Bright responded, "Absolutely, sir."

Bright, a career official, alleges he was removed as head of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority after repeatedly warning higher-ups the virus outbreak was going to be worse than the public was being led to believe.

He said the breaking point came when he opposed a White House directive to allow widespread access to hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug Trump was touting as an effective treatment.

The FDA recently warned against its use for COVID-19, except in limited circumstances. But at the White House on Thursday, the president was still bullish. "We've had tremendous response to the hydroxy," Trump said. "So, a lot of people have sworn by it, and we'll see."

Republican lawmakers for the most part were careful not to attack Bright directly. But Rep. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma criticized him for continuing to collect his \$285,000 salary while first on sick leave for a spike in blood pressure, and now on vacation as he tries to straighten out his work situation.

"You're too sick to go into work, but you're well enough to come here while getting paid," said Mullin. "I have a hard time understanding that."

Bright said one of the worst moments as he tried to raise alarms came when repeated efforts to jump-start U.S. production of respirator masks went nowhere.

He recalled getting emails in late January from Mike Bowen, an executive at a medical supply company called Prestige Ameritech, indicating that its N95 mask supply was "completely decimated."

"And he said: 'We're in deep shit. The world is. And we need to act,'" Bright said. "And I pushed that

forward to the highest levels I could in HHS and got no response. From that moment I knew that we were going to have a crisis for our health care workers because we were not taking action.”

Following Bright to the witness table, Bowen told lawmakers he’s a Republican who voted for Trump. He paused then, and added that he admires Bright.

As part of his whistleblower complaint, Bright is seeking to be reinstated in his old job. A federal watchdog agency has found “reasonable grounds” that he was removed as a reprisal.

HHS, Bright’s employer, says it strongly disagrees with his allegations and says it reassigned him to a high-profile position helping to lead the development of new coronavirus tests at the National Institutes of Health.

Nearly 85,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S., representing more than one-fourth of global deaths and the world’s highest toll, according to figures compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide more than 4.4 million have been infected and about 300,000 have died.

Bright’s testimony followed this week’s warning by Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government’s top infectious disease expert, that a rushed lifting of store-closing and stay-at-home restrictions could “turn back the clock,” seeding more suffering and death and complicating efforts to get the economy rolling again.

Eager to restart the U.S. economy, Trump has been urging states to lift restrictions, and many governors are doing so gradually, though consumers remain leery of going back to restaurants, social events and sporting competitions.

Bright, who has a doctoral degree in immunology, said the nation’s path forward should be based on science. The steps include:

- Establishing a national testing strategy. The White House has urged states to take the lead on testing, even as the federal government pushes to make more tests and better ones widely available. Trump says the U.S. has “prevailed” on testing through this strategy, but in Congress Democrats are demanding a federal framework to encompass the whole nation.

- Doubling down on educating the public about basic safety measures such as frequent hand-washing and wearing masks in public places. “Frankly, our leaders must lead by modeling the behavior,” said Bright, in a not-too-subtle reference to a president who conspicuously goes maskless.

- Setting up a system to fairly distribute equipment and supplies that are scarce and highly sought. Eliminating state vs. state competition would increase efficiency and reduce costs.

3 million more US layoffs intensify fears of lasting damage

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 3 million laid-off workers applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week as the viral outbreak forced more companies to slash jobs even though most states have begun to let some businesses reopen.

Roughly 36 million people have now sought jobless aid in just the two months since the coronavirus first forced businesses to close down and shrink their workforces, the government said Thursday. An additional 842,000 people applied for aid last week through a separate program for self-employed and gig workers.

All told, the figures point to a job market gripped by its worst crisis in decades and an economy that is sinking into a deep downturn. The pace of new applications for aid has declined over the past several weeks but is still four times the record high that prevailed before the coronavirus struck hard in March.

The waves of job cuts have heightened concerns that additional government aid, on top of the nearly \$3 trillion already allocated, is necessary to sustain the economy. Without another aid package, many economists worry that thousands of small businesses will go bankrupt, leaving millions of the unemployed with no job to return to. And state and local governments, facing huge revenue shortfalls, could be forced to lay off millions more workers and cut services.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell this week stressed his belief that Congress should consider providing additional rescue money to avoid prolonging an economic catastrophe.

Republicans in Congress are locked in a standoff with Democrats, who have proposed trillions more in

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 59 of 79

aid. Republican leaders say they want to first see how the previous rescue packages affect the economy and have expressed skepticism about approving much more spending now. That sentiment has alarmed some economists.

"There really isn't any sign that the labor market is bottoming out yet," said Daniel Zhao, senior economist at Glassdoor, the career website.

The Trump administration insists that as states reopen, more Americans will shop, dine out and resume other activities, thereby stimulating the economy. But early data suggests it is fear of contracting the virus, even more than shutdown orders, that may be impairing the economy. Without stronger public health measures, such as widespread testing or a vaccine, economists say such fear will depress growth even as more states reopen their economies.

Even though Georgia reopened its restaurants for sit-down dining late last month, Adam Ozimek, chief economist at Upwork, said data from the reservation site OpenTable shows that reservations are still 91% below their pre-virus level.

"Simply ending lockdowns is not going to be a panacea for these companies," Ozimek said. "People aren't going out because they don't feel safe yet."

The number of people seeking unemployment benefits actually rose last week in Georgia, as well as in Florida, which has also started to reopen. In Florida, that increase likely reflects a troubled system that caused a belated processing of claims that had been filed earlier.

A few other states that have lifted some restrictions, like South Carolina and Texas, reported declines in jobless claims.

President Donald Trump appeared to respond to the report by tweeting, "Good numbers coming out of States that are opening. America is getting its life back!"

In Ohio, shopping malls have reopened for the first time since March but have seen little traffic. Roughly two-thirds of the stores in one mall outside Toledo were still closed Tuesday.

Ozimek pointed to signs that business failures are rising. A survey by the Census Bureau, released Thursday, found that 41% of small businesses have closed temporarily since the pandemic hit. Other research has found that half of small businesses lack enough cash to survive longer than a month without revenue.

"Those are the signs that we've stretched the economy too far, and it's starting to tear," Ozimek said.

State and local governments, which cut nearly 1 million workers in April, are running out of money and collectively posing a threat to the national economy. The recession will likely produce the sharpest plunge in state tax revenue since the center began tracking such data in the early 1970s, said Lucy Dadayan, senior research associate at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center.

About two-thirds of the states have reported data for April, with most showing worrisome declines. California's tax revenue fell 65% compared with a year earlier. New Jersey's dropped 59%, Pennsylvania's 51%. Sales tax revenue has shrunk as consumer spending has tumbled. And income taxes have been diminished by the widespread job losses.

Spending by states and localities plays a vital role in the national economy: It amounted to \$2.33 trillion last year — 11% of the U.S. gross domestic product. States and localities employed nearly 20 million workers in February.

In the meantime, jobless workers in some states are still reporting difficulty applying for or receiving benefits. These include free-lance, gig and self-employed workers, who became newly eligible for jobless aid this year.

Kelly Kelso, a stage crew member in Nashville, filed for unemployment aid after her company, Live Nation, canceled all summer tours. She has no idea when touring will resume. She applied in late March but hasn't received a single check. And she can't get answers.

"I've probably called a hundred times and been disconnected every time," Kelso said.

Kelso's partner is a self-employed musician who finally began receiving unemployment benefits after five weeks. But for the couple, who have a 5-year-old son, money is scarce. Their landlord is demanding rent.

The latest jobless claims follow a devastating jobs report last week. The unemployment rate soared to 14.7% in April, the highest rate since the Great Depression, and employers shed 20.5 million jobs. A

decade's worth of job growth was wiped out in a single month.

Even those figures failed to capture the full scale of the damage. Many workers in April were counted as employed but absent from work but should have been counted as temporarily unemployed.

Millions of other laid-off workers didn't look for a new job in April, likely discouraged by their prospects in a mostly shuttered economy, and weren't included, either. If all those people had been counted as unemployed, the jobless rate would have reached nearly 24%.

Most economists have forecast that the official unemployment rate could hit 18% or higher in May before potentially declining by summer.

AP Writers Martin Crutsinger and Travis Loller in Nashville contributed to this report.

NYC health chief under fire for alleged remark about police

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City's mayor expressed concern Thursday over a heated phone call in March between his health commissioner and a top police commander over what was then a dangerously thin stockpile of face masks.

During the call, which took place as health care workers were desperate to obtain more protective gear to treat thousands of coronavirus patients streaming into hospitals, Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot clashed with NYPD Chief of Department Terence Monahan, who wanted more masks for officers.

The New York Post, citing an anonymous source, reported late Wednesday that Barbot retorted, "I don't give two rats' asses about your cops," during the call. It didn't report what Monahan said to prompt that response.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said he wants to speak with both Barbot and Monahan to "understand exactly what happened," as police unions and a congressman called for Barbot's firing.

"No public servant should ever, in any way, say anything disrespectful about the men and women of the NYPD. They protect us. We need to protect them," de Blasio said. "To me, it would be inappropriate for anyone, particularly in a leadership role, to suggest any lack of interest in protecting the men and women of the NYPD. That would be, to me, a real inappropriate statement."

A spokesman for the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene confirmed "there was a heated exchange between the two where things were said out of frustration, but no harm was wished on anyone."

The department said Barbot had apologized to Monahan "for her contribution to the exchange."

"The apology was accepted, and agreement was arrived between the two to ensure that respirators were delivered to members of the force," press secretary Patrick Gallahue said. "This has always been about saving the lives of our health care workers, police officers and every New Yorker who is fighting through this pandemic."

The head of the city's largest police union said Barbot should be fired.

"Dr. Barbot should be forced to look in the eye of every police family who lost a hero to this virus. Look them in the eye and tell them they aren't worth a rat's ass," said Police Benevolent Association President Pat Lynch.

An official who was briefed on the phone call between Barbot and Monahan said it happened after Monahan called to complain that NYPD personnel sent to pick up 500,000 protective face masks from a New Jersey warehouse were told they'd only be getting 50,000.

The official was not authorized to speak publicly and did so on condition of anonymity.

At the time, public health experts were saying that masks were in such short supply that they needed to be reserved for health care workers treating people with the virus. Doctors and nurses were forced to re-use masks repeatedly — a departure from usual standards of infection control. An alarming number of health care workers were getting ill, causing a staffing crisis just as a tidal wave of patients hit.

The city eventually sent 250,000 masks to the NYPD.

The head of the union representing police detectives, Paul DiGiacomo, called Barbot "a cop-hater." The

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 61 of 79

union representing police sergeants used a misogynistic insult to describe Barbot on its Twitter feed.

U.S. Rep. Max Rose, a Staten Island Democrat, tweeted: "This kind of attitude explains so much about City Hall's overall response to this crisis. Dr. Barbot shouldn't resign, she should be fired."

Barbot and Monahan both declined to comment through department spokespeople.

Reopening on track for swaths of central, northern New York

By MARINA VILLENEUVE Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Large swaths of central and northern New York state that appear to be at low risk of a COVID-19 surge are poised to start reopening Friday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said, urging businesses to prepare plans to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

New York City is broadening the criteria for who should get tested for the coronavirus, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Thursday. The new testing guidelines include anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 and anyone who works at a nursing home or shelter. De Blasio also praised House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's proposed \$3 trillion virus aid package.

Here are the latest coronavirus-related developments in New York:

REOPENING NEW YORK

While central New York, the Mohawk Valley, the Finger Lakes, the North Country, and the Southern Tier are expected to begin their reopening Friday, Cuomo said New York City, its surrounding suburbs and western and eastern counties have yet to meet the state's criteria.

Cuomo's plan allows construction, agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, manufacturing and wholesale trade businesses to start reopening in the first phase. Retail stores can also provide curbside or in-store pickup or drop-off.

"Big question to me is how many businesses choose to reopen tomorrow," Cuomo said.

The state is still advising residents to wear masks, practice social distancing and avoid contact with vulnerable individuals. And prohibitions on large gatherings of any size remain in effect.

Cuomo urged New Yorkers to proceed with caution.

"There is no law or regulation that tells you how to interact with your personal relationships," he said. "That's up to you. I hope you do it smartly."

The state reported another 157 people who tested positive for COVID-19 in nursing homes and hospitals died Wednesday. The number of overall hospitalizations is continuing to gradually decline, but the average of new COVID-19 patients entering hospitals has ticked up for a third day to 420, up from 401.

New York's shutdown of schools and nonessential businesses is officially in place through Friday under a Cuomo executive order.

Cuomo's administration has divided the state into ten regions that must meet seven criteria that include a 14-day decline in or a small number of hospital deaths and hospitalizations before reopening. Each region, led by teams of local representatives, must also make sure they provide enough testing and hire contact tracers among other conditions.

Regions will backtrack if it appears infection rates are increasing, according to Cuomo's office, or move on to the next phases of re-opening after at least two weeks.

Cuomo's administration says that re-opening businesses must come up with a written safety plan that outlines how its workplace will prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Cuomo has said hospitals must have a 90-day supply of personal protective equipment as the state re-opens, but it's been unclear how the state will enforce that.

His spokesman said Thursday that "regulations are forthcoming."

TESTING CRITERIA BROADENED

The expanded new testing guidelines come as the city opens more testing sites with the goal of administering 20,000 tests a day by May 25, de Blasio said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 62 of 79

When the virus first hit New York in March, testing kits were in such short supply that it was difficult for anyone except the most severely affected to get tested. People who suspected they had been infected but who were experiencing only mild symptoms were told simply to stay isolated at home.

De Blasio said the city still needs help from the federal government to expand testing to the point where it's possible to contain the virus through a comprehensive testing and tracing program. "When we get the real support we need from the federal government and that additional lab capacity, we'll be able to go much farther," he said.

New York City has reported more than 186,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases, a figure that is likely much lower than the number of city residents who have been infected.

The number of children in New York City diagnosed with a rare inflammatory syndrome possibly linked to the coronavirus has grown to 100, de Blasio said. Of those, 55 have tested positive either for the coronavirus or for antibodies to the virus.

VIRUS AID PACKAGE PRAISED

The \$3 trillion aid package proposed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is exactly what New York, other states and cities need to revive their economies that have been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said Thursday.

"Right now, if we don't get a massive infusion of federal support, we cannot go through this recovery," the Democratic mayor said on CNN's "New Day." "We cannot get our city back on its feet because we won't be able to pay for the basics."

The coronavirus aid package proposed Tuesday by Pelosi includes \$1 trillion for states and cities, "hazard pay" for essential workers and a new round of payments to individuals. The Democrat-controlled House is expected to vote on the package as soon as Friday, but Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said the Republican-controlled Senate will wait until after Memorial Day to consider options.

De Blasio said the House proposal "would actually allow New York City and New York state, cities and states everywhere, blue states, red states, everyone to get back on their feet."

The mayor has said that New York City, the epicenter of the virus in the United States, has lost more than \$7 billion in revenue because of the two-month coronavirus lockdown,

Survey: Oil, manufacturing had best luck with pandemic loans

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

Almost 75% of small businesses in a survey applied for help from a federal loan program designed to keep workers employed during the coronavirus pandemic, but only 38% of small businesses received any money, according to survey results the U.S. Census Bureau released Thursday.

Oil extraction and mining businesses had the best success in getting loans from the Paycheck Protection Program with more than half of businesses surveyed in that sector reporting getting some help, according to the Census Bureau's Small Business Pulse Survey.

Just under half of small businesses in manufacturing and about 45% of small businesses in accommodations and food services reported receiving loans, the survey said.

Utilities fared the worst of all sectors with less than a quarter of small businesses in that sector getting loans, according to the survey.

The Paycheck Protection Program administered by the Small Business Administration has dispensed more than \$530 billion in low-cost loans to millions of small businesses to cushion them from the sharp downturn induced by the coronavirus.

The Census Bureau survey showed that nearly two-thirds of small businesses in Arkansas, Maine and Oklahoma, had received loans, among the highest in the nation. Trailing the rest of the nation was California, where just over a fifth of small businesses received the emergency loans.

When asked about the disparities in an email, SBA press director Carol Wilkerson said the agency didn't have a comment to provide.

The Census Bureau launched the Small Business Pulse Survey last month in order to capture the impact

of the pandemic on small businesses in near real-time. The release on Thursday was the first of what will be weekly updates. The initial survey was sent to 100,915 small businesses, and 22,449 small businesses responded from April 26 to May 2.

The survey targeted nonfarm, single-location employer businesses with less than 500 employees and receipts of \$1,000 or more.

Almost three-quarters of the small businesses surveyed said they had experienced a drop in revenue, and more than a quarter said they had decreased the size of their workforce. More than 11% of the small businesses reported missing a loan payment, but that rose to 30% for small businesses in accommodations and food services, according to the survey.

Follow Mike Schneider at <http://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

Cassandra Callender, forced to undergo chemo, dies at 22

By PAT EATON-ROBB Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Cassandra Callender, who was forced by Connecticut courts as a teenager to undergo chemotherapy for cancer, has died after a five-year battle with the disease, her mother said Thursday. She was 22.

Callender, of Windsor Locks, died Tuesday at home, where she had been in hospice care for four months, Jackie Fortin said.

"The cancer never went away," Fortin said. "They said they saved her life. They lied. She suffered for five years. It was horrific. If you did that to your dog, you'd get arrested."

A judge in 2015 ordered Callender, known as "Cassandra C." during her legal fight, to undergo chemotherapy for Hodgkin's lymphoma. She had refused treatment, saying she didn't want to poison her body.

She and her mother had missed several appointments, and doctors notified the state Department of Children and Families, which stepped in, according to court documents.

A juvenile court judge removed Callender, who was 17 at the time, from her home and placed her under guard in the Connecticut Children's Medical Center.

Her case went to the state Supreme Court, which ruled in January 2015 that the department wasn't violating her rights.

The case was argued under what is known as the mature minor doctrine, centering on whether Callender was mature enough to determine how to treat her cancer.

Connecticut's high court found that Callender, who had run away during a home visit, demonstrated she did not have the maturity to make her own medical decisions.

Doctors eventually implanted a port in her daughter against her will to administer treatment, Fortin said. She lived at the hospital for six months.

Callender disclosed in 2016 that a mass had been found on her lungs and that she would undergo alternative treatments.

At that point an adult and able to make her own decisions, Callender eventually agreed to more chemo, immunotherapy and other treatments, but the cancer spread, Fortin said.

"Some things work, some things don't. Nothing always works. Neither is a guarantee," she said. "That was the point we were trying to make all along. It should have been her choice."

Children and Families Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes offered condolences Thursday.

"We are saddened to learn of the loss of this young life, and we extend our sympathies to Cassandra's family during this very difficult and emotional time," she said in a written statement.

During her illness, Callender gave birth to twin sons, who are now 19 months old.

Fortin is remembering her daughter as very intelligent and liked by teachers and peers, but said she was denied many of the joys of being a teenager, such as getting a driver's license.

Her mother said she plans an online fundraiser to help pay for the funeral.

"I raised her to be a fighter, and that's what she was," Fortin said. "She went through hell. She never

had a life. She never had a chance. I hold every doctor and nurse who touched her, DCF, the courts — I hold everyone responsible.”

How long before we know if reopenings cause virus spikes?

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

U.S. states and countries worldwide are cautiously relaxing restrictions while watching for potential spikes in coronavirus infections. Getting the timing right is complicated. Disease trackers note the impossibility of seeing clearly what’s happening without widespread testing.

A look at when we might start to see any health impacts of reopening:

WHEN ARE WE GOING TO KNOW?

The virus can circulate undetected, then flare up in a nursing home or after a family gathering. So it could be several weeks to see surges in infections. What’s more, there are still new infections happening now during lockdowns. Some parts of the U.S. are seeing increasing numbers of daily new cases and some are seeing declines. Health officials will be looking at the number of new cases per day and the percentage of positive COVID-19 tests.

WHY DOES IT TAKE THAT LONG?

After exposure to the virus, it can take three to five days for someone to feel sick, and many infected people won’t have symptoms or only mild ones. Some with mild illness might delay getting tested. It can take another few days to get test results back and report them. All told, it can take two weeks or so — the time for one group of people to spread the virus to another — to have enough testing data. Crystal Watson of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security said it will take a few rounds of infection spread — five to six weeks — to know how reopening has affected epidemic curves.

IF THERE’S A SPIKE, HOW WOULD WE STOP IT?

Ideally, investigators would call people who test positive, track down their contacts and get them into quarantine before they can spread the virus to others. There’s evidence the coronavirus can spread before people feel sick, making it important to act quickly. States are just starting to expand their ability to do this contact tracing. Without adequate testing and contact tracing, returning to restrictions or a lockdown might be necessary if there is a surge in infections.

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.

Should runners wear a face mask outdoors?

By The Associated Press undefined

Should runners wear a face mask outdoors?

It depends. You won’t always need a face covering while jogging or riding a bike if you’re exercising with no one around, but it’s good to carry one just in case.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends people wear cloth face coverings when out in public, especially in places where it’s hard to stay at least 6 feet away from others.

If it’s difficult to breathe through a mask when running or doing other strenuous physical activity, find uncrowded trails or times to exercise when you won’t encounter others, says Mark Cameron, an infectious disease expert at Case Western Reserve University.

The more distance you can keep between yourself and others, the better, says Summer Johnson McGee, dean of the University of New Haven’s School of Health Sciences.

Masks are designed to prevent the wearer from possibly spreading the virus to others or being exposed themselves.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: FactCheck@AP.org.

Privacy groups: TikTok app violating children's privacy

By TALI ARBEL AP Technology Writer

Privacy watchdogs say that the popular TikTok video app is violating a children's privacy law and putting kids at risk.

A coalition of 20 groups, including Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood and the Center for Digital Democracy, filed a complaint Thursday with the Federal Trade Commission saying that TikTok is collecting personal information of kids under 13 without their parents' consent.

TikTok, owned by Chinese company ByteDance, has exploded in popularity with young people thanks to its goofy, lighthearted feel and ease of use.

At the same time, it's drawn scrutiny from U.S. officials concerned about national-security risks due to its Chinese ownership and its popularity with kids.

TikTok paid a \$5.7 million fine to the FTC in 2019 over collecting personal information from kids under 13, a violation of the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. It revamped its app with a restricted mode for younger users.

But the privacy groups say it's easy for kids to use TikTok without parental consent. Kids can sign up with a fake birth date to use the full, adult version of the app, "putting them at risk for both TikTok's commercial data uses and inappropriate contact from adults," the groups said in a joint news release.

TikTok uses the data it collects from users, like their location, what's in their messages and what videos they watch, to figure out what new videos to show them and for targeted advertising.

The privacy groups asked the FTC to investigate and fine TikTok. The commission said it received the complaint but had no comment on it.

In an emailed statement, TikTok said it takes privacy seriously and is committed to ensuring the app is a safe and entertaining community for users.

Head of World Trade Organization to step down early

JAMEY KEATEN undefined

GENEVA (AP) — The head of the World Trade Organization said Thursday that he will leave his post a year early, a "personal decision" that sets the stage for a succession contest at the trade body amid lingering U.S.-China tensions and a coronavirus pandemic that has doused the global economy.

Roberto Azevedo, a 62-year-old Brazilian, said he will step down Aug. 31 as WTO director-general, ending a seven-year tenure marked in recent years by intense pressure from President Donald Trump, who repeatedly accused the Geneva-based trade body of "unfair" treatment of the United States and launched a trade war with China in defiance of the WTO system.

"This is a decision that I do not take lightly," Azevedo told a special meeting of WTO delegations. "It is a personal decision - a family decision - and I am convinced that this decision serves the best interests of this organization."

The 25-year-old trade body has never had to fill a vacancy for the director-general post before that term expired, and under WTO rules, a selection process for a successor is to begin as soon as possible.

Azevedo's WTO often found itself in the firing line of the Trump administration, which has accused it of letting China get away with unfair state subsidies and for allegedly strong-arming foreign businesses into giving up their intellectual property in order to gain access to the giant Chinese market.

Speaking to reporters Thursday at the White House before travelling to Pennsylvania, Trump said he was "okay with it" when asked about Azevedo's plans to step down.

"The World Trade Organization is horrible," Trump said. "We've been treated very badly. I've been saying it for a long time. They treat China as a developing nation, therefore China gets a lot of the benefits that the U.S. doesn't get."

Alluding to China's accession to the WTO in 2001, Trump added: "The people sitting in the Oval Office" before him "should never have let that happen."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 66 of 79

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer thanked Azevedo for his "exemplary" service.

"Despite the many shortcomings of the WTO, Roberto has led the institution with grace and a steady hand," Lighthizer said in a statement. "He will be difficult to replace."

Azevedo's tenure has been marred by the U.S. squeeze on the WTO's Appellate Body — a sort of appeals court that issues final rulings on international trade disputes. The U.S. has blocked the appointment of new judges, complaining that the WTO is slow, cumbersome and ill-equipped to deal with challenges posed by China's hybrid capitalist-socialist system.

The Appellate Body's woes have been a punishing blow to the "rules-based international trading system" that Azevedo has long defended. And the "America First" mindset in the United States — long the most powerful WTO player — put him often on the defensive.

"I believe that I have been able to contribute to maintaining the WTO as a key pillar of global economic governance amid challenging times for multilateral cooperation," he said.

The WTO nonetheless has intervened in some of the world's thorniest trade disputes, handing down record rulings recently in standoffs like one pitting plane makers Airbus and Boeing that ultimately gave the U.S. the go-ahead to slap tariffs on billions of dollars worth of European goods in compensation.

Azevedo claimed success on issues like a Trade Facilitation Agreement aimed to cut through red tape and bureaucratic delays in trade, and expanding export of goods and services from developing countries. But on his watch, the WTO failed to conclude Doha round trade talks and has been sclerotic when it comes to reform for the 21st century economy — a legacy in part of its requirement for unanimity among members.

"Regardless of how fulfilling these last 7 years have been for me, I must now end this cycle," Azevedo said. "As members start to shape the WTO's agenda for the new post-COVID realities, they should do so with a new director-general."

___ Paul Wiseman in Washington and Aamer Madhani in Chicago contributed to this report.

What will Jersey Shore beaches be like in the Summer of Bug?

By **WAYNE PARRY** Associated Press

BELMAR, N.J. (AP) — Joanna Eichert longs for the summer days of years gone by at the Jersey Shore, which she recalls as "very crowded and very relaxing."

But with New Jersey's governor giving shore towns the go-ahead to begin reopening their beaches amid the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, it remains to be seen if the Summer of Bug will be either of those things.

Thursday afternoon, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy issued long-awaited guidance to officials in shore towns on reopening beaches, directing them to set occupancy limits, require six feet (2 meters) of space between beachgoers except family members or couples, and prohibit groups of 10 or more from congregating on the beach.

Showers, changing pavilions and rest rooms should be open, but amusement rides and arcades will remain closed and beach fireworks prohibited. Murphy also urged towns to set limits on the amount of daily beach badges they sell.

The governor gave considerable leeway to local officials in reopening their beaches, refusing to set a uniform occupancy limit, instead letting individual towns decide how much is enough as they prepare for visitors eager to get sand between their toes.

Among them was Eichert, a Hillsborough woman who came to the beach in Belmar earlier this week to let her 2-year-old son Logan run around on the boardwalk and in the sand.

"It would be nice to have it like it used to be," she said. "But you have to keep your distance now; I get that. We'll see how it feels and how people are behaving. It's hard to imagine what it's going to look like this summer."

Murphy issued his long-awaited guidance the day before two of the state's most popular beaches planned to reopen. On Friday morning, Point Pleasant Beach and Seaside Heights will begin allowing people back onto the sand in a phased reopening that officials in both towns characterize as an experiment.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 67 of 79

In Point Pleasant Beach, the municipally owned Maryland Avenue beach will open. Once it reaches 500 people, no one else will be allowed onto the sand. Masks will be "encouraged" while standing in line to buy badges, but won't be required once on the beach.

The borough will restrict parking to residents only for much of the area near the beach to discourage large crowds of tourists from coming. Murphy suggested such a tactic in one of his briefings earlier this month as a way to keep beach crowds manageable.

Seaside Heights, famous as the former home of MTV's "Jersey Shore" show, will reopen on Friday with some substantial restrictions. Activities on the beach are limited to walking, jogging, active surf fishing, and surfing. No swimming, beach chairs or blankets, and no sitting or standing.

"Make no mistake about it, our beach and boardwalk operations will be very different from past years," Mayor Anthony Vaz wrote in a post on the Seaside Heights website. "We have the added problem at the local government level of a likely and substantial loss of revenue that has led to a reduction in manpower resources. This means less beach attendants, less lifeguards and less seasonal laborers."

Sea Isle City Mayor Len Desiderio said his town will be among several that plan to hold a test reopening of beaches Saturday, experimenting with occupancy limits.

"Our job has been to bring as many people to the beach as we can," he said. "Now we have to practice crowd management."

Crowd management was also on Pauline Hebler's mind as she sat on the boards of Belmar's boardwalk — benches have been removed — and wondered what this summer will look like.

"You need to have social distancing on the beach, but I have no idea how they'll be able to do it some days," she said. "I don't want to just open it up totally and have everyone get sick again. Trying to find a happy medium is not going to be easy. I just want things to be normal again."

Follow Wayne Parry on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/WayneParryAC>

Some US schools are pulling the plug on distance learning

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

CUSSETA, Ga. (AP) — After the Chattahoochee County school district called an early end to the school year, seniors lined up one day last week to complete their graduation paperwork. Students who hadn't seen each other since in-person classes ended abruptly in March amid the coronavirus outbreak commiserated over all they've missed out on, including the prom and a senior class trip.

Some also wondered about what they may have lost academically.

"Honestly, remote learning, I don't think was my favorite thing," said 18-year-old Isabella Branson. "It's kind of hard to stay motivated when you don't have anything to look forward to and you don't see your friends."

The small district in rural Georgia is among many around the U.S. that have pulled the plug on distance learning, all citing familiar reasons. It's too stressful, the lack of devices and internet access is too much to overcome, and what students get from it just isn't worth the struggle.

In Georgia, where the school year is ending early for one of every 10 students, many district leaders say the final weeks of the school year would have been dedicated anyway to preparing for and taking standardized tests that are now canceled. The governor and state schools superintendent who have moved to dismantle parts of Georgia's high-stakes testing system have said they are not opposed to fewer instructional days.

"We didn't cut any class time out," Chattahoochee County High School Principal Josh Kemp said. "There was no reason to pile more on our parents and students."

But Kemp and others also acknowledge that there was material that wasn't covered and that teachers will have to find a way to fold it in next year for returning students.

"They weren't able to get all the standards," said Tammy Bailey, the science department chair at the high school. "I think there will be a gap."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 68 of 79

Classes had been scheduled to run through May 21 but remote instruction instead came to an end May 8 in the Chattahoochee County school district. A majority of the high school's 450 students live on the U.S. Army's sprawling Fort Benning, while a minority live around the small town of Cusseta. Only 59% of households in the district have access to broadband internet at home.

Other districts around the country that are ending the school year early including Omaha and some nearby suburban districts in Nebraska, Washington, D.C., and some in New Hampshire. Officials say they want to relieve stress on families, ease problems for students without internet access, and focus on preparing for a fresh start in the fall.

The last three weeks of school is "probably not prime instructional time," said Andrew McEachin, an education policy researcher at RAND Corp. But he said that kids in struggling households may suffer most from being cut off from the normalcy of a school routine.

"I think the biggest thing about cutting a school year short is not what it does on average, but what it does on equity," McEachin said. "Even if school isn't working as well as we want it to be, that may be the best access low income students have to learning."

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, said on April 16 that he trusted schools to set their calendars and the following day, state Superintendent Richard Woods wrote that schools' focus during the pandemic should "not be on test scores" but on making sure children are "healthy, safe and nurtured."

But Michael O'Sullivan, executive director of GeorgiaCAN, a group that supports Georgia's testing system, says this spring has been a preview of a "zero-accountability world."

"It's the easy way out of a very difficult situation, but that doesn't mean it's going to be good for kids," O'Sullivan said.

Some schools in Georgia are making plans to combat academic losses from the year, such as beefed-up summer sessions. The Scintilla Charter Academy in Valdosta is aiming to start the next school year on July 23, to make up the time it lost when it ended on April 30.

Scintilla Dean of School Mandy Avera said her families were "stressed and overwhelmed" by online learning. The school covers kindergarten through sixth grade, and Avera is among educators who question whether younger children can successfully acquire critical skills like learning to read without a face-to-face interaction with a teacher.

"It just created a situation where we just can't be as interactive as we like to be at Scintilla," Avera said. "Kindergartners don't understand why they're at home. They don't understand why they can't go back to school and see their friends and see their teachers."

Back in Cusseta, some seniors were stressing about being able to bring only four guests to a socially-distant graduation ceremony, while others were disregarding imposed distance to hug and gossip. But Chattahoochee County Superintendent Kristi Brooks was already trying to think about the next school year, despite uncertainty on whether in-person classes will resume.

"They're going to have missed 60 days of instruction," Brooks said "When we come back for the fall, we're going to have to pick up in some basic areas."

This story has been corrected to show remote instruction ended May 8 and not March 8 in Chattahoochee County.

Follow Jeff Amy on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jeffamy>.

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

Public officials cite virus while limiting access to records

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Many state and local governments across the country have suspended public records requirements amid the coronavirus pandemic, denying or delaying access to information that could shed light on key government decisions.

Public officials have said employees either don't have the time or ability to compile the requested documents or data because they are too busy responding to the outbreak or are working from home instead of at government offices.

The result is that government secrecy has increased at the same time officials are spending billions of dollars fighting the COVID-19 disease and making major decisions affecting the health and economic livelihood of millions of Americans.

That's raised concerns among open-government advocates.

"It's just essential that the press and the public be able to dig in and see records that relate to how the government has responded to the crisis," said David Snyder, executive director of the First Amendment Coalition, a California-based nonprofit. "That's the only way really to avoid waste, fraud, abuse and to ensure that governments aren't overstepping their bounds."

The nonprofit Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press has tracked more than 100 instances in at least 30 states and the District of Columbia in which state agencies, counties, cities or other public entities have suspended requirements to respond to open-records requests by regular deadlines or told people to expect delays.

Some governors have issued decrees allowing record requests to be put on hold for as long as the coronavirus emergency continues. Others have extended response deadlines by days, weeks or even months.

Various federal agencies also have said there may be delays in processing public records requests. The FBI temporarily stopped accepting electronic records requests in March, citing the coronavirus, but has since resumed. Its website now says record-seekers "can expect delays."

A bipartisan group of U.S. senators has raised concerns and asked the federal Office of Information Policy to outline any steps it's taking to protect the public's right to information.

Hawaii Gov. David Ige, a Democrat, issued one of the most sweeping orders, suspending the state's entire open-records law in mid-March. Following an outcry among open-records advocates, Ige revised his order last week. The new order still suspends specific deadlines to provide records but encourages agencies to acknowledge and respond to requests "as resources permit."

Attorney Brian Black, who helped negotiate the compromise, described Ige's original order as "extreme and unnecessary."

"The public records law exists to give people the ability to hold their government accountable, and without timely access to information, they can't do it," said Black, executive director of The Civil Beat Law Center for the Public Interest in Honolulu.

Honolulu Civil Beat, an online publication financed by the same source as the center, has had a records request related to a public transit board pending since March. It also had sought a document related to a dispute about whether the state's airports should be closed to tourists because of the coronavirus.

Public records are "a way of validating, corroborating what these elected officials are telling us," said the publication's editor, Patti Epler.

The Associated Press also has records requests pending in various states where responses have been delayed because of the coronavirus.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records have issued similar advice effectively relaxing open-records requirements. They said days when public offices are physically closed because of the coronavirus don't count toward the normal deadlines to respond to record requests.

The Pennsylvania office also posted a notice on its website, stating: "Requesters: Unless you have an urgent need to access records, please do not file any new Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) requests at this time."

The Republican-led Legislature has mounted a backlash targeted at Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf's admin-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 70 of 79

istration. The House overwhelmingly passed legislation last week that would require Pennsylvania agencies to respond to records requests during disaster declarations, even when their physical offices are closed. The bill is pending in the Senate.

"Government transparency cannot stop during times of crisis," said the bill's sponsor, Republican Rep. Seth Grove.

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy, a Democrat, signed a law in March suspending the state's seven-business-day deadline to respond to record requests during emergencies, as long as agencies "make a reasonable effort, as the circumstances permit."

Republican Sen. Declan O'Scanlon, one of the sponsors of the new law, said he pushed for it out of concern that county and town officials could be overwhelmed while simultaneously dealing with the virus and trying to respond to requests.

"We have to understand they're human beings behind these requests, and providing some leeway is reasonable," he said.

Governors from Washington to Michigan to Rhode Island also have used their executive powers to waive or extend response deadlines for open-records requests.

Delaware Gov. John Carney changed the regular response deadline of 15 business days to instead allow up 15 business days after the end of his emergency declaration.

The city of Portland, Oregon, also has suspended responses to open-records requests as long as a declaration of emergency is in effect.

"Things like that are especially problematic, because we have no idea when these states of emergencies are going to end," said Gunita Singh, an attorney at the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, based in Washington, D.C. "Who knows how long these individual requesters are going to be waiting to have their public records requests fulfilled?"

Even in states where governors have not suspended public records laws, information has sometimes been hard to come by during the coronavirus outbreak.

California's Constitution includes a "right of access to information," specifically stating that "the writings of public officials and agencies shall be open to public scrutiny."

Yet Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom declined for a while to release details of a nearly \$1 billion contract to buy protective masks from a Chinese company. And numerous California municipalities have stopped or slowed their fulfillment of open-records requests.

The city of Burbank said in an online notice that responses to public records requests by legal deadlines "are not essential services."

San Diego County said it was delaying responses to records requests related to the COVID-19 disease but continuing to fulfill ones on other topics.

County spokesman Michael Workman declined to explain the reason for the distinction while noting that staff are focused on essential services for the foreseeable future.

"There are some county employees teleworking, so if they can provide requested documents, they do," Workman said.

Associated Press writer Michael Catalini in Trenton, New Jersey, contributed to this report.

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. OBAMA EMERGES AS CENTRAL FIGURE IN 2020 RACE Democrats are embracing him as a political wingman for Joe Biden, while President Trump gets to train the spotlight on one of his favorite political foils.
2. STRONG TYPHOON SLAMS INTO PHILIPPINES The storm, packing maximum sustained winds of more than 90 miles per hour, forces the evacuation of tens of thousands of people.
3. MEN ACCUSED IN GEORGIA SHOOTINGS HIRE ATTORNEYS - A lawyer hired by one of two white

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 71 of 79

men accused of pursuing and killing a black man cautions against a "rush to judgment."

4. INFIGHTING DELAYS SWEARING-IN OF NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival-turned-partner, Benny Gantz said they would hold a swearing-in ceremony on Sunday.

5. BRUSH FIRES SHUT DOWN PART OF I-75 IN FLORIDA — Four brush fires merged in southwest Florida, causing smoky conditions.

Nats' star Ryan Zimmerman's AP diary: Bring the DH to the NL

By RYAN ZIMMERMAN For The Associated Press

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ryan Zimmerman is a two-time All-Star infielder who has played 15 years in the majors, all with the Washington Nationals. He holds most of the team's career hitting records, and his two homers and seven RBIs last postseason helped the Nationals win their first World Series championship. With baseball on hold, Zimmerman is offering his thoughts -- as told to AP Sports Writer Howard Fendrich -- in a diary of sorts. In the seventh installment, he discusses the possibility of the DH rule being added to the NL for 2020 -- and, perhaps, beyond.

—
Growing up, I always just thought of the DH as the difference between the two leagues. But I also did have a sense of: "This is silly. Why don't we all just play by the same rules?"

For me, it's just a cleaner game with the DH. You know what's going on. You know the lineup. The pitcher can just worry about pitching.

Over the last five or so years, the idea of a universal DH really gained steam. You've seen some pitchers get hurt, whether it's hitting or running the bases.

Guys like Max Scherzer, Jacob deGrom, Madison Bumgarner -- they still work at hitting. But 95% of the pitchers don't really even try anymore.

When you look back at the '90s and early 2000s, pitchers took a lot of pride in it. They got the bunts down. Some of them could hit-and-run pretty regularly. "Pitchers who hit" was actually a part of the game.

Now, I feel like, a majority of the time that spot's an out. And when they're supposed to be advancing runners, it looks like not many of them really even care anymore. If you really watch the games in the NL, most pitchers don't even really want to be up there.

No one comes to the field to watch pitchers bunt or hit. At least I don't think they do. I'd much rather see those guys throw eight shutout innings than lay a bunt down -- especially when the other team is just going to intentionally walk the next guy to set up a double play, anyway.

I guess I've probably changed on the DH rule a little bit. Coming up, being a defensive player, I took so much pride in the way I played defense. My whole life and the beginning of my career, I almost thought of myself as more of a defensive player, and then the offense sort of came as I got older and more mature -- to the point that now I'm pretty proud of what I've done at the plate in the big leagues.

Now you're talking about real career extension for a guy like me that could play first base three or four days a week, and then DH three or four days a week.

Also, with all the new thoughts and worries about time of game, for all the talk that the DH adds time to AL games, I actually think their games run smoother. In the NL, if the pitcher makes the last out of an inning, or a pitcher is on second base when the last out is made, I feel like some pitchers take five minutes to get back out there to the mound.

I know the counter-argument is the NL has so much more strategy with double-switches, and you need to worry about if you want to leave your pitcher in for an extra inning, maybe, if he's up to 90 pitches and he's doing well but you're down one run and have the bases loaded in the sixth inning: "Do you pinch-hit for the pitcher?" I get that aspect of it, as well.

But if there's a DH rule, all the pitchers need to worry about is pitching.

If I'm a fan, I'd rather watch Max Scherzer pitch and someone else hit.

—
More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Young priest loses mentor, then his father -- both to virus

By **LUIS ANDRES HENAO** and **JESSIE WARDARSKI** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Rev. Joseph Dutan recalls how he lifted the chalice in the empty church and felt a flood of emotions: grief, the pain of isolation, even doubt.

But also, the promise of hope that is the gift of every Easter -- even in the midst of a pandemic that had already robbed him and his community of so much, and threatened to take so much more.

He prayed for the soul of the Rev. Jorge Ortiz, his mentor and the first Catholic priest in the United States to die from the novel coronavirus. He prayed that he could console a community that could not gather to mourn Ortiz' passing.

And he offered a more personal prayer: for his own father, struggling with COVID-19.

"God," he prayed, "I'll follow my vocation, but please take care of my dad."

It was not the first time Dutan had faced death. He has officiated at funerals. And before he followed his calling, he was treated successfully for leukemia at the same hospital where his father was on a ventilator, fighting for his life.

But for this 32-year-old priest, the weeks of the pandemic have been a unique struggle.

He has been overcome with emotions for his family and St. Brigid parishioners. "Hearing their pain, you could relate," he said.

The harm caused by the virus is all around him: The funeral home across from St. Brigid, always busy. The blaring sirens of ambulances speeding near the church in this area straddling Brooklyn and Queens, which have some of the highest number of infections in New York City.

Dutan estimated that dozens of St. Brigid's parishioners have been infected and said that at least three have died from COVID-19 complications since Ortiz's death.

Parishioners are unemployed. Others are undocumented -- "They come from Ecuador, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, from all over the world" -- and many of them live in cramped apartments that don't allow for social distancing, rendering them vulnerable.

"You start to see how the community is being affected," Dutan says.

Through the crisis, he has advised the church youth group on Zoom, celebrated Mass in English and Spanish on Facebook via livestream, and taken calls from worried parishioners.

"Father Joseph was one of the first people that we called. I flat out told him: 'We're scared.' I don't know what to do, not just about losing Father Jorge, but my parents are sick," said Tiffany Velez, 27, whose parents contracted the coronavirus.

"The minute I called him he was so calm, cool and collected. He shared his personal story."

Ortiz was his close friend -- Batman to Dutan's Robin, said Robert Velez, a parishioner who was married by Dutan. They had lived together in the rectory. Dutan brought Ortiz food when he fell ill, called the ambulance when his condition worsened. On their last call, he implored his mentor to recover, so they could sing together at the Easter service.

Ortiz was 49 when he died on March 27.

Days later, Dutan's 56-year-old father, Manuel, was rushed to New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center in Manhattan. When he took a turn for the worst on Good Friday, a hospital chaplain performed the last rites. By the next day, his condition improved.

"It was a roller coaster," Dutan said.

He admits he has faced doubts.

"I sometimes feel unworthy. I say, 'Wow, the Lord chose somebody who is very unworthy to consecrate somebody unworthy to bring his body and blood to others, to comfort others,'" he said.

Then, he remembers Ortiz's favorite word: "Animo!" Courage!

"And then I pick myself up," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 73 of 79

Dutan was born in Woodside, Queens, and grew up in a large, devoutly Catholic Ecuadorian family. He said he first felt a calling to serve God when he was in fifth grade in the '90s, but he ignored it because "you know, you want to be the cool kid on the block."

He attended Vaughn College in Queens, where he excelled at electronic engineering. While there, he fell ill with a rare form of leukemia. He fell into a deep depression, thinking that his dreams of having a family of his own, of buying a car or owning a home, were all over at the age of 20.

One day, a priest came to his hospital room. He said: "Joseph, who said you're going to die? Only the Lord has the last word.' ... I remember, just those words echoing every time," Dutan said. "That's when I started seeing things in a different way."

He went back to college, but the draw of the priesthood was strong. He dropped out just one semester before graduation. His father, a chef at a French restaurant, was furious and wouldn't talk to him for a month. He felt his son was throwing away his career.

With time, Manuel Dutan changed his tune. He would often be seen at the church pews and would proudly introduce him to friends and strangers as "my son, the priest."

On April 30, Dutan celebrated a Mass that coincided with his 32nd birthday. The church was empty, but the service was followed online by many who thanked him for his work and sent him greetings in real time. He also received a live surprise: After weeks of isolation, his whole family waited for him outside of the rectory with balloons, banners and a birthday cake.

It was, he said, "A moment of joy ... a moment of light after all these moments of darkness, you finally see a light there."

But the light flickered. "I just got off from a call with my mother," he said, on a recent day. "My father is in a very bad state. His heart is slowly, slowly stopping."

On May 5, Manuel Dutan died. His son pressed on, in his empty church.

"I feel at peace right now," he said. "I'm at a good point knowing that he's not suffering anymore."

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

As coronavirus rolls on, Republicans hit 'pause' on new aid

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Businesses are going belly up, tens of millions have been laid off and, by some measures, the U.S. seems headed for another Great Depression. But Republicans surveying the wreckage aren't ready for another round of coronavirus aid, instead urging a "pause."

Polls show GOP voters think the government is already doing enough, Republicans on Capitol Hill are divided over the best approach and billions approved by Congress have yet to be spent. It's unclear what President Donald Trump wants to do next, if anything, to help the economy. His payroll tax cut idea hasn't gained any traction in Congress.

For these and other reasons, GOP leaders see an unfolding crisis that does not yet cry out for further action.

"There's just a pragmatic piece to this, which is, if we're going to do another bill, let's get into June and July so we know how people are re-emerging," said Rep. Patrick McHenry of North Carolina, the top Republican on the House Financial Services Committee.

The political balancing act comes as the long-dormant deficit-hawk wing of the GOP lumbers back to life, recoiling from the House Democratic proposal to spend another \$3 trillion in taxpayer money. Yet many Republicans acknowledge there is a risk to standing pat, given the massive unemployment, financial struggles for local governments and growing COVID-19 caseloads, particularly with the November election approaching.

Despite their distaste for further negotiations with Democrats, many Republicans privately see passage

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 74 of 79

of another coronavirus measure as inevitable.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a proponent of the "pause," says Republicans are "taking a look at what we've already done. And we've added about \$3 trillion to the national debt, and assessing the effectiveness of that before deciding to go forward."

Yet McConnell, R-Ky., is cracking open the door to more legislation, provided that it is "narrowly targeted." "I'm in discussion, we all are, with the administration. If we reach a decision along with the administration to move to another phase, that'll be the time to interact with the Democrats," he said.

On Thursday, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said it's inevitable that Republicans will negotiate. He would like Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, with whom he has a good relationship, to remain in a leading role.

"In the last two bills, they sat on the sidelines at the beginning, said our way or no way, and then they had to come to the table," Schumer said on CNBC. "Steve Mnuchin was a very positive and powerful force, bringing them in that direction because he knew we had to do stuff for the economy — and the bill for all the partisanship passed 96-0."

Still, recent polls show GOP voters are far more likely to be satisfied with the government's virus response than are Democrats. They are less fearful of a second wave of cases as states loosen stay-at-home orders, and they are not clamoring for more aid.

"We're starting to hear grumbling against spending that I haven't heard for a while," said Adam Brandon, president of FreedomWorks, a conservative group.

Conservative senators from GOP strongholds argue that Washington has done enough, and they have been squaring off in meetings with moderates and pragmatists siding with Democrats. The moderates are supportive of relief for states and local governments, help for the Postal Service, additional jobless aid, and further provisions on testing and tracing for the virus.

The conservative senators have influence with Trump, but he doesn't share their fiscal instincts.

The president and deputies such as Mnuchin have signaled a willingness to deliver aid to state and local governments, which is a central demand of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. Trump at one point even floated a massive debt-financed effort on infrastructure, leaving many conservatives aghast.

Trump has cautioned Republicans against drawing a red line against state and local aid.

Many think the next coronavirus bill, when it passes, will be the last one for a while.

"I don't see us coming back before the election so I'd rather us get this smart and right rather than shoveling more coal into the fire, and people saying we'll come back and do more," McHenry said.

But it's clear that Republicans are dreading another round of negotiations with Democrats.

While each of the four prior COVID-19 response measures passed by almost unanimous votes, the outcome required GOP leaders to accept significant legislative victories for Pelosi and Schumer. They fear another episode in which Mnuchin, a former Democrat, gives them even more.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Obama emerges as central figure in 2020 presidential race

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly eight years after he was last on the ballot, Barack Obama is emerging as a central figure in the 2020 presidential election.

Democrats are eagerly embracing Obama as a political wingman for Joe Biden, who spent two terms by his side as vice president. Obama remains the party's most popular figure, particularly with black voters and younger Democrats, and Biden's presidential campaign is planning for him to have a highly visible role in the months to come.

For President Donald Trump, that means an opportunity to focus the spotlight on one of his favorite political foils. In recent days, Trump and his allies have aggressively pushed conspiracy theories about Obama designed to fire up the president's conservative base, taint Biden by association and distract from

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 75 of 79

the glut of grim health and economic news from the coronavirus pandemic.

"Partisans on both sides want to make this about Obama," said Ned Price, who served as spokesperson for Obama's White House National Security Council.

The renewed political focus on Obama sets the stage for an election about the nation's future that will also be about its past. As Biden looks to Obama for personal validation, he's also running to restore some of the former president's legacy, which has been systematically dismantled by Trump. The current president is running in part to finish that job.

Yet Trump's anti-Obama push also frequently takes on a darker, more conspiratorial tone that goes far beyond differences in health care policy and America's role in the world. His current focus is on the actions Obama, Biden and their national security advisers took in the closing days of their administration, as they viewed intelligence reports about Michael Flynn. Flynn had a short-lived stint as Trump's national security adviser before being fired for lying to Vice President Mike Pence about his interactions with Russia's ambassador to the U.S.

Trump's own administration acknowledged on Wednesday that Obama advisers followed proper procedures in privately "unmasking" Flynn's name, which was redacted in the intelligence reports for privacy reasons. Flynn ultimately pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI, though Trump's Justice Department moved last week to drop the case against him.

Despite there being no evidence of wrongdoing by Obama, Biden or other administration officials, Trump is eagerly pushing the notion of an unspecified crime, branding it "Obamagate." He's being backed up by Republican allies, including Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, who took to the Senate floor this week to ask of the Flynn matter: "What did Obama and Biden know, and when did they know it?"

Trump's zeal has sparked fears among some former Obama and Biden advisers about how far he may be willing to go in using the levers of government to push his case against them in an election year. The Justice Department is conducting an investigation into the origins of the Russia probe that ensnared Flynn and other Trump associates. And on Thursday, Trump tweeted that he wanted Congress to call Obama to testify before lawmakers.

Trump's renewed focus on Obama comes as Republicans grow increasingly anxious that the rising coronavirus death toll and cratering economy will damage the president's reelection prospects in November. More than 84,000 Americans have died from the virus, and more than 30 million have claimed unemployment.

Biden's campaign drew a direct connection between the president's attacks on Obama and the twin crises battering his administration.

"It's no surprise that the president is erratically lashing out at President Obama, desperate to distract from his own failures as commander in chief that have cost thousands of Americans their lives during this crisis," said TJ Ducklo, a Biden campaign spokesman.

Trump's emphasis on Obama also comes as the former president begins to emerge from a three-year period of political restraint as he prepares to embrace his role as leading surrogate for Biden. Last week, Obama told a large gathering of alumni from his administration that DOJ's decision to drop the Flynn case put the "rule of law at risk." He also criticized the Trump White House's handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Biden's campaign has been eager to get Obama involved in the election, though his exact role is still forming, particularly given that the pandemic has upended the campaign's plans for rallies and other in-person events in battleground states. The former president is also expected to campaign for Democratic House and Senate candidates across the country.

Though Obama campaigned for Democratic candidates in the 2018 midterms, he has mostly tried to avoid overt politics since leaving the White House. He's spoken out publicly against Trump on rare occasions, frustrating many Democrats who have wanted him to be more aggressive in calling out his successor.

But the 2020 election has always loomed as the moment when Obama would step off the sidelines, and he's told advisers he's eager to do so. Despite his strident public neutrality during the Democratic primary, he spoke to Biden regularly and has continued to do so as the campaign moves into the general election, according to aides.

Biden's campaign sees Obama as a clear asset as they seek not only to energize Democrats, but also to

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 76 of 79

appeal to independents and more moderate Republicans who may be wary of four more years of Trump in the White House.

A recent Monmouth University poll found 57% of Americans say they have a favorable opinion of Obama. That includes 92% of Democrats and 19% of Republicans.

Obama's favorable ratings are higher than either of the men who will be on the ballot in November. The same poll showed 41% of Americans had a favorable opinion of Biden, and 40% viewed Trump in a favorable light.

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Emily Swanson in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <https://twitter.com/jpaceDC>.

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

VIRUS DIARY: Lockdown, loneliness and a difficult goodbye

By EMILY SCHMALL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — On the last night of her life, my cat watched fireworks and flaming paper lanterns illuminate the dark New Delhi skies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked India's 1.3 billion people, living under the world's largest lockdown, to turn lights off and place earthen lamps — the Hindu symbol of good over evil — on window ledges and balconies in solidarity against coronavirus.

In India, where holidays and festivals are marked by an excess of color and light and sound, more is always better. So it was a fitting last home for a pet that lived in nine cities, in five countries on three continents.

In 2018, as I set out for a new job in India, my eight-year relationship ended. Friends and family worried: Will you be OK alone? I wasn't alone, I told them. I had Little Kitty. When the lockdown was imposed, I told them the same.

Then, in April, she got very sick and died. My constant companion of 14 years was gone. The isolating constraints of a pandemic brought out the sharp contours of my solitude.

I found comfort in the many ways that New Delhi, a capital region of 29 million people, took care of its stray animals, whom I viewed even in normal times as the emotional balm for an anxious city.

When Modi announced a near-total lockdown, fear of hunger sent millions of migrant workers walking homeward toward villages hundreds of miles away. The informal businesses that drew throngs to the city streets — newspaper vendors, chaiwallahs, sidewalk barbers — disappeared overnight.

I reported about despair at a bus depot on the edge of Delhi, where hundreds of people waited to cross into the neighboring states of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, many with only a small bag of belongings. For weeks, the unemployed stood a meter apart in lines around city blocks for hot meals handed out at shuttered schools and temples.

With the disappearance of foot traffic, the animals, too, could starve. Instead, bands of volunteers fed Delhi's army of street dogs, cats, wild birds and wandering cows, leaving plastic take-out bowls of kibble or rice on otherwise abandoned streets.

A love of animals cuts across India's many religious, class and caste divisions. For Hindus, feeding animals is a form of worship. And caring for mine during the coronavirus crisis in India felt like a prayer.

The lockdown meant I could be home to nurse my cat, feeding her chicken broth through a syringe. My sadness was mixed with gratitude that I could care for her after so many years of companionship.

Our veterinarian made house calls, but not during the lockdown. So for six days, I pleaded my case at checkpoints.

Dr. Gandhi's clinic was reduced to skeletal staff in a single room. Clients crowded around sick animals. In the end, my cat died at home; I cried when I called to tell him that Little Kitty was gone.

Like many of India's dead, animal and human, she would be cremated, because a fiery dissolution brings

a swifter, more complete release of the soul.

Past the ancient settlement of Mehrauli, in an area of farms and well-appointed weekend homes, sat a gated complex with Hindu icons, aloe plants and a pink jacaranda tree. I removed my shoes and entered the prayer room — one wall covered in framed pet photos, and in the corner an altar with a statuette of Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction.

The gatekeeper laid my cat on a pushcart. He sprinkled sacred Ganges River water on her body, lit a cone of incense and said some words in Hindi.

We are all experiencing loss right now of a collective magnitude impossible to fathom. Mine, a tiny ripple in that cataclysm, was soothed by the ways that Delhi has continued to care for its own, human and animal alike.

"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 Asia correspondent Emily Schmall on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/emilyschmall>

Uplifting idea: Cranes reunite families in corona crisis

By RAF CASERT and VIRGINIA MAYO Associated Press

WATERMAEL-BOITSFORT, Belgium (AP) — Something he saw as he drove to work one morning gave Tristan Van den Bosch an uplifting idea.

"I saw a man shouting at his mother," said Van den Bosch.

Not unusual — except that the man was on the ground and his mother was three stories up. She was, like many seniors, locked down in a care home to avoid the COVID-19 virus. But as days have turned to weeks and months, families like this one have struggled.

"We can help this man!" Van den Bosch thought.

As operations manager at Group-f, a cleaning and maintenance company, Van der Bosch had a problem. The pandemic had reduced business to a trickle, leaving many of his cranes standing idle in the depot.

Why not use those cranes to lift people, so they can see relatives on the upper floors of homes for the aged?

Since then, Van den Bosch has been driving his cranes to homes in several towns across Belgium. A platform carries families to their relatives' windows. A daughter or grandson waves, and worries vanish from faces creased by age. No internet connection does as well.

Eve Putseys didn't quite know what to expect as she was lifted up to see her 88-year-old aunt, Suzanne, at the La Cambre care home on the outskirts of Brussels.

"It's been seven long weeks since I haven't been able to see her," she said. "It's all quite emotional."

Afterward, Putseys was all smiles.

"I got to see her -- and that was great," she said. And on top of that "she looked very happy to see me."

The anxiety of families with relatives in nursing homes is well placed; of the 8,843 confirmed and suspected cases who had died of the virus in Belgium as of Tuesday, 4,538 were in such facilities. Their families are left feeling helpless, fearing they will not see each other again.

Little wonder Van den Bosch had little trouble filling his platforms for this special kind of joyride.

The La Cambre home prepared the facility, the families and the elderly to make sure everything went smoothly.

"It has been hard work but quite rewarding," said La Cambre director Thibaut Chevrier. "We only saw emotions through the eyes of the residents and the families."

Soon, Group-f officials expect, the platforms will again be used to clean up facades and office fronts. But in the meantime, they have been put to good use.

"Yes, OK, it costs money, the operators cost money but the machines are all used," Van den Bosch said. And in the end, "we're happy that we have been able to help people."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 78 of 79

While nonstop global news about the effects of the coronavirus have become commonplace, so, too, are the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is an AP continuing series reflecting these acts of kindness.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, May 15, the 136th day of 2020. There are 230 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 15, 1948, hours after declaring its independence, the new state of Israel was attacked by Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon.

On this date:

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed an act establishing the Department of Agriculture.

In 1918, U.S. airmail began service between Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York.

In 1930, registered nurse Ellen Church, the first airline stewardess, went on duty aboard an Oakland-to-Chicago flight operated by Boeing Air Transport, a forerunner of United Airlines.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure creating the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, whose members came to be known as WACs. Wartime gasoline rationing went into effect in 17 Eastern states, limiting sales to three gallons a week for non-essential vehicles.

In 1954, the Fender Stratocaster guitar, created by Leo Fender, was officially released.

In 1963, Weight Watchers was incorporated in New York.

In 1968, two days of tornado outbreaks began in 10 Midwestern and Southern states; twisters were blamed for 72 deaths, including 45 in Arkansas and 18 in Iowa.

In 1970, just after midnight, Phillip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green, two black students at Jackson State College in Mississippi, were killed as police opened fire during student protests.

In 1972, Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace was shot and left paralyzed while campaigning for president in Laurel, Maryland, by Arthur H. Bremer, who served 35 years for attempted murder.

In 1975, U.S. forces invaded the Cambodian island of Koh Tang and captured the American merchant ship Mayaguez, which had been seized by the Khmer Rouge. (All 39 crew members had already been released safely by Cambodia; some 40 U.S. servicemen were killed in connection with the operation.)

In 1988, the Soviet Union began the process of withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan, more than eight years after Soviet forces entered the country.

In 2000, by a 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court threw out a key provision of the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, saying that rape victims could not sue their attackers in federal court.

Ten years ago: Jessica Watson, a 16-year-old Australian who'd spent seven months at sea in her pink yacht, became the youngest person to sail around the world solo, nonstop and unassisted as she arrived in Sydney.

Five years ago: A jury sentenced Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR' tsahr-NEYE'-ehv) to death for the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing that killed three and left more than 250 wounded. Elisabeth Bing, the Lamaze International co-founder who popularized what was known as natural childbirth and helped change how women and doctors approached the delivery room, died in New York at age 100.

One year ago: Alabama's Republican governor, Kay Ivey, signed into law the most stringent abortion legislation in the nation, making performing an abortion a felony in nearly all cases. (The law remains blocked by court challenges.) President Donald Trump granted a full pardon to Conrad Black, a former newspaper publisher who had written a flattering political biography of Trump. (Black had been convicted of fraud in 2007 and spent more than three years in prison.) California fire officials said an investigation found that power lines owned by Pacific Gas & Electric Corp. had sparked a Northern California blaze that killed 85 people and nearly destroyed the town of Paradise in 2018; it was the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century.

Today's Birthdays: Actress-singer Anna Maria Alberghetti is 84. Counterculture icon Wavy Gravy is 84.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, May 15, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 307 ~ 79 of 79

Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is 83. Singer Trini Lopez is 83. Singer Lenny Welch is 82. Actress-singer Lainie Kazan is 78. Actress Gunilla Hutton is 78. Country singer K.T. Oslin is 78. Actor Chazz Palminteri is 74. Former Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius is 72. Singer-songwriter Brian Eno is 72. Actor Nicholas Hammond (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 70. Baseball Hall of Famer George Brett is 67. Musician-composer Mike Oldfield is 67. Actor Lee Horsley is 65. TV personality Giselle Fernandez is 59. Rapper Grandmaster Melle Mel is 59. Actress Brenda Bakke is 57. Football Hall of Famer Emmitt Smith is 51. Actor Brad Rowe is 50. Actor David Charvet (shahr-VAY') is 48. Actor Russell Hornsby is 46. Rock musician Ahmet Zappa is 46. Olympic gold medal gymnast Amy Chow is 42. Actor David Krumholtz is 42. Rock musician David Hartley (The War on Drugs) is 40. Actress Jamie-Lynn Sigler is 39. Actress Alexandra Breckenridge is 38. Rock musician Brad Shultz (Cage the Elephant) is 38. Rock musician Nick Perri is 36. Tennis player Andy Murray is 33.

Thought for Today: "Martyrdom has always been a proof of the intensity, never of the correctness of a belief." — Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931).

Copyright 2020, The Associated Press. All rights reserved.