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OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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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.

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Mixed bag today—some things a bit up, others steady or moving downward. A bit better than yesterday. We're at 1,449,800 cases in the US. New case numbers are a bit higher today. NY leads with 350,951 cases, moving down again after holding steady. NJ has 143,905 cases, which is holding. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: IL –90,510, MA – 83,421 (two days' numbers here; there was no new reporting yesterday), CA – 76,009, PA – 64,178, MI – 49,982, TX – 46,937, FL – 44,130, and MD – 37,105. 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, 9 more + DC over 5000, 8 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, TX, CA, FL, PA, MD, MI, and CT. States where new case reports are increasing include AZ, AR, and SD. We're down now to only 3 states listed as increasing; I have some concerns this won't hold, but I am sincerely hoping it does. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, IN, NJ, CO, MA, WA, GA, and TN. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 87,385 deaths in the US. Today the number of new deaths is slightly up after three days holding steady. NY has 27,755, NJ has 10,138, MA has 5592, MI has 4825, PA has 4432, IL has 4074, CT has 3285, CA has 3144, and LA has 2382. All of these states reported fewer than 200 new deaths except for MA which did not report yesterday and is still below 300 deaths, and a third reported fewer than 100. This still feels like progress. There are 8 more states over 1000 deaths, 5 more over 500, 16 more + DC and PR over 100, and 12 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

I have a few words to add to my discussion from the other day about how you can most safely proceed to patronize businesses, now that they're opening back up. I'll add here, once again, that in general I think it's a good idea to limit your shopping activities for a while yet; no state meets the CDC's criteria for loosening up restrictions, which means it's not really all that safe to change your activity pattern at all. I encourage you to track new case reports for your community and hold off until you see some kind of sustained decline. That said, if you insist on getting out, here are a few more guidelines:

(1) Limit your patronage to businesses which require employees to wear masks and to stay six feet from one another (where that is possible). There should be hand sanitizer or another way for workers and customers to clean or disinfect their hands. Go during off-hours when the number of customers will be smaller. Avoid crowded places: If you can't maintain the six-foot rule, choose a different place to spend your money.

(2) If you can receive service outdoors, that's better than indoors. So if you must eat out, the patio is better than inside the restaurant. And consider continuing to pick up take-out for a while yet. Obviously, you can't eat with a mask on, and having a bunch of unmasked people in any kind of proximity for as long as it takes to eat dinner is a high-risk activity. If you're visiting a restaurant, wear a mask when you are not actually eating, and bring your own pen to sign the bill.

(3) Consider how long your business will take; less is better. We are not at a point where a leisurely shopping trip is a good idea. So if you need to purchase an item, make a plan, get in and out as quickly as possible, and save browsing for later when the risks are lower.

(4) Consider availing yourself of pick-up options offered by many stores.

(5) If you're desperate for a haircut, insist your barber or stylist wear a mask, and you wear one too, removing it only as long as necessary to prevent it getting in the way of the procedure. Consider washing your hair before you leave home and asking the stylist to skip that step. And put off the more time-consuming treatments like color and straightening until the numbers look better. Apparently, some salons are offering some services outdoors; that would be ideal if you can find it.

(6) I mentioned this the other day, but I will reiterate it's too soon to go back to church, especially if you have risk factors for serious disease—too many people too close together for too long. So many churches have come up with creative ways for people to worship safely that it's really best to hold off until new case numbers look better.

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(7) I think I would also avoid the gym or fitness studio. I see working out as very like singing—deep breathing and forceful expulsions of air from the lungs. Very high risk, even with proper social distancing. Considering the recommendation is to avoid all singing in churches for a year or more, it seems to me like it's too soon to go back to your indoor workouts. If you're going to ignore that advice, then maintain even more distance from others and disinfect everything you touch. I think wearing a mask during a workout would be difficult, but consider it. And if you have a condition that places you at unusual risk, just don't.

(8) Continue your usual precautions: Carry hand sanitizer and use it when entering and leaving each business. Don't touch your face. Try to keep trips short enough that you do not need to use public restrooms; if you must, the wash your hands thoroughly afterward, and use a paper towel over your hand to avoid touching doorknobs, faucet handles, light switches, etc. before leaving. Bring water with you: Do not use public water fountains.

I get a lot of question about herd immunity. We've heard that term a lot, even before this current pandemic; but I don't know that it's well understood. The principle behind herd immunity is that, if enough of the population is immune to a particular pathogen, the R_0 drops well below 1 at some point because an infected person sort of has a hard time finding someone else to pass it to. This limits spread and effectively incapacitates the pathogen.

Now there are basically two ways you get can get immune to something. One is to have the infection, build an immune response with immunologic memory, and then when you've recovered, you are protected from reinfection. The other is to receive a vaccine which exposes you safely to the pathogen (either a killed/inactivated form of the pathogen or a remnant or part of the pathogen) so you can build an immune response with immunologic memory in advance of exposure so that later, when you encounter the real thing, you're already protected.

The value of herd immunity is that there will always be some people in a population who are not capable of mounting an immune response to the pathogen. This includes newborn babies whose immune systems aren't fully developed yet, people with defective immune systems, people whose immunity has been suppressed as treatment for some other condition or to prevent rejection of a transplanted organ, and elderly whose immune systems aren't working so hot any more. If you have enough immune individuals, those susceptible individuals are protected by the herd. Turns out getting immune to pathogens, in addition to protecting you, is sort of a public service; you're doing your bit for your fellow humans. And skipping vaccines because they're sooo risky and you figure you can just rely on everyone else to cover your rear is basically saying you're cool with everyone else taking a risk to protect you. That makes you some special kind of flower, doesn't it? (We are, of course, leaving aside the fact that vaccines are one of the safest public health interventions we have, so they're not all that risky, and also what happens when a whole lot of people start thinking the same way. We know the answer to that one: Witness the recent outbreaks of diseases which should have been—and used to be—under control.)

So how many people in a population need to be immune before you have effective herd immunity? It varies with the pathogen. For example, for measles (which has an R_0 , depending who you ask, of anywhere from 12 to 18), you achieve herd immunity between 93 and 95% immunity in a population. Higher R_0 requires higher levels of immunity to interrupt transmission. For polio (R_0 of 5-7), an infection that was truly defeated until recently, you need levels around 80-85%. For Covid-19, as with so many things about this virus, we're just estimating; but most experts figure we're going to have to be at 70%-90% immune.

I keep reading how we're almost there with this pandemic, that before you know it, we're going to have achieved herd immunity and this whole thing will rapidly become just a bad memory. Not so fast. Current estimates are that something between 2% and 4% of the US population ave recovered and are now immune; that is clearly not even close. Even in New York which has had more infections and more deaths than any country except the US, we're looking at 15-21% of the population recovered. That, too, is a long way from 70%. If we let this thing burn until we achieve herd immunity from recovered individuals, we need to wait until, best case scenario, 70% of us—that's around 230 million people—have been infected. If we continue at our present rate of 15,000-25,000 new cases a day, we're going to be waiting around for a very long time to get to that 70%, and when the dust settles, at a conservative death rate of 0.5%

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(most folks think it's going to be somewhat higher), we'd be looking at 1.1 million dead people. For another take on that death rate, consider that in New York, close to 1 in 500 residents has died from this; that number of deaths has brought them to somewhere around 20% of the population immune. Consider how many would have to die to bring them up to that 70% level, much less 80% or 90%. That doesn't really seem worth it to me.

And there's yet another consideration here. Remember that we are not yet 100% sure immunity after recovery will be fully protective, but assuming it is, most predictions are that this immunity will last maybe a couple of years. Since it's going to take a while for 70% of us to get infected and recover, we're expecting that won't happen until sometime late next year. And you know what happens shortly after that? The earliest-infected people may start losing their immunity as it fades, and we'll be right back into another round of infection. That's not great. Now, maybe immunity to this will be protective and will last a long time, but the only way we're going to find this out is to wait a long time and see what we have.

So it looks like the best path to herd immunity will not be a short one. A vaccine is likely a year off if all goes well; if we encounter significant snags along the way, it could be longer. That's a long time to wait; but doing things the old-fashioned way will not be quicker and will cost us far more in suffering, medical costs, and lost lives. So don't hang your hat on all this talk of herd immunity. It's a real thing, and we still have a reasonable chance of achieving it with a vaccine; but it's not going to be tomorrow, so we're going to need other ways of getting ourselves out of this mess. Things like controlling transmission and using proper precautions and taking it seriously unless and until we have effective treatments and/or an effective and safe vaccine.

Something else I've been getting question about is math. There has been a spate of articles lately about these antibody tests to determine who's been infected with SARS-CoV-2. The articles always say the tests aren't very good because they give too many false positives—remember, this is where the test says you have antibodies (were infected and are therefore now immune) when you don't. So it would lead you to believe you're protected when you really aren't. That's a big mistake.

The problem was explained in a recent article, which explained 90% accuracy in these tests wasn't good enough, saying, "But the predictive value of an antibody test with 90 percent accuracy could be as low as 32 percent if the base rate of infection in the population is 5 percent. Put another way, there is an almost 70 percent probability in that case that the test will falsely indicate a person has antibodies."

To which several people said, "Whaaaat?" Because there's no way a 90% accurate test can be wrong 70% of the time, is there? Turns out there is: There's something that in statistics is called a decision-making fallacy, something that causes you to make mistakes in interpreting the meaning of your data. This particular one is called the base rate fallacy, and here's how it works when it comes to antibody testing: The base rate is the percentage of the population that has antibodies, and when that's very low, it can lead you to erroneous conclusions.

Here's an extreme example with easy math that will help you to see the parameters of the problem:

Let's say you have a test for antibody that occurs in the population in 0.1% (1 in 1000) of people. That's your base rate. And let's say your test is 100% sensitive (0% of positive people will test negative, that is, everyone who has the antibody is going to test positive, as they should) and 95% specific (5% of negative people will test positive). What happens when you test 1000 people (who are perfectly reflective of the population)?

You're going to have this one guy who tests positive because he really is positive, right? He's your 1 in 1000. No false negatives because this test is 100% sensitive--doesn't miss anybody.

Then you're going to have 5% of your negative people that will test positive. So you have 50 false positives.

So we have 51 positive results, but only 1 of those (roughly 2%) is a true positive. Which means, when the test gives a positive result, it is wrong 98% of the time. Make sense?

You see, if our base rate is low enough, it doesn't take a very high error rate to really mess you up. The article didn't specify what the sensitivity is for their hypothetical test, but it did tell you your base rate is 5% and the test is 90% accurate. To keep things simple, let's say this test is 100% sensitive, so the inaccuracy is all on the specificity side. So if you test 1000 people with a base rate of 5%, 50 of them

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actually have antibodies, and all of those test positive. Then, of the remaining 950, none of whom have the antibody, 10% will falsely test positive; that's another 95.

This means you have $50+95=145$ positive tests, 50 of which are accurate. That means, of your positive tests, just 34% ($50/145 \times 100$) are right. This is how you end up with a test that is 90% accurate, but gets it wrong on almost 70% of negative tests. That's not very good.

We still need better antibody tests because it will be fairly critical to accurately identify the folks who are not really immune. Getting this wrong could place those folks in real danger.

We're coming to the end of another week of this. I'm feeling it because I was supposed to be in the Bay Area this week with my granddaughter, the figure skater, and my daughter so we could go to Stars on Ice together. I had my moment of self-pity before I reminded myself everyone I love is safe and well at the moment, which is so much more than so many can say tonight.

I ran across a nice story a few days ago about a couple of groups of oppressed natives. It seems, after the Choctaw of North America were dispossessed of their lands in 1831 and forcibly removed to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears, losing some 4000 members, they were rebuilding their lives in the 1840s when they heard about a famine in Ireland. Pooling their meager resources, they scraped together \$170 and sent it off to a relief agency to provide food assistance for the Irish. Fast forward to 2020 when the Hopi and Navaho people are being struck down by our modern plague, sparking a food shortage on reservations and people having to take the risk of driving long distances for food, and the Irish raised some \$820,000 in an online fund-raiser to repay the kindness shown them 170 years ago. This money is buying boxes of food for people on the reservation—those who are raising grandchildren, those with underlying health conditions, and those who have the virus. A newspaper article of that long-ago time said the Choctaws "knew nothing more, cared for nothing more, than the fact, that across the Big Water, there were thousands of human beings starving to death." And today from Ireland, one donor wrote, "From Ireland . . . a kindness returned with remembrance, gratitude, and solidarity." The Choctaw, who are doing OK today, are pleased to see their Native brethren served in their time of need. Waylon Gary White Deer, a Choctaw author and artist, said, "We have a tradition among Choctaw people that when you feed someone you're extending human life. That's one of the best things you can do for someone."

Can we all reach out, even across great distances, to feed someone physically or spiritually and emotionally, to extend human life, as we all endure hard times? Look what an investment of \$170 from the poorest of the poor has yielded today. Worth a try, don't you think?

Keep yourself healthy, and I'll see you tomorrow.



Car Parade for GHS Seniors

A parade of cars went down Main Street and around town Friday evening to recognize the GHS seniors. The Flihs family is pictured above as their daughter, Ashley Flihs, drives by.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	May 5	May 6	May 7	May 8	May 9	May 10	May 11
Minnesota	7,851	8,579	9,365	10,088	10,790	11,271	11,799
Nebraska	6,438	6,771	7,190	7,831	8,234	8,315	8,572
Montana	456	456	456	458	458	458	459
Colorado	17,364	17,830	18,371	18,827	19,375	19,375	19,879
Wyoming	452	479	483	490	495	504	510
North Dakota	1266	1,323	1,371	1,425	1,464	1,491	1,518
South Dakota	2,721	2,779	2,905	3,144	3,393	3,517	3,614
United States	1,204,475	1,228,609	1,256,972	1,286,833	1,309,541	1,329,225	1,347,388
US Deaths	71,078	73,431	75,670	77,280	78,794	79,525	80,397
Minnesota	+617	+728	+786	+723	+702	+481	+528
Nebraska	+355	+333	+419	+741	+403	+81	+257
Montana	+8	0	0	+2	0	0	+1
Colorado	+457	+466	+541	+456	+548	----	+504
Wyoming	+8	+27	+4	+7	+5	+9	+6
North Dakota	+41	+57	+48	+54	+39	+27	+27
South Dakota	+53	+58	+126	+239	+249	+124	+97
United States	+23,841	+24,134	+28,363	+29,861	+22,708	+19,684	+18,163
US Deaths	+2,144	+2,353	+2,239	+1,610	1,514	+731	+872
	May 12	May 13	May 14	May 15			
Minnesota	12,494	12,917	13,435	14,240			
Nebraska	8,692	9,075	9,416	9,772			
Montana	461	462	462	466			
Colorado	20,157	20,475	20,838	21,232			
Wyoming	513	523	529	541			
North Dakota	1,571	1,647	1,712	1,761			
South Dakota	3,663	3,732	3,792	3,887			
United States	1,370,016	1,390,764	1,417,889	1,444,870			
US Deaths	82,389	84,136	85,906	87,595			
Minnesota	+695	+423	+518	+805			
Nebraska	+120	+383	+341	+356			
Montana	+2	+1	0	+4			
Colorado	+278	+318	+363	+394			
Wyoming	+3	+10	+6	+12			
North Dakota	+53	+76	+65	+49			
South Dakota	+49	+69	+60	+95			
United States	+22,628	+20,748	+27,125	+26,981			
US Deaths	+1,992	+1,747	+1,770	+1,689			

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May 15th COVID-19 UPDATE

Sixteen counties in South Dakota reported positive COVID-19 cases. The top counties were Minnehaha with 51, Brown with 19, Yankton with 4, and Lincoln, Oglala Lakota and Pennington with 3 each.

There was one more death in South Dakota - a resident of Minnehaha County.

Brown County:

Active Cases: +9 (88)

Recovered: +18 (85)

Total Positive: +19 (173)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (7)

Deaths: 0

Negative Tests: +29 (866)

South Dakota:

Positive: +95 (3,887 total) (35 more than yesterday)

Negative: +846 (23,527 total)

Hospitalized: +6 (296 total) - 80 currently hospitalized (5 less than yesterday)

Deaths: +1 (Minnehaha) (44 total)

Recovered: +137 (2437 total)

Active Cases: 1269 (43 less than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett 19, Brule +2 (84), Butte +4 (96), Campbell 14, Custer +3 (71), Dewey +10 (105), Edmunds +2 (36), Gregory +2 (43), Haakon 18, Hanson +3 (40), Harding +1 (2), Jackson 15, Jones +1 (7), Kingsbury +2 (96), Mellette +7 (33), Perkins +4 (12), Potter +1 (40), unassigned +124 (1160).

Brown: +19 positive, (11 more from Demkota bringing that facility total to 106 with 13 more being recovered bringint that total to 58) +10 recovered (85 of 173 recovered)

Charles Mix: +1 positive (5 of 8 recovered)

Clay: +1 positive (8 of 12 recovered)

Corson: +1 positive (1 of 3 recovered)

Grant: +2 positive (2 of 7 recovered)

Hughes: +1 positive (12 of 16 recovered)

Lincoln: +3 positive, +3 recovered (149 of 198 recovered)

Minnehaha: +51 positive, +119 recovered (2059 of 3101 recovered)

Oglala Lakota: +3 positive (1 of 6 recovered)

Pennington: +3 positive, +1 recovered (15 of 43 recovered)

Roberts: +1 positive, +1 recovered (11 of 18 recovered)

Sanborn: +1 positive (3 of 4 recovered)

Stanley: +1 positive (7 of 9 recovered)

Todd: +2 positive (5 of 15 recovered)

Turner: +1 positive, +1 recovered (17 of 19 recovered)

Union: +2 recovered (39 of 57 recovered)

Yankton: +4 positive (26 of 38 recovered)

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

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 49 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,761.

State & private labs have conducted 51,715 total tests with 49,954 negative results. There are 42 total deaths in North Dakota.

1,071 ND patients are considered recovered.

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	2	1	54
Beadle	22	19	227
Bennett	0	0	19
Bon Homme	4	4	135
Brookings	14	14	470
Brown	173	85	895
Brule	0	0	84
Buffalo	1	1	25
Butte	0	0	96
Campbell	0	0	14
Charles Mix	8	5	135
Clark	4	1	75
Clay	12	8	223
Codington	16	15	624
Corson	3	1	31
Custer	0	0	71
Davison	9	6	399
Day	10	9	87
Deuel	1	1	99
Dewey	0	0	105
Douglas	1	1	41
Edmunds	0	0	36
Fall River	2	2	86
Faulk	1	1	28
Grant	7	2	74
Gregory	0	0	43
Haakon	0	0	18
Hamlin	2	2	95
Hand	1	1	32
Hanson	0	0	40
Harding	0	0	2
Hughes	16	12	338
Hutchinson	3	3	129

Hyde	1	1	22
Jackson	0	0	15
Jerauld	6	5	44
Jones	0	0	7
Kingsbury	0	0	96
Lake	5	4	183
Lawrence	9	9	253
Lincoln	198	149	1942
Lyman	4	3	74
Marshall	1	1	65
McCook	5	3	140
McPherson	1	1	28
Meade	5	1	361
Mellette	0	0	33
Miner	1	1	26
Minnehaha	3101	2059	10736
Moody	17	9	137
Oglala Lakota	6	1	61
Pennington	43	15	1308
Perkins	0	0	12
Potter	0	0	40
Roberts	18	11	210
Sanborn	4	3	45
Spink	4	4	154
Stanley	9	7	51
Sully	1	1	16
Todd	15	5	197
Tripp	1	0	81
Turner	19	17	186
Union	57	39	322
Walworth	5	5	76
Yankton	38	26	598
Ziebach	1	0	18
Unassigned****	0	0	1160

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	363	0
20-29 years	693	0
30-39 years	907	1
40-49 years	716	1
50-59 years	657	6
60-69 years	355	7
70-79 years	91	5
80+ years	105	24

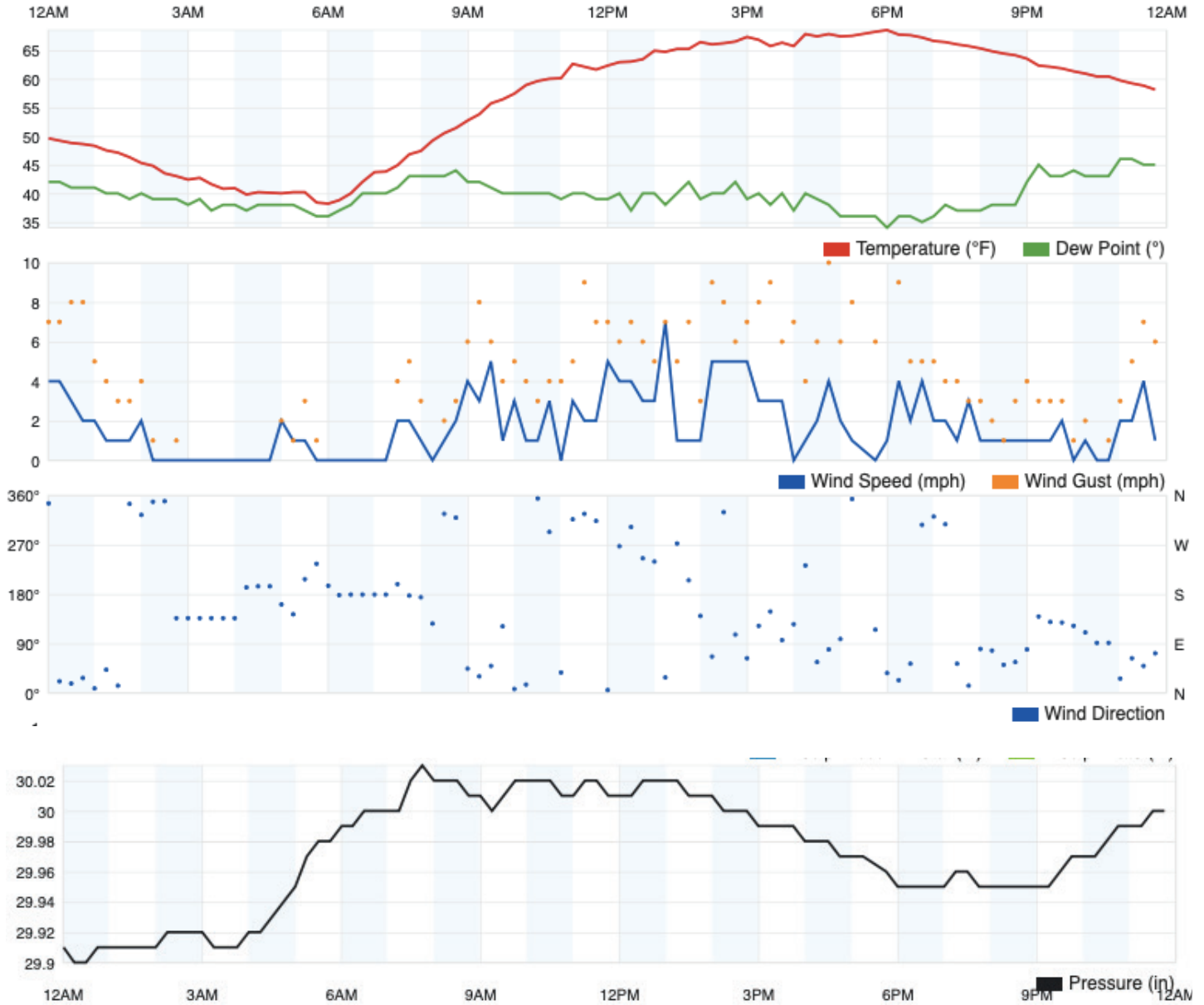
SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1781	23
Male	2106	21

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

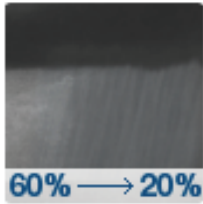


90%

Showers

High: 58 °F

Tonight



60% → 20%

Showers Likely then Slight Chance Showers

Low: 45 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 67 °F

Sunday Night



Partly Cloudy

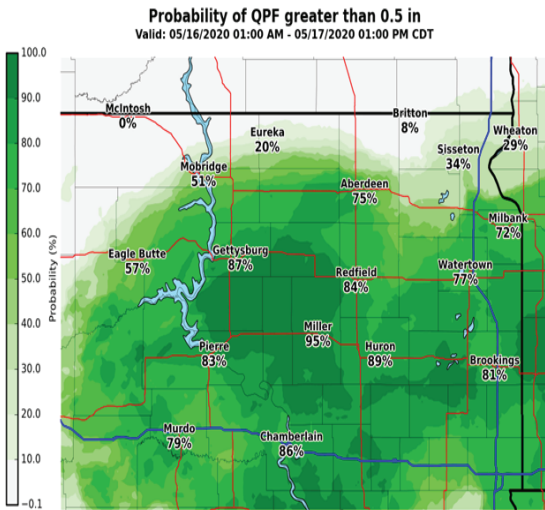
Low: 45 °F

Monday



Mostly Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy

High: 71 °F



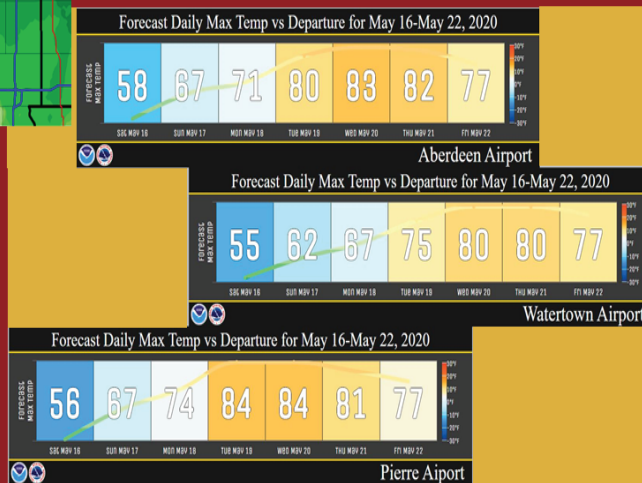
Aberdeen, SD

Widespread Half Inch Or More Of Rainfall Expected Through Tonight

www.weather.gov/abr

Temperatures Warm From 10 Or More Degrees **Below** Normal To 10 Or More Degrees **Above** Normal Over The Next Seven Days

Created 5/16/2020 4:27 AM



Cloudy, rainy and cool today into tonight. Then, things dry out and warm up for, at least, the first half of next week. It'll become windy at times Monday through Wednesday, as well.

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Today in Weather History

May 16, 1883: Benchmark flooding in the Black Hills occurred in 1883, with extremely high flows reported throughout the hills that resulted from heavy rainfall on top of snowmelt.

May 16, 1929: On this day, Aberdeen recorded 3.0 inches of snow. This snowfall is the latest measurable snow for the city of Aberdeen on record.

May 16, 1992: It was a wild day across the tri-state region of Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa, with tornadoes and destructive straight-line winds. A tornado damaged three-grain bins and two farm wagons in Cedar County of northeast Nebraska before crossing into Dixon County. As it traveled east, it destroyed two barns and a garage and was responsible for killing between 5,000 and 10,000 chickens at a chicken farm. In northwest Iowa, Sioux City reported winds of around 60 miles an hour causing some minor damage. Elsewhere, winds gusted as high as 75 miles an hour in Spencer and 74 miles an hour in Le Mars.

1874: The Mill Creek disaster occurred west of North Hampton, MA. Dam slippage resulted in a flash flood that claimed 143 lives and caused a million dollars property damage.

1983: An unyielding spring storm dumped heavy snow across the Front Range in Colorado. High winds of 20 to 40 mph with gusts to 55 mph produced blizzard conditions at times. The Foothills received 1 to 2 feet of snow with 4 to 12 inches along the Foothills. Blowing snow whipped the snow into drifts several feet deep closing schools and highways. Power outages occurred; with 20 square miles of Denver blacked out. Hundreds of passengers were stranded as only half of the runways were open at Stapleton International Airport. The high temperature at Denver the next day of just 40° set a record low maximum. Much of the snow melted on the 18th as temperatures rebounded into the middle and upper 50s causing widespread street flooding.

1924 - The temperature at Blitzen OR soared to 108 degrees to set a state record for the month of May. The record was later tied at Pelton Dam on the 31st of May in 1986. (The Weather Channel)

1952 - High winds in the Wasatch Canyon of Utah struck Ogden and Brigham City. Winds at Hill Air Force Base gusted to 92 mph. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was a summer-like day as thunderstorms abounded across the nation. Thunderstorms in Texas drenched Guadalupe County with more than three inches of rain resulting in flash flooding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from Florida to New York State. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Havre, MT, reported a record high of 95 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather in the south central U.S. Thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes, and there were 180 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A tornado at Cleburne, TX, caused 30 million dollars damage. A violent (F-4) tornado touched down near Brackettville, TX, and a strong (F-3) tornado killed one person and injured 28 others at Jarrell, TX. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Shamrock, TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Oklahoma and northeastern Texas to the Upper Ohio Valley. Thunderstorms spawned seventeen tornadoes, including a twister which killed one person and injured another north of Corning, AR. There were 128 reports of large hail or damaging winds. Strong thunderstorm winds killed one person and injured six others at Folsomville, IN, and injured another five persons in southeastern Hardin County KY. In Arkansas, baseball size hail was reported near Fouke and near El Dorado. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

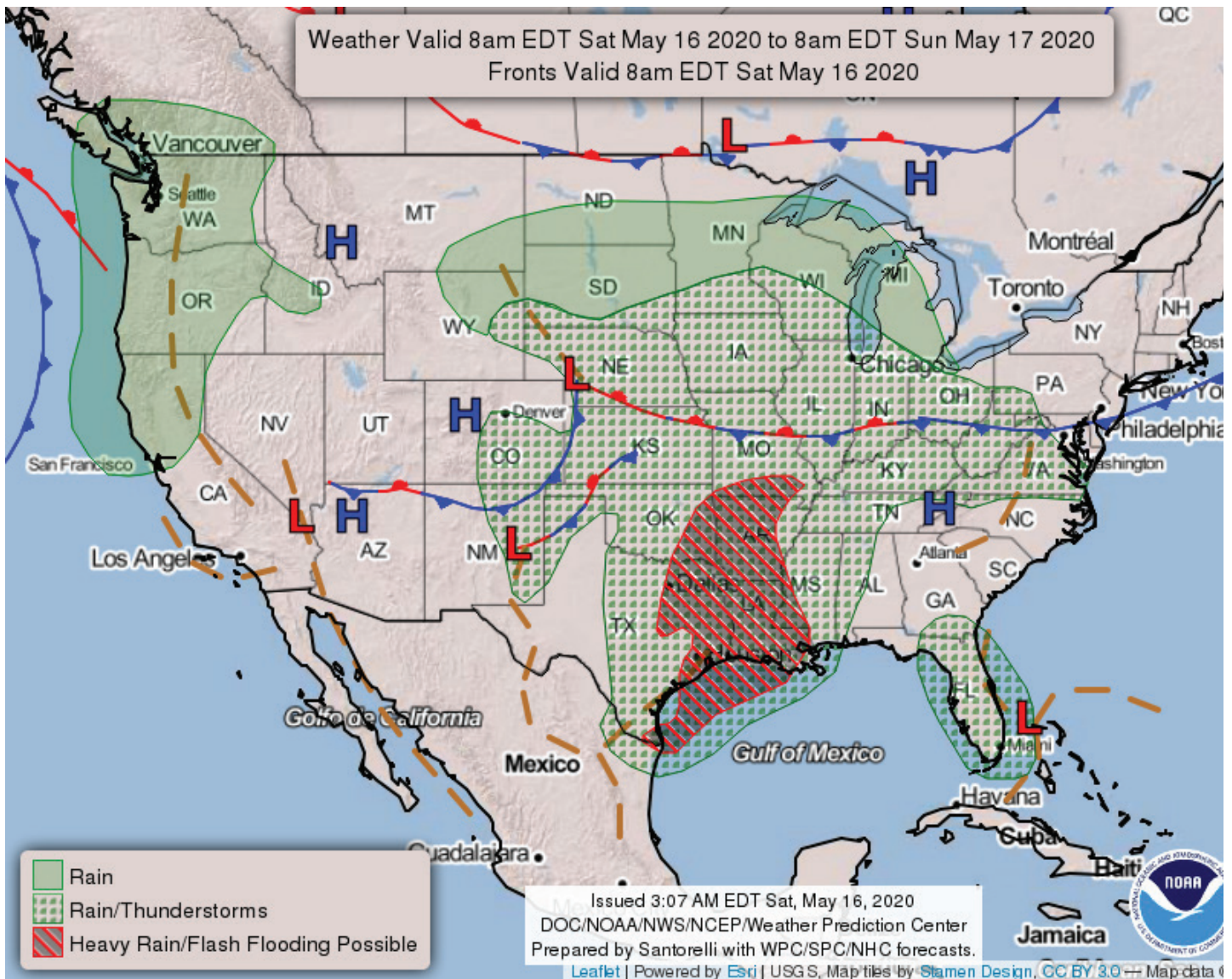
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 69 °F at 4:20 PM
Low Temp: 38 °F at 6:00 AM
Wind: 11 mph at 12:18 PM
Precip: .00

Record High: 101° in 1934
Record Low: 23° in 2014
Average High: 69°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in May.: 1.53
Precip to date in May.: 2.38
Average Precip to date: 5.56
Precip Year to Date: 4.28
Sunset Tonight: 8:59 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:00 a.m.



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PRAYER AND PROVIDENCE

An ocean liner was in the midst of a terrible storm while making its way from England to the United States. The ship was swaying violently from side to side and heaving up and down as the waves washed over the bow.

The captain was trying his best to calm the people and encourage them not to be frightened. Suddenly a lady shouted, "Do something!"

"We're doing our best," said the captain calmly, "and we are trusting in the providence of God."

"Oh my word," she cried. "Is it that bad?"

The word "providence" comes from two Latin words. One means "before" and the other means "to see." When the Christian speaks of "providence," it conveys the message that God knows the outcome of the events in our lives before they happen. Not only that, He knows and understands how those events which we sometimes resent are working to shape us into the person He wants us to be!

Paul said that whatever happens in the life of the Christian happens for the Christian's best interests. For this reason, he said that "everything works together for their good who are called according to His purpose." Not that everything that happens to the Christian is pleasant in and of itself. It means that everything that happens is to shape us into the likeness of Christ. As we become more and more like Him, He can use us more and more to do the work He has called us to do.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may we accept the fact that You are at work in our lives and choose to accept the fact that You love us and want us to be like Christ. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

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

News from the Associated Press

Five years later, Delmont still living with scars of tornado

By **RANDY DOCKENDORF** Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — On that May morning in 2015, the Sunday school classes had gathered in the Zion Lutheran Church basement shortly after worship services.

Moments later, a loud noise pierced the air — sirens warning of a tornado descending upon the town. The Sunday school teachers and children took cover as the F-2 twister roared through the Douglas County community of Delmont with wind speeds of at least 130 miles per hour.

The Sunday school members drew on their faith as they huddled and prayed.

And then, silence.

Their prayers were answered: The tornado passed, and they found their way out of the rubble. They emerged to find the century-old brick church had lost its roof, stained glass windows and pipe organ.

The Rev. Brian Lemcke said his congregation and the rest of Delmont was spared in an important way.

“God blessed us with no injuries to anyone present (in the church basement),” he told the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan. “Although both the parsonage and church buildings were virtually destroyed, along with many homes and other structures in town, we were blessed with no deaths and only minor injuries in Delmont.”

The tornado hit for just a few seconds, but its aftermath has remained for years. Last Sunday marked the fifth anniversary of the May 10, 2015 twister — with the date falling on a Sunday and Mother’s Day both then and now.

Lemcke has been pastor of the church since 2018 and has seen the tornado’s impact on his congregation.

“The lives of many people were changed that day, but God has brought us back together into a new and more useful facility,” he said, noting some items were used from the former church building.

TO THE RESCUE

The tornado’s anniversary brings intense memories not also only for residents but for first responders, volunteers and others who worked with cleanup and getting the town back on its feet.

Douglas County Emergency Manager Pat Harrington said the storm started between Wagner and Dante in Charles Mix County. The twister moved north-northeast into Douglas County before stopping four miles north of Delmont.

“Normally, you don’t have a tornado mid-morning,” he said. “A straight-line wind is one thing, but an actual tornado is fairly uncommon in the morning.”

The tornado traveled 17.3 miles and was 400 yards wide. The twister destroyed several farms, many miles of barbed wire fence and a considerable amount of debris — some papers were found in Letcher, 60 miles to the north.

“For what that town (Delmont) went through, it was a miracle that no one was killed or that there weren’t more injuries,” Harrington said.

An estimated 20 buildings were damaged in Delmont, including the town’s fire hall. Nine people were treated for injuries, with seven released from the hospital shortly afterward.

The 911 dispatch in Lake Andes put out a call for all available assistance, with firefighters and ambulance crews arriving from within a 60-mile radius, Harrington said. At the time, he reported assistance from 14 fire departments and six EMS units accounting for 140 firefighters and more than 35 EMTs.

The first responders conducted a door-to-door search of the town’s residences and marked houses with an “X” to show the structure had been checked and no one was there.

“We didn’t know what we were going to find as far as (injuries) or even deaths,” Harrington said.

After the injured residents were transported for treatment, the first responders met at the baseball field to develop a plan. The town had lost its electricity, water and phone service. In addition, officials cited the danger of leaking propane tanks.

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Delmont was evacuated that afternoon, with residents not allowed back into town until responders could guarantee their safety.

Then-Gov. Dennis Daugaard declared a state of emergency during his visit that afternoon. He met with then-Mayor Mae Gunnare, Fire Chief Elmer Goehring and Harrington for a briefing. The governor remained for a town hall meeting that evening.

Besides coordinating the first responders, Delmont officials faced hundreds — perhaps thousands — of non-residents descending on the community.

"Keeping everything organized and maintaining crowd control was a big deal. We had people coming to help with cleanup. We had people who came to see their mom and dad or other relatives, to see if everything was OK.," Harrington said.

"But we also had certain people who just wanted to come to Delmont and see it, to see what was going on. We literally had people from Sioux Falls driving around and trying to get into Delmont (to see damage)."

Authorities also sought to keep away looters. The South Dakota Highway Patrol and the Douglas County sheriff's office locked down the town, with only Delmont residents allowed inside the town's limits.

The Tripp-Delmont school in Tripp was set up as an emergency shelter for displaced Delmont residents, Harrington said. However, to his knowledge, only one person used the shelter because everyone else stayed with family and friends.

Fire protection remained a concern, not only because of no water supply but also because the new fire hall — which had yet to be dedicated — was destroyed and collapsed on the firetrucks and equipment inside.

Goehring made arrangements with other departments to provide round-the-clock fire protection for about a week. In addition, fire departments, along with the South Dakota Department of Forestry, loaned or gifted trucks and equipment for Delmont's usage.

In addition, the authorities sought a way of controlling the traffic and crowds which came to Delmont each day. Yankton County Emergency Manager provided and set up the Rapid Tag method of identification badges used to register and classify individuals as resident, volunteer, media or other role.

"You had to wear those badges, and it created an accountability piece," Harrington said. "Anyone who didn't have one of those badges was quickly escorted out of town."

In the days following the tornado, Delmont received a visit from Sen. John Thune and then-Rep. Kristi Noem of the South Dakota congressional delegation. The third member, Sen. Mike Rounds, couldn't attend personally but sent a staff member.

Daugaard returned in another capacity — as a private citizen picking up debris, without media coverage or other fanfare, Gunnare said at the time.

Gunnare and others worked with local, state and federal officials on receiving assistance, Harrington said. An emergency operations center was set up, and the National Guard and Red Cross played a major role, he added.

In addition, Delmont received state assistance in removing more than four tons of debris, which could have cost the city \$330,000 and beyond the residents' ability to pay, Gunnare said at the time. The city also received donations of trees, machinery and 1,200 pounds of grass seed, she said.

"Delmont had this little rubble site, which just wasn't feasible," Harrington said. "We had to work out something with the county to use some of their ground a couple of miles away."

In a manner of paying it forward, Gunnare received advice from the Wessington Springs mayor and finance officer about their town's recovery following its June 2014 tornado. After the Delmont tornado, Gunnare was invited to an international disaster conference in Minneapolis for a session on small communities' response to disasters.

MOVING FORWARD

After the tornado, Delmont residents revived the New Year's Eve Day parade and celebration, the firemen's sausage supper, the kuchen festival and the Twin Rivers Old Iron Association's harvest festival. Also, residents Elizabeth "Sam" Grosz and Barb Hoffman launched an effort to hang red wooden cardinals to brighten the town and symbolize new birth and hope.

In addition, Delmont city maintenance man Leo Holzbauer purchased the "Onion House," whose trademark domes had sustained damage, in order to keep the building in the community.

During a recent interview, Harrington fought back emotions upon recalling memories and seeing photos from the damage and recovery process.

"In all honestly, I look at weather a whole lot differently after this storm. Things can happen that you don't expect," he said. "Sometimes, it seems longer than five years (since the tornado), and then sometimes it seems like it's been just a couple of weeks. By far, it's the largest event that I've worked with as emergency manager. I wasn't there every day, but we were still dealing with it more than a year later. Recovery is a long process."

Goehring, who was named the 2018 South Dakota Firefighter of the Year, said the tornado will continue to impact Delmont.

"We didn't ask for this (tornado), and we didn't have choices. We just rolled with it," he said during a post-tornado interview. "This will stay with us for the rest of our lives."

After virus shutdown, kids, calves again greet zoo patrons

By **KELDA J.L. PHARRIS** Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — It's late morning on the last day of April, and a bison cow sets herself off from two others who have new calves tucked in close as they lazily graze and chew cud in the sun.

The standoffish cow, Annie, will be the third to give birth at the Wylie Park Zoo. It's a sure sign she's nearly ready when she distances herself from the others.

"She's part of the original Wylie stock herd. We have very sought-after animals because they're docile and have good genetics," said park supervisor Mark Grote of the bison herd.

Annie was born at the zoo in 2013. Cheyenne and Dixie, the other cows, are from an Onaka ranch, part of a program to keep a healthy genetic line. The calves on average are 65 pounds at birth, Grote told the Aberdeen American News. They get sold off as surplus around December each year.

The bull will be gradually introduced back to the herd after the last calf is born.

In the shop barn, a maternity ward has been set up for a handful of nanny Nigerian dwarf goats. Three sets of twins have already been born. The ones that are about a week or so older have been introduced to the petting zoo barn. They are only the size of small cats. They're a hobby breed and great for controlling noxious weeds. That's why they were introduced to the park about three years ago, Grote said. In all there are eight rams, six nannies and now six kids and counting in the herd.

At about 2 weeks old, they start drinking water on their own. Eventually their mothers will wean them. These kids are here to stay as Wylie grows its herd. Currently, the males are out in the geese pen keeping things mowed down and weeds at bay.

The whitetail, sika deer and elk will be bringing their next generation into the world in a couple weeks, Grote estimates. The park, empty of much of its normal spring foot traffic because of the COVID-19 pandemic, is peaceful, with the only sounds from wee bleats, chirping song birds and the rumble of an off-distance mower.

Myriad projects have been getting done at Wylie Park and the zoo during the health crisis. Maintenance and animal crews have been working as usual.

"We'll have the prettiest park," said Grote, only half-joking.

He sees the zoo as a great therapy for those feeling lonely, isolated and cooped up, so the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions might help folks out in that sense. On May 8, local residents were again able to roam where the bison, deer, llamas, elks and goats play.

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SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

11-17-32-33-46, Mega Ball: 25, Megaplier: 3

(eleven, seventeen, thirty-two, thirty-three, forty-six; Mega Ball: twenty-five; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$266 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$86 million

7 canine teams to conduct 4-day search for South Dakota girl

ROCKERVILLE, S.D. (AP) — Seven canine teams from Colorado, Montana and Wyoming will be in South Dakota for a four-day search for a missing 9-year-old girl.

Serenity Dennard was last seen in February of 2019 near the Black Hills Children's Home in Rockerville. Pennington County authorities said she ran away from the home on a cold and snowy day, in a mountainous and forested area of southwestern South Dakota.

The canine teams will be in South Dakota from Saturday through Tuesday looking for Serenity.

They will also search for 66-year-old Larry Genzlinger, of Howard. Genzlinger was last seen in October while elk hunting with his nephew near Sawmill Draw, Six Mile and Ditch Creek Roads.

Because of continued snow cover in the higher elevations, the search for Genzlinger stopped in October and resumed this month when the snow melted.

The search for Serenity has continued since she went missing, but changed to a recovery effort not long after her disappearance. Authorities said Serenity likely wouldn't have survived if she was outside in subzero temperatures.

South Dakota reports 1 more coronavirus death, 95 new cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials recorded one more COVID-19 death and 95 new confirmed coronavirus cases on Friday.

The new figures bring the state's death toll to 44 and its confirmed case count to 3,887. Health officials have warned the the actual number of infections is higher because many people may not display symptoms or have not sought testing if their symptoms are mild.

The death reported Friday was a woman over 80 who lived in Minnehaha County, the state's most populated area. About 80% of cases in the state have come from the county.

Several other areas experienced a rise in confirmed cases this week, with cities like Aberdeen and Rapid City showing small spikes in confirmed cases. Several Native American tribes also reported a handful of cases, which prompted strict lock downs on two reservations.

State epidemiologist Josh Clayton warned that infections will increase as people practice less social distancing.

Health officials also said 80 people were hospitalized with the disease as of Friday. About two-thirds of people with confirmed cases have recovered, while 1,269 still have active symptoms.

Engineers will test stability of interstate near sinkhole

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Transportation has hired an engineering company to study the safety of Interstate 90 near Black Hawk after a nearby sinkhole exposed an old mine.

The DOT is contracting with FMG Engineering of Rapid City to look for underground abnormalities. The study is expected to begin the last week of May.

A dozen families had to evacuate their homes after a massive sinkhole opened in a nearby subdivision. It exposed the fact the subdivision was built over the abandoned gypsum mine.

FMG Engineering will determine the stability of the interstate using an "electrical resistivity" method, said FMG project manager Alex Fisher.

"It's a method by which electric current is introduced into the ground and variations in the resistive property of the soil are measured in two dimensions," he said. What is measured "can indicate voids, either water-filled or air-filled voids."

Fisher said his team will insert metal pins in the interstate median and on both sides of the highway and exit ramp. They then insert low-voltage electricity into the pins and measure how they communicate with each other, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Electricity failing to communicate between pins means there is an underground void since electricity can't travel through air, Fisher said.

Coronavirus masks a boon for crooks who hide their faces

By **DON BABWIN and STEFANIE DAZIO** Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The way the FBI tells it, William Rosario Lopez put on a surgical mask and walked into the Connecticut convenience store looking to the world like a typical pandemic-era shopper as he picked up plastic wrap, fruit snacks and a few other items. Then, when the only other customer left, he went to the counter, pulled out a small pistol, pointed it at the clerk and demanded that he open the cash register.

The scene, the FBI contends in a court document, was repeated by Lopez in four other gas station stores over eight days before his April 9 arrest. It underscores a troubling new reality for law enforcement: Masks that have made criminals stand apart long before bandanna-wearing robbers knocked over stagecoaches in the Old West and ski-masked bandits held up banks now allow them to blend in like concerned accountants, nurses and store clerks trying to avoid a deadly virus.

"Criminals, they're smart and this is a perfect opportunity for them to conceal themselves and blend right in," said Richard Bell, police chief in the tiny Pennsylvania community of Frackville. He said he knows of seven recent armed robberies in the region where every suspect wore a mask.

Across the United States, masks have become more and more prevalent, first as a voluntary precaution and then as a requirement imposed by governmental agencies and businesses. And people with masks — as well as latex gloves — have found their way into more and more crime reports.

Just how many criminals are taking advantage of the pandemic to commit crimes is impossible to estimate, but law enforcement officials have no doubt the numbers are climbing. Reports are starting to pop up across the United States and in other parts of the world of crimes pulled off in no small part because so many of us are now wearing masks.

In March, two men walked into Aqueduct Racetrack in New York wearing the same kind of surgical masks as many racing fans there and, at gunpoint, robbed three workers of a quarter-million dollars they were moving from gaming machines to a safe. Other robberies involving suspects wearing surgical masks have occurred in North Carolina, and Washington, D.C., and elsewhere in recent weeks.

The problem isn't limited to robberies. In the troubled Cook County Jail in Chicago, the virus has led to at least nine deaths and sickened hundreds of inmates and correctional officers. Staffers must wear masks and inmates are issued a new one every day — a policy that helped one inmate escape on May 2.

Jahquez Scott, jailed on a gun charge and for violating his bond in a drug case, has tattoos of a small heart on one cheek and what looks like a blood-dripping scar on the other. But when he wore a mask, he posed as Quintin Henderson — who doesn't have tattoos on his face and was scheduled to be released, authorities said.

Scott made it out, though he was captured a week later.

In addition to rare jailbreaks, the prevalence of masks in society has created other problems for law enforcement. Before life in a pandemic, masked marauders had to free their faces immediately after leaving a bank or store to avoid suspicion once in the general public. But it came with the risk of being photographed and identified through omnipresent surveillance cameras and cellphones.

These days, they can keep the masks on and blend in easily with or without being "captured" in images.

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"The video is much less useful if we are unable to see a face," said Carlos Marquez, a detective division commander in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, in an email.

It's leaving law enforcement without a crucial crime-solving tool.

"Guys are like, 'OK, I have to wear a mask, the police are not going to stop me on the way to a crime and back from a crime wearing a mask,'" said Brendan Deenihan, chief of detectives for Chicago Police Department. "Now if you are going to commit a crime you can leave your house with a mask on and drive for an hour."

With everyone basically incognito, would-be witnesses might not notice someone acting differently, and that would make it harder to get a good description or identification of the suspect, said Eric Nuñez, chief of the Los Alamitos Police Department in Southern California and president of the California Police Chiefs Association.

It's less likely now that other shoppers would "stare at them, just making mental notes of what they look like," Nuñez said. "If they look like everybody else walking in, they may not do that at all."

It's a real problem for clerks and tellers, such as Tiffany Becker, who manages a Valero convenience store in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, where a number of stores in the area have been robbed by mask-wearing gunmen recently.

"Before I would have called the police because having a mask wasn't normal. Now it's normal," Becker said. "It's scary because you can't tell who is safe and who's not."

Even when investigators identify suspects, the protective gear makes putting cases together all that much more difficult. The same latex gloves more people are wearing to protect themselves from picking up the virus will mean fewer fingerprints at crime scenes.

"In the past if you did a search warrant and you found surgical masks, that would be highly indicative of something (suspicious)," said FBI Special Agent Lisa MacNamara, who investigated the string of robberies in Connecticut that led to the arrest of Rosario Lopez. "Now everybody has masks or latex gloves."

But the reverse can also be true.

MacNamara and her team's investigation was made easier when his alleged accomplice went into the stores "acting as a lookout or 'casing' robbery locations."

The accomplice hadn't worn a mask.

Dazio reported from Los Angeles.

Trump's emergency powers worry some senators, legal experts

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The day he declared the COVID-19 pandemic a national emergency, President Donald Trump made a cryptic offhand remark.

"I have the right to do a lot of things that people don't even know about," he said at the White House.

Trump wasn't just crowing. Dozens of statutory authorities become available to any president when national emergencies are declared. They are rarely used, but Trump last month stunned legal experts and others when he claimed — mistakenly — that he has "total" authority over governors in easing COVID-19 guidelines.

That prompted 10 senators to look into how sweeping Trump believes his emergency powers are.

They have asked to see this administration's Presidential Emergency Action Documents, or PEADs. The little-known, classified documents are essentially planning papers..

The documents don't give a president authority beyond what's in the Constitution. But they outline what powers a president believes that the Constitution gives him to deal with national emergencies. The senators think the documents would provide them a window into how this White House interprets presidential emergency powers.

"Somebody needs to look at these things," Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, said in a telephone interview. "This is a case where the president can declare an emergency and then say 'Because there's an emergency,

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I can do this, this and this.”

King, seven Democrats and one Republican sent a letter late last month to acting national intelligence director Richard Grenell asking to be briefed on any existing PEADs. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., wrote a similar letter to Attorney General William Barr and White House counsel Pat Cipollone.

“The concern is that there could be actions taken that would violate individual rights under the Constitution,” such as limiting due process, unreasonable search and seizure and holding individuals without cause, King said.

“I’m merely speculating. It may be that we get these documents and there’s nothing untoward in their checks and balances and everything is above board and reasonable.”

Joshua Geltzer, visiting professor of law at Georgetown University, said there is a push to take a look at these documents because there is rising distrust for the Trump administration’s legal interpretations in a way he hasn’t seen in his lifetime.

The most publicized example was Trump’s decision last year to declare the security situation along the U.S.-Mexico border a national emergency. That decision allowed him to take up to \$3.6 billion from military construction projects to finance wall construction beyond the miles that lawmakers had been willing to fund. Trump’s move skirted the authority of Congress, which by law has the power to spend money in the nation’s wallet.

“I worry about other things he might call an emergency,” Geltzer said. “I think around the election itself in November — that’s where there seems to be a lot of potential for mischief with this president.”

The lawmakers made their request just days after Trump made his startling claim on April 13 that he had the authority to force states to reopen for business amid the pandemic.

“When somebody’s the president of the United States, the authority is total,” Trump said, causing a backlash from some governors and legal experts. Trump later tweeted that while some people say it’s the governors, not the president’s decision, “Let it be fully understood that this is incorrect.”

Trump later backtracked on his claim of “total” authority and agreed that states have the upper hand in deciding when to end their lockdowns. But it was just the latest from a president who has been stretching existing statutory authorities “to, if not beyond, their breaking point,” said Stephen Vladeck, a law professor at the University of Texas.

Questions about Trump’s PEADs went unanswered by the Justice Department, National Security Council and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Elizabeth Goitein, co-director of a national security program at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, said PEADs have not been subject to congressional oversight for decades. She estimates that there are 50 to 60 of these documents, which include draft proclamations, executive orders and proposed legislation that could be swiftly introduced to “assert broad presidential authority” in national emergencies.

She said the Eisenhower administration had PEADs outlining how it might respond to a possible Soviet nuclear attack. According to the Brennan Center, PEADs issued up through the 1970s included detention of U.S. citizens suspected of being subversives, warrantless searches and seizures and the imposition of martial law.

“A Department of Justice memorandum from the Lyndon B. Johnson administration discusses a presidential emergency action document that would impose censorship on news sent abroad,” Goitein wrote in an op-ed with lawyer Andrew Boyle published last month in The New York Times.

“The memo notes that while no ‘express statutory authority’ exists for such a measure, ‘it can be argued that these actions would be legal in the aftermath of a devastating nuclear attack based on the president’s constitutional powers to preserve the national security.’”

Goitein said she especially worries about any orders having to do with military deployment, including martial law.

“You can imagine a situation where he (Trump) engineers a crisis that leads to domestic violence, which then becomes a pretext for martial law,” said Goitein, who insists she’s simply playing out worst-case sce-

narios. "What I worry about is the extreme interpretation under which he asserts the authority to declare martial law and take over all the functions of government, including running the elections."

She also wonders if there is a PEAD outlining steps the president could take to respond to a serious cyberattack. Would the president aggressively interpret telecommunications law and flip an internet kill switch, or restrain domestic internet traffic? she asks.

Bobby Chesney, associate dean at the University of Texas School of Law, said some fears might be exaggerated because while Trump makes off-the-cuff assertions of authority far beyond past presidents, he doesn't necessarily follow up with action.

Says Chesney: "His actions don't match the rhetoric always — or even often."

The Latest: Greece opens beaches with social distancing

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:

- Britain launches trial for dogs to sniff out humans with COVID-19.
- Italy easing travel restrictions in place since March.
- India surpasses China in coronavirus infection cases.

ATHENS, Greece — Greece reopened organized public beaches under strict social distancing measures during a heat wave.

City dwellers flocked to the beaches while temperatures reached 98 degrees, hoping for a refreshing swim less than a week after full lockdown measures were lifted.

Easing beach restrictions is seen as key to salvaging the tourism industry over the summer in a country expected to have the worst recession in the European Union as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Saturday, swimming and sun loungers were permitted but no group sports or food operations. The government issued strict beach guidelines, with businesses facing fines of up to 20,000 euros (\$21,650) and a three-month closure for violations.

The number of beachgoers cannot exceed 40 people per 1,000 sq. meters (10,764 sq. feet) and two beach umbrellas must be 1.5 meters (5 feet) apart. The distance between groups must be 4 meters (13 feet).

The government is considering opening bars and restaurants on May 25.

LONDON — Local officials and tourism boards are discouraging people from visiting popular tourist spots on the first weekend since lockdown rules for England were eased.

The County Councils Network, which represents 36 rural and coastal authorities in England, says its concerned "day trippers" from cities and towns could raise the infection rate in counties and overwhelm parks and beaches.

Spokesman Julian German says, "Our coastal and rural areas will be there when this is over."

The British government relaxed lockdown rules on Wednesday to allow people in England to spend more time outdoors. They can play golf and tennis, sunbathe, go fishing and have a picnic. Meeting one other person is allowed with social distancing.

Rules for the rest of Britain — Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — haven't been eased.

LONDON — British researchers are launching a trial to see whether dogs can use their noses to detect whether humans have COVID-19 before they show symptoms.

Britain's health department said Saturday that disease control experts are looking into whether dogs which have been trained to sniff out certain cancers and malaria can potentially be used as a "non-invasive, early warning measure" to identify the coronavirus.

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Researchers at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and Durham University are collaborating with the charity Medical Detection Dogs. The trial is getting 500,000 pounds (\$600,000) of British government funding.

Six dogs, including Labradors and Cocker Spaniels, have started basic training for the trial. In the initial phase, researchers plan to gather odor samples from both people infected with the virus and those who aren't.

The health department says the dogs will then undergo thorough training using the samples and will only be deployed if backed by strong scientific evidence.

MILAN — Dozens of restaurant owners have protested outside of Milan's main train station against the new rules for reopening as of Monday.

They say the rules remain unclear and that the entire sector — including suppliers and food producers — is suffering.

They protested in front of signs reading: "I won't open today to close tomorrow," and calling for an abolition to taxes and more concrete help.

The government early Saturday posted rules for restaurants to reopen, including a distance of at least one-meter (three feet) between patrons, a requirement to take reservations and keep records for at least two weeks and a recommendation to use disposable or electronic menus that can be read on personal devices. It also recommends but does not require taking temperatures of diners as they arrive.

In Italy's financial capital, 3,400 restaurants plan to open Monday along with 4,800 bars, 2,900 hairdressers, 2,200 clothing stores and 700 shoe shops.

KARACHI, Pakistan — The first Pakistani COVID-19 patient who was treated at a hospital with blood donated from a man who survived the disease has fully recovered.

The patient was treated at a hospital in the country's southern Sindh province.

Several COVID-19 patients are currently undergoing the plasma therapy after authorities allowed 350 patients to undergo such a clinical trial across the country.

A Pakistani doctor who treated the patient has urged those who defeated coronavirus to donate blood for the treatment that uses plasma from people who have recovered to help seriously ill patients.

The development comes as Pakistan reported 31 more deaths from coronavirus, raising virus-related fatalities to 834.

Pakistan has 38,799 confirmed cases and the increase in infections also coincides with a growing number of daily tests being carried out in this country of 220 million.

ROME — The Italian government is easing travel restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic, allowing people to move freely inside the region where they live as of Monday, and between regions starting June 3.

The government decree announced early Saturday also permits international travel to and from Italy from June 3.

Italy imposed nationwide lockdown rules in early March after it became the first country outside Asia with a major outbreak of coronavirus. More than 31,000 people have died, leaving Italy with the highest death toll after the United States and Britain. But the government led by Premier Giuseppe Conte has gradually reopened the country as the rates of infections and deaths have fallen.

Social distancing rules are being implemented in the sectors of the economy that have reopened, including factories and some businesses. Schools remain closed and crowds are not permitted, though people will be allowed to attend Mass in churches with some restrictions starting next week.

NEW DELHI — India's coronavirus infection cases have surpassed China's with the health ministry on Saturday reporting the spike to 85,940 cases with 2,752 deaths.

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In total, China has reported 4,633 deaths among 82,933 cases since the virus was first detected late last year in the central city of Wuhan.

The worst hit Indian states are Maharashtra with 29,100 cases, Tamil Nadu 10,108, Gujarat 9,931 and New Delhi 8,895.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is due to announce this weekend a decision whether to extend the 54-day-old lockdown. Early this month, it started gradually easing the restrictions to resume economic activity by allowing neighborhood shops to reopen and manufacturing and farming to resume. It also has resumed a limited train service across the country to help stranded migrant workers, students and tourists.

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

Fist bumps and masks: Professional soccer returns in Germany

By CIARÁN FAHEY AP Sports Writer

BERLIN (AP) — Professional soccer resumed in Germany after a two-month break with four games in the second division on Saturday taking place behind closed doors.

South Korea midfielder Lee Jae-sung scored the first goal in the division to give Holstein Kiel the lead at Jahn Regensburg. He celebrated by giving teammates fist bumps.

The games were the first since soccer was put on hold March 13 due to the coronavirus pandemic, and they were being played in empty stadiums amid strict hygiene measures.

Goal celebrations in other games were also marked by fist bumps and elbow-to-elbow touching. Players had been warned to keep their emotions in check, and to desist from spitting, handshakes and hugging.

All players and team staff who didn't start games wore masks. Substitutes took their positions in the stands, rather than beside the fields as customary. Balls and seats were disinfected, and players were handed masks as they left the field at half time.

The Bundesliga was due to resume later Saturday, also without fans, with the Ruhr derby between Borussia Dortmund and Schalke the highlight.

The game's authorities were keen to restart the country's top two divisions with several clubs, including Schalke, facing severe financial difficulties because of the pandemic-enforced suspension in play.

Numerous polls showed a growing majority in Germany was against the resumption of the leagues. Fans are also critical of games without supporters present.

"Soccer without fans is nothing," read a joint statement from several Bayern Munich fan groups after the league decided on May 7 to resume.

Cologne fans accused authorities Saturday of prioritizing money over people's health. There was criticism too from players.

Karlsruher SC midfielder Marc Lorenz, a substitute in the second division game against Darmstadt on Saturday, told the Badische Neueste Nachrichten newspaper that the league hadn't considered the health of the players "at all" in its rush to get back. He also warned of fatigue leading to serious injuries.

Teams in both divisions are allowed five substitutions instead of the usual three to help cope after two months without play.

Players and staff have been subjected to regular testing for COVID-19. There were three cases found at Cologne, while second-division Dynamo Dresden was ordered into 14 days of quarantine after two more cases brought its total to three last Saturday. Dresden's game against Hannover on Sunday was called off, and the team cannot train during the quarantine period.

Augsburg coach Heiko Herrlich was due to make his debut in charge against Wolfsburg but will miss the game after leaving the team hotel in strict quarantine conditions to buy toiletries. He will only return after twice testing negative for the virus.

Bayern Munich visits Union Berlin on Sunday.

More AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/Soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Ciarán Fahey on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/cfaheyAP>

Pizzas (and haircuts) back on the menu, but with warnings

By COLLEEN BARRY, DENNIS PASSA and PABLO GORONDI Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Venice geared up to receive tourists, Milan's pizzerias prepared to open and Australians headed out to eat for the first time in weeks Saturday, but the reopening of restaurants, pubs and cafes came with a warning: Don't overdo it.

Public health experts are urging caution as governments ease restrictions on eateries, shops and parks in many countries and roll out measures to restart dormant factories. The coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 300,000 people, has slowed in many places but could pick up again if precautions aren't taken or officials move too quickly to get people back to work.

"The message is, yes, appreciate all the efforts, appreciate the opportunity to release some of those measures, but let's not have a party, let's not go to town," said Tony Bartone, president of the Australian Medical Association.

Most restaurants are limited to 10 customers at a time, and Bartone said people must maintain social distance, follow coughing etiquette, wash their hands regularly and stay away from others if they are ill.

In New Zealand, even Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and her fiance, Clarke Gayford, were initially turned away for Saturday brunch by a restaurant in the capital city, Wellington, because it was too full under coronavirus guidelines.

Gayford took responsibility, saying he hadn't made reservations. There was a happy ending, as a spot freed up and staff chased down the street to call the couple back.

"A+ service," Gayford tweeted.

Italy's tourism industry is focused firmly on June 3, when both regional and international borders re-open, allowing the first prospect of tourists since Europe's first lockdown went into place in early March. In tourist-reliant Venice, occupancy of the city's 50,000 hotel beds has hovered around zero ever since.

"Venice lives on tourism, period," said Claudio Scarpa, head of the city's hotel association. "All the economic structures that operate in the city, including the port, are tied to tourism."

While Venice hopes for some kind of restart, it may have to wait a while yet. Germany — its border about a four-hour drive from Venice — is instructing citizens not to travel abroad for tourism until at least June 15.

France was also being cautious, calling for a coordinated European effort on opening. At the same time, it could make decisions "that protect the French" regarding countries "where the virus is still active," Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said Saturday.

In Milan, Italy's financial capital, 3,400 restaurants plan to open Monday, along with 4,800 bars, 2,900 hairdressers, 2,200 clothing stores and 700 shoe shops.

"After a long period at home, we will all want to go out and have a good coffee in a bar, eat a pizza in a pizzeria, buy a pair of jeans, or go to the hairdressers," Milan Mayor Giuseppe Sala said in a Facebook video Saturday.

Many restaurant owners, however, complained that the new rules for reopening were unclear and that the entire sector — including suppliers and food producers — was suffering. Dozens protested Saturday outside Milan's main train station in front of signs reading: "I won't open today to close tomorrow," and calling for an abolition of taxes and more concrete help.

In Britain, officials and tourism boards were discouraging people from visiting popular tourist spots — like beaches or country parks — on the first weekend since lockdown rules were eased in England. Rules remain stricter in other parts of the U.K. and English daytrippers have been warned against crossing into Scotland or Wales.

In the United States, an Associated Press analysis found that 41 of the nation's 50 states fall short of

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the COVID-19 testing levels that experts say are necessary to avoid another wave of outbreaks, even as some of those states move aggressively to allow businesses to reopen.

Rapid, widespread testing is considered essential to tracking and containing the coronavirus. The AP analysis is based on metrics developed by Harvard University's Global Health Institute.

Harvard researchers have calculated that the U.S. needs to test at least 900,000 people daily to reopen the economy safely, nearly three times the current tally of about 360,000, according to figures compiled by the COVID Tracking Project website.

Among the states falling short are Texas and Georgia, which have reopened shopping malls, barbershops and other businesses, although New York state is moving more cautiously.

"I really do feel there are dangers here to opening up without enough tests, but I don't feel it's a uniform danger everywhere in the country," said Dr. Ashish Jha, director of Harvard's Global Health Institute.

In South Korea, which has one of the highest levels of testing, a Health Ministry spokesman said Saturday that the country may have dodged a major outbreak after finding 162 cases linked to clubgoers in Seoul, the densely populated capital.

Son Young-rae said 46,000 people have been tested in the club-related outbreak.

India overtook China in the number of confirmed infections as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is due to announce this weekend a decision whether to extend the 54-day-old lockdown. India counted 85,940 infections and 2,752 deaths compared to China's 82,941 confirmed case and 4,633 fatalities.

China is shortening its annual legislative session, which begins late next week in Beijing, as small clusters of cases pop up elsewhere in the country. The spread of the disease has largely stopped in the country where the pandemic started, but Jilin province in the northeast has reported 28 cases over nine days, the latest two on Friday.

In Mexico, the number of new confirmed cases hit a new daily high Friday, even as the government clarified guidelines for the construction, mining and automotive industries to start returning to work Monday.

The country recorded more than 2,000 cases for the second straight day, suggesting its outbreak has yet to peak. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, straddling the issue, said Friday that "we have to be more careful, not relax the discipline."

Meanwhile, efforts to find effective testing methods for the new coronavirus now include man's best friend. British researchers are launching a trial to see whether dogs can use their noses to detect whether humans have COVID-19 before they show symptoms.

Britain's health department said that disease control experts are looking into whether dogs, which have been trained to sniff out certain cancers and malaria, can be potentially be used as a "non-invasive, early warning measure" to identify the coronavirus.

Six dogs, including labradors and cocker spaniels, have started basic training for the trial.

Passa reported from Brisbane, Australia, and Gorondi from Budapest, Hungary. Associated Press journalists from around the world contributed to this story.

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

Democrats push new \$3T coronavirus relief bill through House

By ANDREW TAYLOR and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats have powered a massive \$3 trillion coronavirus relief bill through the House, an election-year measure designed to brace a U.S. economy in free fall and a health care system struggling to contain a pandemic still pummeling the country.

Friday's 208-199 vote, with all but one Republican opposed, advances what boils down to a campaign-season display of Democratic economic and health-care priorities. It has no chance of becoming law as written, but will likely spark difficult negotiations with the White House and Senate Republicans. Any

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product would probably be the last major COVID-19 response bill before November's presidential and congressional elections.

The enormous Democratic measure would cost more than the prior four coronavirus bills combined. It would deliver almost \$1 trillion for state and local governments, another round of \$1,200 direct payments to individuals and help for the unemployed, renters and homeowners, college debt holders and the struggling Postal Service.

"Not to act now is not only irresponsible in a humanitarian way, it is irresponsible because it's only going to cost more," warned House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. "More in terms of lives, livelihood, cost to the budget, cost to our democracy."

Republicans mocked the bill as a bloated Democratic wish-list that was dead on arrival in the GOP-led Senate and, for good measure, faced a White House veto threat. Party leaders say they want to assess how \$3 trillion approved earlier is working and see if some states' partial business reopenings would spark an economic revival that would ease the need for more safety net programs.

Republicans are also sorting through internal divisions and awaiting stronger signals from President Donald Trump about what he will support.

"Phase Four is going to happen," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office, using Washington insider-speak for the measure. "But it's going to happen in a much better way for the American people."

Trump and top Republicans like Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., are insisting the next measure should protect reopening businesses from liability lawsuits. The president is also demanding a cut to payroll taxes, but GOP leaders are not yet onboard.

The daylong debate painted a Capitol scene that's become common in the era of coronavirus, even as it remains disconcerting. The sparsely populated House floor was dotted with lawmakers and aides wearing protective masks and even gloves, though some Republicans lacked them.

Many members looked shaggier and sported beards they had not worn weeks ago. Roll call votes lasted over an hour each because lawmakers were voting in small groups to limit crowding.

To enhance the bill's political impact, Democrats named their measure "The Heroes Act" for the payments it would provide front-line emergency workers. With more than 86,000 Americans dead, 1.4 million confirmed infections and 36 million filing unemployment claims in a frozen economy, Democrats saw GOP opposition as an easy campaign-season target.

"Are you kidding me?" said Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, of Republican assertions that it was time to stop spending more money. "Where do you guys live? Food lines at our food banks around the block? In the United States of America?"

Republicans saw the bill as a Democratic political blunder. They said overly generous unemployment benefits discouraged people from returning to work, and attacked language helping immigrants in the U.S. illegally get federal benefits. They also singled out provisions helping states set up voting by mail and easing the marijuana industry's access to banks.

"It may help the cannabis industry, but it won't help Main Street," said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

Pelosi pushed the measure through after overcoming party divisions aggravated by election pressures. Some moderate Democrats opposed the package for its price tag and politically fraught provisions like assisting marijuana businesses. A few progressive Democrats were upset because it did not do more, such as guaranteeing workers' salaries and bolstering their health insurance coverage.

Fourteen Democrats voted against the measure. Nearly all are centrists and number among the party's most vulnerable lawmakers in November's elections: freshmen from districts Trump won in 2016.

Among them was Rep. Cindy Axne of Iowa, who labeled the measure "bloated." Another, Rep. Abigail Spanberger of Virginia, tweeted, "This bill strays far beyond delivering relief or responding to an urgent crisis, & it has no chance at becoming law."

Republicans were already planning to use the day's votes against other moderate Democrats who backed Friday's legislation and face competitive reelection races.

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Clearly, the bipartisan consensus that produced four previous coronavirus bills was crumbling quickly. Polls show GOP voters are satisfied with the federal response and aren't agitating for more. Self-branded deficit hawks are citing the massive increase in the spiraling \$25 trillion national debt.

Some congressional aides said the Democratic bill's real price tag could breach \$3.5 trillion. A partial estimate of tax provisions alone revealed eye-popping costs: \$412 billion to renew \$1,200 cash payments to individuals, more than \$100 billion to pay health insurance premiums for the unemployed and \$164 billion to make an "employee retention" tax credit for businesses more generous.

Republicans leaders faced disunity between conservatives who feel enough has been done and pragmatists who back rescuing the Postal Service from looming insolvency and delivering cash to revenue-starved state and local governments. The huge price tag and a lack of consultation with Republicans by Pelosi cemented GOP opposition.

"This bill is nothing more than the Democratic policy agenda masquerading as a response to the coronavirus crisis," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla. He said the bill is "going nowhere, and is going nowhere fast."

Liberal Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., also opposed the bill. She told reporters that if constituents ask her if the bill would put money in their pockets or preserve their health care, "I can't tell them yes."

The lone Republican backing the legislation was Rep. Peter King of New York, who is retiring.

Medics around the world face hostility over virus stigma

By **SAMY MAGDY** and **EMILY SCHMALL** Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Dr. Dina Abdel-Salam watched in terror last month as scores of strangers gathered under the balcony of her aunt's empty apartment in the Egyptian city of Ismailia, where she'd temporarily sheltered after leaving her elderly parents at home to protect them from exposure to the coronavirus.

The crowd called out her name, hurling threats until she dialed the police for help.

"You have moved here to make us sick," someone shouted.

Abdel-Salam's ordeal is just one of many in a wave of assaults on doctors, illustrating how public fear and rage can turn against the very people risking their lives to save patients in the pandemic.

While many cities across the world erupt at sundown with collective cheers to thank front-line workers treating COVID-19 patients, in Egypt, India, the Philippines, Mexico and elsewhere, some doctors and nurses have come under attack, intimidated and treated like pariahs because of their work.

The pandemic, especially in places with limited healthcare infrastructure, has already subjected doctors to hardships. But medical workers, seen as possible sources of contagion, face another staggering challenge in these countries: the stigma associated with the illness.

"Now more than ever, we need to recognize the importance of investing in our health workforce and take concrete actions that guarantee their well-being and safety," Ahmed al-Mandhari, the World Health Organization's regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, said in a virtual news conference earlier this week.

But in many places, that's a difficult task as mistrust, fear and misinformation can have devastating effects. Decades of poor education and scant government services in some places have created deep misgivings about the medical profession.

In central India, a group of five health workers, dressed in full protective suits, entered a neighborhood to quarantine contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 patient when a mob descended, slinging stones and screaming insults.

"Some people felt that the doctors and nurses will come and take their blood," said Laxmi Narayan Sharma, the health union president in Madhya Pradesh, in central India.

In the southern Indian city of Chennai, another stone-throwing mob broke up a funeral for Simon Hercules, a neurologist who died from COVID-19, pelting the ambulance carrying his remains and forcing his family and friends to run for their lives.

In Afghanistan, conspiracy theories undermine the credibility of medical professionals. Nearly 19 years after the U.S.-led coalition defeated the Taliban, many blame Western nations for the country's deteriora-

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tion. One commonly shared conspiracy theory is that the virus was allegedly manufactured by the U.S. and China to reduce the world population, said Sayed Massi Noori, a doctor at one of two Kabul hospitals testing for coronavirus.

Last week, several physicians at the emergency unit of the Afghan Japan Hospital, where Noori works, were mobbed by 15 family members of a patient who died of the virus. The doctors had their noses bloodied.

"The relatives believe it is the doctors who killed their family members," Noori said.

The coronavirus hotline in Ouagadougou, the capital of war-torn Burkina Faso, fields calls about persistent coughs and headaches. But it has also gotten death threats.

"They call and say that after they're finished killing the soldiers in the north, they're going to come and kill everyone here," said Red Cross volunteer Emmanuel Drabo.

Health workers across the Philippines have been attacked and targeted more than 100 times since mid-March, resulting in 39 arrests, police Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar told The Associated Press. In one attack, five men stopped a nurse heading to work in the Sultan Kudarat province in late March, throwing liquid bleach into his face and burning his eyes.

Tough-talking President Rodrigo Duterte, long censured for his violent approach to curbing crime, responded: "I told the police, maybe it's illegal but I'll answer for it. Pour it back on the attackers of doctors and nurses."

In Guadalajara, Mexico's second-largest city, doctors and nurses say just venturing out in scrubs invites danger. One city hospital instructed its workers to shed their uniforms when they clock out, and the government has assigned National Guard troops to public hospitals.

Similar fears have sparked arrests in Sudan. In Omdurman, across the Nile River from the capital, Khartoum, a riot erupted at a hospital when rumor spread it would take COVID-19 patients. Police arrested several people who tried to attack the building, said hospital director Babaker Youssef.

In Egypt, even hospital administrators have faced public anger.

Ahmed Abbas, the vice president of a government hospital in Egypt's Nile Delta city of Zagazig, was wearing scrubs when he was jostled and cursed while waiting in line at an ATM. The head of Egypt's Doctors' Union, Ihab el-Taher, says such incidents are "limited" but still disheartening.

On top of a global shortage of respirators, virus testing, and protective equipment, increased public hostility has deprived some medical professionals of basic needs — such as housing and transportation.

In India's capital, New Delhi, doctors and first responders reported being evicted by their landlords. A nurse in Ethiopia said taxis refuse to pick up workers coming out of the nation's main hospital dedicated to coronavirus patients.

As the wave of attacks spurs government efforts to better support medical personnel and dispel rumors, many doctors draw optimism from growing public awareness.

After police dispersed the mob beneath her balcony in Ismailia, some people came back to apologize, Abdel-Salam said. In India, two of the doctors pelted with stones in Madhya Pradesh were cheered when they returned with gifts of saplings a day later, after health officials had explained the purpose of their visit.

Yet painful memories linger.

After the aborted burial of Dr. Hercules in southern India, one of his colleagues had to pick shards of glass off his shrouded body. Another colleague, Pradeep Kumar, gathered two hospital workers and returned under the cover of night to cover the dug-out grave with dirt.

"We had to literally use our hands," Kumar said. "This man deserved something better than that."

Schmall reported from New Delhi. Associated Press writers Chonchui Ngashangva in New Delhi; Jim Gomez in Manila, Philippines; Tameem Akhgar in Kabul, Afghanistan; Sam Mednick in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and Elias Meseret in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, contributed.

Virus lockdown gives Venice a shot at reimagining tourism

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — In Venice, a city famous for being visited by too many and home to too few, children's play now fills neighborhood squares, fishermen sell their catch to home cooks, and water buses convey masked and gloved commuters to businesses preparing to reopen.

At the same time, the famed lacquered black gondolas remain moored to the quay; hotel rooms are empty, museum doors sealed; and St. Mark's Square — normally teeming in any season — is traversed at any given moment by just a handful of souls after tourists abandoned the city in late February.

For years, Venice has faced an almost existential crisis, as the unbridled success of its tourism industry threatened to ruin the things that have drawn visitors for centuries. Now the coronavirus pandemic has dammed off the tide of tourists and hobbled the city's economy.

Residents hope the crisis has also provided an opportunity to reimagine one of the world's most fragile cities, creating a more sustainable tourism industry and attracting more full-time residents.

The pandemic — following on the heels of a series of exceptional floods in November that dealt a first economic blow — ground to a halt Italy's most-visited city, stanching the flow of 3 billion euros (\$3.2 billion) in annual tourism-related revenue, the vast majority of the city's intake. Promised government assistance has been predictably slow to arrive.

The city that has inspired painters like Canaletto and Turner is now a blank canvas.

"This allows us to rethink life in the historic center," said Mayor Luigi Brugnaro, speaking in the empty piazza in front of St. Mark's Basilica this week.

The population of the historic center has shrunk to some 53,000, down by one-third from a generation ago. To help repopulate the center, Brugnaro favors a proposal from the city's Ca' Foscari university to rent to students apartments that had been removed from housing stock as tourist rentals. The mayor imagines a dynamic he witnessed in Boston, where those who come to study fall in love with the city and stay.

Brugnaro also wants to create a center to study climate change, given the city's vulnerability to flooding, that could attract scientists who would become residents. He imagines triggering a sort of Renaissance that would bring other foreign residents — creatives — who for centuries were the city's lifeblood.

He would like to resize the hit-and-run mass tourism on which the economy depends.

"Venice is a slow city," Brugnaro said. "The slowness of Venice is the beauty of Venice."

Visions for Venice's future include calls to offer tax breaks to bring traditional manufacturing back to the historic center. Civic groups have suggested incentives to restore traditional ways of Venetian life, like the standing rowboats used for centuries by residents but that struggle to compete with motorized boats. There is hope that tourist trap shops that disappeared after the shutdown will be replaced with more sustainable businesses.

Bevilacqua — the maker of luxury textiles used by fashion houses such as Dior, Valentino and Dolce&Gabbana — is the only manufacturer in operation on the Grand Canal.

"To relaunch, Venice must return to its past," said Rodolfo Bevilacqua. "You cannot, and I will use a heavy term, profane it daily. That is, people who don't clean up after themselves."

While the pandemic has offered a glimpse at a cleaner, slower Venice, already there are signs of how hard it will be to maintain that, let alone implement grander plans. Jane da Mosto, executive director of the NGO We Are Here Venice, notes that bars that have begun to reopen are serving with disposable plates and cutlery — not more sustainable alternatives.

Debates over how to manage tourism have always been heated in Venice and are especially fraught now. Venice's controversial plan to impose a tax on day-trippers has been put aside — and many object that any such system would give the city even more of a theme park air.

The mayor and tourism officials estimate it will be at least a year until tourists — who have numbered 30 million a year — return in any significant numbers. While many are reveling in the drop in noise pollution and improved air quality, a year without tourists also means many jobs will be wiped out.

"It will be a fight for survival," said Claudio Scarpa, the head of the Venetian hotel association.

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The docking of cruise ships is halted for this year. Gondoliers aren't being permitted to glide through the canals until June 1, and many are struggling, having received just one payment of 600 euros from the government.

Their future even after that date remains uncertain. The gondolier's position at the rear of the boat allows enough distance to spare them the mask requirement. But Andrea Balbi, the head of the association representing the city's 433 gondoliers, said that the rules so far won't permit them to help tourists on and off the rocky boats. The extended hand is not just a courtesy, Balbi said, but a condition of insurance coverage.

Arrigo Cipriani, the owner of Harry's Bar, said he is not even thinking about opening the wood-paneled, canal-side bar made famous by Ernest Hemingway until health restrictions are relaxed. His bar offers some of the best people-watching in Venice over peachy Bellini cocktails — but it is just 9½ meters by 4 meters (30 feet by 13 feet), which under current rules would allow only a fraction of the usual clientele.

"Hospitality means freedom. It means an absence of imposition," Cipriani said — and doesn't happen over a mask.

Nearby, the Hotel Saturnia is spacing out its bar tables to reopen next Monday. "We want to send a positive message," said owner Gianni Serandrei.

Brugnarò, the mayor, is hoping to send a signal of recovery by staging the popular Redeemer's festival in July. The annual event celebrates the end of the plague in 1577 — one of the most disastrous episodes in Venetian history — with a regatta and a spectacular fireworks display.

"It will be something out of this world to see," he said, "watching from a boat in St. Mark's Basin."

The Latest: India surpasses China in coronavirus cases

By The Associated Press

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:

- India surpasses China in coronavirus infection cases.
- Democrats power massive \$3 trillion response bill through House.
- Canada's largest airline laying off at least 20,000 because of pandemic.
- Trump hopeful to have virus vaccine on market by end of year or shortly after.

NEW DELHI — India's coronavirus infection cases have surpassed China's with the health ministry on Saturday reporting the spike to 85,940 cases with 2,752 deaths.

In total, China has reported 4,633 deaths among 82,933 cases since the virus was first detected late last year in the central city of Wuhan.

The worst hit Indian states are Maharashtra with 29,100 cases, Tamil Nadu 10,108, Gujarat 9,931 and New Delhi 8,895.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is due to announce this weekend a decision whether to extend the 54-day-old lockdown. Early this month, it started gradually easing the restrictions to resume economic activity by allowing neighborhood shops to reopen and manufacturing and farming to resume. It also has resumed a limited train service across the country to help stranded migrant workers, students and tourists.

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean officials say they so far confirmed 162 coronavirus cases linked to club goers in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, but also expressed cautious hope that infections are beginning to wane.

Health Ministry official Son Young-rae on Saturday said the country may have ducked a major surge in transmissions in a region where half of its 51 million people live, pointing out that the daily increase in

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infections have been within 30 over the past days despite a jump in tests.

Son said 46,000 have so far been tested after health workers earlier this month detected a slew of infections linked to clubs and other nightspots in Seoul's Itaewon entertainment district.

"It's notable there were no new transmissions in churches, call centers and gyms where virus carriers went to," Son said.

He said this was a sign that facilities and businesses are properly practicing hygiene and enforcing distance between people, which he said would be crucial as the country explores a more sustainable form of social distancing.

Authorities had expanded what they call "anonymous testing," which allows people to provide only their phone numbers and not their names for COVID-19 tests. Some South Korean media have described the Itaewon clubs linked to infections as catering to sexual minorities, which raised concern of discouraging sick people from coming forward in fear of homophobic backlash.

South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Saturday reported 19 new cases of the coronavirus, but 10 were linked to passengers arriving from abroad.

WASHINGTON — Democrats have powered a massive \$3 trillion coronavirus response bill through the House, over Republican opposition.

The 1,815-page measure is aimed at propping up a U.S. economy in freefall and a health care system overwhelmed by a pandemic that's still ravaging the country. It's also an election-year statement of priorities by Democrats.

The measure has no chance of passing the GOP-controlled Senate and has already drawn a White House veto threat. Passage sets up difficult negotiation with the White House and Senate Republicans over what's likely to be the last major COVID-19 response bill before November's presidential and congressional elections.

CANBERRA, Australia — Restrictions put in place to stop the coronavirus from spreading across Australia have eased, but the public was warned to take their new-found freedoms carefully in order to prevent a second wave of the pandemic.

States and territories have begun the first stage of a three-stage process to lift restrictions on outdoor and indoor gatherings and business operations. Australians will get to sit in pubs, cafes and restaurants for the first time in weeks after isolation and social distancing measures kept the lid on infections and COVID-19 deaths.

But Australian Medical Association president Tony Bartone urged people to remain vigilant because the virus is still present in the community and could flare up as hot spots or small outbreaks.

"If we do the wrong things, we risk undoing all the gains that we've made," Bartone said. "So, the message is, yes, appreciate all the efforts, appreciate the opportunity to release some of those measures, but let's not have a party, let's not go to town."

He said people must still maintain social distancing, cough etiquette, washing hands regularly and staying away from others if they are not well.

"Those messages are really the backbone as we progressively lift those restrictions," he said.

The number of active cases breached 7,000 on Friday, but the death toll from the pandemic remains at 98, extremely low by international standards.

JUNEAU, Alaska -- An Alaska lawmaker on Friday defended asking whether stickers that individuals may be asked to wear as part of a Capitol coronavirus screening process will be "available as a yellow Star of David."

Republican Rep. Ben Carpenter of Nikiski said he was serious in making the comment in an email chain with other legislators. He was responding to proposed protocols aimed at guarding against the virus as lawmakers prepare to reconvene Monday. The protocols suggest stickers be worn to confirm someone at the Capitol had been screened.

"The point is, tying it to the Star of David shows, who amongst the human population has lost their

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liberties more than the Jewish people?" he said in an interview. "And if there were more people standing up for the loss of liberties prior to World War II, maybe we wouldn't have had the Holocaust.

"This is about the loss of liberties within our people, and we're just turning a blind eye to it," he said, adding that virus fears are "causing us to have policies that don't make any sense."

In his email, Carpenter asked about the screening process. "If my sticker falls off, do I get a new one or do I get a public shaming too? Are the stickers available as a yellow Star of David?"

Rep. Grier Hopkins, a Fairbanks Democrat, responded to Carpenter's email by calling the remark "disgusting. Keep your Holocaust jokes to yourself."

The state has reported 388 cases of COVID-19 involving Alaska residents and eight cases involving non-residents. There have been 10 deaths related to COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, according to the state health department.

HONOLULU — A tourist from New York who allegedly posted photos on Instagram of himself at the beach has been arrested for violating Hawaii's traveler quarantine.

The state says 23-year-old Tarique Peters of the Bronx arrived in Honolulu on Monday. People who saw his social media posts reported him to authorities. He was arrested Friday. He couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

Hawaii mandated a 14-day quarantine on travelers arriving to the islands in an attempt to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Authorities have been cracking down on travelers allegedly defying the quarantine.

TORONTO — Canada's largest airline plans to lay off at least 20,000 employees because of the pandemic. Air Canada says the layoffs will impact more than half of the company's 38,000 employees. The airline says COVID-19 has forced it to reduce its schedule by 95% and it doesn't expect normal traffic to return anytime soon.

The carrier says its workforce will be reduced by 50% to 60%. The move is effective June 7.

Air Canada announced in March it would lay off nearly half of its workforce under a cost reduction scheme. It proceeded to rehire some 16,500 laid-off flight attendants, mechanics and customer service agents in April under after the Canadian government announced a wage subsidy plan, but has not committed to maintain the program past June 6.

LOS ANGELES -- A federal judge has ordered Los Angeles city and county to move thousands of homeless people who are living near freeways, saying their health is at risk from pollution and the coronavirus.

Judge David O. Carter issued a preliminary injunction Friday requiring relocation of an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 people camping near freeway ramps and under overpasses and bridges. The order would take effect on May 22.

Carter says those people are at risk from the coronavirus, lead and other pollutants, and from accidents and earthquakes.

DENVER — A man suspected of killing a woman in Denver was released from prison three weeks before the slaying due to concerns over the coronavirus.

The Denver Post reports Cornelius Haney was released April 15 under powers granted to the Colorado Department of Corrections by Gov. Jared Polis. The governor's order aims to speed up certain releases from the prison system to lower the population amid the pandemic. Police arrested Haney on Monday in the fatal shooting of a 21-year-old woman in an alley in east Denver on May 9.

Haney had a mandatory release date of Aug. 22. States across the country are trying to reduce their prison populations to prevent outbreaks of the virus.

GAINESVILLE, Ga. — Community leaders say an effort to tamp down the spread of COVID-19 is succeeding in northeast Georgia, the site of a recent outbreak that threatened to level the state's huge poultry

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processing industry.

Republican Gov. Brian Kemp visited Gainesville on Friday to highlight the effort, with local leaders saying they believed community outreach and infection-control efforts had begun to control the disease.

Norma Hernandez of the Northeast Georgia Latino Chamber of Commerce says that over the past two weeks, community leaders have worked to present a message from people that Spanish speakers will trust.

As poultry industry officials proudly noted Friday, Georgia is the nation's largest chicken producer, a \$41 billion industry that employs more than 45,000 people statewide and turns out 15% of U.S. production.

Kemp's visit came as Georgia neared 37,000 overall infections and more than 1,550 deaths.

The state recently surpassed 300,000 tests, which Kemp hailed as a milestone in efforts to locate virus cases. The latest testing figure represents close to 3% of the state's population.

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. -- Residents of the Navajo Nation will be under the strictest weekend lockdown yet. Grocery stores, gas stations and other businesses will be closed starting Friday night. Essential workers also are being told to stay home until Monday around dawn.

A frustrated Navajo Nation president made the announcement after a spike in deaths that he attributed to shifting traffic patterns in New Mexico. As of Thursday, the tribe reported 127 deaths and 3,632 positive cases since it first began tracking the figures. Tribal officials say more than 500 people have recovered.

The Navajo Nation has been hit harder by the coronavirus than any other Native American reservation.

LISBON, Portugal — Portugal will transition to its second phase of scaling back confinement measures following the positive government assessment of the evolution of its COVID-19 outbreak.

The first stage of the reopening process began with small shops and businesses such as hairdressers. Phase two starting Monday will include restaurants, bars, cafes and other shops opening under capacity limitations and social distancing restrictions.

Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa also unveiled the plan for the reopening of beaches on June 6. Social distancing restrictions will have to be in place, with a maximum capacity for each beach.

The government announced that citizens will be able to check online or via a mobile phone application the current capacity of each beach .

Portugal has 20,583 confirmed cases and 1,190 deaths from the pandemic.

LAS VEGAS -- The city of Las Vegas has announced that downtown restaurants and businesses operating under the first two phases of state reopening orders are allowed to extend operations to the sidewalk during regular business hours.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that outdoor dining and sidewalk sales are now permitted. But each business must continue implementing social distancing measures by keeping tables, chairs and other furniture six feet from pedestrian paths. City spokesman Jace Radke says Las Vegas is currently in the first stage of reopening, which went into effect Saturday. The second phase will allow establishments to expand operations outside with additional restrictions.

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

It's a work from home Congress as House approves proxy vote

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — It all started with the grandchildren.

As House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer saw it, if he could Face Time with the grandkids, why not have Congress legislate by video chat and avoid the health risks of convening at the Capitol during the coronavirus pandemic?

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And so the silver-haired, 80-year-old congressman from Maryland helped steer the House into one of the more substantial rules changes of its 230 year history.

"This is no revolutionary, radical change," Hoyer told The Associated Press in an interview. "This is exactly what the Founders wanted to happen."

The House approved the new rules Friday, during what could likely be the chamber's last fully in-person votes for the foreseeable future.

From now on, lawmakers will be allowed to cast House floor votes by proxy — without being "present" as the Constitution requires. The next step will allow them to skip the middle-man and simply vote remotely once leaders approve the technology.

The shift will dramatically change the look, if not the operation, of the legislative branch — launching a 21st century WFH House, like others, "working from home."

Debate over the changes has been fierce.

As President Donald Trump encourages Americans back to work, Democrats pushed the changes past the objections of Republicans.

"It's a very sad day inside this House," said Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California.

Neither Civil War nor Great Depression or any other national crisis had spurred the House to allow its members to vote from home, a sign of how deeply the virus outbreak act is disrupting the institutional norms of American life.

McCarthy, a top Trump ally, argued during debate, "The founders would be ashamed."

But like the rest of the country, lawmakers are weighing risks and responsibilities. Since the virus outbreak shuttered Capitol Hill in March, the 435-member House has largely stayed away while the smaller Senate resumed operations. Several lawmakers and dozens of staff in the sprawling complex have tested positive as the virus hits close.

Democrats argue the House can rely on technology for remote work as the pandemic drags on. But Republicans objected to what they see as a power grab during the crisis.

Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma, the top Republican on the rules panel, warned the changes will fundamentally alter the nature of the institution, "and not for the better."

Under the new rules, House lawmakers will no longer be required to travel to Washington to participate in floor votes. Some will. But others can assign their vote to another lawmaker who will be at the Capitol to cast it for them. A single lawmaker can carry 10 proxy votes to the chamber.

Just as important, the House committees — the bread and butter of legislative work — will be able to fully function remotely. Committee hearings are prime-time for lawmakers — the chance to grill officials, spar with colleagues and have much of it captured on C-SPAN. House lawmakers will be able to draft bills, conduct oversight and even issue subpoenas from the comfort of their homes.

With the Capitol physician warning it could be years before Congress resumes full operations, lawmakers are anxious to show constituents they are working — but safely.

"Convening Congress must not turn into a super-spreader event," said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., the chairman of the Rules Committee.

The changes are expected to be temporary, only through the remainder of this session of Congress, at the end of the year. Democrats insist the changes should be used only under times of crisis.

But Republicans warn there will be legal challenges to legislation passed during this period, questioning the constitutional legitimacy of proxy votes.

"You've got to be here," said another Trump ally, Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio. "You can't phone it in."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi shelved the proposal two weeks ago insisting she wanted any change of this significance to be bipartisan. McCarthy had proposed a "hybrid" plan that would allow the committees to conduct work remotely but stopped short of allowing the proxy floor voting. A bipartisan task force failed to reach a compromise.

The House has never allowed proxy floor votes, even during some of the most challenging eras in the nation's history. Lawmakers convened during the 1918 Spanish Flu epidemic and only stayed away a short time after the 2001 terror attacks. Proxy votes had been allowed in committees, but that ended decades

ago.

For Hoyer, who has spent half his lifetime in Congress — marking his 40th year in the House next week — it's a reminder that technological savvy cuts across generational and institutional lines.

He acknowledges being new to technology but quickly grew "enamored" by feeling of proximity video provided. "It's a real experience," he said.

As lawmakers pushed for options during the crisis, the leader came on board. He's not a fan of proxy voting — he would have preferred a video vote — but sees it as a temporary step until they are able to create the remote vote option.

Known as an institutionalist who often welcomes freshmen lawmakers with Capitol tours, Hoyer believes the changes are in keeping with tradition.

"It is unacceptable to have the Congress sidelined at any point in time," he said.

"It is the use of technology to do the same thing the Congress has been doing since its inception," he said — conducting oversight and debating and passing legislation "and sending it to the desk of the president."

Pandemic planning becomes political weapon as deaths mount

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the first three years of his presidency, Donald Trump did not publicly utter the words "pandemic" or "preparedness." Not in speeches, rallies or his many news conferences, planned and impromptu.

But on Friday, the White House pointed to extensive planning exercises the administration conducted and reports it wrote warning of the threat in 2018.

Still, Trump has repeatedly said that the blame for the federal government having inadequate stockpiles of crucial supplies and machines needed to cope with an outbreak lay with his predecessor, Barack Obama.

Obama has been a persistent foil for Trump on a number of issues, but in the case of planning for the pandemic he has devoted little attention to the 69-page "playbook" from the Obama administration about the threat of a viral outbreak that might include Ebola or an airborne respiratory illness like coronavirus. And the Obama administration could draw from a similar document written during the administration of George W. Bush in 2006.

The politics of pandemic planning have gotten increasingly pitched as the COVID-19 death toll continues to mount in the United States.

Trump claims he inherited a "broken, terrible" system from Obama. Critics counter that Trump had three years in office to prepare — more than enough time to build on the pandemic strategies he inherited.

The friction was laid bare in the Rose Garden and the White House briefing room on Friday.

Trump, at a midday event outside the Oval Office, declared: "I inherited nothing. I inherited practically nothing from the previous administration, unfortunately."

His spokeswoman, Kayleigh McEnany, later displayed a copy of the Obama plan dismissively during a briefing in the White House press room before hoisting two binders of what she called the superior Trump plans.

Beth Cameron, who worked on pandemic planning in the Obama administration, said the playbook that the Obama administration presented to the Trump administration "was given, briefed and discussed with the incoming administration, explicitly." She said it was intended to provide the White House with a set of questions it should ask early on in an emerging epidemic or pandemic threat.

"It outlined who should come together to answer those questions and to be prepared to anticipate what was coming next ... to get moving," Cameron said. She said the Trump administration was slow to respond to COVID-19 and that Obama's playbook could have helped the administration get ahead of an emerging threat like the coronavirus.

Cameron said the Bush and Obama administrations both did extensive planning for pandemics and many of those plans were passed to the Trump White House. "They were not political. They were non-partisan," she added.

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McEnany styled the Trump administration's response to COVID-19 as "unprecedented." She referred to Obama's plan as a "thin packet of paper" that was replaced by "two detailed, robust pandemic response reports commissioned by the Trump administration."

She said that in 2018 the Trump administration issued its own pandemic crisis action plan and last summer conducted Crimson Contagion 2019, a simulation to test the nation's ability to respond to a large-scale outbreak. In January, the Department of Health and Human Services issued an after-action report.

"This exercise expounded upon — exposed rather — the shortcomings in legacy planning documents, which inform President Trump's coronavirus response beginning as early as January," McEnany said.

Her comments drew criticism from Ron Klain, who was the U.S. Ebola response coordinator during the Obama administration and now advises Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden.

"Let's get to the bottom line," Klain tweeted after McEnany's briefing. "If their position now is that they HAD a plan, and that THIS was their plan ... I fail to see how that is a helpful argument for them in any way."

The Trump administration's 36-page National Biodefense Strategy, issued in September 2018, was a self-described "call to action." Among the many goals was bolstering preparedness to save lives through "medical countermeasures," such as vaccines, ventilators, diagnostic tests and personal protective equipment like medical gowns and masks that were in short supply in the early days of the pandemic.

McEnany said the nation's stockpile was insufficient, but didn't answer questions about why Trump didn't work to restock it during his first three years in office. The White House said the stockpile had only 28% of the items needed during a pandemic and contained less than a one-month supply of key items, but the administration is updating inventories and how they are distributed.

Cameron said Trump had plenty to study when he entered the Oval Office.

Bush took a keen interest in preparing the nation for an influenza pandemic after reading John M. Barry's "The Great Influenza" about the 1918 influenza that killed more than 500,000 Americans and more than 20 million people across the globe.

He read the book in 2005 while at his Texas ranch. A few months later, Bush gave a speech at the National Institutes of Health rolling out the first modern-day national strategy to prepare for an influenza pandemic, detect outbreaks, expand vaccine production capacity and stockpile treatments.

"Unlike storms or floods, which strike in an instant and then recede, a pandemic can continue spreading destruction in repeated waves that can last for a year or more," Bush said in the November 2005 speech.

Obama worked on the Ebola epidemic and also on H1N1 and the Zika virus. In 2014, Obama stood up the White House's National Security Council Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense to coordinate government resources in preparation for the next disease outbreak and prevent it from becoming a pandemic.

There are scores of other pandemic planning books on the shelves, including the Biological Incident Annex, which was updated by the Obama administration and re-issued in January 2017 as Trump took office. The Pandemic Crisis Action Plan from 2018 that McEnany talked about is not online, but a General Accounting Office report references it.

"President Trump has been in office for well over three years now, which is more than enough to build upon the pandemic strategies he inherited," said Lawrence Gostin, a public health expert at Georgetown University who worked with the Bush and Obama administrations on global health issues.

"It's quite evident that whatever pandemic planning had been done during the Bush or Obama administrations never made it to high levels in the Trump administration."

He thinks Trump was just focused on other issues — that pandemic planning wasn't a top priority for the president.

Gostin said he was startled when Trump first said that no one expected a pandemic like COVID-19 to happen.

"Well, every global health expert expected this to happen," Gostin said. "We couldn't tell you when it would happen. We couldn't tell you exactly what the pathogen would be, but we always knew that there

was a big novel pandemic coming.”

Autopsy: Pilot in Kobe Bryant crash had no alcohol, drugs

By STEFANIE DAZIO and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The pilot flying Kobe Bryant and seven others to a youth basketball tournament did not have alcohol or drugs in his system, and all nine sustained immediately fatal injuries when their helicopter slammed into a hillside outside Los Angeles in January, according to autopsies released Friday.

The reports by the Los Angeles County coroner’s office provide a clinical but unvarnished look at the brutality of the crash.

One of the most popular sports figures in Los Angeles and a celebrity around the globe, Bryant was broken beyond recognition when his body was found outside the wreckage of the chopper, His remains had to be identified by his fingerprints.

The report made it clear: Bryant and the passengers almost certainly were dead in an instant due to blunt trauma.

“These injuries are rapidly if not instantly fatal,” wrote Juan Carrillo, senior deputy medical examiner, in Bryant’s report.

The crash that killed the 41-year-old retired Los Angeles Lakers star, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna — clad in the jersey she would have worn to play that morning, with the word “Mamba” on the front and her last name on the back — pilot Ara Zobayan and the others is considered accidental.

Bryant was headed from his Orange County home to his daughter’s tournament at his Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks on the morning of Jan. 26. The group, including one of his daughter’s coaches, and two of her teammates, encountered thick fog in the San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles.

Zobayan, an experienced pilot who often flew Bryant, climbed sharply and had nearly succeeded breaking through the clouds when the craft took an abrupt left turn and plunged into the grassy, oak studded hills below.

When it struck the ground, it was flying at about 184 mph (296 kph) and descending at a rate of more than 4,000 feet per minute. The impact caused a crater and scattered debris over an area the size of a football field in the Calabasas hills. Flames engulfed the wreckage, but burns on the bodies were determined to have occurred after death.

Bryant’s body was found on one side of the wreckage and his daughter was found in a ravine on the opposite side.

The autopsy noted Bryant’s tattoo of a crown on his right shoulder, above where his wife’s name, Vanessa, was imprinted. On the lower right arm were the names of three of his four daughters: Bianka Bella, Natalia Diamante and Gianna Maria-Onore, the daughter who died with him.

The youngest girl, Capri Kobe, only 7 months old when her father died, is not mentioned.

The only drug in Bryant’s system was methylphenidate, which is sold under the brand name Ritalin and used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and narcolepsy.

The National Transportation Safety Board has not concluded what caused the crash on the outskirts of Los Angeles County but said there was no sign of mechanical failure in the Sikorsky S-76. A final report is not expected for months.

The aircraft did not have a device called the Terrain Awareness and Warning System, which signals when an aircraft is in danger of hitting ground. While the National Transportation Safety Board has recommended the system be mandatory for helicopters, the Federal Aviation Administration only requires it for air ambulances. Both California’s senators have called for the FAA to mandate the devices in the wake of the tragedy.

The others killed were Orange Coast College baseball coach John Altobelli, his wife, Keri, and their daughter Alyssa; Christina Mauser, who helped Bryant coach his daughter’s basketball team; and Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton. Alyssa and Payton were Gianna’s teammates.

Bryant is the only NBA player to have his team retire two numbers in his honor. He was selected last

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month for the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. A ceremony is scheduled for late August though it may be delayed until at least October because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Bryant and his daughter were honored at a star-studded public memorial Feb. 24 at the Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles, with 20,000 in attendance at the arena where Bryant spent most of his two-decade career with the Lakers. The date 2/24 corresponded with the No. 24 jersey he wore and the No. 2 worn by Gianna.

The same day, Vanessa Bryant filed a lengthy lawsuit alleging that Zobayan was careless and negligent to fly in the fog and should have aborted the flight. She has also filed a claim, a precursor to a lawsuit, against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department after deputies allegedly shared unauthorized photos of the crash site.

Zobayan's brother, Berge Zobayan, has said in a court filing that Bryant knew the risks of helicopter flying and his survivors aren't entitled to damages from the pilot's estate, while the helicopter company, Island Express, says they are not responsible for damages, calling the crash, among other things, "an act of God" and "an unavoidable accident" that was beyond their control.

This story has been corrected to fix an incorrect reference to the number of people on board.

Associated Press Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds in Miami contributed.

Autopsy: Pilot in Kobe Bryant crash had no alcohol, drugs

By STEFANIE DAZIO and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The pilot flying Kobe Bryant and seven others to a youth basketball tournament did not have alcohol or drugs in his system, and all nine sustained immediately fatal injuries when their helicopter slammed into a hillside outside Los Angeles in January, according to autopsies released Friday.

The reports by the Los Angeles County coroner's office provide a clinical but unvarnished look at the brutality of the crash.

One of the most popular sports figures in Los Angeles and a celebrity around the globe, Bryant was broken beyond recognition when his body was found outside the wreckage of the chopper. His remains had to be identified by his fingerprints.

The report made it clear: Bryant and the passengers almost certainly were dead in an instant due to blunt trauma.

"These injuries are rapidly if not instantly fatal," wrote Juan Carrillo, senior deputy medical examiner, in Bryant's report.

The crash that killed the 41-year-old retired Los Angeles Lakers star, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna — clad in the jersey she would have worn to play that morning, with the word "Mamba" on the front and her last name on the back — pilot Ara Zobayan and the others is considered accidental.

Bryant was headed from his Orange County home to his daughter's tournament at his Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks on the morning of Jan. 26. The group, including one of his daughter's coaches, and two of her teammates, encountered thick fog in the San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles.

Zobayan, an experienced pilot who often flew Bryant, climbed sharply and had nearly succeeded breaking through the clouds when the craft took an abrupt left turn and plunged into the grassy, oak studded hills below.

When it struck the ground, it was flying at about 184 mph (296 kph) and descending at a rate of more than 4,000 feet per minute. The impact caused a crater and scattered debris over an area the size of a football field in the Calabasas hills. Flames engulfed the wreckage, but burns on the bodies were determined to have occurred after death.

Bryant's body was found on one side of the wreckage and his daughter was found in a ravine on the opposite side.

The autopsy noted Bryant's tattoo of a crown on his right shoulder, above where his wife's name, Van-

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essa, was imprinted. On the lower right arm were the names of three of his four daughters: Bianka Bella, Natalia Diamante and Gianna Maria-Onore, the daughter who died with him.

The youngest girl, Capri Kobe, only 7 months old when her father died, is not mentioned.

The only drug in Bryant's system was methylphenidate, which is sold under the brand name Ritalin and used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and narcolepsy.

The National Transportation Safety Board has not concluded what caused the crash on the outskirts of Los Angeles County but said there was no sign of mechanical failure in the Sikorsky S-76. A final report is not expected for months.

The aircraft did not have a device called the Terrain Awareness and Warning System, which signals when an aircraft is in danger of hitting ground. While the National Transportation Safety Board has recommended the system be mandatory for helicopters, the Federal Aviation Administration only requires it for air ambulances. Both California's senators have called for the FAA to mandate the devices in the wake of the tragedy.

The others killed were Orange Coast College baseball coach John Altobelli, his wife, Keri, and their daughter Alyssa; Christina Mauser, who helped Bryant coach his daughter's basketball team; and Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton. Alyssa and Payton were Gianna's teammates.

Bryant is the only NBA player to have his team retire two numbers in his honor. He was selected last month for the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. A ceremony is scheduled for late August though it may be delayed until at least October because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Bryant and his daughter were honored at a star-studded public memorial Feb. 24 at the Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles, with 20,000 in attendance at the arena where Bryant spent most of his two-decade career with the Lakers. The date 2/24 corresponded with the No. 24 jersey he wore and the No. 2 worn by Gianna.

The same day, Vanessa Bryant filed a lengthy lawsuit alleging that Zobayan was careless and negligent to fly in the fog and should have aborted the flight. She has also filed a claim, a precursor to a lawsuit, against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department after deputies allegedly shared unauthorized photos of the crash site.

Zobayan's brother, Berge Zobayan, has said in a court filing that Bryant knew the risks of helicopter flying and his survivors aren't entitled to damages from the pilot's estate, while the helicopter company, Island Express, says they are not responsible for damages, calling the crash, among other things, "an act of God" and "an unavoidable accident" that was beyond their control.

This story has been corrected to fix an incorrect reference to the number of people on board.

Associated Press Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds in Miami contributed.

China goes after US over more than \$1 billion owed to the UN

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — China is going after the United States over more than \$1 billion that the Trump administration owes the United Nations in unpaid dues for its regular operating budget and arrears for the separate budget for the U.N.'s far-flung peacekeeping operations.

The unusual singling out of the U.S. non-payment by China's U.N. mission comes as President Donald Trump continues to accuse Beijing of not being open about the coronavirus when cases were initially reported in December and early January.

A U.S. Mission spokesperson said China "is eager to distract attention from its cover-up and mismanagement of the COVID-19 crisis, and this is yet another example."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in early April that the United Nations faced a cash crisis because of non-payment of dues by member states, which has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic.

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He said in a letter to the U.N.'s 193 member nations that "unpredictable cash inflows, exacerbated by the global crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, seriously threaten" the U.N.'s ability to do its work. He announced a temporary hiring freeze and urged all countries to pay their past and present dues.

China's U.N. Mission said its acting deputy ambassador, Yao Shaojun, spoke at a U.N. General Assembly's budget committee meeting Thursday titled "Improving the Financial Situation of the United Nations," and stressed the importance of all U.N. member nations fulfilling their financial obligations, citing the U.S. arrears.

"Facing tremendous economic and fiscal pressure from the COVID-19 outbreak, China, the second largest contributor to the UN regular budget and peacekeeping budget, has managed to pay all assessed contributions in full," the mission quoted Yao as saying. "It shows China's concrete support to the cause of the U.N. and the work of the secretary-general."

The United States fund 25% of the regular U.N. budget, while China pays 12%. Of the 193 member nations, 91 had paid their dues in full as of May 13. China paid \$336.78 million for the regular budget on May 1

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Friday there is still \$1.62 billion unpaid for the U.N.'s 2020 regular budget and \$2.12 billion outstanding for the peacekeeping budget. He did not give the U.S. arrears.

China's Yao called the United States "the largest debtor," saying it owed about \$1.16 billion to the regular budget and \$1.3 billion to the peacekeeping budget.

The U.S. Mission spokesperson, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said the United States recently made a payment of \$726 million toward its peacekeeping assessment "and per practice will pay the bulk of its assessment at the end of the calendar year."

Because the U.S. fiscal year runs from July to June, not January to December, it has always paid U.N. dues late in the year.

The U.S.-China dispute has been escalating over the pandemic, which has circled the globe causing over 300,000 deaths.

Trump suspended U.S. funding to the World Health Organization in early April, accusing the U.N. health agency of failing to stop the virus from spreading when it first surfaced in China. He said the agency "must be held accountable," accusing the WHO of parroting Beijing.

The U.S.-China dispute over the WHO has blocked the U.N. Security Council, the global organizations's most powerful body, from adopting any resolution on the pandemic.

China strongly supports the WHO and has insisted the agency's role in tackling the pandemic be included in any resolution. The U.S. insists on making no mention of the WHO and including a reference to "transparency" on the coronavirus outbreak, which China opposes.

China's U.N. Mission said Beijing has decided to donate \$30 million more to the WHO in addition to the \$20 million it already gave the agency to support its work on COVID-19.

Democrats push new \$3T coronavirus relief bill through House

By ANDREW TAYLOR and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats powered a massive \$3 trillion coronavirus relief bill through the House on Friday, an election-year measure designed to brace a U.S. economy in free fall and a health care system struggling to contain a pandemic still pummeling the country.

The 208-199 vote, with all but one Republican opposed, advances what boils down to a campaign-season display of Democratic economic and health-care priorities. It has no chance of becoming law as written, but will likely spark difficult negotiations with the White House and Senate Republicans. Any product would probably be the last major COVID-19 response bill before November's presidential and congressional elections.

The enormous Democratic measure would cost more than the prior four coronavirus bills combined. It would deliver almost \$1 trillion for state and local governments, another round of \$1,200 direct payments to individuals and help for the unemployed, renters and homeowners, college debt holders and the struggling Postal Service.

"Not to act now is not only irresponsible in a humanitarian way, it is irresponsible because it's only going

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to cost more," warned House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. "More in terms of lives, livelihood, cost to the budget, cost to our democracy."

Republicans mocked the bill as a bloated Democratic wish-list that was dead on arrival in the GOP-led Senate and, for good measure, faced a White House veto threat. Party leaders say they want to assess how \$3 trillion approved earlier is working and see if some states' partial business reopenings would spark an economic revival that would ease the need for more safety net programs.

Republicans are also sorting through internal divisions and awaiting stronger signals from President Donald Trump about what he will support.

"Phase Four is going to happen," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office, using Washington insider-speak for the measure. "But it's going to happen in a much better way for the American people."

Trump and top Republicans like Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., are insisting the next measure should protect reopening businesses from liability lawsuits. The president is also demanding a cut to payroll taxes, but GOP leaders are not yet onboard.

The daylong debate painted a Capitol scene that's become common in the era of coronavirus, even as it remains disconcerting. The sparsely populated House floor was dotted with lawmakers and aides wearing protective masks and even gloves, though some Republicans lacked them.

Many members looked shaggier and sported beards they had not worn weeks ago. Roll call votes lasted over an hour each because lawmakers were voting in small groups to limit crowding.

To enhance the bill's political impact, Democrats named their measure "The Heroes Act" for the payments it would provide front-line emergency workers. With more than 86,000 Americans dead, 1.4 million confirmed infections and 36 million filing unemployment claims in a frozen economy, Democrats saw GOP opposition as an easy campaign-season target.

"Are you kidding me?" said Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, of Republican assertions that it was time to stop spending more money. "Where do you guys live? Food lines at our food banks around the block? In the United States of America?"

Republicans saw the bill as a Democratic political blunder. They said overly generous unemployment benefits discouraged people from returning to work, and attacked language helping immigrants in the U.S. illegally get federal benefits. They also singled out provisions helping states set up voting by mail and easing the marijuana industry's access to banks.

"It may help the cannabis industry, but it won't help Main Street," said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

Pelosi pushed the measure through after overcoming party divisions aggravated by election pressures. Some moderate Democrats opposed the package for its price tag and politically fraught provisions like assisting marijuana businesses. A few progressive Democrats were upset because it did not do more, such as guaranteeing workers' salaries and bolstering their health insurance coverage.

Fourteen Democrats voted against the measure. Nearly all are centrists and number among the party's most vulnerable lawmakers in November's elections: freshmen from districts Trump won in 2016.

Among them was Rep. Cindy Axne of Iowa, who labeled the measure "bloated." Another, Rep. Abigail Spanberger of Virginia, tweeted, "This bill strays far beyond delivering relief or responding to an urgent crisis, & it has no chance at becoming law."

Republicans were already planning to use the day's votes against other moderate Democrats who backed Friday's legislation and face competitive reelection races.

Clearly, the bipartisan consensus that produced four previous coronavirus bills was crumbling quickly. Polls show GOP voters are satisfied with the federal response and aren't agitating for more. Self-branded deficit hawks are citing the massive increase in the spiraling \$25 trillion national debt.

Some congressional aides said the Democratic bill's real price tag could breach \$3.5 trillion. A partial estimate of tax provisions alone revealed eye-popping costs: \$412 billion to renew \$1,200 cash payments to individuals, more than \$100 billion to pay health insurance premiums for the unemployed and \$164 billion to make an "employee retention" tax credit for businesses more generous.

Republicans leaders faced disunity between conservatives who feel enough has been done and pragmatists who back rescuing the Postal Service from looming insolvency and delivering cash to revenue-starved state and local governments. The huge price tag and a lack of consultation with Republicans by Pelosi cemented GOP opposition.

"This bill is nothing more than the Democratic policy agenda masquerading as a response to the coronavirus crisis," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla. He said the bill is "going nowhere, and is going nowhere fast."

Liberal Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., also opposed the bill. She told reporters that if constituents ask her if the bill would put money in their pockets or preserve their health care, "I can't tell them yes."

The lone Republican backing the legislation was Rep. Peter King of New York, who is retiring.

Pandemic claims another retailer: 118-year-old J.C. Penney

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The coronavirus pandemic has pushed the storied but troubled department store chain J.C. Penney into Chapter 11 bankruptcy. It is the fourth major retailer to meet that fate.

As part of its reorganization, the 118-year-old company said late Friday it will be shuttering some stores. It said the stores will close in phases throughout the Chapter 11 process and details of the first phase will be disclosed in the coming weeks.

Penney is the biggest retailer to file for bankruptcy reorganization since the pandemic and joins luxury department store chain Neiman Marcus, J.Crew and Stage Stores. Plenty of other retailers are expected to follow as business shutdowns across the country have evaporated sales. In fact, U.S. retail sales tumbled by a record 16.4% from March to April.

"The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for our families, our loved ones, our communities, and our country," said Penney's CEO Jill Soltau in a statement. "As a result, the American retail industry has experienced a profoundly different new reality, requiring J.C. Penney to make difficult decisions in running our business to protect the safety of our associates and customers and the future of our company."

Many experts are skeptical about Penney's survival even as it sheds its debt and shrinks the number of its stores. Its fashion and home offerings haven't stood out for years. And moreover, its middle-to-low income customers have been the hardest hit by massive layoffs during the pandemic. Many of them will likely shop more at discounters — if they shop at all, analysts say.

"This is a long, sad story," said Ken Perkins, president of Retail Metrics, a retail research firm. "Penney offers no reason to shop there compared to its competitors, whether it's Macy's or T.J. Maxx or Walmart. How are they going to survive?"

Penney said that it has \$500 million in cash on hand and has received commitments of \$900 million in financing to help it operate during the restructuring. It said that it will be looking at different options, including the sale of the company. The restructuring should reduce several billion dollars of its debt and provide more flexibility to navigate the financial fallout from the pandemic, Penney said.

Like many department stores, Penney is struggling to remain relevant in an era when Americans are buying more online or from discounters. Sears has now been reduced to a couple hundred stores after being bought by hedge fund billionaire and its former chairman Eddie Lampert in bankruptcy in early 2019. Barneys New York closed its doors earlier this year and Bon-Ton Stores went out of business in 2018.

The pandemic has just put department stores further in peril as they see their sales evaporate with extended closures. Even as retailers like Penney start to reopen in states like Texas and Florida that have relaxed their lock downs, they're also facing Herculean challenges in making shoppers feel comfortable to be in public spaces.

In fact, Green Street Advisors, a real estate research firm, predicted in a report last month that more than 50% of all mall-based department stores will close by the end of 2021. It expects that Penney will eventually liquidate its business, noting that a smaller company won't solve its main problems.

Like Sears, J.C. Penney's troubles were years in the making, marking a slow decline from its glory days

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during the 1960s through 1980s when it became a key shopping destination at malls for families.

The company's roots began in 1902 when James Cash Penney started a dry good store in Kemmerer, Wyoming. The retailer had focused its stores in downtown areas but expanded into suburban shopping malls as they became more popular starting in the 1960s. With that expansion, Penney added appliances, hair salons and portrait studios.

But since the late 1990s, Penney struggled with weak sales and heavier competition from discounters and specialty chains that were squeezing its business from both ends. Penney's began flirting with bankruptcy nearly a decade ago when a disastrous reinvention plan spearheaded by then CEO Ron Johnson caused sales to go into free fall.

Johnson drastically cut promotions and brought in hip brands that turned off loyal shoppers. As a result, sales dropped from \$17.3 billion during the fiscal year that ended in early 2012 to \$13 billion a year later. Many longtime customers walked away and have not returned. Johnson was fired in April 2013 after just 17 months on the job.

Since then, Penney's has undergone a series of management changes, each employing different strategies that failed to revive sales. The company based in Plano, Texas, has suffered five straight years of declining sales, which now hover around \$11.2 billion. Its shares are trading at less than 20 cents, down from \$1.26 a year ago, and from its all-time peak of \$81 in 2006.

Soltau has acted swiftly since joining the company in October 2018. She jettisoned from stores major appliances that were weighing down operating profits. That reversed the strategy of her predecessor, Marvin Ellison, who brought appliances to the showroom floor after a 30-year absence in an attempt to capitalize on the troubles of ailing Sears.

Soltau turned the company's focus back to women's clothing and goods for the home like towels and bed sheets, which carry higher profit margins. Furniture is still available, but only online.

Still, sales and profits have remained weak. For the fiscal fourth quarter ended Feb. 1, sales at stores opened at least a year dropped 4.7 adjusted for the exit of appliances. Profits were down 64%.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

Astrid Kirchherr, photographer of the Beatles, dead at 81

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Astrid Kirchherr, the German photographer who shot some of the earliest and most striking images of the Beatles and helped shape their trend-setting visual style, has died at age 81.

She died Tuesday in her native Hamburg, days before her 82nd birthday, her friend Kai-Uwe Franz told The Associated Press. Her death was first announced by Beatles historian Mark Lewisohn, who tweeted Friday that Kirchherr made an "immeasurable" contribution to the group and was "intelligent, inspirational, innovative, daring, artistic, awake, aware, beautiful, smart, loving and uplifting." According to the German publication Die Zeit, she died of a "short, serious illness."

"God bless Astrid a beautiful human being," Ringo Starr tweeted. George Harrison's widow, Olivia Harrison, tweeted that Kirchherr was "so thoughtful and kind and talented, with an eye to capture the soul."

Kirchherr was a photographer's assistant in Hamburg and part of the local art scene in 1960 when her then-boyfriend Klaus Voormann dropped in at a seedy club, the Kaiserkeller, and found himself mesmerized by a young British rock group: The five raw musicians from Liverpool had recently named themselves the Beatles. As she later recalled, Voormann then spent the next few days convincing Kirchherr to join him, a decision which profoundly changed her.

"It was like a merry-go-round in my head, they looked absolutely astonishing," Kirchherr later told Beatles biographer Bob Spitz. "My whole life changed in a couple of minutes. All I wanted was to be with them and to know them."

Kirchherr had dreamed of photographing "charismatic" men and found her ideal subjects in the Beatles, especially their bassist at the time, Stuart Sutcliffe, a gifted painter. They quickly fell in love, even though

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she spoke little English and he knew little German.

"Stuart was a very special person and he was miles ahead of everybody," she told NPR in 2010. "You know as far as intelligent and artistic feelings are concerned, he was miles ahead. So I learned a lot from him and because in the '60s we had a very strange attitude towards being young, towards sex, towards everything."

The Beatles in the early 1960s were nothing like the smiling superstars the world would soon know, and they seemed to have little in common with Kirchherr and her friends, young existentialists dubbed "Exies" by John Lennon. The rock group favored black leather and greased back hair and gave wild, marathon performances. The James Dean lookalike Pete Best was the Beatles' drummer, and Paul McCartney was playing guitar, along with Lennon and George Harrison. (Best was replaced in 1962 by Ringo Starr, and McCartney moved over to bass when Sutcliffe left and became engaged to Kirchherr).

Kirchherr was liked and trusted by all of them, and her photographs captured a group still more interested in looking cool and "tough" than in being lovable. She took indelible black and white portraits, including John, Paul and George in leather and cowboy boots on a rooftop; all five with their instruments on an abandoned truck; and a moody closeup of John in an open fairground with Sutcliffe looming like a ghost in back. Self-portraits captured Kirchherr's own distinctive looks — her high cheekbones and closely cut blonde hair.

"Absolutely stunned to hear the news of Astrid passing," Best tweeted Friday. "God bless you love. We shared some wonderful memories and the most amazing fun times."

Kirchherr had an indirect influence on the Beatles' transformation. The collarless jackets the Beatles favored in the early days of Beatlemania were inspired by Kirchherr's wardrobe; Sutcliffe, who was around the same height as she, had begun wearing her collarless tops. Meanwhile, Voormann had been so self-conscious about his large ears that he grew his hair longer to cover them. Kirchherr loved his new style, what became the Beatles "mop top" — hair brushed forward, without gel, a look favored by other young German artists — and Sutcliffe soon wore his hair that way. The others, after some resistance, followed along.

Her love affair with Sutcliffe was tragically brief. Sutcliffe collapsed and died of a cerebral hemorrhage in April 1962, at age 21. Kirchherr later married twice, including to the British drummer Gibson Kemp. Both marriages ended in divorce, and she would long say that she never got over Sutcliffe's death.

"He was, and still is, the love of my life," she told NPR in 2010. "I never, ever — and I was married a couple of times — met another man who was so fascinating, so beautiful, and so soft and well-mannered. You name it and that he was, and such a gifted artist."

Over the decades following Sutcliffe's death, Kirchherr worked as a freelance photographer and an interior designer among other jobs, and in recent years helped run a photography shop in Hamburg. She and Voormann remained close to the other Beatles. Voormann designed the cover of their "Revolver" album and played bass on many of their solo projects. Kirchherr's Beatles photographs have been exhibited around the world, including at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. In the 1994 movie "Backbeat," for which she served as a consultant, Kirchherr was played by Sheryl Lee and Sutcliffe by Stephen Dorff.

"Stephen is so much like Stuart it's spooky," she told The Washington Post in 1994. "Stephen has the same intensity when he talks to people. And he's a very, very intelligent, very charming, very sexy boy. All the things I remembered Stuart had, Stephen has as well."

This story has been corrected to show the date of death was Tuesday, not Wednesday.

NFL teams can reopen facilities Tuesday _ with provisos

By BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer

NFL teams can begin reopening their facilities on Tuesday if state and local governments will allow it. In a memo sent to the 32 teams Friday by Commissioner Roger Goodell and obtained by The Associated Press, he stressed that the clubs must be "in compliance with any additional public health requirements

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in their jurisdiction, and have implemented the protocols that were developed by (league medical officer) Dr. (Allen) Sills and distributed to all clubs on May 6.”

Facilities have been closed since late March due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Each team was required to submit a plan to the league for reopening its training/practice facility this week.

“Clubs unable to meet these criteria on May 19 may reopen their facilities on the earliest date thereafter on which they are able to meet the criteria,” Goodell added.

Sills will conduct a training program for club infection control officers (ICO) on Monday night that is required.

Already established in the openings were these protocols:

—Until further notice from the NFL, teams may have no more than 50% of their staff in the facility, not to exceed 75 people. If a club wants to deploy staff to more than one location, all locations must implement the same health and safety protocols, and the combined number of employees at all locations can't exceed 75.

—No members of the coaching staff can return to the facility under the first phase of reopening. “This is important to ensure equity among all 32 clubs,” Goodell wrote.

—No players may be in the facility other than those undergoing medical treatment or rehab. Strength and conditioning coaches participating in player rehab may continue that work in the facility. Otherwise, they are barred until the rest of the coaching staff is allowed to return.

—Members of the personnel, football operations/football administration staff, equipment staff, medical staff, and nutritionists can attend.

Naturally, any incidence of Covid-19 in the facility must be reported immediately to Sills and the team's ICO. Clubs also must promptly report any change in government regulations to the league.

“After we implement this first phase,” Goodell told the teams, “and as more states and localities enact policies that allow more club facilities to reopen, I expect that additional staff, likely including coaching staff, will be allowed to return to club facilities in a relatively short time.

“In the meantime, we are continuing to work with the NFLPA and our medical teams on developing protocols that could permit a certain number of players to return to club facilities as early as next month.”

NFL teams normally would be holding organized team activities (OTAs) during May, followed by June minicamps. Due to the pandemic, such activities have been done remotely.

Coaching and training staffs have worked with the players by conducting classroom instruction and on-field activities through digital applications instead of at team facilities. Those virtual meetings can occur for four hours per day, four days per week.

The NFL has held the scouting combine, free agency and the draft in the last two months. It released the regular-season schedule and has said it expects to play it as planned, beginning Sept. 10 with Houston at Super Bowl champion Kansas City.

But it is also making contingency plans for everything from a shortened season to moving the dates of games to playing in empty stadiums.

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

What you need to know today about the virus outbreak

By The Associated Press undefined

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 because of fears of spreading the coronavirus.

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. A staggering 36 million people have now sought jobless aid in just the two months

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since the virus first forced businesses to close and shrink their work forces.

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

WHAT'S HAPPENING TODAY:

___ Democrats began pushing Congress' biggest coronavirus relief bill yet toward expected House passage Friday, a \$3 trillion behemoth they say a beleaguered country badly needs but Republicans call a bloated election-year wish list. The bill was sure to go nowhere in the GOP-led Senate, let alone reach President Donald Trump's desk, where a promised veto awaited.

___ President Donald Trump expressed no concerns Friday about a rapid coronavirus test the White House has been relying on to ensure his safety, despite new data suggesting the test may return an inordinate share of false negatives. A preliminary study by New York University researchers reported problems with the test Trump and his deputies have been promoting as a "game changer."

___ Brazil's health minister resigned after less than a month on the job in a sign of continuing upheaval in the nation's battle with the COVID-19 pandemic and President Jair Bolsonaro's pressure for the nation to prioritize the economy over health-driven lockdowns. Nelson Teich's resignation was confirmed by the Health Ministry.

___ Officially, the number of coronavirus virus cases in Yemen is low — 106 in the southern region, with 15 deaths. But a surge in deaths in Aden — more than 500 in just the past week, according to the city registrar — has raised the nightmare scenario that the virus is spreading swiftly in a country with almost no capacity to resist it.

___ Five sailors on a U.S. aircraft carrier that is sidelined in Guam due to a COVID-19 outbreak — have tested positive for the virus for the second time, raising questions about how troops that test positive can be reintegrated into the military, particularly on ships.

___ NFL teams can begin reopening their facilities on Tuesday if state and local governments will allow it.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

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

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

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

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

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

ONE NUMBER:

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

IN OTHER NEWS:

___ BE ACTIVE: Beach volleyball star Kerri Walsh Jennings knew the national stay-at-home orders would be especially hard on young athletes and others trying to stay fit. With her own quest for a sixth Olympics on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic, Walsh Jennings held video chats with dozens of volleyball

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clubs and teams — more than 4,500 people in all — with a message to remain active.

___ SONG CONTEST SILENCED: Over its many years, the Eurovision Song Contest has come to be a sign of the times. So it is perhaps fitting that, in coronavirus times, nothing will be happening Saturday at the scheduled venue of the Ahoy Hall in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam.

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

US retail sales plunged a record 16% in April as virus hit

By JOSH BOAK and ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writers

BALTIMORE (AP) — U.S. retail sales tumbled by a record 16.4% from March to April as business shut-downs caused by the coronavirus kept shoppers away, threatened the viability of stores across the country and further weighed down a sinking economy.

The Commerce Department's report Friday on retail purchases showed a sector that has collapsed so fast that sales over the past 12 months are down a crippling 21.6%. The severity of the decline is unrivaled for retail figures that date back to 1992. The monthly decline in April nearly doubled the previous record drop of 8.3% — set just one month earlier.

"It's like a hurricane came and leveled the entire economy, and now we're trying to get it back up and running," said Joshua Shapiro, chief U.S. economist for the consultancy Maria Fiorini Ramirez.

Shapiro said he thinks retail sales should rebound somewhat as states and localities reopen their economies. But he said overall sales would remain depressed "because there is going to be a big chunk of the lost jobs that don't come back."

The sharpest declines from March to April were at clothing, electronics and furniture stores. A long-standing migration of consumers toward online purchases is accelerating, with that segment posting a 8.4% monthly gain. Measured year over year, online sales surged 21.6%.

Other than online, not a single retail category was spared in April. Auto dealers suffered a monthly drop of 13%. Furniture stores absorbed a 59% plunge. Electronics and appliance stores were down over 60%. Retailers that sell building materials posted a drop of roughly 3%. After panic buying in March, grocery sales fell 13%.

Clothing-store sales tumbled 79%, department stores 29%. Restaurants, some of which are already starting to close permanently, endured a nearly 30% decline despite shifting aggressively to takeout and delivery orders.

For a retail sector that had already been reeling, a back-to-back free-fall in spending poses a grave risk. Department stores, restaurants and auto dealerships are in danger. Nearly \$1 of every \$5 spent at retailers last month went to non-store retailers, evidence that the pandemic has accelerated the shift toward online shopping.

Retailers are being imperiled not only by business shutdowns mandated by states and localities but also by a record loss of 36 million jobs over the past two months. The layoffs and reduced hours have encouraged a pullback in spending.

Lindsay Fulton, a 29-year-old from suburban Richmond, Virginia, who was furloughed from her sales job at the end of March, said most of what little shopping she does now is online. She has no plans anytime soon to browse stores or simply shop for fun.

"I feel like, across the board, everyone's habits have changed," she said.

In the past two weeks, J.Crew, Neiman Marcus and Stage Stores have filed for bankruptcy protection. J.C. Penney with its 850 stores and almost 90,000 workers followed them on Friday into bankruptcy. UBS estimates that roughly 100,000 stores could shutter over the next five years.

"The whole economic model is unraveling," Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail. "This is going to be very painful. For some, it's going to be fatal."

An April analysis by a group of academic economists found that a one-month closure could wipe out

31% of non-grocer retailers. A four-month closure could force 65% to close.

The plunge in retail spending is a key reason why the U.S. economy is contracting. Retail sales account for roughly half of all consumer spending, which fuels about 70% of total economic activity. The rest of consumer spending includes services like cellphone and internet contracts, gym memberships and child care.

With few Americans shopping, traveling, eating out or otherwise spending normally, economists have estimated that the gross domestic product — the broadest gauge of economic activity — is shrinking in the April-June quarter at a roughly 40% annual rate. That would be the deepest quarterly drop on record.

The pressures being exerted on retail are also being felt globally. Among the European countries that share the euro currency, retail sales fell a painful 11.2% from February to March.

Spending tracked by Opportunity Insights suggests that consumer spending might have bottomed out around mid-April before beginning to tick up slightly, at least in the clothing and general merchandise categories. But spending on transportation, restaurants, hotels and arts and entertainment remains severely depressed.

Even with the sales declines, the pandemic is forcing shifts in what people buy as they adjust to working at home. CSolutions, which monitors sales of packaged goods, has noted a shift to comfort and convenience. Sales of baking flour, tomato sauces, ice cream, premixed cocktails and breakfast sausages have surged from a year ago.

Pajama-buying rocketed 143% from March to April, according to Adobe Analytics, which monitors online retailers. By contrast, sales of pants, jackets and bras have declined.

Cody Pipper, a sales associate for a 16-store chain called Litehouse Pools and Spas, says he's noticed that more people are now spending in ways that serve their at-home lifestyles. Pipper, 24, of Elyria, Ohio, said he himself spent \$2,500 for a Peloton exercise bike for his wife, a medical assistant who recently returned to work. He said they expect to spend less on dining out and shopping at the mall.

"I've had a really good time with the family hanging out, watching TV," said Pipper who has a 1-year-old son. "I think this is the norm. This is what we are supposed to do now."

¹D'Innocenzio reported from New York. AP writer Sarah Rankin contributed to this report from Richmond, Virginia.

Coronavirus spreads in Yemen with health system in shambles

MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Hundreds of people in Aden, southern Yemen's main city, have died in the past week with symptoms of what appears to be the coronavirus, local health officials said in interviews with The Associated Press.

The officials fear the situation is only going to get worse: Yemen has little capacity to test those suspected of having the virus and a 5-year-long civil war has left the health system in shambles.

One gravedigger in Aden told AP he'd never seen such a constant flow of dead — even in a city that has seen multiple bouts of bloody street battles during the civil war.

Officially, the number of coronavirus virus cases in Yemen is low — 106 in the southern region, with 15 deaths. Authorities in the Houthi rebel-controlled north announced their first case on May 5 and said only two people had infections, one of whom — a Somali migrant — died.

But doctors say the Houthis are covering up an increasing number of cases to protect their economy and troops. And the surge in deaths in Aden — more than 500 in just the past week, according to the city registrar — has raised the nightmare scenario that the virus is spreading swiftly in a country with almost no capacity to resist it.

The upswing in suspected COVID-19 cases in Yemen is sounding alarms throughout the global health community, which fears the virus will spread like wildfire throughout the world's most vulnerable populations such as refugees or those impacted by war.

"If you have a full-blown community transmission in Yemen, because of the fragility, because of the

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vulnerability, because of the susceptibility, it will be disastrous," said Altaf Musani, the World Health Organization chief in Yemen.

WHO says its models suggest that, under some scenarios, half of Yemen's population of 30 million could be infected and more than 40,000 could die.

Half of Yemen's health facilities are dysfunctional, and 18% of the country's 333 districts have no doctors. Water and sanitation systems have collapsed. Many families can barely afford one meal a day.

Yemen has no more than 500 ventilators and 700 ICU beds nationwide. There is one oxygen cylinder per month for every 2.5 million people. WHO provided some 6,700 test kits to Yemen, split between north and south, and says another 32,000 are coming. The health agency says it is trying to procure more protective equipment and supplies to fight the virus. But WHO said efforts have been hampered because of travel restrictions and competition with other countries.

The ongoing civil war pits the Houthis, who occupy the north, against a U.S. and Saudi-backed coalition that formed an internationally recognized government in the south. Now that coalition in the South has fragmented: separatists backed by the United Arab Emirates rose up and expelled the government from southern capital Aden last summer and declared self-rule last month. The two factions are fighting in Abyan, a province adjacent to Aden.

The war has already killed more than 100,000 and displaced millions.

The two warring sides in Yemen's civil war have taken vastly different approaches to dealing with the pandemic, each in its own way fueling the possible spread of the virus.

The south is a picture of utter collapse: Rival factions within the U.S. backed coalition are battling for control. No one appears to be in charge as an already wrecked health system seems to have completely shut down.

Health personnel, with little protective equipment, are terrified of treating anyone suspected of having the coronavirus.

Many medical facilities in Aden have closed as staffers flee or simply turn patients away. No one is answering a hotline set up by U.N.-trained Rapid Response Teams to test suspected cases at home.

"If you are suspected of having corona and you are in Aden, most probably you will wait at home for your death," said Mohammed Roubaid, deputy head of the Aden's health office.

From May 7 until Thursday, the city's civil registrar recorded 527 deaths, the head of the office Sanad Gamel told AP.

The causes of death weren't listed, but the rate was many times higher than the usual average death rate of around 10 people a day, city health official said. Multiple doctors said they were convinced the deaths are COVID-19 related. In a statement Thursday, Save the Children put the toll of people with COVID-19 symptoms in Aden the past week at 385.

In the north, meanwhile, the Houthi rebels in power there are waging a campaign to aggressively suppress any information about the scale of the outbreak, even as doctors told the AP of increasing infections and deaths.

The Houthis have refused to release positive test results and intimidated medical staff, journalists and families who try to speak out about cases, doctors and other officials say. Doctors and local health officials said they believed many people are dying of COVID-19 in their homes, undocumented.

Doctors in three northern provinces, including the capital Sanaa, told the AP they have seen increasing numbers of suspected coronavirus cases and deaths. All spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing reprisals from the rebels.

Houthi militiamen have shut down several markets in Sanaa and locked down streets in 10 neighborhoods, barring families from leaving their homes, after suspected cases arose.

Medical staffers said they are under surveillance and can't speak about what they see inside health centers.

Both local health ministry and international aid officials have been warned not to discuss cases or of possible local transmission of the virus, since the rebels insist the north's few cases came from abroad, according to two officials with knowledge of the discussions.

In the first week of May, a surge of patients entered the Kuwait Hospital, the sole fully operating CO-

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VID-19 treatment center in the capital, said four officials. One official said 50 of them were likely infected with the coronavirus and 15 died later. Staffers say they believe the patients were infected because Houthi authorities never revealed the results of their tests.

"When it's negative, they give the results to us," the official said.

An internal document with test results at the hospital on May 4 showed three positive cases. On one page was scribbled the name of a woman who died. The AP obtained a copy of the document, which also circulated on social media. Two officials confirmed its authenticity.

Families of those who died of suspected coronavirus infection say they are left in the dark.

Relatives of a man who died in Sanaa recently said Houthi authorities refused to release their father's body from the morgue, saying they were awaiting test results. They believe Houthi officials wanted to bury the body without a mass funeral that could spread the virus.

After three days, under heavy pressure from the family, Houthi officials released the body, but not the test results. Two other families told AP about similar experiences.

In Houthi-controlled Ibb province, a local official said at least 17 people had died. "The situation is very dangerous and out of control," he said. A doctor in Ibb said tests are sent to Sanaa but results are never revealed, adding, "There are cases, but I'm not allowed to speak."

In Dhamar, a local medical official said at least 10 suspected coronavirus cases had been hospitalized and at least two people had died. One had come from Sanaa, meaning it was a local transmission.

"We buy plastic sheets and stitch them together to make protective gowns and masks. There is no other way," one health official said.

U.N. officials said the Houthis' control of information about the spread of suspected COVID-19 cases has hampered their response to the outbreak. As long as the Houthis do not officially acknowledge cases, the U.N. cannot rally global donors to send supplies to tackle the outbreak, officials said.

In the south, authorities announced the first confirmed coronavirus case on April 10, a man in his 70s working at a port in Hadramawt province.

Many families fearing the outbreak fled from Hadramawt to Aden.

Twenty days later, authorities announced a cluster of cases in Aden's densely populated district of Mansoura.

By early May, city officials reported dozens of deaths per day.

Basic services in Aden were already in shambles because of the civil war. The situation worsened after a separatist group took over.

Health authorities were split between two camps—those loyal to the internationally-recognized government and those who answer to a group that split off last year—so employees have no clue who to report to, and no one is sure who is making decisions.

In the midst of the confusion, many health facilities are shutting their doors. At least five doctors suspected of being infected with the coronavirus have died, according to a health ministry official.

As a result, no one is testing—and authorities are not eager to see higher numbers anyway, said one official, adding, "The whole chain is dysfunctional"

International aid agencies believe the coronavirus has been circulating in Yemen since March. But doctors may have missed it in part because of flooding that struck Aden in April, leaving entire sections submerged in sewage and water for weeks.

That flooding helped cause an outbreak of other diseases, including Dengue fever and Chikungunya, three health officials said. But health officials said past outbreaks of these diseases have had nowhere near the same death toll

Zakariya al-Qaiti, the outgoing head of Aden's sole isolation center at al-Amal Hospital, said he had no doubt about the cause. "I can affirm that coronavirus is breaking out in Aden."

The isolation ward has so far received 60 cases, 20 of whom died, officials said.

The facility is often engulfed in darkness because it runs out of fuel for its power generators. For weeks, it had no equipped laboratory and no special ambulance to bring coronavirus patients.

It also didn't have any money—al-Qaiti said the government withheld its budget after the separatist takeover. So its 100 staffers have not been paid, and 15 of them have quit.

The international humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders is now running al-Amal. Aden resident Assem Sabri said his friend Nabil Abdel-Bari, a young businessman who was suffering from shortness of breath and fever, was refused entry at four hospitals.

"The doctors took one look at him and shouted, "You have coronavirus,"" Sabri said. "Doctors in Aden have lost all their humanity and mercy. We are heading in a very dangerous direction."

Abdel-Bari returned home and died days later, Sabri said.

At al-Qateea, one of the smallest of Aden's six cemeteries, Abdullah Salem, a gravedigger, said he receives 10 to 15 bodies a day, about 10 times more than normal.

He said he doesn't know how to deal with the bodies, because burial permits do not list a cause of death. "Is it corona, dengue, or TB? We have no clue," he said.

Michigan judge hears latest clash over stay-home orders

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Republicans who control the Michigan Legislature urged a judge Friday to strike down stay-home orders and other restrictions related to the coronavirus, saying Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer trampled their authority in determining statewide emergencies.

The clash in Michigan is the latest between Democratic governors who have shut down businesses and ordered people to stay home in response to COVID-19 and conservatives who believe the steps are excessive.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court this week ruled against Gov. Tony Evers' administration, clearing the way for bars and restaurants to reopen.

The dispute in Michigan centers on two laws: a 1976 statute that gives the Legislature a role in emergency declarations after 28 days, and another from 1945 that grants broad authority to governors.

The House and Senate, which are controlled by Republicans, did not extend Whitmer's disaster emergency declaration in late April but she acted anyway.

The '45 law cited by the governor was aimed at local emergencies, not statewide virus outbreaks, said attorney Michael R. Williams, arguing on behalf of lawmakers.

Whitmer "suggested that the (emergency) conditions would not end until such time as a vaccination has been created. That would mean we'd be talking 2021, 2022, perhaps later," Williams said. "At other times, she's talked about the economic consequences of the disaster. ... We would be talking about the exercise of executive power with no legislative input for a period of years."

Court of Claims Judge Cynthia Stephens seemed to pick up that point. She challenged the governor's lawyer by asking if Whitmer could declare an emergency for her entire term and keep the Legislature on the sideline.

"The governor can't just declare an emergency if she feels like it. The conditions have to exist, and that is undisputed," Chris Allen of the attorney general's office said.

Later, he said there's no "blank check."

"Public emergencies, whether it's a pandemic or a flood or some kind of other local or statewide response — they demand broad authority, not narrow nitpicking," Allen said. "The orders issued pursuant to the governor's declaration need only be reasonable and directed at being necessary to bringing the emergency under control, necessary to protecting life and property."

Meanwhile, confirmed coronavirus cases in Michigan passed 50,000 and deaths rose slightly to 4,825, the health department said Friday. Tens of thousands of people have recovered since March.

The judge didn't immediately make a decision. Stephens predicted the case would eventually land at the Michigan Supreme Court.

Whitmer, who has had a choppy relationship with Republicans during her nearly 17 months in office, has accused them of playing politics by suing her during the pandemic. She said the GOP also has inspired gun-toting protesters on the Capitol grounds.

House and Senate leaders complain that Whitmer's broad approach to reopening Michigan doesn't make

sense, especially in regions that haven't been hit as hard with the virus as the Detroit area, which has 66% of cases.

In Wisconsin, Evers lost a court case over his anti-virus strategy. The state Supreme Court said the governor's health director exceeded her authority by extending a stay-home order without working with Republicans in the Legislature to come up with an administrative rule.

Follow Ed White at <http://twitter.com/edwhiteap>

Historically black colleges work to help students amid virus

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Ja'nayla Johnson worked hard in high school with the dream of being the first in her family to graduate from college, but she started to doubt herself as several colleges rejected her. Then Bennett, a small historically black women's college in North Carolina, saw Johnson's potential and offered her a full scholarship.

"Bennett means everything to me," Johnson said. When the campus announced it was shutting down because of the coronavirus, "I was scared out of my mind."

The sophomore said she has suffered from depression that forced her to withdraw for a semester last year and didn't think returning home to California would be good for her mental health. She also didn't think she would be able to continue her studies back home, where she would feel obligated to care for younger siblings.

Bennett staff provided a house for Johnson and another student along with money for necessities. The school of 268 students helped Johnson, and others like her, despite its somewhat shaky financial condition and concerns that COVID-19 could make things worse.

It is a perilous time for the nation's historically black colleges and universities, which have long struggled with less funding and smaller endowments than their predominantly white peers and are now dealing with the financial challenges of the coronavirus. HBCUs have the added challenge of educating a large population of low-income and first-generation students who now need more help than ever. Those students will get a morale boost on Saturday as President Barack Obama delivers a commencement speech for HBCU graduates amid an uncertain future for their schools.

Bennett is on probation from its accrediting agency for financial instability. Because of that, the school was already making plans for a possible decrease in enrollment. President Suzanne Walsh said the coronavirus is just another challenge the school will overcome.

Brian Bridges, with the United Negro College Fund, said that even HBCUs facing serious financial trouble can survive the coronavirus. "They've persisted for 150-plus years of underfunding and Jim Crow segregation," he said. "They know how to make a way out of no way."

Forrest Harris is president of American Baptist College, a small liberal arts school in Nashville best known for educating U.S. Congressman John Lewis when he was helping plan the city's lunch counter sit-ins. With a tiny endowment, the school relies heavily on tuition from its 100 students and is facing a "significant revenue loss" from COVID-19. Harris is confident the school will continue educating social justice leaders.

Harris is a graduate of Knoxville College, an HBCU that lost its accreditation and closed down for several years but is now accepting students through an online program and working toward the goal of restoring the campus.

"HBCUs are hard to die," Harris said. "They have a resilient spirit and a tradition of educating African Americans in communities that are going to fight hard for them."

That doesn't mean the schools never die. St. Paul's College, in Lawrenceville, Virginia, was 125 years old when it closed in 2013 after struggling financially and accreditation woes. Morris Brown College in Atlanta has been trying to reearn accreditation after a financial scandal over a decade ago forced bankruptcy and near closure. It currently enrolls 35 students.

Even at the better-endowed HBCUs, officials are bracing for a tough few years. Morehouse College

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President David Thomas said after the last recession enrollment at the all-men's school in Atlanta dropped from about 2,800 to 2,100.

"It will always be the case that black families are disproportionately affected by recessions and economic downturns," Thomas said. "We're already preparing ourselves for the idea that students who didn't need aid before will need it now because someone has lost a job. Already parents are sending emails."

HBCUs were founded at a time when African Americans were barred from many white-serving institutions. Harry Williams, president of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, said they are the "backbone of the African American middle class."

While colleges today are integrated, HBCUs still play an important role in educating black Americans. A 2019 study found that two-thirds of low-income students at HBCUs end up in at least the middle class, and the schools do a better job of lifting up those students than primarily white institutions despite fewer resources.

A Government Accounting Office report found HBCUs educated more than 226,000 African American students pursuing college degrees in 2017. Meanwhile, their median endowments are only about half of those at similar non-HBCUs.

Congress has approved over \$1 billion in emergency relief to minority-serving institutions, and a portion of that is earmarked specifically for needy students. Administrators say the aid will help but won't make them whole.

Delaware State University has raised \$600,000 for an emergency fund for students but has received applications with needs totaling \$1.2 million for things like transportation, housing, food and technology, President Tony Allen said.

Like many other schools, Delaware sent laptops to students who lacked them and worked with telecommunications companies to provide Internet service. But Alabama State University President Quinton Ross said he has students who live in rural areas where broadband Internet just isn't available. Students had to "complete their coursework using the old correspondence course," he said.

Ross, who is an Alabama State alumnus, said HBCUs have traditionally been "a shelter in a time of storm" and sending students home was "one of the most difficult decisions our team has ever had to make."

At Morehouse, the school is housing around 20 students who could not return home in an Atlanta hotel. They include graduating senior Lanarion Norwood, who grew up just a few minutes away from the campus in a neighborhood he was desperate to leave.

Norwood was rejected three times by Morehouse, but convinced the school to place him on a probational summer program and then enroll as a student. He has spent every summer on campus, working for the same program he attended after high school.

"It was kind of magical when I first stepped onto the Morehouse campus," Norwood said. "Since then, there's never been any other place for me."

Appeals judges seem apt to let presidential primary proceed

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal appeals court judges seemed inclined during oral arguments Friday to let New York's Democratic presidential primary proceed next month despite state claims that it could threaten the safety of voters during a pandemic.

The three-judge panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard 90 minutes of arguments after a judge last week ordered the primary to take place despite an April decision by Democratic members of the state's Board of Elections to cancel it.

Even without the presidential primary, elections were scheduled in all but two of the state's 62 races for other elections, including congressional and state races.

The judges did not immediately rule, but they leaned forcefully against the state.

Some of them seized on the claim by Judith Vale, an attorney for the state, that Bernie Sanders and Andrew Yang could have remained on the ballot by withdrawing their announcements that they were

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suspending their presidential campaigns. Instead, lawyers sued to keep them on the ballot.

Circuit Judge Amalya L. Kearsue asked what a candidate would have to do to reinstate a suspended campaign.

Vale said they would have to send a letter to the Board of Elections or "otherwise make clear they were un-suspending their campaign."

"How does that differ functionally from what Senator Sanders did, which was to simply ask not to be taken off the ballot?" Kearsue asked.

Vale said Sanders failed to announce he was lifting the suspension of his campaign.

Judge Dennis Jacobs noted that one way a candidate might decide to re-enter the race was if "they did quite well in the presidential primary in New York."

"So the question becomes whether this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy," Jacobs said. "If you suspend, you can't appear on the ballot. If you can't appear on the ballot, you can't get the public support that brings in the money. If you can't bring in the money, you can't resuscitate your campaign."

Judge José A. Cabranes cited the constitutional right to vote and the First Amendment and questioned whether state or national leaders of the Democratic party had a say in the decision to cancel the primary.

He also said delegates play an important role in the Democratic convention and have made the difference in the selection of vice presidential candidates in the past.

"Doesn't it seem odd to you that somehow these other political contests will go on and the only one that's eliminated is the presidential primary? Doesn't it suggest that there's some particular objective here that's perhaps not obvious to any of us?" Cabranes asked.

"No, no," Vale responded. "This is all in the context of the pandemic."

"Has any other state cancelled its presidential primary?" Cabranes asked.

"No," Vale said.

"So that's quite unusual, obviously, by definition," Cabranes said.

Lawyers for Sanders and Yang noted that the state never spelled out when it changed the rules that candidates needed to lift the suspensions of their campaigns to remain on the ballot.

Attorney Jeffrey Kurzon, who sued on behalf of Yang and several would-be delegates, told the judges it was "appalling" that the election was canceled. He called it a "middle-of-the-game change" that was properly overturned by the lower court.

Portland, Oregon, homeless tax tests voter mood in pandemic

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Voters in metropolitan Portland, Oregon, will be asked Tuesday to approve taxes on personal income and business profits that would raise \$2.5 billion over a decade to fight homelessness even as the state grapples with the coronavirus and its worst recession in years.

The ballot measure was planned before the pandemic reduced the U.S. economy to tatters. Proponents, including many business leaders and major institutions, argue the taxes are needed now more than ever in a region that has long been overwhelmed by its homeless problem.

How voters in the liberal city react amid the pandemic will be instructive for other West Coast cities struggling to address burgeoning homeless populations as other sources of revenue dry up. The measure is believed to be one of the first nationwide to ask voters to open their wallets in a post-COVID-19 world.

"I think it's really going to give you a sense about how concerned are people, still, about homelessness as an issue — and what are they willing to pay in to solve that issue," said Marisa Zapata, who runs Portland State University's Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative.

"We know government budgets are going to be eviscerated, so what does this mean for additional revenue-raising opportunities?" she said. "Who could we turn to to bear some of that responsibility and how will voters react?"

A recent study by Zapata's institute estimated that in a one-year period, nearly 40,000 people in greater Portland experienced an episode of homelessness and 105,000 households faced housing insecurity.

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Opponents say they are surprised organizers continue to campaign for the measure when the majority of Oregon's population remains under lockdown and the economy is stalled. A "no" campaign, almost entirely funded by the Northwest Grocery Association, is trying to draw voters' attention.

"People are frustrated. They're out of work, they're angry and the last thing they're thinking about right now is raising taxes," said Amanda Dalton, the association's legislative director.

Voters in the three counties that make up the greater Portland metro region will be asked to consider a 1% marginal income tax on the wealthiest residents and a 1% tax on gross profits for the region's biggest businesses.

The measure would apply to individual filers with a taxable income of more than \$125,000 or joint filers with taxable income of more than \$200,000. Joint filers making \$215,000 a year, for example, would be taxed 1% on \$15,000, or \$150 a year.

The measure has a 10-year sunset clause and is expected to generate \$2.5 billion, although the recession's impact on those estimates is unclear. If it passes, the first taxes would not be collected until 2021.

Roughly 90% of residents and 94% of businesses will be exempt from the tax, said Angela Martin, campaign director for HereTogether, the coalition that crafted the measure.

Voters in the area have a history of supporting measures to address social woes. The same region approved a nearly \$653 million bond to build affordable housing in 2018. Organizers are candid about capitalizing on that history to test the limits of voters' pocketbooks in much different times.

The Portland Business Alliance, whose membership has repeatedly identified homelessness as a critical factor affecting its ability to expand and recruit, is backing the measure. So are a host of state and local government leaders and major sports franchises, including the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers.

Money from the previous bond measures can only be spent on building housing, while this money would be devoted to so-called "wrap around services" to help the homeless or those on the verge of homelessness. That includes rent assistance, case management and outreach, job training, and mental health and substance abuse treatment.

The regional approach, with strong collaboration from the business community, could be a model for other cities, Martin said.

"It's going to be an indicator of what we can do, not just on homelessness but on the range of economic support that our community is going to need coming out of this coronavirus," she said. "This is one the first public tests of what do we want our community to look like and how we should pay for that."

Opponents are angry that organizers didn't back away once the coronavirus arrived. The measure survived two legal challenges just as COVID-19 triggered Oregon's stay-at-home order.

Gov. Kate Brown last week asked all state agencies to propose ways to cut their budgets by almost one-fifth, and the city of Portland itself is predicting a \$75 million drop in revenue. Metro, the agency that referred the measure to voters, itself just laid off more than 700 employees.

"Businesses and households are racking up huge amounts of debt. You have people who aren't paying their rent and who are delaying their mortgages," said Eric Fruits, a research director at the nonpartisan Cascade Policy Institute.

The measure's fate, in part, depends on voter turnout. Oregon is a vote-by-mail state, and residents have until 8 p.m. Pacific on Tuesday to turn in their ballots in person. As of Friday, voter turnout stood at just over 24%.

An earlier version of this story incorrectly stated in one reference that the business tax would be on gross receipts. It would be on gross profits.

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>

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NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By BEATRICE DUPUY, ARIJETA LAJKA and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

CLAIM: Nancy Pelosi is trying to pass a law called HR6666 which would allow people to come into your home and take your family members for quarantine.

THE FACTS: House bill 6666, the COVID-19 Testing, Reaching, And Contacting Everyone (TRACE) Act, clearly states that individuals who test positive during testing for COVID-19 would quarantine at their residences. Following the introduction of the bill May 1, social media users began misrepresenting components of the bill online. The text posts shared thousands of times across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter said that the bill would remove family members from households and force them to quarantine. "Nancy Pelosi is trying to pass a law called HR6666. If this passes, strangers can come into your house and take (by force if needed) your family members including your children to a quarantined area," states one widely shared post on Facebook. In reality, the House bill would give \$100 billion to local organizations, such as community health centers or nonprofits, to help with testing and contact tracing by funding door-to-door outreach, the purchase of testing supplies and the hiring and training of people to run mobile testing sites. Preference would be given to hot spots and medically underserved communities. The bill states that grants will be awarded for "diagnostic testing for COVID-19, to trace and monitor the contacts of infected individuals and to support the quarantine of such contacts, through mobile health units and as necessary, testing individuals and providing individuals with services related to testing and quarantine at their residences." U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush, a Democrat from Illinois who introduced the bill, said on his website that the bill would not require that anyone be tested for the coronavirus and would not force anyone to quarantine. "I've seen these alarming posts as well, but I can assure you that they are completely false," he says on his website. "This bill does not authorize anyone to enter your home, for whatever reason, without your permission, nor does it allow the government to remove anyone from your home because of the coronavirus." Posts online expressed outrage and suggested that the bill would allow the government to enter homes and do as they pleased. The post is part of a common misleading theme emerging on social media around government efforts to stop the spread of the coronavirus. As of Friday, the bill was in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

CLAIM: Former President Barack Obama is the first president to speak out against his successor.

THE FACTS: Several former presidents have made comments criticizing the policies of their successors, including George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter — even Theodore Roosevelt. On Sunday, Trump retweeted a tweet that included the false claim: "Barack Hussain Obama is the first Ex-President to ever speak against his successor, which was long tradition of decorum and decency," the tweet stated, misspelling Obama's middle name, which is Hussein. In his retweet, Trump asserted that "he got caught." During a private call last Friday with former members of his administration, Obama criticized Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, calling it an "absolute chaotic disaster." A recording of the call was obtained by Yahoo News. Obama also discussed the Justice Department dropping its criminal case against Trump's first national security adviser, Michael Flynn, saying he worried that the "basic understanding of rule of law is at risk." Although there is a traditional reluctance among presidents to criticize a successor, Obama is not the first president to do so. "Historically, recent presidents do not attack sitting presidents that often and when they do, they are measured," Peter Loge, a professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, told The Associated Press in a phone interview. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a University of Pennsylvania professor who focuses on political communication, agreed. "When presidents have criticized other presidents, they tend to do so while not naming them," she said, noting that such criticism would generally be made in private. In April 2015, former President George W. Bush was seen

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as criticizing successor Obama during a closed-door Republican Jewish Coalition meeting, quoting Sen. Lindsey Graham's comments on Obama's policies in the region: "Pulling out of Iraq was a strategic blunder." Former President Clinton criticized the administration of his successor, George W. Bush, over its Iraq policy: "The point is, there is no military victory here," he told Good Morning America in July 2007. Former President Jimmy Carter ripped successor Ronald Reagan for sending arms to Iran in hopes that Americans held captive in Lebanon would be released. Carter said Reagan mishandled the Iran-Contra affair and is "making believe he's telling the truth" to the American people about it. President Theodore Roosevelt called successor William H. Taft a traitor of reform, and criticized him for not advancing his progressive policies. Experts noted that Trump's rhetoric around former presidents has gone far beyond the norm, particularly his criticism of Obama on social media and at political rallies.

CLAIM: The California Department of Social Services sent a letter to participants in state assistance programs mandating testing for the coronavirus for all family members receiving benefits. Failure to be tested by June 1, 2020, will result in the temporary suspension of benefits and children may be removed from the household if someone tests positive.

THE FACT: The letter was fabricated and falsely attributed to the California Department of Social Services. Social media users shared the fabricated letter widely online, expressing outrage that benefits would be taken from those who were not tested for COVID-19. "This is scary beyond belief," one post on Facebook said. "Refuse to test and they can take more than unemployment benefits. They can remove your children and place them in foster care!!" The letter said that participants "in state assistant benefits including cash aid, Cal Fresh or Medical, you are being informed that COVID-19 testing has been declared mandatory for all members of your household receiving assistance. Failure to obtain a test by June 1, 2020 will result in the temporary suspension of your benefits beginning July 1, 2020." The California Department of Social Service letterhead was included on the document and it appeared to have been signed by Dr. Mark Ghaly, secretary of the California Health and Human Services. Both were used without consent. "We have alerted the appropriate county authorities for investigation," the California Department of Social Services said on its website. "If you receive this letter, please disregard it. State departments and county human services departments NEVER will ask about your health status in connection to an application for benefits." The letter stated that Merced County in California would be offering the free tests at participating locations and included a website and phone number. Merced County debunked the fake letter in a post on Facebook, calling it counterfeit. "The letter also falsely claims that if someone tests positive for COVID-19, his/her children may be removed from the home and placed into foster care," Merced County posted on Facebook on Monday. "Should you have any questions regarding social services or child welfare, please contact the Merced County Human Services Agency child welfare hotline at 209-385-3104."

CLAIM: Individuals in Washington state who refuse to cooperate with contact tracers, or those who refuse testing, will not be allowed to leave their homes for necessities.

THE FACTS: Numerous posts circulated on Facebook falsely claiming that people who refuse to participate in contact tracing in Washington will "not be allowed to leave their homes to purchase basic necessities such as groceries and/or prescriptions." Not so, said Amy Reynolds, communications director with the Washington State Department of Health, who said the posts "are not accurate summaries of contact tracing or enforcement." Reynolds confirmed to The Associated Press in an email that contact tracing is voluntary. "Anyone can choose not to participate in an interview if they are contacted by public health professionals," she said. "We hope to make it easy for people who test positive or who are identified as close contacts to voluntarily follow public health recommendations, which may include staying home for a period of time." Jay Inslee, governor of Washington, announced the launch of a contact tracing plan this week to keep track of the spread of COVID-19. The state has 1,371 contact tracers ready to assist local health departments. According to AP reporting, Inslee said that the goal is to "box in" the virus by first having people who think they have symptoms quarantine themselves and seek testing. The goal is to contact those who test positive within 24 hours of testing and to contact those the people encountered within 48

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hours. "At the sign of any symptoms, people should confine themselves at home. Voluntary confinement for both ill persons and the members of their households will be a major challenge, but it is one of the most critical portions of this entire endeavor," Inslee said. Last week, Inslee announced that stay-home restrictions will be extended through at least May 31. "As the Governor mentioned, our experience with infectious disease shows that the vast majority of people voluntarily comply when asked to stay home," Reynolds said. "We believe most people are eager to take steps to protect their own health and that of their loved ones and communities." She added that local health officers have some authority related to individual enforcement but they rely on people voluntarily following public health recommendations. "The authority to enforce involuntary isolation or quarantine rests with local health officers," she specified. "Each local health jurisdiction in Washington has existing plans and processes should involuntary isolation or quarantine be needed. They would need to speak to their authority in more detail."

CLAIM: Dr. Fauci has sat on Microsoft's board of directors with Bill Gates as his boss.

THE FACTS: Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, has never served on Microsoft's board of directors. Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has become a target of misinformation as he oversees the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest posts are trying to link Fauci to Microsoft founder and billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates, who has long been a target for his work around vaccines. "I bet you didn't know Dr. Fauci sat on MicroSoft's Board of Directors- and that Bill Gates - was his Boss...Now did, ya," the text posts online say. Posts with the false claim circulated widely on social media, with posts on Facebook shared thousands of times. Microsoft confirmed to The Associated Press that Fauci has not served on Microsoft's board. Fauci has, however, collaborated with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which announced in 2010 that Fauci would serve on the Leadership Council for the Decade of Vaccines Collaboration. The effort was part of the foundation's Global Vaccine Action Plan, which the leadership council would oversee. On the Gates Foundation website, it shows that Fauci also participated on a board in 2003 with other medical officials and scientists to help the Gates Foundation with their work around AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

CLAIM: Video says that onions can cure bronchitis, fever and kill viruses in the air.

THE FACTS: While onions offer nutritional and health benefits, there is no evidence that they can cure bronchitis, fever or kill viruses in the air if placed around a room. Myths around using onions to cure various ailments have existed for years. As medical researchers around the world struggle to find a vaccine for coronavirus, social media users are searching online for ways to treat themselves at home. One video on Facebook with more than 50,000 views was shared with the comment, "onions better than any VACCINE." "Do you know if you have fever or bronchitis, if you chop up onions and put it in like a cheese cloth or a thin cloth, put it on your chest, it gets rid of bronchitis?" says a woman featured in the video. "If you have a fever, cut a piece of the onion in slices, put it under your foot bottom and put on a sock. By morning your fever gone." The woman also suggests cutting the tops off the onions and then putting them in every corner of a room. "It will pull out every virus, any bacteria out of the air," she says. Myths about onions and viruses are totally undocumented by science, said Ruth S. MacDonald, who chairs the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Iowa State University. According to the National Onion Association, myths about onions date back to the 1500s when it was said that putting cut onions around a room would protect against the bubonic plague. Back then it was believed diseases were spread through "noxious air." The myth continued to live on to the influenza pandemic of 1918-19. "In short, there is no scientific evidence that a cut raw onion absorbs germs or rids the air of toxins/poisons," the association says on its website. Medical experts say it is important to consult a health care professional if you are showing signs of fever or bronchitis rather than relying solely on home remedies.

CLAIM: Video shows massive protests in Germany against "Deepstate," Bill Gates and vaccines.

THE FACTS: The video shows a July 2017 protest in Warsaw, Poland, against plans that would put the judicial system under the control of the conservative ruling party. The aerial video, taken in the evening,

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shows thousands of people demonstrating near the Presidential Palace in Warsaw on July 23, 2017. It has been circulating on social media falsely captioned as showing protests in Germany. “#Breaking #BreakingNews #Germany ERUPTS in MASSIVE Protests against the #NWO Corrupt #Deepstate & the NAZI Eugenics World takeover by #BillGates #vaccine Sterilization & Depopulation Campaign as they know about it better than anyone with their history,” stated a May 11 Twitter post with the video. The tweet refers to anti-vaccine rhetoric and conspiracy theories that have circulated around the COVID-19 pandemic. Across Germany there have been multiple protests in recent weeks with demonstrators demanding an end to coronavirus lockdown restrictions there. Twitter users falsely suggested that the video was linked to those protests. But the falsely captioned video being shared with some social media posts was filmed on Krakowskie Przedmieście, an elegant promenade in Warsaw, on July 23, 2017. Anti-government protests erupted in Poland as the ruling party moved to take control of the courts. According to AP reporting, on July 16, 2017, thousands protested, outraged over legislation they said would violate judicial independence and the rule of law. The protests lasted for days.

CLAIM: Videos show proof that actor Tom Hanks and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot support the “New World Order,” a conspiracy theory built on the idea that the world’s most wealthy and powerful are plotting to overthrow democracy and install a single, global authoritarian government.

THE FACTS: The videos are being misrepresented. The YouTube clip featuring Hanks was taken from a five-minute video of him addressing the class of 2020 at Wright State University. Social media users claim Hanks — who called the graduates “chosen ones” — was congratulating members of the New World Order for a successful coup because of the pandemic. A review of the video shows Hanks simply told students they would enter a post-college world that will look very different after coronavirus has spread throughout the globe. “You chosen ones are going to form the new structures and to find the new realities and make the new world, the world after all that we have been through and after your time here in the final years, the final weeks at Wright State,” Hanks told the graduates. Hanks’ video message was played during a virtual ceremony on May 2 for graduates of the college’s Department of Theatre, Dance and Motion Pictures.

The video featuring Lightfoot was edited to take her words out of context. She was not planning a global coup, she was talking about ending a long-standing and unusual custom in Chicago called “aldermanic prerogative,” which gave aldermen absolute power on zoning and development decisions in their home wards. The video with Lightfoot’s comments was taken during an April 2019 interview with the Chicago Tribune, days after she won her mayoral bid with a historic campaign that vowed reforms that would root out corruption in the city. During the interview, Lightfoot said she would put a stop to aldermanic prerogative, practice some have criticized as unchecked power that was easy for aldermen to abuse. To help get rid of the practice, Lightfoot says she plans to sign an executive order that says the city will no longer honor the practice. She tells the Tribune that after that order is signed, she will then hire new officials across key departments in the city, like zoning and housing, who are on board with abolishing the custom. “You pick the people to run those agencies and the deputies that are pledging allegiance to the new world order and good governance,” Lightfoot said. Social media users are sharing an edited, one-minute video clip of that comment to suggest she is talking about trying to overthrow the government with a new world order. Other social media posts share a screenshot of her quote to make the misleading claim. In May 2019, after she was inaugurated, Lightfoot signed an executive order limiting aldermanic prerogative.

This is part of The Associated Press’ ongoing effort to fact-check misinformation that is shared widely online, including work with Facebook to identify and reduce the circulation of false stories on the platform.

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Truckers honk over shipping rates, not 'in favor of' Trump

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says the sound of truck horns just south of the White House is a "sign of love" for him from truckers. But the truckers are actually honking their opposition to low shipping rates.

"They're protesting in favor of President Trump," the president claimed in the Rose Garden on Friday during an announcement about vaccine development. The blaring of truck horns wafted across the Ellipse and into the sun-splashed garden during that event and a ceremony Trump held in the afternoon to recognize good deeds during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Those are truckers that are with us all the way," he said at the earlier event.

But the drivers who have lined Constitution Avenue with their big rigs didn't come to Washington for Trump. They're in the nation's capital to protest low shipping rates that they say could force many of them out of business.

An initial flurry of freight shipments stemming from the coronavirus pandemic has subsided. As a result, many truckers have found themselves without freight to haul or with offers to deliver goods at rates they say are unsustainable.

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows visited the truckers on Thursday.

Space Force unveils flag; Trump touts 'super-duper missile'

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Space Force — the newest branch of the armed services — now has its own flag.

Defense Department officials presented President Donald Trump with the Space Force flag during a short Oval Office event on Friday. The dark blue and white flag includes elements intended to evoke the vast recesses of outer space.

The Space Force, which was officially established in December, is the first new military service since the U.S. Air Force was established in 1947. The 16,000 airmen and civilians that make up the Space Force technically remain part of the Air Force, which previously oversaw offensive operations in space. But Trump has made clear he sees the newest service as critical to the future of American defense.

The president said during Friday's ceremony that the U.S. is building a "super-duper missile" that can travel "17 times faster than what we have right now."

The flag includes a Delta Wing -- long a symbol in the Air Force -- meant to signify change and innovation. Dark and light shades of gray within the delta were incorporated in a nod to the 24/7 nature of the Space Force's work.

The flag also features a globe, for the Space Force fighters' home turf, and an elliptical orbit around the globe was incorporated to signify the force's mission to defend and protect from adversaries and threats emanating in space.

This flag was produced by artists and crafts people at the Defense Logistics Agency flag room in Philadelphia from a design finalized and documented by the Department's Institute of Heraldry at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Virus or not, if you open Jersey Shore beaches, they'll come

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

SEASIDE HEIGHTS, N.J. (AP) — Somehow, after years of living underground and waiting for some unfathomable signal that it's time, cicadas suddenly know when it's time to surface and swarm.

Teenagers and college students apparently have that same ability when it comes to the Jersey Shore's beaches opening.

On Friday, local governments gave the signal and beachgoers returned to the sand at some of New Jersey's most popular beaches, including Seaside Heights and Point Pleasant Beach. Both were conducting what they considered trial-run openings to see how well crowds could be contained, and how well they adhered to social distancing and other measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

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Teens and young adults were particularly well-represented in Seaside Heights, which for generations has been the place to go the day after graduation, or pretty much any other time when sunshine and the opposite sex were priorities.

Yet despite the teen migration, things were decidedly under control at Seaside Heights, a place with a reputation for not always being so. It was, you may recall, the setting for the infamous MTV show "Jersey Shore." On Friday, there were more families with children than Snooki wannabes.

"It feels real nice to be here; we've barely been out," said Kate Shouldice of Toms River, who brought her children ranging in age from 8 to 3 to stroll the boardwalk. "It'll be nice when everything gets back to normal, and it feels like it's been doing that a little bit lately."

"It feels good to be out," echoed Pat Sullivan of Toms River. "After the spring we had, it's been brutal." The two beaches were among those that reopened a day after New Jersey's Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy gave guidance to shore towns on how to reopen their beaches safely amid the virus pandemic.

Directives include keeping at least six feet (2 meters) apart, except for relatives or household members. Masks are encouraged but not required on the sand. Bathrooms, showers and changing rooms will be open and cleaned frequently.

Whether or not vacationing hordes will heed restrictions meant to keep everyone safe was on the minds of many beachgoers Friday.

"I think people will try to social distance," said Cedric Sweat of Stone Mountain, Georgia, as he walked the Seaside Heights boardwalk. "But I'm already seeing people doing things they shouldn't be doing."

"I think some people will get mad" at some of the restrictions, said Deb Ferrier of Point Pleasant Beach as she and some friends sat on the beach. "I don't want even go near this place on Memorial Day weekend."

Greg Barr of Point Pleasant Beach predicted the summer would be a mixed bag, with older beachgoers largely obeying virus-mitigation efforts — and younger ones, not so much.

"Younger kids, college-age, I don't think will do as good a job," said Barr, who himself looked barely older than a college student. "There will be some frustration, and some people will take chances, I'm sure."

Paul Kanitra, Point Pleasant Beach's mayor, said the beach that reopened Friday in his town is nice and wide after a recent replenishment and should have enough room for at least 500 people to safely use it while staying far apart from each other. He said the town would examine how the initial reopening goes before deciding whether to remove restrictions designed to minimize outside visitors, including limiting parking near the beach to residents-only.

"We're optimistic about it," he said. "It's certainly not a situation anyone wants to be in. There's no playbook for this."

Follow Wayne Parry at <http://twitter.com/WayneParryAC>.

Trump still confident in virus test despite false negatives

By JILL COLVIN, MATTHEW PERRONE and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump expressed no concerns Friday about a rapid coronavirus test that the White House has been relying on to ensure his safety, despite new data suggesting the test may return an inordinate share of false negatives.

Trump expressed his confidence in the test from Abbott Laboratories after a preliminary study by New York University researchers reported problems with it. Trump and his deputies have promoted the 15-minute test as a "game changer" and have been using it for weeks now to try to keep the White House complex safe.

The Food and Drug Administration announced late Thursday it was investigating preliminary data suggesting the Abbott test can miss a large number of COVID-19 cases, falsely clearing infected patients.

"Abbott is a great test; it's a very quick test," Trump said at a Rose Garden event to highlight his administration's efforts to develop a vaccine for the virus. "And it can always be very rapidly double checked."

The rapid swab is used daily at the White House to test Trump, key members of his staff as well as any visitor to the White House complex who comes in close proximity to the president or Vice President Mike

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Pence. The tests were also used to justify most White House staffers' decisions not to wear masks until they were ordered to do so earlier this week.

"We've got to get to the bottom of it, but we still have confidence in the test or we wouldn't have it on the market," Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told Fox Business Network.

White House officials on Friday continued using the Abbot ID Now test. Reporters at the White House underwent the test before Trump's Rose Garden event. The president noted that the administration officials and staff around him, not all of whom were wearing masks, also had undergone testing Friday.

Trump, who also did not wear a mask, was asked why not everyone was wearing a face covering.

"I've been tested, we've all been tested and we're quite a distance away, and we're outdoors," said Trump. "I told them I gave them the option they can wear it or not."

Azar described the FDA warning as a routine announcement that comes after medical manufacturers submit any type of negative information about their product.

Trump has praised the Abbott test as "very quick, very good" and alluded to the tests helping keep him safe. The coronavirus test was quickly brought to market in late March, just weeks after Trump effectively called on the nation to lock down to try to slow the spread of the virus. At the time, the test received governmental approval, FDA commissioner Steve Hahn noted "normally these tests take months to develop."

On Friday, Hahn said that if a person is suspected of having the disease caused by the coronavirus, "it might be worth, if the test is negative, getting a second confirmatory test. That's what our guidance is about."

Hahn, asked on CBS on Friday whether he'd continue to recommend using the test at the White House, said, "That will be a White House decision." But he said the test is on the market and the FDA continues to "recommend its use or to have it available for use."

White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said she had discussed the issue with Hahn and suggested some of the high false negative results may have been the result of "user error."

Still, she said, "They take any indication of false negatives very seriously," adding that anyone who tests negative but still presents symptoms should consider being tested again.

McEnany also cited the president's daily test as a reason he chooses not to wear a mask.

Federal health officials have been alerting doctors to the potential inaccuracy in the test, which is used at thousands of hospitals, clinics and testing sites across the United States.

The FDA warning came a day after New York University researchers reported results suggesting Abbott's test can miss up to half the infections caught by a rival test made by Cepheid. The research has not been peer-reviewed or published in a medical journal and was based on about 100 patients.

The researchers found that Abbott's test, run on the company's portable ID NOW system, missed one-third of the infections caught by Cepheid's test when swabs were stored in liquid used to transport laboratory samples. When the samples were kept dry the test missed 48% of the cases flagged by Cepheid's test.

The researchers called the test's performance "unacceptable," due to the risk of falsely clearing patients who could spread the infection to others. They acknowledged shortcomings of the study, including the time needed to transport patient samples to the device for processing.

Abbott rejected the findings, saying the researchers used the test "in ways that it was not designed to be used."

"ID NOW is intended to be used near the patient with a direct swab test method," the company said in a statement.

The company pointed to other independent study results that found the test accurately detected 90% or more infections.

Last month Abbott changed the instructions for its test to explicitly warn against putting patient samples in transport chemicals. The update came after researchers at the Cleveland Clinic reported a 15% false negative rate for samples stored in the chemicals.

The FDA said it was reviewing the data with Abbott and was working on a letter to health care providers about potential accuracy issues. The agency said physicians may need to confirm the results of a negative Abbott test if patients have symptoms of the virus. Regulators said they are requiring Abbott to conduct

follow-up studies on the test's accuracy.

Federal contracting data show the White House spent \$140,666 on the Abbott rapid test kits in April. The Department of Health and Human Services also paid more than \$27.3 million last month for the problematic Abbott tests.

Madhani reported from Chicago. AP writer Michel Biesecker contributed to this report.

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.

Sailors on sidelined carrier get virus for second time

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Five sailors on the U.S. aircraft carrier sidelined in Guam due to a COVID-19 outbreak have tested positive for the virus for the second time and have been taken off the ship, according to the Navy.

The resurgence of the virus in the five sailors on the USS Theodore Roosevelt underscores the befuddling behavior of the highly contagious virus and raises questions about how troops that test positive can be reintegrated into the military, particularly on ships.

All five sailors had previously tested positive and had gone through at least two weeks of isolation. As part of the process, they all had to test negative twice in a row, with the tests separated by at least a day or two before they were allowed to go back to the ship.

The Roosevelt has been at port in Guam since late March after the outbreak of the virus was discovered. More than 4,000 of the 4,800 crew members have gone ashore since then for quarantine or isolation. Earlier this month hundreds of sailors began returning to the ship, in coordinated waves, to get ready to set sail again.

In a statement Friday, the Navy said that, while onboard, the five sailors self-monitored and adhered to strict social distancing protocols.

"These five Sailors developed influenza-like illness symptoms and did the right thing reporting to medical for evaluation," the Navy said, adding that they were immediately removed from the ship and put back in isolation. A small number of other sailors who were in contact with them were also taken off the ship.

Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said the outbreak has been a learning process.

"This is a very stubborn, infectious disease," he told Pentagon reporters during a briefing on Friday. He said that because of the Navy's quick action, medical crew were notified right away and determined who might have also been exposed and got them all off the ship.

As of Thursday, more than 2,900 sailors have reboarded the ship, and about 25% of the more than 1,000 who had tested positive have now recovered, according to the Navy.

One U.S. official familiar with the situation on the ship said commanders don't know why this is happening but suggested it could be related to questions about testing accuracy. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said that screening has been intensified on the ship. And, anyone who exhibits any flu-like symptoms at all is being tested and removed.

The sailors have been tested using the nasal swab. And in some cases the infection can be at such a low level that it is not detected by the test. It's not clear whether cases like these are actual relapses, or if people tested negative without really being completely clear of the virus.

Turkish pilots, others, to stand trial over Ghosn escape

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — A court in Istanbul on Friday accepted an indictment against four pilots, an airline company official and two flight attendants accused of helping former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn escape from Japan to Lebanon via Turkey, and set a trial date for July 3.

Prosecutors are seeking up to eight years in prison each for the four pilots and the airline official, on

charges of illegally smuggling a migrant, according to the indictment, cited by the state-run Anadolu Agency. The two flight attendants face a one-year prison term each if convicted of not reporting a crime.

Ghosn, who was arrested over financial misconduct allegations in Tokyo in 2018, skipped bail while awaiting trial in Japan late last year. He flew to Istanbul and was then transferred onto another plane bound for Beirut, where he arrived Dec. 30.

The Turkish airline company MNG Jet said in January that two of its planes were used illegally in Ghosn's escape, first flying him from Osaka, Japan, to Istanbul, and then on to Beirut. The company said its employee had admitted to falsifying flight records so that Ghosn's name did not appear on them.

The indictment states that Ghosn is believed to have been smuggled inside a "foam-covered music box" large enough to carry a person 1.70 meter- (5.58 feet-) tall, the private DHA news agency reported. It notes a 216,000 euro and 66,000 dollar increase in the airline official's bank accounts between Oct. 16 and Dec. 26, 2019.

The four pilots and the two flight attendants have denied involvement in the plans to smuggle Ghosn. They also denied knowing that the former Nissan chief was aboard the flights, DHA reported.

The company employee and four pilots remain in custody while the flight attendants were released after questioning.

Lawyer: Security video in Arbery case may show water breaks

By RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — A young black man filmed by a security camera walking through a home under construction in December and in February may have stopped at the site for a drink of water, according to an attorney for the homeowner thrust into the investigation of the fatal shooting of Ahmaud Arbery.

Arbery was killed Feb. 23 in a pursuit by a white father and son who armed themselves after the 25-year-old black man ran past their yard just outside the port city of Brunswick. Right before the chase, Arbery was recorded inside an open-framed home being built on the same street.

Gregory McMichael, 64, and Travis McMichael, 34, have been jailed on murder charges since May 7. The elder McMichael told police he suspected Arbery was responsible for recent break-ins in the neighborhood. He also said Arbery attacked his son before he was shot.

Arbery's mother has said she believes her son was merely out jogging.

On Friday, an attorney for the owner of the house under construction released three security camera videos taken Dec. 17, more than two months before the shooting. They show a black man in a T-shirt and shorts at the site. In the final clip, he walks a few steps toward the road, then starts running at a jogger's pace.

"It now appears that this young man may have been coming onto the property for water," J. Elizabeth Graddy, the attorney for homeowner Larry English, said in a statement. "There is a water source at the dock behind the house as well as a source near the front of the structure. Although these water sources do not appear within any of the cameras' frames, the young man moves to and from their locations."

A man in similar clothes appears briefly in another security video taken at the home construction site Feb. 11, less than two weeks before the shooting. Graddy said that person appears to be the same man shown in the Dec. 17 videos.

It is not known if Arbery is the person shown in any of the videos taken prior to Feb. 23, when the shooting occurred.

Defense lawyers for Gregory McMichael said Friday that they have examined evidence that "tells a very different story" about Arbery and the two men charged with killing him. Attorney Laura Hogue told reporters: "There is more than one video of the incident."

She did not give any specifics. A roughly 40-second cellphone video of the shooting was leaked online last week, a day before the McMichaels were charged the felony murder and aggravated assault. The video fueled a national outcry not just over the killing but also that more than two months passed before arrests were made.

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Attorney Franklin Hogue, hired to defend Gregory McMichael along with his law partner wife, said more details would be revealed at a preliminary court hearing that he plans to request soon.

"The truth will reveal this is not just another act of violent racism," Franklin Hogue told a news conference outside the couple's Macon office. "Greg McMichael did not commit murder. Greg McMichael is not a party to the crime of murder."

Attorneys for Arbery's parents have said security camera video from the same home construction site Feb. 23 shows Arbery on the property right before the shooting. They also say the footage shows Arbery committing no crimes.

English has said nothing was ever stolen from his property. Graddy said his security cameras had recorded "numerous clips of persons entering the property" and shared two clips that showed a pair of children riding bicycles up to the home and then walking inside.

"There were frequently people on the construction site both day and night," attorneys for Arbery's parents said in a statement Friday. "Ahmaud Arbery seems to be the only one who was presumed to be a criminal and ultimately the only one murdered based on that assumption."

Travis McMichael, 34, called 911 to report a possible trespasser on English's property the night of Feb. 11, less than two weeks before Arbery was shot. He described a "black male, red shirt and white shorts."

"When I turned around and saw him and backed up, he reached into his pocket and ran into the house," Travis McMichael told the 911 operator. "So I don't know if he's armed or not. But he looked like, he was acting like he was."

AP reporter Kate Brumback contributed from Atlanta.

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 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 in 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

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sands of Waikiki that they needed to be in the water or moving along.

On the East Coast, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy issued guidance Thursday to officials in shore towns on reopening beaches, directing them to set occupancy limits and spacing requirements. Popular tourist spots like Point Pleasant and Seaside Heights, home of "Jersey Shore" fame, were opening Friday. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo also announced that beaches will open with limits in time for Memorial Day weekend.

In Greece, with an early heat wave hitting the country over the weekend, more than 500 organized beaches — where umbrellas and lounge chairs are available for hire — were opening Saturday morning, with strict social distancing measures. Free public beaches opened a few weeks ago. Authorities issued warnings when some crowds formed, but beach-goers generally appeared to heed health guidelines.

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."

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.

Mlak Sahli, a student from Saudi Arabia studying public health, said it felt liberating to return 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.

Poll: US believers see message of change from God in virus

By ELANA SCHOR and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The coronavirus has prompted almost two-thirds of American believers of all faiths to feel that God is telling humanity to change how it lives, a new poll finds.

While the virus rattles the globe, causing economic hardship for millions and killing more than 80,000 Americans, the findings of the poll by the University of Chicago Divinity School and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research indicate that people may also be searching for deeper meaning in the devastating outbreak.

Even some who don't affiliate with organized religion, such as Lance Dejesus of Dallastown, Pa., saw a possible bigger message in the virus.

"It could be a sign, like 'hey, get your act together' — I don't know," said Dejesus, 52, who said he believes

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in God but doesn't consider himself religious. "It just seems like everything was going in an OK direction and all of a sudden you get this coronavirus thing that happens, pops out of nowhere."

The poll found that 31% of Americans who believe in God feel strongly that the virus is a sign of God telling humanity to change, with the same number feeling that somewhat. Evangelical Protestants are more likely than others to believe that strongly, at 43%, compared with 28% of Catholics and mainline Protestants.

The question was asked of all Americans who said they believe in God, without specifying a specific faith. The survey did not have a sample size large enough to report on the opinions of religious faiths with smaller numbers of U.S. adherents, including Muslims and Jews.

In addition, black Americans were more likely than those of other racial backgrounds to say they feel the virus is a sign God wants humanity to change, regardless of education, income or gender. Forty-seven percent say they feel that strongly, compared with 37% of Latino and 27% of white Americans.

The COVID-19 virus has disproportionately walloped black Americans, exposing societal inequality that has left minorities more vulnerable and heightening concern that the risks they face are getting ignored by a push to reopen the U.S. economy. Amid that stark reality, the poll found black Americans who believe in God are more likely than others to say they have felt doubt about God's existence as a result of the virus — 27% said that, compared with 13% of Latinos and 11% of white Americans.

But the virus has prompted negligible change in Americans' overall belief in God, with 2% saying they believe in God today, but did not before. Fewer than 1% say they do not believe in God today but did before.

Most houses of worship stopped in-person services to help protect public health as the virus began spreading, but that didn't stop religious Americans from turning to online and drive-in gatherings to express their faiths. Americans with a religious affiliation are regularly engaging in private prayer during the pandemic, with 57% saying they do so at least weekly since March — about the same share that say they prayed as regularly last year.

Overall, 82% of Americans say they believe in God, and 26% of Americans say their sense of faith or spirituality has grown stronger as a result of the outbreak. Just 1% say it has weakened.

Kathryn Lofton, a professor of religious studies at Yale University, interpreted the high number of Americans perceiving the virus as a message from God about change as an expression of "fear that if we don't change, this misery will continue."

"When people get asked about God, they often interpret it immediately as power," said Lofton, who collaborated with researchers from the University of Chicago and other universities, along with The Associated Press, on the design of the new poll. "And they answer the question saying, 'Here's where the power is to change the thing I experience.'"

Fifty-five percent of American believers say they feel at least somewhat that God will protect them from being infected. Evangelical Protestants are more likely than those of other religious backgrounds to say they believe that, with 43% saying so strongly and another 30% saying so somewhat, while Catholics and mainline Protestants are more closely split on feeling that way or not.

However, the degree and nature of protection that God is believed to offer during the pandemic can differ depending on the believer. Marcia Howl, 73, a Methodist and granddaughter of a minister, said she feels God's protection but not certainty that it would save her from the virus.

"I believe he has protected me in the past, that he has a plan for us," said Howl, of Portalas, N.M. "I don't know what's in his plan, but I believe his presence is here looking after me. Whether I can survive it or not, that's a different story."

Among black Americans who believe in God, 49% say they feel strongly that God will protect them from the virus, compared with 34% of Latino and 20% of white Americans.

David Emmanuel Goatley, a professor at Duke University's divinity school who was not involved with the survey, said religious black Americans' view of godly protection could convey "confidence or hope that God is able to provide -- that does not relinquish personal responsibility, but it says God is able."

Goatley, who directs the school's Office of Black Church Studies, noted a potential distinction between how

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religious black Americans and religious white Americans might see their protective relationship with God. Within black Christian theology is a sense of connection to the divine in which "God is personally engaged and God is present," he said. That belief, he added, is "different from a number of white Christians, evangelical and not, who would have a theology that's more a private relationship with God."

Fingerhut reported from Washington.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,002 adults was conducted April 30-May 4 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.2 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

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

Facebook buys Giphy, popular tool for creating animated GIFs

By The Associated Press undefined

Facebook has bought Giphy, a popular tool for creating the animated images known as GIFs that pepper conversations around the internet.

The companies did not disclose financial terms. Citing unnamed people familiar with the matter, Axios said the deal is valued around \$400 million.

Facebook said in a blog post Friday that it plans to integrate Giphy into Instagram but added that Giphy will still work outside of Facebook's properties.

The company said about half of Giphy's traffic comes from Facebook's apps — Instagram, Facebook, Messenger and WhatsApp. Giphy is also widely used on Twitter and in messaging apps.

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. AFGHANISTAN MATERNITY HOSPITAL ATTACK - A U.S. official said he is convinced the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan carried out this week's horrific attack on a maternity hospital in a majority Shiite Muslim neighborhood in Kabul, killing 24 people, including newborn babies and mothers.

5. TEBLOR RATTLES NEVADA - The main highway between Las Vegas and Reno was damaged and closed following a magnitude 6.5 earthquake.

Review: Zoinks! 'Scoob!' is no tasty treat

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

Even before darker anxieties took hold, the bad guys of "Scooby-Doo" were charmingly quaint. An evil circus owner, a grumpy civil servant, a plotting first mate — these were the villains of "Scooby-Doo," all of them revealed with an unmasking flourish and the cursing of "you meddling kids."

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But for anyone looking for the nostalgic and corny delights of the old 1970s cartoon in the new animated reboot "Scoob!" — well, and I'm sorry to resort to this, ruh roh. "Scoob!" is the kind of movie less predicated on original formulas than the contemporary dictates of corporate franchise-making. Scooby-Doo has been amplified and digitized. Superheroes and current pop culture references have been ushered in, most of them from other properties of the same studio (including even "Shallow" from "A Star Is Born"). Even a "cinematic universe" has been born. It's enough to make a critic sigh "zoinks."

"Scoob!" had been headed for theaters this spring but on Friday it was released for rental on digital platforms and on-demand. Following Universal's "Trolls World Tour," it's the second major studio movie diverted into the home by the pandemic — this time via Warner Bros.

The smaller screen may be the more natural home of Scooby-Doo even though "Scoob!" aspires to be so much like other big-screen franchises. This latest film, following a pair of live-action movies in the aughts, has replaced the usual small-time mysteries of "Scooby-Doo" with the familiar world-jeopardizing dangers of comic-book movies. Even Scooby gets outfitted in spandex.

It's a less discussed and tiresome effect of Marvel movies that so many kids films have adopted their rhythms and plot lines. The superhero takeover extends into so many realms of pop culture that wanly surrender, joining in lock step. Incorporating characters like Blue Falcon, Dick Dastardly, Captain Caveman and Dynomutt, "Scoob!" has also tried to grow an interconnected Hanna-Barbera universe, a gambit that only adds to the feeling of force-fed corporate synergy.

Director Tony Cervone, a longtime Hanna-Barbera and Warner Bros. Animation veteran, opens "Scoob!" with an origin story, flashing back to when Scooby (voiced again by Frank Welker) met Shaggy (Will Forte, taking over for Casey Kasem).

Hundreds of cases later, the movie catches up with Mystery Inc. gang, including Fred (Zac Efron), Daphne (Amanda Seyfried) and Velma (Gina Rodriguez). Setting things in motion is, of all people, Simon Cowell (voicing himself and appearing in weirdly accurate animated form), who professes friendship has no value. "Scoob!" will test the bond between Shaggy and Scooby.

Things immediately go haywire. A spaceship arrives and abducts Shaggy and Scooby. Aboard is the son of Blue Falcon (Mark Wahlberg) and his robotic canine Dynomutt (Ken Jeong), who need Scooby to help stop a scheme launched by Dick Dastardly (Jason Isaacs) involving ancient, mythic dogs.

If Greek antiquity isn't where you'd expect a "Scooby Doo" movie to go, you'll probably also be thrown by straining-to-be-hip gags about the Hemsworth brothers and stealing Netflix passwords. Right down to that exclamation point in the title, "Scoob!" is trying much too hard to be just like every other movie. "Scooby Doo" was never the most unpredictable of shows but "Scoob!" has merely swapped the original's blueprint for that of a superhero movie. You'll be left mournfully munching a bag of Scooby Snacks while wondering, "Scooby-Dooby-Doo, where are you?"

"Scoob!" a Warner Bros. Pictures release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for some action, language and rude/suggestive humor. Running time: 94 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

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

Once adversaries, Boston lawyers now aid COVID-19 caregivers

By MICHAEL REZENDES Associated Press

During a storied legal career, Clyde Bergstresser has become one of the go-to medical malpractice lawyers in Massachusetts. But as COVID-19 cases surged at Boston area hospitals, Bergstresser found his sympathies aligning with the professions he has often fingered in million-dollar lawsuits.

"I've made a lot of money suing the health care industry. This seems like a good time to give back," he said.

Rather than make a personal donation to one of the city's many hospitals, Bergstresser blitzed the local legal community, corraling support from some of the city's most prominent attorneys in a new non-profit

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they are calling, "Lawyers Honoring COVID Caregivers."

The idea is to use the considerable influence of board members, and a quickly designed website, to raise money for front-line care givers.

Although a variety of recipients could qualify for the funds, Bergstresser said the group is targeting Boston EMS, the city's ambulance service, and Boston Medical Center, a safety-net hospital that serves the city's poor.

Norman Stein, the chief development officer at BMC, said the funds are arriving just in time and are likely to be used for a variety of items that don't normally pop up on the hospital's budget.

For instance, the hospital is housing nearly 140 staffers at a nearby Hampton Inn so they can be sure they won't infect family members with the novel coronavirus. The staffers run the professional gamut, from doctors and nurses to maintenance workers, dietitians and medical technicians. And they have been staying at the inn anywhere from two to 50 nights.

"At the end of the day you really want to go home. But should you go home?" Stein asked. "If staffers decide they'd rather not, they can stay at the hotel."

Another unexpected expense has been food and financial support for some of the 750 staffers, many of them low-wage earners, who were furloughed as the hospital stopped providing elective surgeries and other non-emergency procedures while gearing up for the rush of COVID-19 patients.

At the peak of the surge, which is cresting in Massachusetts, 70 percent of the hospital's beds were occupied by COVID-19 patients, a higher percentage than at any of Boston's other hospitals, according to Stein.

At Boston EMS, chief of staff Laura Segal said the lawyers' interests were "perfectly aligned" with the goals of agency's Peer Support Unit, which helps EMTs and paramedics who may be traumatized after responding to emergencies.

Pat Calter, the unit coordinator, said it typically helps emergency personnel recover by encouraging them to take time for themselves with meditation, yoga or a physical workout, and by relying on the support of their fellow EMTs and paramedics. "There needs to be guidance, there needs to be support and there needs to be a safety net, and we provide all three," he said.

Calter said the funds coming from the lawyers are especially welcome because it is expected that when the pandemic eases, EMTs and paramedics will show the effects of the strain under which they've been living.

"Members are out there burning the candle at both ends. They're going to fall hard, and we need to lessen the blow and soften the landing," he said.

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.

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

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.

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About 133,000 U.S. workers — just over half of the industry's workforce before the pandemic — are expected to pour back into auto 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 has seen sales start to recover.

Ford is predicting stronger sales in the future in Europe, China and the U.S. based on data collected from new models equipped with internet modems that show the number of times an engine is turned on and off. The company 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.

U.S. sales fell 46% in April compared with a year ago, but analysts are forecasting a smaller decline of 30% in May. Sales have been juiced by incentives, with offers of 0% financing for seven years. Government statistics show auto production dropped over 70% in April.

Pickup trucks are giving automakers the most hope, said Jeff Schuster, senior vice president at LMC Automotive, a consulting firm. From January 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. "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

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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.

VIRUS DIARY: Navigating a flu-like illness in the corona age

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — For those of us from a region where outbursts of violence are an occupational hazard, coping with coronavirus seemed simple enough: Stay at home and you'll be fine.

For the most part it has been. Other than taking the dog out for walks, I've been homebound, working remotely and waiting for the plague to pass.

On April 6, I finally headed out to report on Israeli volunteers aiding those on the pandemic's front lines. Then I started to develop a sore throat. And an irksome cough. And some shortness of breath.

I reasoned it was a just a cold I had picked up from one of my daughters or a "regular" flu. Still, a panicky climate amid a surge in coronavirus cases left that lingering doubt following my lone sojourn into the outside world.

A brief call to Israel's national coronavirus hotline made it clear I was a low-priority case. I hadn't been out of the country recently, hadn't come in contact with a confirmed coronavirus case and didn't have a temperature over 38 degrees (100.4 Fahrenheit).

With Israel's Health Ministry under fire for delivering far less than their promised availability of tests, I was swiftly rejected.

With the country in virtual lockdown, people were also being discouraged from physically visiting doctors for fear of contagion. So, after a phone consultation I started taking an antihistamine and a steroid inhaler for breathing difficulties, while continuing to take cold and flu medication.

For the next week it mostly did the trick. But the symptoms simply wouldn't go away.

Finally, after two weeks, I went to the local clinic. The physician checked me out and suggested I also use an allergy nasal spray. I asked about a COVID-19 test but was referred to a specialist instead. A nurse added to my confusion by suggesting I get checked for the coronavirus.

"But I don't have a fever," I explained.

Irrelevant, she responded, saying many younger people were asymptomatic and my cough and shortness of breath made me a prime candidate.

I was steadily feeling worse with full-body aches and chest pains. Making matters worse, my 1-year-old daughter started running a high fever. I raged at my vacillation, fearing I had not only neglected my own health but exposed my family as well. With a pounding head, I called the coronavirus hotline again to

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demand a test. After a long exchange, I was rejected once again.

The next day, I visited an ear, nose and throat specialist, where a thorough examination seemed to solve the mystery. It was a bad case of sinusitis. The diagnosis — any diagnosis! — gave me a sense of relief.

But after several days of antibiotics, I was just feeling worse. I was breaking out into alternating fits of sweating and shivering cold. My fever spiked and the aches kept me bed-bound for hours.

I didn't know what was going on. Could I really be having sinusitis and the worst flu of my life at the same time? I quarantined myself in one of the girls' rooms and feared something more ominous was going on.

I called the corona hotline a third time. Finally, they relented.

The following day, a young woman in a full-body protective suit and a menacing visor arrived at my door, swabbed my throat and nostril and said I'd get a result in three to five days.

Thankfully, the baby's fever had broken and no one else in the family was ill. Slowly, I began to recover, waking up pain-free for the first time on April 29. Rolling out of bed, I peeked at my phone.

There was a text message from the Health Ministry.

"The corona test performed on you," it read, "is negative."

—
Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus saga through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. Follow AP Jerusalem Correspondent Aron Heller at www.twitter.com/aronhellerap

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, May 16, the 137th day of 2020. There are 229 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 16, 1943, the nearly month-long Warsaw Ghetto Uprising came to an end as German forces crushed the Jewish resistance and blew up the Great Synagogue.

On this date:

In 1770, Marie Antoinette, age 14, married the future King Louis XVI of France, who was 15.

In 1868, at the U.S. Senate impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson, 35 out of 54 senators voted to find Johnson guilty of "high crimes and misdemeanors" over his attempted dismissal of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, falling one vote short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict; the trial ended 10 days later after two other articles of impeachment went down to defeat as well.

In 1920, Joan of Arc was canonized by Pope Benedict XV.

In 1939, the federal government began its first food stamp program in Rochester, New York.

In 1953, Associated Press correspondent William N. Oatis was released by Communist authorities in Czechoslovakia, where he had been imprisoned for two years after being forced to confess to espionage while working as the AP's Prague bureau chief.

In 1966, China launched the Cultural Revolution, a radical as well as deadly reform movement aimed at purging the country of "counter-revolutionaries."

In 1975, Japanese climber Junko Tabei became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

In 1984, comedian Andy Kaufman died in Los Angeles at age 35.

In 1988, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *California v. Greenwood*, ruled that police could search discarded garbage without a search warrant. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop released a report declaring nicotine was addictive in ways similar to heroin and cocaine.

In 1990, death claimed entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. in Los Angeles at age 64 and "Muppets" creator Jim Henson in New York at age 53.

In 1991, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to address the United States Congress as she lauded U.S.-British cooperation in the Persian Gulf War.

In 2006, the Pentagon released the first video images of American Airlines Flight 77 crashing into the

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military headquarters and killing 189 people on 9/11.

Ten years ago: BP crews finally succeeded in keeping some of the oil rushing from a blown well out of the Gulf of Mexico by hooking up a mile-long tube to funnel the crude into a tanker ship. Space shuttle Atlantis arrived at the International Space Station. Rafael Nadal won a record 18th Masters title by beating Roger Federer 6-4, 7-6 (5) in the Madrid final. Lebanese-born Miss Michigan Rima Fakih won the 2010 Miss USA title.

Five years ago: U.S. commandos killed a man described as the Islamic State's head of oil operations in a rare ground attack inside Syria. An Egyptian court sentenced the country's first freely elected leader, ousted Islamist President Mohammed Morsi, to death over a mass prison break during the 2011 uprising that eventually brought him to power. (Morsi collapsed and died in court in June, 2019, during trial on espionage charges.) American Pharoah won the Preakness in a driving rain, keeping alive his Triple Crown bid, which he achieved at the Belmont Stakes the following month.

One year ago: The death of globe-trotting architect I.M. Pei was confirmed by his New York company; one of Pei's sons said he had died overnight at the age of 102. Former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning was ordered back to jail for refusing to testify to a grand jury investigating WikiLeaks. (Manning was released in March, 2020 after prosecutors reported that the grand jury that subpoenaed her had disbanded.) Prosecutors in Dallas said Billy Chemirmir, a man who'd previously been arrested in the death of an 81-year-old woman, had been charged with killing at least 11 more elderly women whose jewelry and other valuables he allegedly stole. "The Big Bang Theory" closed out its run as television's top-rated comedy; the series had won 10 Emmy Awards, including four acting honors for Jim Parsons.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Senator and Connecticut Governor Lowell Weicker is 89. Former Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats is 77. Jazz musician Billy Cobham is 76. Actor Danny Trejo is 76. Actor Bill Smitrovich is 73. Actor Pierce Brosnan is 67. Actress Debra Winger is 65. Olympic gold medal gymnast Olga Korbut is 64. Olympic gold medal marathon runner Joan Benoit Samuelson is 62. Actress Mare Winningham is 61. Rock musician Boyd Tinsley (The Dave Matthews Band) is 56. Rock musician Krist Novoselic (noh-voh-SEL'ik) is 55. Singer Janet Jackson is 54. Country singer Scott Reeves (Blue County) is 54. Actor Brian (BREE'-un) F. O'Byrne is 53. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ralph Tresvant (New Edition) is 52. Actor David Boreanaz is 51. Political correspondent Tucker Carlson is 51. Actress Tracey Gold is 51. International Tennis Hall of Famer Gabriela Sabatini is 50. Country singer Rick Trevino is 49. Musician Simon Katz is 49. TV personality Bill Rancic is 49. Actor Khary Payton is 48. Rapper Special Ed is 48. Actress Tori Spelling is 47. Actor Sean Carrigan is 46. Singer-rapper B. Slade (formerly known as Tonex) is 45. Actress Lynn Collins is 43. Actress Melanie Lynskey is 43. Actor Jim Sturgess is 42. Actor Joseph Morgan is 39. DJ Alex Pall (The Chainsmokers) is 35. Actress Megan Fox is 34. Actor Drew Roy is 34. Actor Jacob Zachar is 34. Actor-comedian Jermaine Fowler is 32. Actor Thomas Brodie-Sangster is 30. Actor Marc John Jefferies is 30. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Ashley Wagner is 29. Actor Miles Heizer is 26.

Thought for Today: "Work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying." — Studs Terkel, American author and historian (born this date in 1912, died 2008).

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