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Work is well underway for the new Langford water tower. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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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Jean Walter's Birthday

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



Bahrs celebrate 50th Anniversary

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

Helmer graveside service

Richard E. Helmer: December 16, 1926 – March 26, 2020

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

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GHS Senior Parade

This is an amazing photo taken by Matt Johnson on top of Tom Wood's house across the alley from Groton Area High School. The high school building is a perfect backdrop for the photo with the US Flag clearly seen. Yesterday was suppose to be the GHS graduation day, but with the COVID-19, graduation has been postponed to July 12th. That did not stop the GHS senior parade on a most perfect weather day.



Parents and well-wishers were on hand for the 2020 GHS Senior Parade. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Langford seniors were recognized with banners on the street lights in Langford. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The NFL schedule has been released, so we now know who the Vikings will face and when they will play them. It goes without saying, but this schedule is assuming sports will be back relatively soon, which is no sure thing. Speaking of the pandemic, I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe. also hope you are enjoying these articles, and they are able to bring a small distraction from all the negative news.



By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings open their preseason at home against the Houston Texans on August 14. Deshaun Watson is a phenomenal young quarterback, and their defense - led by JJ Watt - can be good when healthy.

Their next game is in Cincinnati on Aug 21. The Bengals had the number one overall pick in this year's draft, selecting QB Joe Burrow from LSU.

Nine days later the Vikings travel to Cleveland to battle the Browns, where Kevin Stefanski has been named the team's head coach after being on the Vikings' coaching staff since 2006.

The Vikings' last practice game will be at home against the Seattle Seahawks on September 3, which somehow makes it five years in a row the two teams will meet in the preseason.

The Vikings start off the regular season at home against the Green Bay Packers on Sept 13. This game will be a good test for both of these teams who have division title aspirations.

Week two, the Vikings travel to Indianapolis on Sept 20 to take on the Colts who are now led by Philip Rivers.

Week three will be a home game on Sept 27 against the Tennessee Titans, a team led by their bruising running back Derrick Henry.

The week four game will air October 4, featuring the Texans once again, although this game will be in Houston.

Week five feels like deja vu, as the Vikings will once again face a preseason foe, this time traveling to Seattle on Oct 11.

Week six will be at home, as the Matt Ryan led Atlanta Falcons come to town on Oct 18.

Following the game against Atlanta, the Vikings will have their bye week before traveling to Green Bay on November 1.

The Vikings return home and prepare for another divisional foe, with the Detroit Lions coming to town Nov 8. The Lions drafted the best cornerback and running back (Jeff Okudah, D'Andre Swift), it will be interesting to see if they take a step forward this year.

The Vikings and Bears will battle in Chicago week 10. This is a Monday Night Game, and will air Nov 16.

The Vikings return home week 11, taking on the Cowboys Nov 22. QB Dak Prescott has been franchise tagged, and is negotiating with the team for a contract that will make him the highest paid player in the NFL. As of now both sides are refusing to give in.

Week 12 the Carolina Panthers fly to Minnesota on Nov 29. The Panthers have moved on from QB Cam Newton, and have replaced him with former Viking Teddy Bridgewater.

The Vikings and Jacksonville Jaguars clash in week 13, which will be December 6. The Jaguars are undergoing a roster transformation, and project as one of the worst teams in the league.

Week 14 will be a highly anticipated matchup, as the Vikings travel to Tampa Bay on Dec 13 to take on the Tom Brady led Buccaneers (that sentence feels weird to write).

Week 15 the Vikings and Bears will have a rematch in Minnesota on Dec 20.

Week 16 looks to be the best game of the season for a few different reasons. The Vikings travel to New Orleans for a great late-season matchup. The game will also be on Christmas!

The Vikings will finish up the regular season at Detroit on January 03.

What do you think the Vikings' final record will be when it's all said and done? Reach out to me on Twitter and let me know (@JordanWrightNFL). Skol!

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It's Healthy to Talk About Bodily Functions

One summer during my college years, another premed student and I got a job at the Swedish Hospital in Minneapolis, as nurses' aides. At that time, the guys were called orderlies, but we were part of the nursing department. We were taught how to clean patients' private parts without making the patient feel self-conscious, and how to place urinary catheters mostly in old men with prostates that had overgrown and were blocking urinary flow.



By Richard P. Holm, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

We all have those private areas, let's not pretend otherwise. The waste disposal parts are as important to us through our lifetime as our hearts, except not quite as romantic. Try switching metaphors and famous poems simply don't have the same pizzazz. For example, try E.E. Cummings' "I carry your colon with me," or William Wordsworth's "My urinary tract leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky," or Douglass Cross' "I left my bladder in San Francisco."

Romance aside, we are happy when our urinary tract is working well, draining the urine, removing waste and water. The kidneys collect and concentrate the urine, they deliver this yellow fluid through the ureters, the tubes from the kidneys to the bladder. The bladder is a bag to collect the urine until it is convenient to be emptied.

It seems like a simple, straight-forward system. However, trouble could be around the next corner. Conditions like urinary tract infections, kidney stones, bladder control problems, and prostate troubles are not uncommon through the course of a person's life and can vary from causing short-term discomforts to long-lasting conditions.

One of the barriers to treatment for many people is the human problem of stigma and shame. It does not feel good to admit to anyone, even a loved one or a medical professional, that you're having troubles "down there." Let me reassure you: this is a common human condition. Shame is an enemy to a healthy, functioning body. I would instead say "join the club!" and remind you that you are not the only one with such a problem.

I am no longer the young orderly helping the old men in the Swedish Hospital with their issues. I now find myself amazed at the magnificent function of the human body, identifying more with those old guys than I do with the young staff. All of us have bladders and urinary tracts about which there is nothing to be ashamed.

Richard P. Holm, MD wrote this essay in February 2020. He passed away in March after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace" available on Amazon. Dr. Holm's legacy lives on through his Prairie Doc® organization. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook, featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. Central.

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Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The numbers are going the right direction; this is the third consecutive day of good news. Remembering that reporting is somewhat inconsistent on weekends, I like the look of this. A lot.

We're at 1,493,300 cases in the US. New case numbers are down today for the second consecutive day. They've also dipped well below 20,000, and we haven't been there for a couple of days now. NY leads with 355,037 cases, a nice decline in new cases and back below 2000 new cases for the first time in several days. NJ has 146,334 cases, which is holding for the third day. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: IL -94,362, MA - 86,010, CA - 80,158, PA - 65,745, MI - 51,054, TX - 48,793, FL - 45,580, and MD - 38,920. These ten states account for 68% of US cases. 4 more states have over 30,000 cases, 3 more states have over 20,000 cases, 12 more have over 10,000, 8 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, FL, CA, MD, PA, CT, MI, and GA. States where new case reports are increasing include TX, OK, LA, AR, VA, ND, NC, and WY. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, CO, NJ, WA, MA, RI, IN, and MO. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 89,502 deaths in the US. Today the number of new deaths is well down for a second day and below 1000 new deaths reported (well below at that) for the first time in 5 days. NY has 28,168, NJ has 10,356, MA has 5797, MI has 4891, PA has 4506, IL has 4198, CT has 3408, CA has 3290, and LA has 2425. All of these states except NY (just over 200) and NJ (just over 100) reported fewer than 100 new deaths, most of them well under. Things are going our way. There are 9 more states over 1000 deaths, 5 more over 500, 15 more + DC and PR over 100, and 12 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

A few weeks ago, I reported here that a small study had indicated the drug, hydroxychloroquine, was showing some activity against SARS-CoV-2 and then later I added that it is possible it works better if used in combination with the antibiotic, azithromycin. That news, of course, led to the establishment of dozens of controlled clinical trials and also led to FDA emergency authorization to use the drugs for Covid-19 outside of clinical trials. Along the way, we've been hearing some troubling reports of a particular heart arrhythmia in patients treated with these drugs that increased the risk for sudden cardiac death. Now that people have been giving this for a while, we have some data from two observational studies (where they look at patients who did and did not receive this treatment and compare the results. I will point out that the gold standard is still a controlled trial and that such studies are not yet complete; but these data are a good indication what we might expect from trials as they wrap up. The first study involved 1438 patients and was reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association. It concludes that, "Among patients hospitalized in metropolitan New York with COVID-19, treatment with hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, or both, compared with neither treatment, was not significantly associated with differences in in-hospital mortality." They may have seen an increased rate of cardiac complications with these drugs, but that difference might be explainable in another way, so no conclusions about this were drawn. The authors, of course, acknowledged the limitations of an observational study and the need to defer to controlled trials when these are reported.

The second was reported in the New England Journal of Medicine and involved 1376 patients. It concludes that, "the risk of intubation or death was not significantly higher or lower among patients who received hydroxychloroquine than among those who did not," also concluding that the results "do not support the use of hydroxychloroquine at present" outside randomized clinical trials testing its efficacy."

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In plain language, these careful conclusions say it doesn't look like these drugs work, but we should wait for the clinical trials to be sure. It's not looking good though.

If you've been reading these updates right along, you are likely aware I have concerns about the economy opening back up too quickly and leading to another resurgence in cases that sends a second shock through the system, even while I also have concerns about the damage done by having things shut down. I've read an interesting proposal for a reopening strategy that might walk the fine line between those concerns, written by a couple of professors of computational and systems biology at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. What they are proposing is sending folks back to work in two-week cycles—four days on followed by 10 days at home. Here's the reasoning: The virus has a three-day latency, the period between when you get infected and when you can infect anyone else. So if you get infected in your first day back on the job, you'll be back at home, staying away from people, by the time you're able to transmit it. Incubation in the vast majority of cases is around 5-10 days, so if you're still feeling fine at the end of your 10 days off, then you're good to go back to work. Schools would reopen under similar circumstances, coordinating the kids' days in school with the parents' days at work, which alleviates many of the child care issues that arose with the shutdowns. There would still be distance learning for students on the off days. Modeling done at the Weizmann Institute projects that this step would bring the R_e for the virus below one, suppressing the epidemic while allowing sustainable economic activity. And if someone is infectious, this at least reduces the number of days they're in contact with others and it reduces the density of people at work and school, which also limits transmission. I think we'd have to modify our unemployment insurance payments to support people through a long-term return to only part-time work, but this would relieve budgetary pressure on that system by reducing the size of payments each person needs, far better than running in cycles where the infection repeatedly gets out of hand and we have to shut down again and again every time cases spike. That sort of repeated shutting down has significant costs to the overall economy and for health care. Even if only some cities or regions began this practice and people kept coming in from outside with the infection, keeping the R_e below 1 means the newly introduced virus wouldn't really be able to take hold in the population: We know that low R_e interrupts transmission.

The modeling assumed workers would still use masks and distancing at work, but it did not assume large-scale testing, which, face it, we still don't and probably won't in the near future have. We would still need those with symptoms to self-quarantine, need to do contact tracing and isolation, and need to protect high-risk groups. I understand the logistics would be daunting; but there is already a plan to move forward with such an arrangement for school reopening in Austria, so it seems a surmountable problem. This is something that could be tested in limited regions and evaluated in real life without high cost or high risk. As the situation improves, the model projects that additional work days can then be added without risking resurgence. I do not have the expertise to do a comprehensive evaluation of this proposal; but on its face it looks good enough that I hope policy-makers at least carefully consider its feasibility. Perhaps not every light you see at the end of the tunnel is an oncoming train.

As more and more localities ease restrictions, something we're going to keep seeing is some expert's assessment of which activities are smart/not smart to engage in; we've certainly talked about it here more than once. The latest of these I've seen helpfully sorts activities into high/medium/low risk categories and doesn't really differ from those I've mentioned before. I think it's easy to follow, so I'll give you the list and mention that, for now, until you see new cases in your own region falling over a period of at least a couple of weeks, I would recommend you confine yourself to those in the low to low-medium risk category, remembering that distancing and wearing a mask should remain routine—probably for quite some time to come. (Sorry.)

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So here they are, according to epidemiologist Dr. Susan Hassig, Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. High risk: gatherings with family or friends, bars, religious functions, movie theaters and sporting events. Medium to high risk: gyms, indoor dining at restaurants, hair and nail salons. Medium risk: dates or gatherings with just a couple of friends. Low to medium risk: beaches, outdoor dining at restaurants. Low risk: outdoor activities, retail shopping (no trying on clothing though; it would all need to be decontaminated every time), touching mail or groceries.

In the category of distressing news, although we don't have systematically-collected data yet, there have been many reports of after-effects of Covid-19 in recovered/recovering patients that can linger for weeks. People are experiencing chronic fatigue, shortness of breath, muscle aches, weakness, repeated bouts of fever, increased heart rate, rashes, and headaches, many of which can be debilitating. Because some recovered patients continue to experience abnormal blood clot formation, some hospitals are routinely sending discharged patients home with a 30-day course of anticoagulants (blood thinners) to reduce the risks that presents. And doctors are concerned there may be cases with long-term damage to the kidneys, gastrointestinal tract, neurologic system, heart, and lungs. It appears, even for those who survive, this is no walk in the park. I don't think anyone really has a clue as to the incidence of these kinds of sequelae; it will require further research to establish that.

And that's it for today. Please remember that, while the lost lives are the greatest and most important of these, people are experiencing all kinds of losses these days. There's the loss of jobs, social interaction, family gatherings, treasured activities, and many, many opportunities. Even if the loss you're feeling doesn't seem important compared to others' losses, you are permitted to mourn; there's no rule that says only the person with the greatest suffering has a right to grieve. Allow yourself to feel sad: Sad things are happening. They're happening to other people too, and I find it can relieve one's own pain to reach out to someone else and offer comfort. Consider helping someone else while you help yourself; we are all in need of a touch of humanity these days.

I had that sort of humanizing experience today. I was taken back some 16 years into the past: It was the 4th of July, and as usual (but probably not this year), we had a huge crowd gathered here on the farm for fun, food, and fireworks—our biggest event of the year. Family members invite their friends, and this particular year, one of those friends was a family with a couple of kids. The teen-aged girl in the family fell in love with a litter of just-weaned kittens and hauled one of them around the place pretty much all day long. By the time they were ready to leave, it was apparent to all that this kitten belonged more to her than it did to us, and so we packed Kitty off to a new home that evening. They named the cat Dakota to honor her place of origin, and just today I was treated to a photo of Dakota, still alive and kicking 16 years later, living still with that now all-grown-up girl and her family. This was just the bright spot my day needed.

I hope your day is filled with bright spots too, that you trouble yourself to offer a bit of light to someone else, and that you stay well. We'll talk again.

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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	May 16	May 17	
Minnesota	12,494	12,917	13,435	14,240	14,969	15,668	
Nebraska	8,692	9,075	9,416	9,772	10,220	10,348	
Montana	461	462	462	466	468	468	
Colorado	20,157	20,475	20,838	21,232	21,633	21,938	
Wyoming	513	523	529	541	559	566	
North Dakota	1,571	1,647	1,712	1,761	1,848	1,900	
South Dakota	3,663	3,732	3,792	3,887	3,959	3,987	
United States	1,370,016	1,390,764	1,417,889	1,444,870	1,467,884	1,486,423	
US Deaths	82,389	84,136	85,906	87,595	88,754	89,550	
Minnesota	+695	+423	+518	+805	+729	+699	
Nebraska	+120	+383	+341	+356	+448	+128	
Montana	+2	+1	0	+4	+2	0	
Colorado	+278	+318	+363	+394	+401	+305	
Wyoming	+3	+10	+6	+12	+18	+7	
North Dakota	+53	+76	+65	+49	+87	+52	
South Dakota	+49	+69	+60	+95	+72	+28	
United States	+22,628	+20,748	+27,125	+26,981	+23,014	+18,539	
US Deaths	+1,992	+1,747	+1,770	+1,689	+1,159	+796	

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May 17th COVID-19 UPDATE

Once again, more people have fully recovered compared to the positive cases in South Dakota with 51 more being fully recovered and there were 28 positive cases in the state. Minnehaha had 16 positive cases, Pennington had 3 and Brown had just 2. North Dakota reported one new death and South Dakota recorded none. To date, South Dakota has 44 people who have died from COVID-19 and North Dakota has had 43.

In Minnehaha County, 70 percent of the positive cases have fully recovered, 78 percent in Lincoln County, 61 percent in Beadle County and 46 percent in Brown County. Realize that the spikes in Minnehaha and Lincoln counties happened sometime ago while Brown and Beadle counties had their surges in the past week.

Brown County:

Active Cases: -1 (106)

Recovered: +3 (90)

Total Positive: +2 (196)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (10)

Deaths: 0

Negative Tests: +9 (943)

South Dakota:

Positive: +28 (3,987 total) (44 less than yesterday)

Negative: +355 (24,572 total)

Hospitalized: +8 (312 total) - 77 currently hospitalized (2 more than yesterday)

Deaths: 0 (44 total)

Recovered: +51 (2724 total)

Active Cases: 1219 (23 less than yesterday)

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett 19, Brule +2 (89), Butte 97, Campbell 17, Custer +1 (76), Dewey 107, Edmunds +2 (39), Gregory 45, Haakon 18, Hanson +1 (44), Harding 3, Jackson 15, Jones 7, Kingsburg +1 (97), Mellette 34, Perkins 13, Potter +2 (44), unassigned +129 (1414).

Aurora: +1 positive, +1 recovered (2 of 3 recovered)

Beadle: +1 positive (19 of 31 recovered)

Brown: +2 positive, +3 recovered (90 of 196 recovered)

Charles Mix: +1 positive (5 of 9 recovered)

Clay: +1 positive (8 of 15 recovered)

Codington: +1 positive (15 of 17 recovered)

Day: +1 positive (9 of 11 recovered)

Hamlin: +1 positive (2 of 3 recovered)

Lincoln: -1 positive, +4 recovered (155 of 200 recovered)

Minnehaha: +16 positive, +41 recovered (2193 of 3135 recovered)

Moody: +1 recovered (10 of 17 recovered)

Oglala Lakota: +1 positive (1 of 10 recovered)

Pennington: +3 positive (14 of 52 recovered)

Roberts: +1 recovered (12 of 19 recovered)

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

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 2,636 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 52 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 1,900. NDDoH reports one new death.

State & private labs have reported 65,989 total completed tests.

1,178 ND patients are recovered.

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	3	2	55
Beadle	31	19	241
Bennett	0	0	19
Bon Homme	4	4	138
Brookings	14	14	490
Brown	196	90	943
Brule	0	0	89
Buffalo	1	1	26
Butte	0	0	97
Campbell	0	0	17
Charles Mix	9	5	144
Clark	4	1	78
Clay	15	8	231
Codington	17	15	651
Corson	3	1	31
Custer	0	0	76
Davison	9	6	412
Day	11	9	90
Deuel	1	1	101
Dewey	0	0	107
Douglas	1	1	43
Edmunds	0	0	39
Fall River	2	2	92
Faulk	1	1	29
Grant	9	2	79
Gregory	0	0	45
Haakon	0	0	18
Hamlin	3	2	101
Hand	1	1	33
Hanson	0	0	44
Harding	0	0	3
Hughes	16	12	351
Hutchinson	3	3	134

Hyde	1	1	23
Jackson	0	0	15
Jerauld	6	5	45
Jones	0	0	7
Kingsbury	0	0	97
Lake	5	4	190
Lawrence	9	9	263
Lincoln	200	155	2003
Lyman	4	3	79
Marshall	1	1	67
McCook	5	3	146
McPherson	1	1	29
Meade	5	1	373
Mellette	0	0	34
Miner	1	1	27
Minnehaha	3135	2193	11014
Moody	17	10	142
Oglala Lakota	10	1	63
Pennington	52	14	1380
Perkins	0	0	13
Potter	0	0	44
Roberts	19	12	228
Sanborn	5	3	48
Spink	4	4	163
Stanley	9	7	52
Sully	1	1	16
Todd	16	5	201
Tripp	2	0	89
Turner	19	17	197
Union	60	42	348
Walworth	5	5	76
Yankton	40	26	621
Ziebach	1	0	18
Unassigned****	0	0	1414

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	1830	23
Male	2157	21

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	368	0
20-29 years	719	0
30-39 years	926	1
40-49 years	728	1
50-59 years	675	6
60-69 years	365	7
70-79 years	99	5
80+ years	107	24

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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.

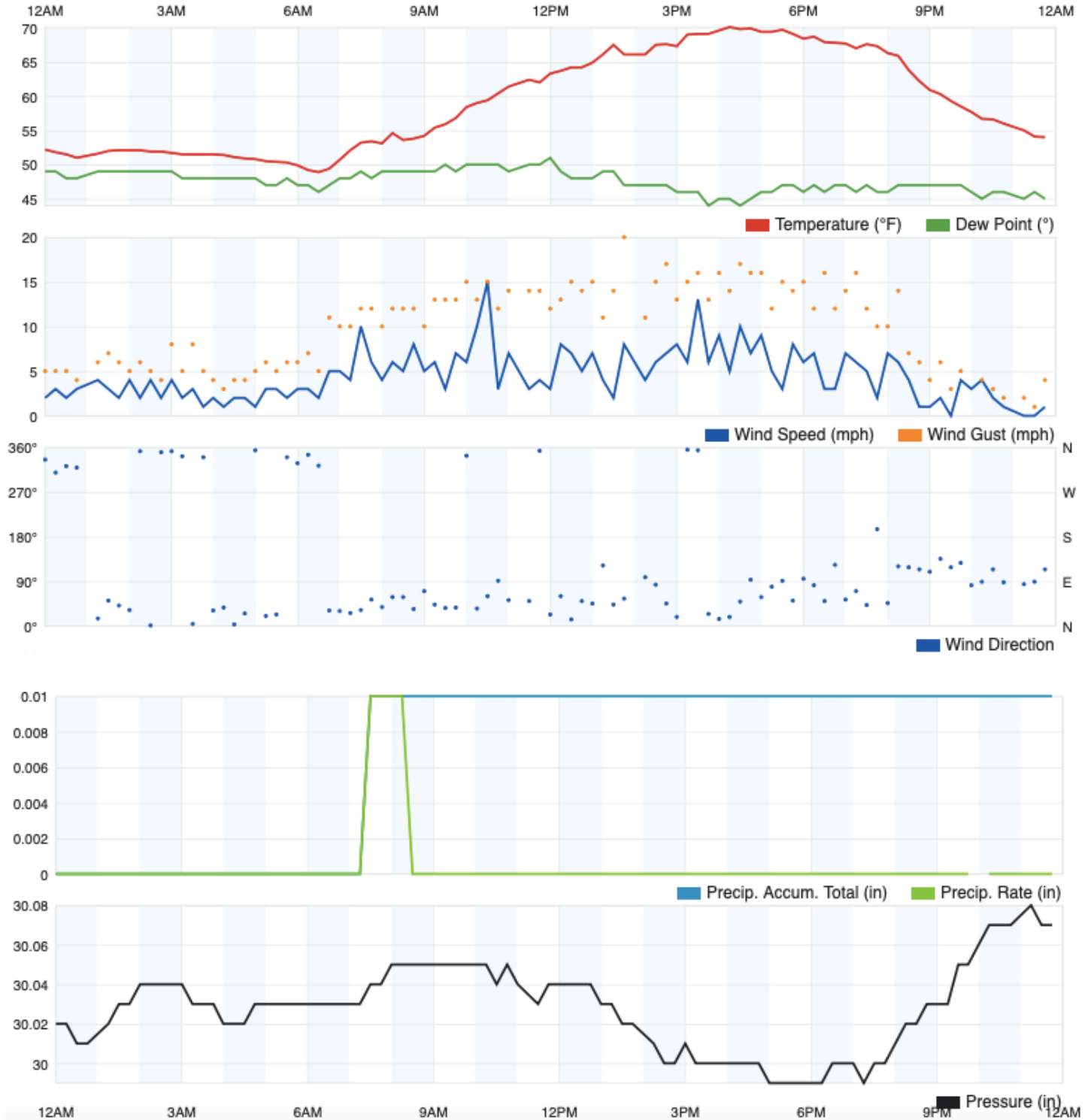
TERMS: Payment of cash, check, or CC must be made before removal of items. Nothing removed before settlement.
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Increasing Clouds

High: 73 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 48 °F

Tuesday



Sunny

High: 76 °F

Tuesday Night



Mostly Clear

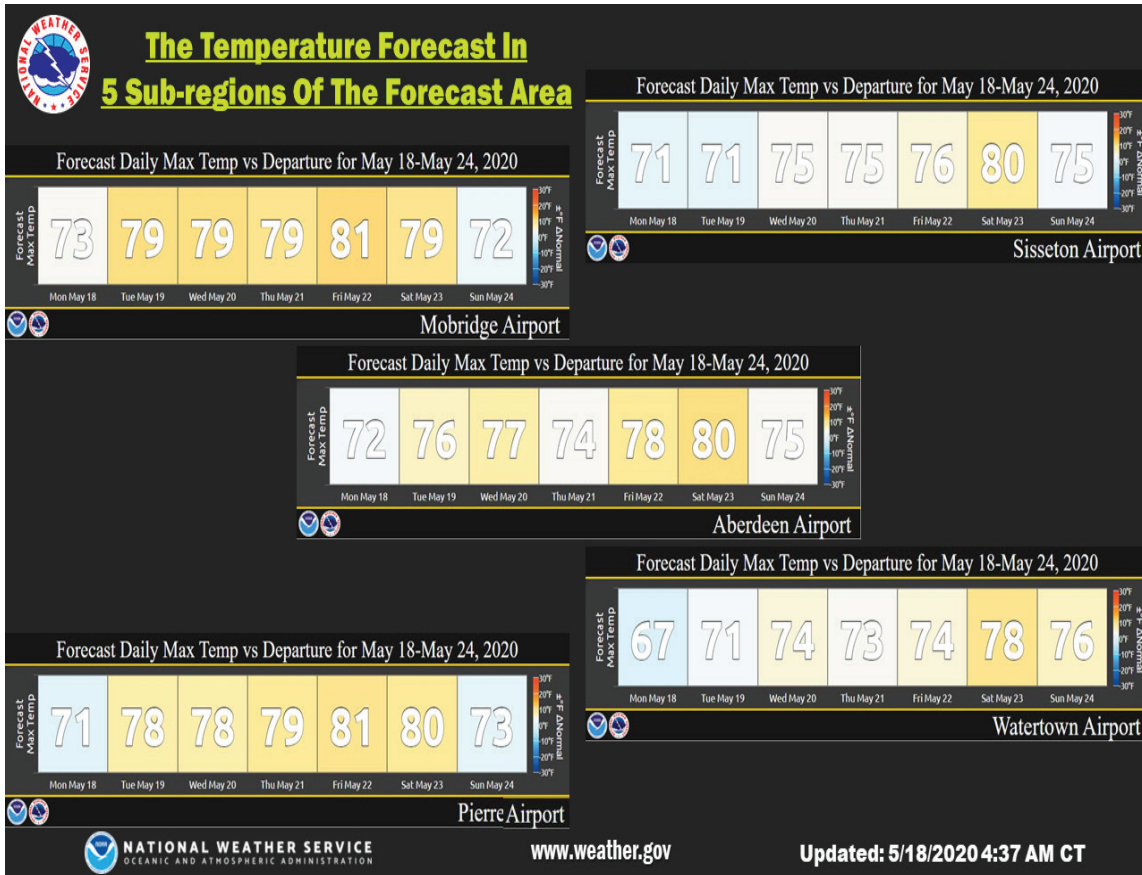
Low: 56 °F

Wednesday



Partly Sunny and Breezy

High: 79 °F



Still looks like a decent warm up is in store this week. And, breezy to windy southerly winds are still expected. The number inside each box is the forecast high temperature for that day for that location. The background color inside each box represents how many degrees above climo normal that temperature is for that day at that location. Finally, chances for showers and thunderstorms make their return to the forecast by Wednesday night mainly along and west of the Missouri River valley. Rain chances then expand eastward across the region by the end of the week and on into the weekend.

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Today in Weather History

May 18, 1918: An estimated F2 tornado moved NNE from 5 miles NNW of Ferney, across the eastern edge of Groton. Homes were unroofed, and barns were destroyed. Nine farms lost buildings. One man was injured in a barn, another in a car that was thrown from the road. Estimated damage was set at \$60,000. Tornadoes were also seen in Lincoln and Sanborn Counties in South Dakota.

Also, an estimated F2 tornado moved northeast through the townships of Akron and Artichoke in Big Stone County, Minnesota. About 300 farms had tornado damage. The funnel dissipated on Artichoke Lake.

May 18, 1960: Pierre received 1.96 inches of rain in less than 30 minutes which caused flash flooding. About 30 basements were flooded with extensive cave-in damage at one home. Flash flooding from 2 to 3 inches of rain occurred near Presho, washing out county roads, three bridges, and a grain storage bin. Gettysburg also received 2.5 inches of rain.

May 18, 1996: A brief F0 tornado touchdown and cut a narrow path from 2 miles east of Willow Lake with no damage reported.

A 100 mph wind gust blew down 38 large trees on Highway 81 from the junction of Lake Norden corner on Highway 28 to the intersection of the Hayti corner. Also, four double posted and five single posted signs were broken off, and one single posted steel sign was bent over.

1825 - A tornado (said to have crossed all of the state of Ohio) smashed into the log cabin settlement of Burlington, northeast of Columbus. (David Ludlum)

1883: The massive tornado outbreak on record in Illinois affected the northern and central parts of the state. At least 14 strong to violent tornadoes touched down killing 52 people. The largest death toll from a single tornado was 12, with 50 injuries, from an estimated F4 tornado which moved from near Jacksonville to 5 miles west of Petersburg. This tornado destroyed the town of Litterberry. Another tornado, with an estimated F4 intensity, killed 11 people and injured 50 along its path from the south edge of Springfield northeast to near Kenney. This particular tornado reportedly drove 10 inches by 12-inch oak timbers 10 feet into the ground. Another estimated F4 tornado in far northern Illinois touched down near Capron and tracked for 17 miles before lifting in far southern Wisconsin. Lastly, an estimated F4 tornado tracked 20 miles through Kenosha and Racine Counties in Wisconsin. Eight people were killed, and 85 were injured.

1960 - Salt Lake City UT received an inch of snow. It marked their latest measurable snowfall of record. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Mount Saint Helens (in Washington State) erupted spewing ash and smoke sixty-three thousand feet into the air. Heavy ash covered the ground to the immediate northwest, and small particles were carried to the Atlantic coast. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Kansas, developing along a cold front, spawned tornadoes at Emporia and Toledo, produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Fort Scott, and produced golf ball size hail in the Kansas City area. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed ahead of the cold front. Pomona NJ reported a record high of 93 degrees, and Altus, OK, hit 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure anchored over eastern Virginia kept showers and thunderstorms over the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Flash flooding was reported in Pennsylvania. Up to five inches of rain drenched Franklin County PA in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from the Central Gulf Coast States to the Lower Missouri Valley during the day and evening. Thunderstorms spawned sixteen tornadoes, and there were 74 reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the central U.S. spawning a sixteen tornadoes, including a dozen in Nebraska. Thunderstorms also produced hail four inches in diameter at Perryton TX, wind gusts to 84 mph at Ellis KS, and high winds which caused nearly two million dollars damage at Sutherland NE. Thunderstorms deluged Sioux City IA with up to eight inches of rain, resulting in a record flood crest on Perry Creek and at least 4.5 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

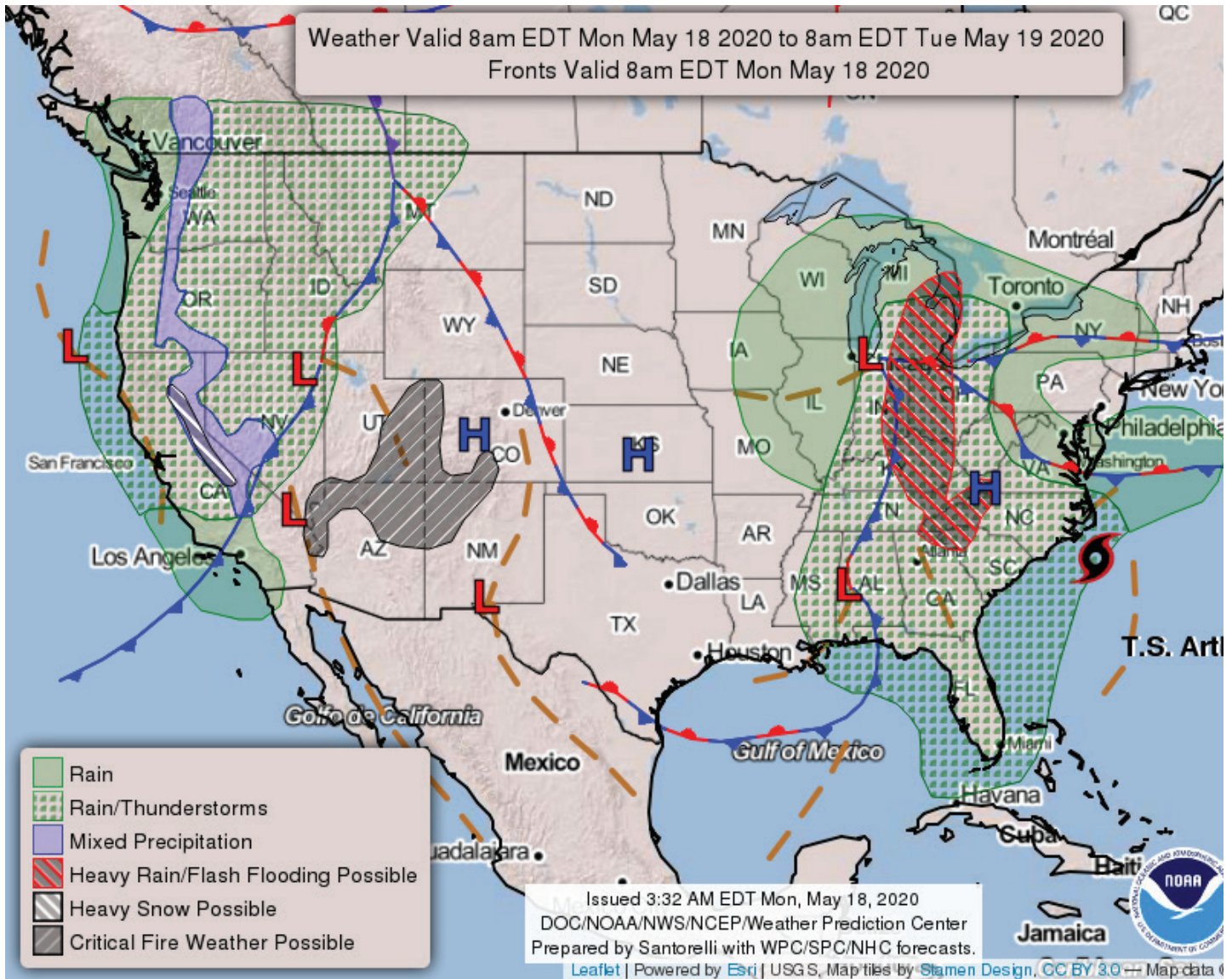
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 70 °F at 4:13 PM
Low Temp: 49 °F at 6:29 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 4:21 PM
Precip: .01

Record High: 100° in 1934
Record Low: 26° in 1915
Average High: 69°F
Average Low: 45°F
Average Precip in May.: 1.75
Precip to date in May.: 2.46
Average Precip to date: 5.78
Precip Year to Date: 4.36
Sunset Tonight: 9:02 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:58 a.m.



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LOOKING FOR GOD?

A French astronomer speaking to a group of intellectuals proudly declared, "I've swept the universe with my telescope, and I find no God. I've searched the skies for years but can find Him nowhere. Therefore, I have concluded that there is no God."

Following him a humble, but world-renowned violinist came to the stage and said, "Your statement, dear sir, is just as foolish as for me to say, 'I have searched inside my violin with a microscope to find a musician, and I could not find one.' Because there is music, Sir, there must be a musician."

"And, because there is a creation," he concluded, "there must be a Creator!"

David declares that God has revealed Himself in and through nature. In nature, we learn about His power and greatness and our insignificance and finiteness. As God reveals Himself through Scripture, we learn about His holiness and our sinfulness. As God reveals Himself through our daily experiences, we learn about His grace and graciousness that frees us of our sin and guilt.

We are surrounded by God's greatness so that we can see His many magnificent displays in nature. But the greatest display of God is in His work of love, grace, mercy, salvation, and hope in His Son. How can anyone expect more evidence of God than what we see in His Son, our Savior.

Prayer: Thank you, Father, for making Yourself visible in nature. But, we see You more clearly and convincingly in Your Son, Jesus, who came to seek and to save us, the lost, In His Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalms 19:1 The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.

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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

9-year-old artist finds comfort in comic book panels

By ERIN BORMETT Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — There's a cast of characters in William Korman's head, and the 9-year-old is bringing them to life panel by panel.

William, a fourth grader at Jefferson Elementary School in Pierre, is an aspiring newspaper comic artist. Starting with sketches from the how-to-draw sections of Dav Pilkey's "Dog Man" graphic novel series, he learned to favor cartoon drawing over a more realistic art style.

William usually shows his comics to friends and family, but he recently submitted his first comic publicly in a letter to the Argus Leader. He also has the draft of a letter to "Garfield" creator Jim Davis written and ready, in case William "wants to get to know him better." He hasn't decided whether he wants to send that one just yet.

Creating impossible scenarios without the need for context is well suited to William's wild imagination and humor style.

"In cartoons, you can do whatever you want," said William. "But if you're trying to make a comic happen in real life, you can't just have an anvil falling from the sky. Unless there was a dispenser or something above them."

One comic, titled "Punchline," shows dinosaurs on a stage. A dinosaur is reading a script for the "Punchline" comic he is starring in and says he doesn't find it funny. The inspiration for this comic started when his little sister mentioned a "supersaurus," or superhero dinosaur, at lunch one day. William decided that dinosaurs doing human activities would make a good joke.

"If there's something that happens that's funny in real life, I might build off of that and try to put it in a more cartoony form," he said.

William's mom, Joy, said that his style is largely influenced by those he reads in books and newspapers. His dry wit, often breaking the fourth wall, comes from classic newspaper comics like Scott Adams' "Dilbert" and Jim Davis' "Garfield." It's unusual humor for a 9-year-old.

"We encourage exploration of all different creative areas, and this is one he's held onto tight," said Joy.

While his cartoonist heroes focus their body of work on a single character, William finds that limiting. He prefers to bring as many characters to life as possible.

"I get lots of inspiration and it's hard for me to just stick to one basic comic," he said. "Sometimes in school, when I'm supposed to be doing math or something, a cartoon character will come up and just flick into my brain. I try to still pay attention, but I try to keep it on my mind so I don't forget and can try sketching it out when I'm done."

William said his homework load has lessened since schools closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, so he has more time to draw. His comics are a welcome source of comfort in otherwise uncertain times.

"Sometimes I can just kind of break down because I can't see my friends or I'm scared something's going to happen to my grandparents," said William. "So it kind of helps keep my mind off something that might make me sad or fearful."

When William is not drawing, he enjoys reading, watching Star Wars and playing Minecraft with friends online. In fact, a new comic idea of his involves Jedi made out of Minecraft blocks.

Joy is glad to see her son's artistic side growing, but said it has literally started expanding all over the house. She finds papers full of drawings in the car, under the couch, on every table and spread across the floor.

"There's this war of, I love the creativity, and I love that he's letting it all flow onto paper, but it's a mess," she said.

Whether he meets the greats or not, William is determined to build a career out of his drawings and learn what life is like for professional cartoonists. He's waiting for the day when he will earn a weekly slot

in the comics section of the Sunday newspaper.

Man uses 3D printer to produce virus test swabs, mask straps

By ABIGAIL DOLLINS Argus Leader

STIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man was just doing a favor for a neighbor, but one small request turned into thousands from all over the country.

Mitchell Olson received a message from his neighbor who is a nurse asking him to make five mask straps to alleviate the pressure on her ears from hours of wearing surgical masks. Happy to help, he took to the 3D printer that was gifted to his husband, Mark Schmidt, for Christmas and turned out five mask straps.

Olson could not anticipate the requests that came flooding in overnight. In just a matter of hours, he received requests for 5,000 of his 3D printed mask straps.

"It was pretty cool to see that we could use the 3D printer to do something really great for people," Olson told the Argus Leader.

People come and go to pick up the mask straps from a small tub that sits on Olson and Schmidt's front porch. Olson also makes daily trips to the post office to ship out the straps to people all over the country.

One request came from a hotel in Florida that is housing first responders who are there to work during the pandemic. Another request came from South Dakota nurses who are serving in New York City, one of the epicenters for the coronavirus pandemic.

But the requests for mask straps have turned into something more — requests for nasal testing swabs used in COVID-19 testing.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center reached out to Olson with a 3D print design for the testing swabs made by Dr. Jesse Cox, who saw the need for more testing swabs at the hospital.

"The benefits of 3D printing are that it's so flexible in that it can serve as a temporizing measure while the more traditional manufactures can ramp up their capacity to meet demand," Cox said.

The nasopharyngeal swabs are used to reach the back of the nose and are critical in the fight against the coronavirus. The health system is now performing nearly 500 of these tests per day and is expecting to see an increase in testing in the coming weeks, Cox said.

The same 3D printer that Olson used to make Easter egg designs just days before is now creating the swabs used in COVID-19 testing.

The machine runs around the clock, producing 50 swabs at a time. Every 3.5 hours, an alarm sounds signifying Mark or Mitchell to remove the freshly printed testing swabs. In the middle of the night, they will wake to the sound of the alarm to clean off the machine and program it to print more.

Their efforts have not gone unnoticed by community members. To help cover the material and shipping costs, Olson and Schmidt received a \$2,500 grant from Seeds of Change, a non-profit created by POET. The couple have also received messages from people asking what they could do to help. Friends and strangers have donated supplies through an Amazon wish list.

To Mitchell and Mark, the sacrifice is worth the reward.

They are happy to help front-line workers, even if it is something as simple as a mask strap or testing swab, Olson says.

"It is certainly interesting to play any kind of role in this picture," Olson said. "As overwhelming as it is sometimes, it's such a great feeling to be able to help people out there who are on the front lines and who are risking their lives to help us."

South Dakota reports 28 additional COVID-19 cases, no deaths

STIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials reported 28 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Sunday but no new deaths tied to the coronavirus.

Health officials said 3,135 of the state's 3,987 coronavirus cases have been reported in Minnehaha County, which is South Dakota's most populous county and the location of a large outbreak at a pork processing plant.

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Health officials said the number of deaths tied to the coronavirus remained at 44 Sunday.

The number of hospitalized patients was 77 on Sunday, up two from the previous day. A total of 312 cases have required hospitalization.

Health officials have warned the the actual number of infections is higher because many people may not display symptoms or have not sought testing for mild symptoms.

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.

Hong Kong lawmakers clash as pro-Beijing camp elects chair

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Clashes broke out in Hong Kong's legislature Monday for a second time this month as a pro-Beijing lawmaker was elected as chair of a key committee that scrutinizes bills, ending a prolonged struggle for control with the pro-democracy camp.

The legislature's House Committee, which vets bills and decides when to present them for a final vote, had been without a chairperson for more than six months. The central government in Beijing criticized deputy chairperson and pro-democracy lawmaker Dennis Kwok for deliberately delaying matters and causing a backlog of bills that affect public interest.

Kwok was replaced Friday by Chan Kin-por, who was appointed by the legislature's president to preside over Monday's election. After scuffles and shouting matches led to Chan ejecting most of the pro-democracy lawmakers, the election took place, with pro-Beijing lawmaker Starry Lee winning easily.

Her election will likely speed up the passing of a controversial bill that would criminalize abuse of the Chinese national anthem. Hong Kong's leader, Carrie Lam, said last week that passing the bill was a priority for the government, and the bill will be presented to the committee on May 27.

The move "highlights how Beijing aims to reassert control over Hong Kong," said political and corporate risk consultant Steve Vickers, the CEO of Steve Vickers and Associates. Besides the anthem bill, he noted a recent call by the Chinese central government's top representative in Hong Kong to enact a national security law.

At Monday's meeting, pro-democracy lawmakers held up placards that read "Abuse of Power" and "CCP tramples HK legislature," referring to China's ruling Communist Party. Within minutes, at least five lawmakers were ejected for disorderly behavior, with at least one lying injured on the ground as the meeting was briefly suspended.

"Hong Kong is marching toward the beginning of the end of 'one country, two systems,'" pro-democracy lawmaker Claudia Mo said after the meeting ended.

The former British colony was returned to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework that gives Hong Kong its own legal system and greater rights than in the mainland.

Mo urged Hong Kong residents to vote out those who "don't care about Hong Kong's future" in the legislative elections in September.

Pro-democracy lawmaker Tanya Chan accused security guards at Hong Kong's legislature of "losing their impartiality," after the guards surrounded the bench where the chairperson was seated and prevented pro-democracy lawmakers from getting close.

Pro-Beijing lawmaker Martin Liao said the opposition camp had "assaulted some of the security officers" and disrupted "legitimate" election proceedings.

Lawmakers clashed over the same issue on May 8, when Lee occupied the chairperson's seat more than an hour before the meeting was scheduled to start, saying that external legal counsel had advised that she had the power to preside over House Committee meetings.

Pro-democracy lawmakers accused her of abusing her power and staged a walkout, leaving Lee and the pro-Beijing camp to clear several bills.

Also Monday, 15 pro-democracy figures, including media tycoon Jimmy Lai, appeared in court to face

charges relating to months of anti-government protests last year sparked by an extradition bill that has since been withdrawn. The bill would have allowed residents of Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory, to be sent to mainland to stand trial.

Lai, whose Apple Daily newspaper is critical of the Communist Party, and former lawmaker Martin Lee stood together as they tried to get through a media scrum outside the court in West Kowloon district. They and the other activists were arrested on April 18.

"We want to announce to the world that the root of disturbance in Hong Kong is the Chinese Communist Party, destroying, interfering with 'one country, two systems,'" activist Lee Cheuk-yan said as the group stood together before going in.

Vickers, the consultant, said some see the arrests as an attempt to neutralize key opposition leaders ahead of the legislative elections in September.

Associated Press videojournalist Alice Fung contributed to this report.

2016 repeat? Trump revives Clinton playbook to battle Biden

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and BILL BARROW Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Accusations of a "deep state" conspiracy. Allegations of personal and family corruption. Painting an opponent as a Washington insider not to be trusted.

It's 2016 again. Or at least that's President Donald Trump's hope.

Trump and his allies are dusting off the playbook that helped defeat Hillary Clinton, reviving it in recent days as they try to frame 2020 as an election between a dishonest establishment politician and a political outsider being targeted for taking on the system. This time, however, the so-called outsider is the sitting president of the United States.

Eager to distract from the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 89,000 Americans and crippled the economy, Trump and his advisers have started their fog machine again, amplified by conservative media as it was during the Russia probe and the impeachment investigation. Their latest target: the president's likely general election foe, Joe Biden, in an urgent effort to drive up his negative approval ratings less than six months before the election.

The strategy already centered on playing up allegations that Biden's son, Hunter, profited off the vice presidency. Trump recently added Biden's ties to China, the country the White House now blames for the spread of COVID-19. And it kicked into overdrive last week when Trump seized upon revelations that Biden was informed of the investigation of ties between Russia and Michael Flynn, a senior Trump official, as evidence of a plot to undermine a presidency before it began.

Flynn's so-called unmasking, a common request by a government official for an intelligence agency to identify someone in contact with a foreigner under surveillance, became the centerpiece of unprecedented attacks by Trump on his predecessor. Trump said, without evidence, that Barack Obama — and, by extension, his vice president — had perpetrated the "greatest political scam, hoax in the history of our country."

"This was all Obama. This was all Biden. These people were corrupt — the whole thing was corrupt — and we caught them," Trump said. "People should be going to jail for this stuff."

The Biden campaign quickly pushed back, denying wrongdoing and noting the routine practice of unmasking to help officials understand intelligence. They paint Trump's reaction as a tired play that will have little effect on voters who've watched three years of a scattershot presidency now struggling to handle the pandemic.

"We have a president who doesn't want to talk about the central issue in this campaign right now," said Mike Donilon, one of Biden's longest-serving advisers. "This isn't new. It's not like Trump started attacking the vice president today or yesterday. He's been at him all year long."

The president, Donilon asserted, falls back on "an all-out effort to try to take people away from what they're living through," describing a tactic that he acknowledged "has succeeded in the past in terms of throwing up distractions and smokescreen."

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Trump's ability to distract, deflect and dominate headlines remains peerless among politicians.

Four years ago, he claimed Clinton's use of a private email server as secretary of state endangered national security and alleged she used her government connections to enrich her family through the nonprofit Clinton Foundation. For many voters, the insinuations underscored doubts about the integrity of Clinton and her husband, the former president.

Polls suggest an uphill climb for a reprisal against Biden. Fewer voters dislike Biden than they did Clinton. And in 2016, voters who had negative views of both candidates overwhelmingly broke for Trump; for now, they favor Biden.

There are other inherent limitations to Trump's effort to repeat his 2016 strategy.

The FBI investigated Clinton's use of the email server and, while it did not bring charges, the fallout was politically damaging. But while the optics of the younger Biden's lucrative work in China and with a Ukrainian gas company have frustrated some Democrats, no one has charged either father or son with any wrongdoing.

And it was Trump's push for Ukraine to find politically damaging dirt on the Bidens that led to the president's impeachment.

But the storyline won't go away. Trump's Senate allies will hold hearings into the younger Biden's work overseas to portray the former vice president as a longtime Washington insider whose family benefited from his stature.

"From his involvement in the unmasking of General Flynn to his son Hunter Biden repeatedly landing lucrative foreign business deals while his father was vice president, Joe Biden embodies the D.C. swamp," said Trump campaign spokeswoman Sarah Matthews.

Trump's attempts to turn the routine into the sinister has also fueled his latest effort to undermine special counsel Robert Mueller's report, which identified substantial contacts between Trump associates and Russia but did not accuse him of a crime or allege a criminal conspiracy between his campaign and the Kremlin. Now the plan is to link the Democratic standard-bearer to the probe.

Biden allies display something approaching amusement as they tick through the attacks Trump has leveled against the former vice president, including calling him "Sleepy Joe."

The campaign argues the attacks demonstrate Trump's own weaknesses. They point to the Trump family's ongoing business entanglements across the world while his daughter and son-in-law work in the White House to his weeks spent complimenting Chinese President Xi Jinping before blaming Beijing for the pandemic.

Biden's team doesn't believe a pervasive narrative like "Hillary's emails" will shadow this campaign.

"People have a really good understanding of who Joe Biden is," Donilon said, arguing that Trump's handling of the pandemic plays into arguments about Biden's experience, competence and temperament.

Yet similar Trump smokescreens confused Americans about both the Russia and Ukraine investigations. And while the unmasking accusations may inspire the GOP base more than persuade swing voters, Trump allies believe it can prove a coordinated effort to thwart a duly elected president.

"It's a reminder that Trump is the outsider trying to take on those who were entrenched in power for decades," said Jason Miller, a top aide on Trump's 2016 campaign. "And if Trump is the outsider, Biden is the insider."

Barrow reported from Atlanta.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/@JonLemire> and Barrow at <https://twitter.com/@BillBarrowAP>.

Tropical Storm Arthur crawls closer to North Carolina coast

MIAMI (AP) — Life-threatening surf and rip currents will spread along U.S. East coast beaches in the days ahead as Tropical Storm Arthur kicks up ocean swells offshore, the National Hurricane Center warned

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on Monday.

It's another early start for the Atlantic hurricane season: Arthur formed Saturday in waters off Florida, marking the sixth straight year that a named storm has developed before June 1.

The Hurricane Center said Arthur is expected to move near or just east of the coast of North Carolina, where up to 5 inches of rain was expected in spots Monday before turning away from the East Coast Tuesday.

At 5 a.m. EDT, the storm's center was located about 85 miles (135 kilometers) south-southwest of Morehead City, North Carolina. Arthur had top sustained winds of 45 mph (75 kph) and was moving to the north-northeast at 14 mph (22 kph).

A tropical storm warning was issued for parts of North Carolina's coast, from Surf City to Duck, including Pamlico and Albemarle Sounds, and heavy rainfall is expected for much of the eastern part of the state, said Michael Lee, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Newport, North Carolina.

"But the main threat that we're really trying to get out there is that there is enhanced risk for dangerous rip currents both today and tomorrow. So, any folks who want to try to go to the beach and get in the water, we have a high risk out for most of our beaches," Lee said.

The weather service said eastern North Carolina should prepare for some localized flooding and dangerous marine conditions along the coast.

"Minor inundation from storm surge is possible for very low-lying areas adjacent to the ocean, sounds, and rivers, with overwash of dunes and flooding of properties and roadways possible for locations where dune structures are weak," mainly north of Cape Lookout, the weather service said.

While there may be a component of warming waters and climate change in other pre-June storms, Arthur is more of a subtropical storm system than a traditional named storm and its water is cooler than what's usually needed for storm formation, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

A lot of these out-of-season storms are weak fleeting ones that meteorologists can see now because of satellites and better technology and would have been missed in earlier times, Klotzbach said.

Local forecasters in the Bahamas said showers have lingered over the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco, which are still struggling to recover after being hit by a Category 5 hurricane last year. Patients are being cared for in tents in Grand Bahama after Hurricane Dorian damaged the island's hospital.

Associated Press writer Danica Coto in San Juan, Puerto Rico, contributed to this report.

Europe reopens widely, seeks to salvage summer vacations

By **GEIR MOULSON** and **DEREK GATOPOULOS** Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Europe reopened more widely on Monday, allowing people into the Acropolis in Athens, shops in Italy, markets and museums in Belgium, golf courses in Ireland and beer gardens in Bavaria while its leaders discussed how to salvage Europe's hallowed summer vacations.

As nations carved out a new normal amid the coronavirus pandemic, the World Health Organization opened its main annual meeting — conducted online this year. Chinese President Xi Jinping was among a handful of world leaders expected to address the two-day online gathering that comes amid high tensions between his nation, where the pandemic began, and the United States, the country hardest hit by the coronavirus.

President Donald Trump, who has suspended U.S. funding to the WHO and accused it of failing to stop the virus from spreading when it first surfaced in China, was not expected to address the meeting. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar was to represent the U.S.

New infections and deaths have slowed considerably in Europe, where some countries started easing lockdowns a month ago and even the harshest shutdowns — such as those in Italy and Spain — have loosened significantly. Many nations are now preparing to open their borders next month, trying to sketch out the parameters for a highly unusual summer tourist season.

Germany's foreign minister, who was discussing the options Monday with colleagues from 10 largely

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southern European countries, cautioned that this year's holidays will be like no other.

"Even if a summer vacation will be possible elsewhere in Europe, which I hope, one has to say that this vacation this year won't be like the ones we know from the past," Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told ZDF television. "The pandemic is still there and we must at least have safety precautions for the worst case that the figures get worse again."

More than 4.7 million people worldwide have tested positive for the coronavirus and over 315,000 deaths have been reported, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. Those figures are believed to understate the true dimensions of the pandemic because of limited testing, differences in counting the dead and concealment by some governments.

The U.S. has reported almost 90,000 deaths and Europe has seen at least 160,000 dead.

Greece reopened the Acropolis in Athens and other ancient sites, along with high schools, shopping malls and mainland travel. Paving stickers were used as markers to keep visitors apart outside the Acropolis. Tourists were local, for the country still has a 14-day quarantine for arrivals, and travel to the Greek islands remains broadly restricted.

Authorities are keen to reopen the vital tourism sector, following a warning by the EU Commission that Greece is likely to suffer the worst recession in the 27-nation European Union this year.

Greece's public beaches reopened over the weekend amid a heatwave with strict social distancing rules, but buses from Athens to the nearby coast were crowded.

In Belgium, more students returned to school, hairdressers began clipping locks again and museums and zoos opened their doors, all with strict reservation systems to avoid overcrowding. Hoping to make the most of the sunny weather, open-air markets started selling their plentiful spring fruit and vegetables.

Golf courses and garden stores reopened in Ireland but Health Minister Simon Harris said he's still nervous because the virus hasn't gone away. He hoped that social distancing and other measures will make more normalcy possible.

If Ireland can get the next three weeks right, "we as a country will find a way to live safely alongside the virus," Harris told RTE radio.

Churches in Italy and at the Vatican resumed public Masses. Guards in hazmat suits took the temperatures of the faithful entering St. Peter's Basilica, where Pope Francis celebrated an early morning Mass in a side chapel to commemorate the centenary of the birth of St. John Paul II.

Across town, the Rev. Jose Maria Galvan snapped on latex gloves and a face mask before distributing Communion to the dozen parishioners attending Mass at his Sant'Eugenio parish.

"Before I became a priest I was a surgeon, so for me gloves are normal," he joked later.

Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa took his morning coffee at a Lisbon cafe and was having lunch at a restaurant with the speaker of parliament as officials encouraged people to support local businesses. Costa told reporters "we can't return to our old life as long as the virus is around" but noted that the economy must come back to life.

The virtual meeting of the U.N. health agency's World Health Assembly comes as the WHO has been drawn into a blame game between the U.S. and China over the spread of the virus. Trump claims China mishandled the outbreak early on but China has defended its record, saying it has worked closely with the WHO to respond to the pandemic.

The EU and other countries have called for an independent evaluation of the WHO's response to the pandemic "to review experience gained and lessons learned." The resolution has the support of more than half of WHO's member countries.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the meeting it was a "false dichotomy" to assume governments would choose between saving their citizens or their economies.

"Unless we control the spread of the virus, the economy will never recover," he warned.

China reported just seven new cases on Monday but kept tighter social distancing rules in parts of the northeastern province of Jilin after a cluster of cases of unknown origin turned up. But many people in Beijing, where no cases have been reported in weeks, have stopped wearing masks outdoors, although

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masks are required in most indoor areas and on public transportation.

Moscow health officials said 77 people died of the virus in the Russian capital in the past 24 hours, the highest daily number so far. With over 290,000 infections, Russia is second only to the U.S. in the number of cases but health officials suspect many more people with the virus have died than Russia's official death toll of 2,722.

In some Indian states, people trickled outdoors and thin traffic returned to the roads Monday, a day after the government extended a nationwide lockdown to May 31 but eased many restrictions to restore economic activity. Small shops and other businesses reopened in several states, including the capital, New Delhi.

At the same time, India recorded its biggest single-day coronavirus surge with 5,242 new cases, along with 157 deaths.

In Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro greeted hundreds of supporters — and joined some in performing push-ups — who gathered before the presidential offices to back his open-the-economy drive. Bolsonaro has played down the impact of the virus even as it has swept through Latin America's most populous country, leaving over 16,000 people dead.

Geir Moulson reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers around the world contributed.

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

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

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. HONG KONG LAWMAKERS SCUFFLE Clashes have broken out in the legislature for a second time this month as a pro-Beijing lawmaker was elected as chair of a key committee that scrutinizes bills.
2. EXTREMIST GUILTY OF MURDER An Israeli district court has convicted a Jewish extremist of murder in a 2015 arson attack that killed a Palestinian toddler and his parents.
3. 'GOD TV' SPAT An evangelical broadcaster who boasted of miraculously securing a TV license in Israel now risks being taken off the air over suspicions of trying to convert Jews to Christianity.
4. STORM APPROACHES SOUTHEASTERN COAST Tropical Storm Arthur is crawling closer to the North Carolina coast, amid threats of some minor flooding and rough seas as the system moves off the Southeast seaboard.
5. US RESTRICTIONS CRITICAL BLOW TO HUAWEI The latest U.S. sanctions on Huawei threaten to devastate China's first global tech competitor, escalating a feud with Beijing that could disrupt technology industries worldwide.

Jewish extremist convicted in arson that killed Arab toddler

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — An Israeli district court on Monday convicted a Jewish extremist of murder in a 2015 arson attack that killed a Palestinian toddler and his parents, a case that had sent shock waves through Israel and helped fuel months of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

The court ruled that the Jewish settler Amiram Ben-Uliel hurled firebombs late one night into a West Bank home in July 2015 as a family slept, killing 18-month-old Ali Dawabsheh. His mother, Riham, and father, Saad, later died of their wounds. Ali's 4-year-old brother Ahmad survived.

"This trial won't bring my family back," Hussein Dawabsheh, the toddler's grandfather, said outside the courtroom in central Israel. "But I don't want another family to go through the trauma that I have."

At the time of the arson killing, Israel was dealing with a wave of vigilante-style attacks by suspected Jewish extremists. But the deadly firebombing in the West Bank village of Duma touched a particularly sensitive nerve.

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The attack was condemned across the Israeli political spectrum, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged “zero tolerance” in the fight to bring the assailants to justice. Investigators placed several suspects under “administrative detention,” a measure typically reserved for alleged Palestinian militants that allows authorities to hold suspects for months without charge.

“This was an attack with racist motives,” said prosecutor Yael Atzmon. “The court ruled it as a terrorist attack and this sends an important message that terror is terror and the identity of the perpetrators is irrelevant.”

Critics, however, noted that lesser non-deadly attacks, such as firebombings that damaged mosques and churches, had gone unpunished for years. And as the investigation into the Duma attack dragged on, Palestinians complained of a double-standard, where suspected Palestinian militants are quickly rounded up and prosecuted under a military legal system that gives them few rights while Jewish Israelis are protected by the country’s criminal laws.

Nasser Dawabsheh, the toddler’s uncle, said he was convinced that others were also involved in the crime. “If it was a Palestinian, they would have arrested every one he talked to and demolished his house and convicted him in a very short time,” he said. “We are not relieved because we know that other criminals are out of jail.”

Ben-Uliel’s lawyers, however, claimed their client was severely tortured and that was how his confession was exacted. They did not offer evidence for their claim but said they were not surprised by the verdict and would appeal. There was no immediate word on when the sentencing would take place.

“We hope that the Supreme Court will overturn the judgment,” said Yitzhak Baum, one of his lawyers.

The Shin Bet internal security service had said Ben-Uliel confessed to planning and carrying out the attack, and that two others were accessories. It said he claimed the arson was in retaliation for the killing of an Israeli by Palestinians a month earlier.

Ben-Uliel belonged to a movement known as the “Hilltop Youth,” a leaderless group of young people who set up unauthorized outposts, usually clusters of trailers, on West Bank hilltops — land the Palestinians claim for their hoped-for state.

As the judges walked into the court, the 25-year-old Ben-Uliel sat slouched in the dock, a large white skullcap on his head and blue mask on his face, reading what looked to be a biblical text. He was exonerated of the charge of belonging to a terrorist organization.

Ukraine’s overburdened doctors in desperate virus fight

By **MSTYSLAV CHERNOV** and **YURAS KARMANAU** Associated Press

CHERNIVTSI, Ukraine (AP) — A breathing machine at a Ukrainian hospital breaks down, leaving a coronavirus patient gasping helplessly for air. Dr. Olha Kobevko rushes from room to room to see if there is an electrician among her other patients who can fix it.

Eventually, she figures out a way to get the device working again on her own.

“We are like in a war situation here, like on a front line!” she exclaims in despair.

Kobevko, 37, is the only infectious disease specialist at the infection division of a hospital in the western city of Chernivtsi that is supposed to accommodate 60 patients but now holds about 100.

The deplorable conditions — broken or substandard equipment, a lack of drugs, low wages — reflects the meltdown of Ukraine’s health care system, which has been quickly overwhelmed by the coronavirus pandemic even with the country’s relatively low number of cases.

Ukraine’s corruption-plagued economy has been weakened by six years of war with Russia-backed separatists in the east. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s year-old administration inherited an underfunded health care system that was further crippled by a reform launched by his predecessor that drastically cut state subsidies.

It has left Ukraine’s hospitals without vital equipment. The infectious disease wing of the main regional hospital in Chernivtsi was built more than a century ago when the city was still part of the Austro-Hungarian

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Empire, and it lacks a centralized oxygen supply system that is standard in any modern clinic.

The hospital's oxygen supply system is located in just one room, and nurses have to manually refill bags they call "oxygen pillows" every few minutes and carry them to patients elsewhere.

"A patient would beg, 'Air, air, give me air!' and there is nothing you can do," Kobevko said. "You just keep squeezing the bag, unable to save a life. That is the most painful thing, and it costs very little to secure centralized oxygen supply."

The sound of coughs muffled by oxygen masks mixes with the squeaking of medical equipment in the hospital's old building as nurses rush through dimly lit corridors to change the oxygen bags. The air smells of ozone from the ultraviolet lamps used to disinfect the wards.

The critically ill are moved to a separate building that has a few ventilators, but it's also filled beyond capacity and cannot always accept new patients, even those in serious condition.

Ukraine has 18,616 confirmed coronavirus cases, with 535 deaths. Chernivtsi has 2,713 of those infections, a hot spot of contagion, along with another western city, Ivano-Frankivsk, 100 kilometers (60 miles) away, and the capital, Kyiv. Thousands of Ukrainians who had temporary jobs in Italy, Spain and other European countries returned home amid the pandemic and some carried the infection with them.

In the hospital's kitchen, workers nap on mattresses. But ambulance crews soon arrive with more patients, giving them little chance to sleep, even after an exhausting tour of duty.

Svetlana Padynich is a medic on an ambulance crew that brings in COVID-19 patients during her 12-hour shifts.

Lately, workers on the crews have been falling ill. A week ago, one died of pneumonia caused by the virus. Another four medics at her station also have come down with pneumonia but are in stable condition.

"We are experiencing a staff shortage," said Padynich, 42. "Half of ambulance personnel have gotten sick and those who remained have to carry a colossal load."

Padynich wears an FFP2 mask, which offers some but not complete protection, and she wears another medical mask underneath it.

"I understand that I'm taking high risks, but someone needs to work," she said.

Protective gear is in short supply, with most of it coming from private donors. Deliveries have been irregular.

"I worry about my safety," Padynich said. "I'm afraid of getting sick, but I fear infecting my family with COVID-19 even more."

Because of that, she says she has not seen her mother since the start of the outbreak.

Medical workers account for about a fifth of all coronavirus cases in Ukraine, with more than 50 getting infected daily.

Aware of the weaknesses in the health care system, the government ordered a strict lockdown on March 12, including closing most enterprises. But under pressure from desperate farmers, businessmen and others, it eased the restrictions May 11, allowing some stores, hair salons, beauty parlors and other ventures to reopen.

Doctors fear that move could trigger a new wave of contagion.

"If we end the quarantine and leave the health care system in the same shape, it will bring a disaster," Kobevko said.

Government subsidies previously covered wages for health care workers and hospital utility bills. Under a new medical reforms that began last month, however, those funds have been sharply reduced, putting many clinics on the verge of closure.

Ukraine's president has sharply criticized the reforms ordered by his predecessor, warning it could mean closing more than 300 hospitals and leaving 50,000 medical workers jobless.

"Except for the medics — the excellent professionals who are among the best in the world — we have nothing else," Zelenskiy said.

Faced with the outbreak, the government has offered a subsidy to medical workers dealing with the outbreak that quadruples their monthly wage.

Kobevko said her basic monthly salary of \$175 — on a par with the nation's current minimum wage

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— reflects the general low regard of medical professionals in Ukraine. She gets an extra \$25 in monthly hardship pay for working in the infectious disease clinic.

"It shows the government's lack of respect for our work," she said. "That kind of indifference should scare not just me. We have nothing and are driven by enthusiasm, but we are running out of it."

Yuras Karmanau reported from Minsk, Belarus.

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

Gangs deliver food in poor Cape Town area amid lockdown

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Preston's new face mask is emblazoned with the stars and stripes of the U.S. flag.

While protecting him from the coronavirus, it would normally also put him in danger in Manenberg, one of a number of violent and poor neighborhoods on the outskirts of Cape Town known as the Cape Flats. The mask's colors identify Preston as a member of the Americans, a criminal gang usually unwelcome on the turf of the rival Hard Livings gang.

"They'd shoot me," the 35-year-old says with what appears to be a smile, his eyes crinkling.

But today, he's working side-by-side with other notorious gang members to deliver bread, flour and vegetables to poor families who are struggling during South Africa's coronavirus lockdown, which has closed industries and left many in Manenberg without work.

Preston stands in a courtyard with the other gang members amid an unlikely truce, bowing his head as Danny, a senior member of the Hard Livings, says a prayer. Caps are removed and tattooed arms are held behind backs.

"We (the gangs) did decide to work together to help," Danny said. "And we have got no problem (with each other), you see. No problem."

The project was started by Andie Steele-Smith, an Australian known as the "gang pastor." They ride in the back of his pickup truck and trailer, leaping off to carry items to homes and soup kitchens.

Steele-Smith said that "as soon as these guys were given an opportunity to do something good, they grabbed the opportunity with both hands and are just wringing it for everything they can."

The gangs also benefit, getting some food as well as the chance to stay relevant in tough times. They also seem to enjoy the role of modern-day Robin Hoods.

Still, these men are drug dealers and many are killers. A lot of them have tattoos that identify them as members of prison "Numbers" gangs, which experts say are far more violent.

One who doesn't think much of their good deeds is J.P. Smith, who works in the mayor's office of Cape Town in charge of safety and security. He says their real business is murder, extortion, trafficking in drugs and guns, protection rackets and corrupting police and judges, noting there were 900 gang-related killings in the Cape Town area last year.

"None of that goes away because the gangsters suddenly pretend to do something nice," Smith said. "The trauma they've inflicted on communities for decades won't be forgotten for a couple of loaves of bread."

Manenberg resident Cristal van Rensburg says two cousins were killed by gang members, with one shot 30 times in the face and chest. Her brother and other relatives also are in gangs, and she says she often sees her cousins' killers on the street.

"In the beginning it was difficult," she said. "It's not a good feeling to lose someone and know that person who hurt your family is walking past you every day. You see in Manenberg, that's part of life."

Despite its beauty, Cape Town was ranked last year as the 11th most-dangerous city in the world. According to the Mexico City-based Citizen Council for Public Safety and Criminal Justice, which compiled the list, Cape Town had 2,868 homicides in 2018, the second-most on the list behind Caracas, Venezuela.

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An attempted truce has accompanied the food distribution, and Smith said police have reported a decrease in trouble in Manenberg in recent weeks.

But the grim reality is still evident.

During the food delivery, the pickup truck encounters people who say a man has been stabbed to death, and the victim is a member of a gang known as the Clever Kidz.

Santjie, a local leader of the gang who is riding on Steele-Smith's truck, had earlier made a comment that has become suddenly relevant: "Life here is very quick. It's very quick."

Residents of Manenberg seem to live either in government-built housing blocks called "the courts" or in haphazard houses on unmarked streets.

The headquarters of the Americans is a multistory labyrinth with "Welcome 2 United States" scrawled on it. Across the street is more graffiti, misspelled and perhaps mistaken: "God loves Manenburg."

The neighborhood was created by South Africa's apartheid government in the 1960s as a dumping ground for poor non-whites who were evicted from Cape Town's prime land. Steele-Smith describes it as "forgotten" and lacking hope.

Danny, Preston and Santjie, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition that only their first names are used because they belong to criminal gangs, say they have much in common: all have been shot and all have been to prison.

Danny is 61 and says he was behind bars for 29 years for murder and armed robbery. The other two don't specify their crimes. Santjie, the youngest of the three at 31, has been "in and out" numerous times, he says.

All three saw joining gangs as natural — boys are recruited in their early teens or younger.

Preston says he may eventually quit his gang, but Danny warns: "If you turn your back on your gang, you're a target."

"A traitor," Preston agrees.

Leaving a gang means giving up protection. A local saying goes that the only sure way out of a Cape Flats gang is death.

The Rev. Eric Hofmeyer used to be a member of the Hard Livings gang, joining when he was 9 but getting out at age 21 in the 1980s. He says he survived two stabbings by rival gangs and also escaped death when police interrupted an attempt by his own gang to kill him.

He says the food project shows that the new generation is open to change.

"I believe there is a way out for those young men," he said.

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Follow Gerald Imray on Twitter: www.twitter.com/GeraldImrayAP

'GOD TV' spat exposes tensions between Israel, evangelicals

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — An evangelical broadcaster who boasted of miraculously securing a TV license in Israel now risks being taken off the air over suspicions of trying to convert Jews to Christianity.

The controversy over "GOD TV" has put both Israel and its evangelical Christian supporters in an awkward position, exposing tensions the two sides have long papered over.

Evangelical Christians, particularly in the United States, are among the strongest supporters of Israel, viewing it as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, with some seeing it as the harbinger of a second coming of Jesus Christ and the end of days.

Israel has long welcomed evangelicals' political and financial support, especially as their influence over the White House has risen during the Trump era, and it has largely shrugged off concerns about any hidden religious agenda.

But most Jews view any effort to convert them to Christianity as deeply offensive, a legacy of centuries of persecution and forced conversion at the hands of Christian rulers. In part because of those sensitivities, evangelical Christians, who generally believe salvation can only come through Jesus and preach the

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Gospel worldwide, rarely target Jews.

When "GOD TV," an international Christian broadcaster, reached a seven-year contract earlier this year with HOT, Israel's main cable provider, it presented itself as producing content for Christians.

But in a video message that has since been taken down, GOD TV CEO Ward Simpson suggested its real aim was to convince Jews to accept Jesus as their messiah. The channel, known as "Shelanu," broadcast in Hebrew even though most Christians in the Holy Land speak Arabic.

"God has supernaturally opened the door for us to take the Gospel of Jesus into the homes and lives and hearts of his Jewish people," Simpson said in the video.

"They'll watch secretly, they'll watch quietly," he added. "God is restoring his people, God is removing the blindness from their eyes."

In a subsequent video, Simpson acknowledged that the channel was under investigation by Israeli authorities, saying that preaching about Jesus in Israel is a "very touchy subject." He apologized for any offensive remarks and said GOD TV would comply with all regulations.

Freedom of religion is enshrined in Israeli law, and proselytizing is allowed as long as missionary activities are not directed at minors and do not involve economic coercion.

The Communications Ministry said it was investigating a "discrepancy" between the application for the license that was granted in March, which said the channel was focused on the Christian community, and its actual content, which appears to "target Jews and convince them that Jesus is the messiah."

HOT said in a statement that it was not responsible for the channel's content and has been "fully transparent" with authorities.

GOD TV was founded in the U.K. in 1995 and eventually grew into a 24-hour network with offices in several countries. Its international broadcasting licenses are held by a Florida-based non-profit. It claims to reach 300 million households worldwide, and Simpson was among the participants at a high-level Christian media summit hosted by Israel last year.

Simpson denied trying to convert Jews to Christianity. He said Jews who accept Jesus as the messiah can continue to practice their faith, a reference to Messianic Jews, popularly known as Jews for Jesus.

The Messianic movement, which emerged in its modern form in the 1970s, incorporates Jewish symbols and practices — including referring to Jesus by his Hebrew name, Yeshua — but is widely seen as a form of Christianity. All major Jewish denominations reject it, and Israel considers Messianic Jews to be converts to another faith.

"There's no such thing really as the Messianic movement," said Rabbi Tovia Singer, who leads an organization devoted to countering missionary activity aimed at Jews. "It's a dog whistle, it's a name that's used by evangelical Christian Protestants."

He said Simpson's willingness to speak openly about conversion reflects the growing influence of evangelical Christians in both Israel and the United States.

"They feel bulletproof to say these kinds of things and what their real agenda is," he said.

Rev. Malcolm Hedding, the former executive director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, an umbrella group for Christian Zionists, said Christians only share their faith when asked, and denied they have any secret agenda.

"Evangelical support for Israel is not based on prophecies but on promises that God gave to Abraham 4,000 years ago," he said. "We cannot, and should not, let the arrival of a TV channel in Israel impact negatively on the well-being of a movement that for decades now has brought about a new day in Jewish Christian relationships."

At least one prominent evangelical supporter of Israel has criticized GOD TV for airing missionary content aimed at Jews, saying it encourages anti-Semitism.

"In recent decades, millions of Christians have felt the call to stand with the State of Israel and the Jewish people with no hidden agenda," said Laurie Cardoza-Moore, a Tennessee-based evangelical who hosts a program called "Focus on Israel" that previously aired on GOD TV.

"Any attempts to convert Jews or downgrade their religion will only sow undue hatred at a time when

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we should unite in the face of darkness," Cardoza-Moore said.

Daniel Hummel, the author of a book on evangelicals and Israel, says Christian Zionists have "more or less learned" that Messianic Judaism's presence in the movement is "politically unwise."

"The issue always continues to simmer, but the precedent was set (in the 1970s) and grew stronger that any Christian organization wishing to work in Israel or be at all close to the center of political action in the (Christian Zionist movement) would need to publicly disavow at minimum coercive evangelization."

Simpson says GOD TV has hired lawyers to resolve the issue and is determined to stay on the air.

"The last thing we want to do is to cause division over there," he said. "We love Israel."

Me and we: Individual rights, common good and coronavirus

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

We, the people. But individual rights. The common good. But don't tread on me. Form a more perfect union and promote the general welfare. But secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

From the moment the American republic was born right up until today, this has been its hallmark: Me and we — different flavors of freedom that compete but overlap — living together, but often at odds.

The history of the United States and the colonies that formed it has been a 413-year balancing act across an assortment of topics, priorities, passions and ambitions. Now, in the coronavirus era, that tug of war — is it about individuals, or the communities to which they belong? — is showing itself in fresh, high-stakes ways.

On Friday, protesters massed at the foot of the Pennsylvania Capitol steps — most of them maskless — for the second time in a month to decry Gov. Tom Wolf and demand he "reopen" the state faster. It is one of many states where a vocal minority has criticized virus-related shutdowns for trampling individual rights.

"He who is brave is free," read a sign carried by one Pennsylvania protester. "Selfish and proud," said another, referring to the governor's statement that politicians advocating immediate reopening were "selfish." "My body my choice," said a sign at a rally in Texas, coopting an abortion-rights slogan to oppose mandatory mask rules.

"The pandemic is presenting this classic individual liberty-common good equation. And the ethos of different parts of the country about this is very, very different. And it's pulling the country in all these different directions," says Colin Woodard, author of "American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle Between Individual Liberty and the Common Good."

Though polls show a majority of Americans still support some level of shutdown, the cries to reopen have grown in the past few weeks as job losses continue to mount. In Pennsylvania and across the country, the demonstrators' chorus has generally been: Don't tell me how to live my life when I need to get out of my house and preserve my livelihood.

"They're being told to stay home, wait it out. And that's a really weird democratic message to get. And the only way to do it is to say, 'I trust the government,'" says Elspeth Wilson, an assistant professor of government at Franklin & Marshall College in Pennsylvania.

While the catalyst is an unprecedented pandemic, the collision of individual rights and the common good is as old as the republic itself: Where does one American's right to move around in public without a mask end, and another American's right to not be infected with a potentially fatal virus begin?

"This is economic paralysis by analysis for some people. And they're afraid," says Steven Benko, an ethicist at Meredith College in North Carolina. "They feel devalued."

Americans have long romanticized those who reject the system and take matters into their own hands — the outlaw, the cowboy, the rebel. Many American leaders have wrestled to reconcile that with "common good" principles that are generally needed to govern.

"Reagan did that better than anyone. He was the cowboy selling the shared American vision. That's quite a contradiction," Benko says.

Ronald Reagan's crowning metaphor — the United States as the "city upon a hill" — was borrowed from the Puritans, whose traditions shaped the American ethos, including the compact that created the New

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World's first English government. But Puritanism also asserted that hard work, a form of moral righteousness, heralded success and salvation.

Over time, and with other ingredients added as more groups came to American shores, a vague sense of shame became attached to the inability to be an individualist: If you couldn't get along on your own, in the eyes of some, you were less of an American.

But is that kind of "rugged individualism," as it came to be known, applicable in a 21st-century virus scenario where everything from food shopping to health care to package delivery requires a web of intricate, precise networks that form a common good?

Overlaid on this debate, too, is what some call an ignored truth: Individualism tends to favor groups that are in power, economically or socially. In short, doing what one wants is a lot easier when you have the means (health care, money, privilege) to deal with the impact it causes.

That's particularly relevant when the direct impact of one's individualism — in the form of virus-laden droplets — can ripple out to others.

"We fail to recognize how interdependent we really are," says Lenette Azzi-Lessing, a clinical professor of social work at Boston University who studies economic disparity.

"The pandemic and dealing with it successfully does require cooperation. It also requires shared sacrifice. And that's a very bitter pill for many Americans to swallow," she says. "The pandemic is revealing that our fates are intertwined, that the person in front of us in line on the grocery store, if he or she doesn't have access to good health care, that that's going to have an effect on our health."

U.S. history has sometimes revealed that in times of upheaval — the Great Depression, World War II, even the founding of the nation itself — common good becomes a dominant American gene for a time. Will that happen here? Or is the fragmentation of politics and economics and social media too powerful to allow that?

"The status quo is individualism. And then when we get to these crisis periods, it changes," says Anthony DiMaggio, a political scientist at Lehigh University who is researching groups that advocate reopening. "All these rules go out the window and people are willing to jettison all these ways of looking at the world."

So is it, as Ayn Rand once told an interviewer, that "each man must live as an end in himself, and follow his own rational self-interest?" Or is it more like Woody Guthrie, paraphrasing Tom Joad in "The Grapes of Wrath": "Everybody might be just one big soul — well, it looks that way to me."

More likely, in a nation stitched together by a high-wire act of political compromise, it's somewhere in between — a new path that Americans must chart so they can continue their four-century experiment through unprecedented times. Yet again.

Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, has been writing about American culture since 1990. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/anthonyted>.

Just a chat: Calls offered for older adults staying home

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — For 81-year-old Dell Kaplan, the offer to get calls from a stranger just to chat while staying home during the coronavirus pandemic was immediately appealing.

"It gets pretty lonely here by yourself," said Kaplan, a suburban Dallas resident who has been missing meals out with friends, family get-togethers and going to classes at a nearby college.

The program being offered by the city of Plano is among those that have popped up across the U.S. during the pandemic to help older adults with a simple offer to engage in small talk.

"It's really just to give them a social outlet that they might not have otherwise," said Holly Ryckman, a library support supervisor who is among about 15 staffers from several city departments in Plano who together have been making about 50 calls a week starting in April.

Brent Bloechle, a library manager who helped organize the program, said the city plans to keep it up through at least mid-summer, and maybe permanently.

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The people receiving the calls have various amounts of social interaction in their lives, Ryckman said. Many, she said, talk about relatives who are in touch, so her call might be just be “one piece of the puzzle” helping them stay engaged.

That’s the case for Kaplan, who regularly talks with her daughter, granddaughters and friends, keeps up with people on Facebook and has been participating online in her adult-learning classes.

But Kaplan said her biweekly chats with Ryckman give her something to look forward to “besides the usual.”

Laurie Onofrio-Collier has been making calls to older people across the U.S. from her California home as part of the AARP’s Friendly Voices program. Onofrio-Collier said her goal is for each person she calls “to feel uplifted, to feel good.”

Like the Plano program, the volunteers for the Friendly Voices program guide people to resources if they need help from local groups for things like getting groceries — AARP’s Community Connections site lists groups across the U.S. offering help — but the main point is conversation.

Onofrio-Collier said some people she has called live with a spouse, while others live alone.

She said conversations touch on everything from hobbies to vacations to happy memories.

Onofrio-Collier bonded with one caller over a shared experience: “We ended up talking about how ... when we were kids we loved to read so much that we would read under the covers with a flashlight.”

“I get off the phone with a smile,” Onofrio-Collier said.

She is among about 1,000 volunteers making the calls, according to Andy Miller, senior vice president of AARP Innovations Labs.

Miller said some people want help with technology so they can stay connected with their grandchildren. One volunteer helped a woman figure out how to play online checkers with her grandchild.

“We’re seeing a lot of that — where people are just trying to stay connected to family in ways that they probably didn’t do before,” Miller said.

Older adults are among those who are particularly vulnerable to severe illness and death from the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. That’s why health officials are encouraging people over 65 to stay home even as some states loosen restrictions put in place because of the pandemic. For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms, and the vast majority recover within a few weeks.

“Some seniors may be the last ones out because of the vulnerability,” Miller said.

Kaplan, who retired 11 years ago after more than two decades managing Plano’s senior center, said she and Ryckman didn’t know each other, but found common ground in talking about the city and dealing with isolating at home.

Ryckman said the calls have been “a gift” for her.

Kaplan said that when she feels it’s safe for her to venture to places other than the grocery store, she plans to visit the library and meet Ryckman in person.

Sri Lanka newlyweds cancel wedding party, help poor instead

By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — As couples do all over the world, Darshana Kumara Wijenarayana and his fiance, Pawani Rasanga, spent months planning a grand wedding.

And everything was on course for the Sri Lankan couple — until the coronavirus struck the island nation off India’s southern tip, leading to an indefinite lockdown.

“By that time, we had made all the arrangements. Clothes, rings and cakes had been ordered. The reception hall was booked. We had planned to invite 250 guests,” Darshana told The Associated Press by phone from his home in Malimbada, a small town about 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of the capital Colombo.

Family and friends urged them to postpone their April 27 wedding.

Instead, the couple chose to celebrate their love by feeding the poor.

The first COVID-19 patient in Sri Lanka was a Chinese tourist who fell sick in January during her vacation. She was discharged in February.

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Until the first week of March, there was little panic about the disease. Then on March 11, the first Sri Lankan — a tour guide — tested positive for the virus, triggering fear and the closure of schools and universities and many businesses.

The ongoing curfew has curbed the spread of the virus, but also dealt a severe blow to many who survive on a daily wage.

As the couple's wedding day approached, the local curfew was lifted during daytime hours, so they were free to host the wedding as planned, albeit under strict social distancing guidelines.

But they'd hatched another plan.

Darshana, the 30-year-old owner of a small retail shop, and Pawani, 25, a lab assistant at a state-run school, decided to share their wedding day with some of their neediest neighbors.

After registering the marriage with a few close family and friends, the couple cut the wedding cake and fed each other a piece before getting to work.

The groom wore a dark blue, three-piece, Western-style suit with an ivory tie and boutonniere, and the bride was in a white lace sari and a jeweled wedding headpiece with pink and purple flowers pinned above her chignon.

Both wore masks as they delivered plastic bags of goods to each home, some built of uneven wooden planks on mud floors. Little girls and their mothers beamed at the bride as she distributed colorful plastic headbands; they offered the couple blessings for a happy married life.

Darshana and Pawani presented children with toy cars. They even offered slices of their cake. Then, they applied hand sanitizer and moved on to the next home.

They have since received a flood of phone calls and visits at their home and shop from strangers who praised them for their generosity.

"By doing this, we got a great satisfaction," Darshana said. "When you see the happiness on the face of these people, especially the kids ... you see I don't have words to explain that happiness."

While nonstop news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, have the stories about the kindness of strangers and individuals who have sacrificed for others. "One Good Thing" is an AP series reflecting these acts of kindness.

Canadian aerobatic jet crashes amid pandemic show; 1 dead

KAMLOOPS, British Columbia (AP) — A Canadian aerobatic jet crashed into a British Columbia neighborhood during a flyover intended to boost morale during the pandemic, killing one crew member, seriously injuring another and setting a house on fire. Video appeared to show the plane's crew ejecting.

The crash left debris scattered across the neighborhood near the airport in the city of Kamloops, 260 miles (418 kilometers) northeast of Vancouver, on Sunday. The Snowbirds are Canada's equivalent of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds or U.S. Navy's Blue Angels.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he was "deeply saddened" by the death of Capt. Jennifer Casey, who served as a spokesperson for the Snowbirds, and the injuring of Capt. Richard MacDougall, one of the team's coordinators and pilot of the aircraft who survived landing on the roof of a house.

"For the past two weeks, the Snowbirds have been flying across the country to lift up Canadians during these difficult times," Trudeau said in a statement. "Their flyovers across the country put a smile on the faces of Canadians everywhere and make us proud."

The morale boosting mission is now on indefinite hold and the fleet of Tutor jets has been placed on operational pause.

Video posted to Twitter appears to show two Snowbirds taking off from Kamloops Airport. One of the aircraft subsequently climbed into the sky before rolling over and plunging to the ground. The video appears to show at least one person ejecting from the plane before it disappears behind a stand of trees and an explosion is heard.

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A local resident who lives seven houses from the crash site and had been watching the aircraft said he saw “the Snowbird going straight down.”

“I saw what looked like a parachute about, say, 20 feet over the house, and it disappeared from sight, and the parachute hadn’t fully deployed yet — it was still sort of straight up and down,” Kenny Hinds said.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the cause of the crash is under investigation.

Rose Miller lives directly across the street from where the plane hit. She’d watched the Snowbirds arrive on Saturday, and she went to her front window on Sunday when she heard the roar of jet engines.

Miller said she heard a loud bang and wondered whether it might be a sonic boom. Then she watched the plane smash onto the ground.

“It looked to me like it was mostly on the road, but it just exploded. It went everywhere,” she said. “In fact, I got a big, huge piece in my backyard. The cops said it was the ejection seat.”

Miller said a couple in their early 70s lives in the home. Both are OK, she said, noting that she’d spoken with them after they were evacuated to a nearby street. The woman had been in the basement while the man was behind the house.

Miller said section of roof on a home on a nearby street has been covered up.

“This accident really shakes us to our core,” Kamloops Mayor Ken Christian said. About five houses had to be evacuated.

Operation Inspiration started in Nova Scotia earlier this month and features the team’s signature nine-jet formation. It was aimed at boosting morale amid the pandemic.

Marni Capostinsky said she lives across the street from the crash site and was out on the deck when she heard the plane getting closer.

“We ran out under the cover to look and saw something black coming towards us, everyone hit the deck it was so loud,” she said.

Hinds said it looked like the living room of the house where the crash occurred was on fire.

“I just started running down the street. And I got there maybe a minute after it crashed and there was a couple of residents that had their hoses out and they were trying to put the flames out because it hit a house,” he said.

It’s been a difficult few weeks for Nova Scotia and the Canadian military as a navy helicopter went down over the Mediterranean last month, killing six people — three of whom were from Nova Scotia. Casey’s roots were in Nova Scotia — a province that saw a gunman kill 22 people in rampage amid the pandemic last month.

Sunday’s crash follows the downing of another Snowbird in the U.S. state of Georgia last October, where the team was scheduled to perform in an air show. Capt. Kevin Domon-Grenier sustained minor injuries when he ejected from the plane, which crashed into a farmer’s field. No one else was hurt.

The Snowbirds have performed at airshows across Canada and the U.S. for decades and are considered a key tool for raising awareness about — and recruiting for — the air force. Eleven aircraft are used during shows, with nine flying and two kept as spares.

The air force obtained its Tutor jets in 1963 and has used them in air demonstrations since 1971. Prior to Sunday’s crash, seven pilots and one passenger had been killed and several aircraft had been lost over the course of the Snowbirds’ history.

—
Associated Press writer Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

The Last Word: Armstrong reflects on being Jordan’s teammate

By B.J. ARMSTRONG For The Associated Press

EDITOR’S NOTE: B.J. Armstrong, a Los Angeles-based sports agent who played with the Chicago Bulls during the 1991, 1992 and 1993 championship seasons, offered perspective and analysis to The Associated Press throughout the airing of “The Last Dance” series. With the final two episodes airing Sunday night, Armstrong shared his insight in an essay — as told to AP Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds — on the

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10-part documentary.

It took me a little while to realize that Michael Jordan was rarely around when we were on the road together.

We were teammates for parts of five seasons, which means we played more than 200 road games together. Life on the road on an off day gets monotonous; you go to dinner, you go to the movies, sometimes you walk around the city. And whatever we did, Michael usually wasn't with the group.

He was always in his room. It had to be tough, right? That's when it hit me: You need to have a certain personality to absorb the public life that comes with being a superstar.

For the last five weeks, for two hours every Sunday night, Michael finally showed us what his life was like in "The Last Dance" series from ESPN and Netflix.

He made the game look easy.

But being Michael Jordan, and all that came with it, that wasn't easy.

It all happened gradually and really took off around 1992 when he went to the Olympics and we had won our second championship. He had just exploded on the scene.

Suddenly, he just couldn't do the things that we could do. And he never made excuses for it. I remember the little things, now — he stopped shooting before games, stopped warming up, because he thought it could be disruptive to the team. He was like, "I don't want to interfere with the team." He always knew our routines and had respect for them. He always made sure that everyone had their space within the group.

He was always aware. He always knew what was going on with the group. He had a huge respect for the team dynamic and what we were trying to do and to trying to achieve together, even though he was clearly this very unique individual player.

This guy was incredible, yet he was most comfortable being one of the guys. We hadn't seen a player like him. He could score, he could defend, he could rebound. He was so confident. But underneath that, behind the scenes, I knew Michael Jordan was a country kid from North Carolina, and it was that simple to him. He was a young man, at heart, who wanted to be one of the guys who loved to play and was willing to do whatever was necessary.

Now, did he evolve? Yes. But regardless of all the other things, basketball was always first and foremost. To me, that was the most impressive thing about watching him on this journey. It was that way in 1984 and it was that way in 1998. Losing, winning, making movies, whatever, he was always committed, no matter what. That is an amazing, amazing accomplishment because it is so difficult.

What we got from watching this, and I can say this because I played with arguably the greatest player to ever play, was that professional sports was never intended to be a one-player show. To me, that's the brilliance of Michael Jordan. He was an incredible, amazing individual player who matched his talents to the team, matched the team's talents to him and he lived in the middle of those extremes. I don't know how you do that.

I think it was absolutely amazing story, and this series came at the right time because of the current situation that we're all in with this coronavirus pandemic. And, you know, there were so many lessons to be learned. The biggest one is that there was no quit in Michael Jordan. He was going to find a way. He never made an excuse. He never, ever allowed himself to have fear about not being able to do something.

And people might say, "Oh, no, nobody can do that."

Well, I saw somebody do that for five years. And for the last five weeks, we all got to see that.

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

Thousands defer plans to leave the military during crisis

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Army Sgt. Antonio Gozikowski was planning to leave the military next month and head to college.

After serving for six years, the dental assistant's goal was to become a dentist, and then return to the Army in a few years with his expanded medical skills. But now, with the coronavirus forcing universities to consider virtual or reduced schooling this fall, he decided to take advantage of a new Army program and extend his military service for six more months.

Across the military, uncertainty about future jobs or college opportunities is driving more service members to re-enlist or at least postpone their scheduled departures. As unemployment, layoffs and a historic economic downturn grip the nation, the military — with its job security, steady paycheck and benefits — is looking much more appealing.

"Everything from elementary schools to universities is closing down and there's no saying how it's going to go when the fall semester opens," said Gozikowski, adding that he's hoping schools start opening up for spring semester. "This is like a safety net. I have a source of income and I'll be able to continue working."

Gozikowski, who is from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and is serving at Fort Hood, Texas, is one of hundreds of service members who are taking advantage of newly developed, short-term extensions being offered by the military.

As of last week, the Army had already exceeded its retention goal of 50,000 soldiers for the fiscal year ending in September, re-enlisting more than 52,000 so far. And the other services have also met or are closer than planned to their target numbers. The influx of people re-enlisting will offset any shortfalls in recruiting, which has been hampered by the outbreak. And that will help the services meet their total required troop levels for the end of the year.

"We're hiring," said Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy. "Like anything, market dynamics come into effect and people will see where the opportunities lie."

Sgt. Maj. Stuart Morgan, the senior Army career counselor, said Gozikowski was able to take advantage of a new program designed to help soldiers who were planning to leave this year but are now worried and reconsidering their options. The program allows them to delay their departure for up to 11 months to get them past the peak coronavirus period. By early last week, he said, 745 soldiers had signed up.

"What we're seeing this year, which is directly related to COVID, is we do have a population of soldiers that what they were expecting at the end of transition has suddenly disappeared," Morgan said. "And now you have a soldier that is trying to go through a transition period that is now facing uncertainty on the outside."

The Air Force is already expecting to fall short of its recruiting goal by as much as 5,800 as a result of the virus. And that gap, the Air Force said, could be filled by service members who decide to re-enlist or extend their service.

So far, the number of Air Force personnel who have withdrawn their requests to leave the service or have asked to extend their enlistment is 700 more than last year at this time, including 230 pilots and medical staff.

For one pilot, the opportunity to make that sudden change of course was a relief. In discussing his plans, he asked that his name not be used to preserve any future employment options.

Nearly two months ago, he was in Miami taking an airline certification course and getting ready for his next career. For months, he and his fellow pilots at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois had been talking about which airlines were hiring.

"Everybody was getting out," the 10-year transport aircraft pilot said in an interview from the air base. "The conversations were like, oh, who got picked up by Southwest, who got picked up by American, who got picked up by Delta. And then the whole coronavirus thing started to play its course."

Suddenly, he said, "the discussions are more like, what are we gonna do now?"

The pilot said he was worried about the uncertainty. Even if he got a job, it might only be temporary, if

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the economic downturn continued.

"I need stability in my life. There's no steady income on the outside, or guaranteed income either," said the pilot, adding that in the military, he's guaranteed a job. "While other people are getting laid off and not working, we're still collecting a paycheck and going to work."

Retention is also on the rise in the Marine Corps.

Currently there are about 183,000 Marines, and the goal for the end of the fiscal year is about 184,600. The Corps has nearly reached its retention goal of about 12,600 for the fiscal year, with only about 100 or so to get by the end of September. The Navy was not able to provide retention numbers.

In addition, Marines who were planning to leave the service are being allowed to extend their enlistments by a few months, to get past the initial COVID crisis, or by a year or two.

Maj. Craig Thomas, a Marine Corps spokesman, said virus-related restrictions on recruiting and shipping new Marines to initial training will likely mean the service won't meet its goal for total force size this year. He added, however, that while it is too early to tell if the bad economy will further boost retention, the enlistment extensions could make up for the recruiting shortfalls.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump, GOP falsehoods on Flynn, Biden, virus

By HOPE YEN, ERIC TUCKER and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and his GOP allies are misrepresenting the facts behind the legal case of former national security adviser Michael Flynn as they seek to allege improper behavior during the Obama administration in the presidential campaign season.

Broadly dubbing his allegations "Obamagate," Trump points to unspecified conspiracies against himself in 2016 and suggests the disclosure of Flynn's name as part of legal U.S. surveillance of foreign targets was criminal and motivated by partisan politics. There's no evidence of that.

In fact, the so-called unmasking of Americans' names like Flynn's is legal.

Over the weekend, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro also alleged without evidence corruption involving Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's son, Hunter, in China. And in an interview re-aired Sunday, Trump mischaracterized messages between FBI employees to suggest a post-2016 election plot to get him.

Meanwhile, Trump continued to spread falsehoods about the availability of tests needed to help stem the spread of the coronavirus in the U.S. and exaggerated the scope of his travel restrictions on China.

A look at the recent political rhetoric and reality:

FLYNN

TRUMP: "OBAMAGATE!" — tweet Saturday.

TRUMP: "Biggest political crime and scandal in the history of the USA." — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: He's making an unsupported claim that former President Barack Obama broke the law.

Trump and his supporters have made the unmasking of Flynn one of their major talking points, claiming that it proves the Obama administration unfairly and illegally targeted Flynn and other Trump associates.

But there is nothing illegal about unmasking. The declassified document also states that the unmasking requests were approved through the National Security Agency's "standard process."

This past week, when Trump was asked by reporters to define Obama's criminal offense in the alleged "Obamagate," Trump failed to articulate one. "You know what the crime is," he said last Monday. "The crime is very obvious to everybody. All you have to do is read the newspapers, except yours."

During routine surveillance of foreign targets, names of Americans occasionally come up in conversation, either because the foreigner is talking to or about them. For privacy reasons, those names are generally concealed, or masked, before the intelligence is distributed to administration officials. U.S. officials can ask the agency that collected the intelligence to unmask the name if they think it is vital to understanding the intelligence.

While Trump casts unmasking as sinister, the number of identities unmasked in response to such requests has actually increased during the first years of the Trump administration from the final year of the

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Obama administration.

SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM, Republican chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee: "The unmasking of General Flynn by the Obama Administration regarding conversations during the presidential transition are deeply troubling and smell of politics, not national security." — statement Wednesday.

THE FACTS: There is nothing from newly released material that suggests the unmasking requests were rooted in politics rather than national security.

There were indeed multiple Obama administration officials, including then-Vice President Biden, who asked the NSA to disclose the name of an American whose identity was concealed in intelligence reports. That American was revealed to be Flynn.

But there's nothing inherently unusual about the requests, and the documents released by the Trump administration say the people who made the requests were authorized to receive the underlying intelligence reports.

SEN. RAND PAUL, R-KY: "But it should be and is illegal to listen to an American's conversation. And it's even worse if you're listening to an American who just happens to be your political opponent from the opposite party." — interview Wednesday on Fox News Channel.

THE FACTS: It is not illegal to listen to an American's conversations, and law enforcement officials do it routinely with a warrant or court order. But in any event, that's not what happened here.

No one was listening intentionally to an American's conversation. Instead, U.S. officials learned of the conversations that involved or mentioned Flynn during surveillance of foreign targets.

TRUMP, addressing the criminal case against Flynn that Trump's Justice Department is now seeking to drop: "This was all Obama, this was all Biden. These people were corrupt, the whole thing was corrupt, and we caught them." — interview Thursday on Fox Business Network.

THE FACTS: He's suggesting partisan politics by the Obama administration were completely behind Flynn's investigation. That's incorrect.

It is true that the counterintelligence investigation into ties between Russia and the Trump campaign, and into Russia in particular, began during the Obama administration. But it continued well into Trump's own administration. The investigation into Flynn was taken over by a special counsel who was appointed by Rod Rosenstein, Trump's own deputy attorney general.

'OBAMAGATE'

NAVARRO: "Joe Biden has got 40 years of sucking up to the Chinese, including the eight years as vice president. And we know about the billion dollars that his son took from the Chinese." — interview Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

TRUMP: "Worst of all, was the last eight years under President Obama and Biden, where his son gets a billion and a half dollars, and then they're supposed to be tough on China. ... And he walked out of China with \$1.5 billion dollars to invest for them, of which he makes hundreds of thousands — and actually millions — of dollars." — Fox interview Thursday.

THE FACTS: There's no evidence Hunter Biden pocketed \$1.5 billion from China. More generally, accusations of criminal wrongdoing by father or son are unsubstantiated.

In 2014, an investment fund started by Hunter Biden and other investors joined with foreign and Chinese private equity firms in an effort to raise \$1.5 billion to invest outside China. That's far from giving Hunter Biden such a sum, as Trump describes it.

Hunter Biden's lawyer, George Mesires, wrote in an internet post last year that his client was an unpaid director of the fund at the time "based on his interest in seeking ways to bring Chinese capital to international markets."

"He has not received any return on his investment," Mesires said.

Hunter Biden stepped down from the Chinese board last October as part of a pledge not to work on

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behalf of any foreign-owned companies should his father win the presidency.

TRUMP: "So even before I got elected, you remember the famous — the two lovers, right, Strzok and Page, the insurance policy, she's going to win, but just in case she doesn't we have an insurance policy. That means that if I won, they're going to try and take me out." — Fox interview Thursday, which re-aired Sunday.

THE FACTS: There was no conspiracy afoot to take out Trump in the 2016 text message between two FBI employees.

Trump depicts the two as referring to a plot — or insurance policy — to oust him from office if he won the presidential election over Democrat Hillary Clinton. It's apparent from the text that it wasn't that.

Agent Peter Strzok and lawyer Lisa Page, both now gone from the bureau, said the text messages reflected a debate about how aggressively the FBI should investigate Trump and his campaign when expectations at the time were that he would lose anyway.

Strzok texted about something Page had said to the FBI's deputy director, to the effect that "there's no way he gets elected." But Strzok argued that the FBI should not assume Clinton would win: "I'm afraid we can't take that risk." He likened the situation to "an insurance policy in the unlikely event you die before you're 40." He has said he was not discussing a plot to drive Trump from office.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

NAVARRO, praising Trump's pandemic response: "This starting gun for the China pandemic started on Jan. 30 when President Trump had the courage to pull down the flights from China. ... So don't tell me we lost February, because I was there. I'm right here. And this president was directing us to move as quickly as possible." — interview Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

TRUMP: "In January I put — and I was criticized by everybody including Dr. Fauci — I put in a wall. We put in a very strong wall. Only a small number of people were allowed in, and they were all U.S. citizens. I can't tell a U.S. citizen, you can't come back into your country. ... We actually acted very early." — Fox interview Thursday.

THE FACTS: The travel restrictions he imposed on China in late January had other loopholes besides the exceptions for U.S. citizens. It was not a solid "wall" or total ban, as Trump and his trade adviser suggest.

There were many gaps in containment and initial delays in testing in January and February, leading to the U.S. rising to No. 1 globally in the number of people infected by the coronavirus.

His order temporarily barred entry by foreign nationals who had traveled in China within the previous 14 days, with exceptions for U.S. citizens, but also their immediate family and permanent residents.

Dr. Anne Schuchat, the No. 2 official at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told The Associated Press the federal government was also slow to understand how much coronavirus was spreading from Europe, which helped drive the acceleration of U.S. outbreaks in February. Trump announced restrictions for many European countries in mid-March.

"I think the timing of our travel alerts should have been earlier," she said.

VIRUS TESTING

TRUMP: "We just cracked 10 million tests ... Ten million. ... If you look down here, these are other countries that have not done anywhere near what we're doing. We're double. If you add them up and double them, we've done more tests. But I can't get the press to print that, unfortunately." — remarks Wednesday with governors of Colorado and North Dakota.

TRUMP: "What we've done on testing, we've now tested more than the entire world put together." — remarks Thursday to reporters.

THE FACTS: False. The U.S. has not tested more than all other countries combined, let alone double the number for the entire world. It also lags many countries in testing its population proportionally.

Together, just three countries — Russia, Germany and Italy — have reported more tests than the U.S.

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This week, the U.S. had reported conducting more than 10 million tests since the pandemic began, after failing in the crucial early weeks of the outbreak. That compared with more than 23 million tests by the other countries in the top 10 of the testing count.

The U.S. was followed by Russia, Germany, Italy, Spain, Britain, India, United Arab Emirates, Turkey and France.

BRETT GIROIR, the federal health official overseeing U.S. testing: "Everybody who needs a test can get a test. ... If you're symptomatic with a respiratory illness, that is an indication for a test and you can get a test. If you need to be contact traced, you can get a test." — news briefing on May 11.

THE FACTS: Not according to public health experts, who say the U.S. is not near the testing level to safely reopen.

Researchers at the Harvard Global Health Institute, for instance, said the U.S. should now be doing 900,000 tests a day to help stop the spread of the virus. Trump this week said the U.S. was doing about 300,000.

Giroir stressed that an adequate number of diagnostic tests were available for those with symptoms of COVID-19, but studies have shown many who get infected never show symptoms. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, has urged enough testing to include at the least asymptomatic people in vulnerable populations, such as nursing homes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently broadened its guidelines for coronavirus testing to include certain asymptomatic people who may be at higher risk.

More than 40 states are failing to test widely enough to reach the level needed to safely loosen stay-at-home orders, according to an AP analysis of metrics developed by the Harvard Global Health Institute. The group includes four — Colorado, Florida, Georgia and Texas — that have already reopened.

Associated Press writers Meghan Hoyer and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

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China warns US of 'all necessary measures' over Huawei rules

BEIJING (AP) — China's commerce ministry says it will take "all necessary measures" in response to new U.S. restrictions on Chinese tech giant Huawei's ability to use American technology, calling the measures an abuse of state power and a violation of market principles.

An unidentified spokesperson quoted Sunday in a statement on the ministry's website said the regulations also threatened the security of the "global industrial and supply chain."

"The U.S. uses state power, under the so-called excuse of national security, and abuses export control measures to continuously oppress and contain specific enterprises of other countries," the statement said.

China will "take all necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises," it said.

Under the new rules, foreign semiconductor makers who use American technology must obtain a U.S. license to ship Huawei-designed semiconductors to the Chinese company.

Chip design and manufacturing equipment used in the world's semiconductor plants is mostly U.S.-made, so the new rule affects foreign producers that sell to Huawei and affiliates including HiSilicon, which mainly designs chipsets used in smartphones and wireless base stations. The U.S. Commerce Department said foreign foundries would be granted a 120-day grace period for chips already in production.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said Friday that Washington wants to prevent Huawei from evading sanctions imposed earlier on its use of American technology to design and produce semiconductors abroad.

Huawei Technologies Ltd., China's first global tech brand and a maker of network equipment and smartphones, is at the center of a U.S.-Chinese conflict over Beijing's technology ambitions.

American officials say Huawei is a security risk, which the company denies.

It wasn't clear what form China's response would take, but the sides are already deep in conflict over U.S. accusations of copyright theft and unfair trading by firms in China's heavily state-controlled economy.

Canada arrested Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of Huawei's founder, in December 2018 in a case that sparked a diplomatic furor among the three countries and complicated high-stakes U.S.-China trade talks. China detained two Canadians in apparent retaliation for Meng's arrest.

Japan's growth drops amid pandemic, worse times likely ahead

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's economic growth plunged into recession in the first quarter as the coronavirus pandemic squelched production, exports and spending, and fears are growing that worse times may lie ahead.

The Cabinet Office reported Monday a 3.4% drop in the annual pace of seasonally adjusted real gross domestic product, or GDP, for the January-March period. The annual pace gives what the rate would be when continued for a year. For just the quarter, the drop was 0.9%.

Exports dived 21.8%. Private residential investments slipped nearly 17%, and household consumption fell 3.1%.

Analysts say things are expected to get worse as the world's third-largest economy endures its biggest challenge since World War II.

Japan is in a technical recession, defined as two quarters straight of contraction, as its economy contracted 1.9% in October-December. Growth was flat in July-September and was a mere 0.5% in April-June, according to the latest numbers.

Japan is extremely vulnerable to repercussions from the pandemic given its dependence on trade with both China and the U.S., the country where the pandemic began and the country where it has been hit hardest.

Travel, tourism and trade with those countries and others have languished amid shutdowns aimed at fighting the disease.

Manufacturers that are pillars of Japan's economy, such as Toyota Motor Corp., have reported dismal financial results. Some companies have been unable to provide forecasts for this fiscal year. Profitability is nose-diving as people economize and stay home. Production at some plants has halted.

The government has come up with a rescue package of nearly 108 trillion yen (\$1 trillion), and plans more, including aid to small businesses and cash handouts.

More than 16,000 people in Japan have been infected with the virus and more than 700 have died, but those numbers are relatively low given it has the world's oldest population and its cities are densely populated.

Japan eased its state of emergency last week for most of the country, though hot spots like Tokyo are maintaining restrictions. While many places are starting to reopen, normal operations and a recovery in consumption are not expected anytime soon.

Robert Carnell, regional head of research Asia-Pacific at ING, said the damage to the private sector will continue, even as public demand picks up, helped by government aid.

"So even though the state of emergency has been criticized as being a halfhearted response to the pandemic, compared with many other nations, it has still resulted in a substantial reduction in economic activity, and will weigh on growth," he said.

Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

Canadian aerobatic jet crashes amid pandemic show; 1 dead

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A Canadian aerobatic jet crashed into a British Columbia neighborhood Sunday during a flyover intended to boost morale during the pandemic, killing one crew member, seriously injuring another and setting a house on fire. Video appeared to show the plane's crew ejecting.

The crash left debris scattered across the neighborhood near the airport in the city of Kamloops, 260 miles (418 kilometers) northeast of Vancouver. The Snowbirds are Canada's equivalent of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds or U.S. Navy's Blue Angels.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he was "deeply saddened" by the death of Capt. Jennifer Casey, who served as a spokesperson for the Snowbirds, and the injuring of Capt. Richard MacDougall, one of the team's coordinators and pilot of the aircraft who survived landing on the roof of a house.

"For the past two weeks, the Snowbirds have been flying across the country to lift up Canadians during these difficult times," Trudeau said in a statement. "Their flyovers across the country put a smile on the faces of Canadians everywhere and make us proud."

The morale boosting mission is now on indefinite hold and the fleet of Tutor jets has been placed on operational pause.

Video posted to Twitter appears to show two Snowbirds taking off from Kamloops Airport. One of the aircraft subsequently climbed into the sky before rolling over and plunging to the ground. The video appears to show at least one person ejecting from the plane before it disappears behind a stand of trees and an explosion is heard.

A local resident who lives seven houses from the crash site and had been watching the aircraft said he saw "the Snowbird going straight down."

"I saw what looked like a parachute about, say, 20 feet over the house, and it disappeared from sight, and the parachute hadn't fully deployed yet — it was still sort of straight up and down," Kenny Hinds said.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said the cause of the crash is under investigation.

Rose Miller lives directly across the street from where the plane hit. She'd watched the Snowbirds arrive on Saturday, and she went to her front window on Sunday when she heard the roar of jet engines.

Miller said she heard a loud bang and wondered whether it might be a sonic boom. Then she watched the plane smash onto the ground.

"It looked to me like it was mostly on the road, but it just exploded. It went everywhere," she said. "In fact, I got a big, huge piece in my backyard. The cops said it was the ejection seat."

Miller said a couple in their early 70s lives in the home. Both are OK, she said, noting that she'd spoken with them after they were evacuated to a nearby street. The woman had been in the basement while the man was behind the house.

Miller said section of roof on a home on a nearby street has been covered up.

"This accident really shakes us to our core," Kamloops Mayor Ken Christian said. About five houses had to be evacuated.

Operation Inspiration started in Nova Scotia earlier this month and features the team's signature nine-jet formation. It was aimed at boosting morale amid the pandemic.

Marni Capostinsky said she lives across the street from the crash site and was out on the deck when she heard the plane getting closer.

"We ran out under the cover to look and saw something black coming towards us, everyone hit the deck it was so loud," she said.

Hinds said it looked like the living room of the house where the crash occurred was on fire.

"I just started running down the street. And I got there maybe a minute after it crashed and there was a couple of residents that had their hoses out and they were trying to put the flames out because it hit a house," he said.

It's been a difficult few weeks for Nova Scotia and the Canadian military as a navy helicopter went down over the Mediterranean last month, killing six people — three of whom were from Nova Scotia. Casey's

roots were in Nova Scotia — a province that saw a gunman kill 22 people in rampage amid the pandemic last month.

Sunday's crash follows the downing of another Snowbird in the U.S. state of Georgia last October, where the team was scheduled to perform in an air show. Capt. Kevin Domon-Grenier sustained minor injuries when he ejected from the plane, which crashed into a farmer's field. No one else was hurt.

The Snowbirds have performed at airshows across Canada and the U.S. for decades and are considered a key tool for raising awareness about — and recruiting for — the air force. Eleven aircraft are used during shows, with nine flying and two kept as spares.

The air force obtained its Tutor jets in 1963 and has used them in air demonstrations since 1971. Prior to Sunday's crash, seven pilots and one passenger had been killed and several aircraft had been lost over the course of the Snowbirds' history.

Law enforcement ties, long delay complicate Arbery case

By KATE BRUMBACK and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — There was an abundance of evidence when officers arrived at the scene on a February afternoon in coastal Georgia: A man, apparently unarmed, lying on the street, soaked in blood. The suspected shooter, a shotgun, eyewitnesses. And video of the incident.

But no arrests were made in the death of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery for more than two months, not until after video of the shooting in Brunswick surfaced and stoked a national uproar over race relations.

Local prosecutors are now under investigation for their handling of the case. And a newly appointed investigative agency and prosecutor must untangle the criminal investigation, build a case and make up for lost time.

Among the questions: Did shooting suspect Travis McMichael and his father, Gregory, both white, get special treatment because the elder McMichael had been a longtime investigator at the Brunswick Circuit District Attorney's office? Did investigators treat the shooting as a potential murder, or as a justifiable homicide? And might the outcome have been different if Arbery weren't black?

The 911 operator sounded confused by the caller's description of a purported crime: A man was in a house under construction.

"You said someone's breaking into it right now?"

"No, it's all open. It's under construction," the caller says, "And he's running right now. There he goes right now."

The dispatcher says she'll send police, but "I just need to know what he was doing wrong."

A second call comes in six minutes later: "I'm out here in Satilla Shores. There's a black male running down the street."

The operator is trying to get more details when a man yells, "Stop. ... Damnit. Stop." Then, after a pause, "Travis!"

Moments later, Arbery is shot.

According to the police report, Gregory McMichael said he saw a person he suspected of burglary "hauling ass" down the street. He ran inside his house, calling for his son Travis. The two grabbed their guns, hopped into a pickup truck and chased him.

Gregory McMichael told police they wanted to talk to Arbery and tried to corner him, but he began to "violently attack" Travis McMichael, the report says. The two fought over the shotgun, and Arbery was shot. The McMichaels claimed self-defense.

The father and son were questioned, and police called the district attorney's office, where Gregory McMichael had worked for more than two decades, for legal advice. They were released.

Meanwhile, Arbery's mother got a call from an investigator.

"He went on to say that Ahmaud was involved in a burglary, and in the midst of the burglary he was confronted by the homeowner, and in the midst of that confrontation, there was a fight over the firearm

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and Ahmaud was shot and killed," Wanda Cooper-Jones told The Associated Press. She repeated that story to her family.

Law enforcement in Brunswick has a checkered history, and over the past decade police have faced numerous lawsuits and increasing scrutiny.

In 2010, two officers fired eight bullets into an unarmed woman's car after a chase, killing her. An investigation found neither of the officers checked on her condition afterward — instead their in-car cameras caught them comparing their shooting skills.

One of those officers later killed his estranged wife and her friend before dying in a standoff with police.

Just days after Arbery's killing, Glynn County Police Chief John Powell and three former high-ranking officers were indicted in what investigators described as a cover-up of an officer's sexual relationship with an informant.

A November 2019 memo from the county manager described how Powell had "inherited a culture of cronyism, outdated policies, lack of appropriate training, and loss of State certification."

The memo also described how supervisors had failed to document or investigate misconduct allegations and detailed a "culture of cover-ups, failure to supervise, abuse of power, and lack of accountability within the Glynn County Police Department" before Powell arrived.

Now, the version of Arbery's death told to Cooper-Jones is under dispute, and authorities are again under scrutiny.

Officers in a small town calling the DA for guidance in a fatal shooting case is not unusual and would normally be uncontroversial. But there's disagreement over what happened next.

Peter Murphy, an elected commissioner in Glynn County, alleged that officers were hesitant to arrest the McMichaels after the DA's office told them it wasn't necessary.

"I'm just wondering, what other investigation occurred over the next two months really?" Murphy said.

The district attorney's office has called that a "malicious lie" and says it was police who raised the justified shooting angle.

Police say they were told the day of the shooting that more follow-up was needed but the McMichaels weren't flight risks and could go home. A second prosecutor was brought in after the first recused herself because Gregory McMichael had worked for her, and he quickly decided no charges were necessary. He was eventually removed over his own conflict of interest — his son works at the Brunswick Circuit.

J. Tom Morgan, a former metro Atlanta district attorney who is now a criminal defense lawyer, said it would be a "big misstep" for the DA to advise against arrests if officers decided there was probable cause that a crime had occurred.

"I can't imagine saying 'stand down' if I'm not there personally to talk to people," Morgan said. "If police believe they have probable cause, I'm not going to second-guess them from my back porch."

In any homicide, it's important to interview witnesses immediately while the facts are still fresh in their minds and before they've had a chance to coordinate stories. If that was delayed because officers were told not to make arrests, it could be problematic, he said.

Bowling Green State University criminologist Philip Stinson said there is also a tendency to treat a crime scene differently if a current or former law enforcement officer is involved, as was the case with Gregory McMichael.

It could make it harder for prosecutors to bring a successful murder case, and easier for defense lawyers to argue that the crime scene is tainted by potential prosecutor misconduct that's under investigation by Georgia authorities.

It looks like investigators started with an assumption it was a justified shooting, Stinson said.

"Because of that — because of all of the assumptions that are made, all of the steps in the investigation that are not taken — they made the job much more difficult for the AG's office," he said.

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The case seemed to have stalled until May 5, when a video was posted to the website of a local radio station.

The shaky footage, taken by a man listed in the police report as a witness, shows Arbery, dressed in shorts and a white top, running from the McMichaels. The driver's side door is open. Travis McMichael and Arbery appear to struggle over the gun. Gregory McMichael hops from the back of the truck. Arbery is shot and falls to the ground.

It doesn't show Arbery with a firearm, nor have police said they recovered one.

The footage seemed to refute Gregory McMichael's version and prompted widespread outrage and calls for justice. The case drew national attention, including from Jay-Z and President Donald Trump, who said he was "disturbed."

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case. Investigators canvassed the neighborhood, talking to some people who had previously been interviewed and others who hadn't.

They arrested both McMichaels on charges of aggravated assault and murder May 7, less than 48 hours later.

GBI director Vic Reynolds said there was clear probable cause and that local authorities had done "a good investigation, a thorough investigation."

The legal case now stretches beyond coastal Georgia, with the FBI weighing potential federal hate crime charges. And more evidence is emerging.

A third prosecutor who had the case when the video surfaced was removed after the attorney general said it had grown in "size and scope," and a fourth prosecutor from a bigger district has now been appointed. Cobb County District Attorney Joyette M. Holmes, one of seven black district attorneys in Georgia, is overseeing the prosecution at the direction of the state attorney general.

The first DA, Jackie Johnson, has defended her office's involvement. So has the second DA.

"I'm confident an investigation is going to show my office did what it was supposed to and there was no wrongdoing on our part," Johnson told the AP this week.

Asked if anyone in her office told police not to arrest the McMichaels or suggested the shooting may have been justified, Johnson said, "Absolutely not."

More video has emerged of a man inside a house under construction — the home where the 911 caller reported seeing someone shortly before Arbery was shot. But the owner's lawyer has told AP and others the house was wide open, and nothing was ever taken.

The McMichaels remain in jail and their attorneys caution against a rush to judgment.

For now the case is stalled once again, with courts largely closed due to the coronavirus pandemic and no way to call a grand jury until mid-June at the earliest.

Brumback reported from Atlanta and Long reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Russ Bynum in Savannah, Ga., Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed.

Investigators open criminal probe into LA explosion

By **STEFANIE DAZIO** and **FRANK BAKER ASSOCIATED PRESS**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Police and fire investigators launched a criminal probe Sunday into the cause of an explosion at a hash oil manufacturer in downtown Los Angeles that sent firefighters running for their lives.

Detectives from the Los Angeles Police Department's major crimes division were working with the city Fire Department's arson investigators to determine what might have sparked the blast that shot a ball of flames out of the building Saturday night and scorched a fire truck across the street, police spokesman Josh Rubenstein said.

"We're in the very early stages of the investigation ... to understand what happened and figure out how to move forward," he said.

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives was assisting local fire investigators,

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an agency spokeswoman said.

The blast injured a dozen firefighters. Some of them who ran out onto sidewalks, where they tore off their burning protective equipment, including melted helmets, officials said.

"Everybody off the roof!" a firefighter shouted in scanner traffic captured on Broadcastify.com.

"Mayday mayday mayday! All companies out of the building. Mayday mayday mayday!" another shouted.

Firefighters first thought they were battling a routine structure fire, city fire Capt. Erik Scott told KNX Radio, but as they got a little farther in the building they started to hear "a loud hissing sound and a significant rumbling that you could feel vibrating throughout the area."

He said "one significant explosion" shook the neighborhood around 6:30 p.m. Firefighters inside had to run through a wall of flames he estimated as 30 feet (9 meters) high and wide, and those on the roof scrambled down a ladder that was engulfed in flames.

Three firefighters were released after spending the night in the hospital, fire department spokesman Nicholas Prange said Sunday. Of the eight who remained hospitalized, two were in critical but stable condition, he said. Officials initially announced that 11 firefighters were injured. But Prange said a 12th was treated and released for a minor injury.

All were expected to survive.

"Things could have been so much worse," said Los Angeles Fire Department Medical Director Dr. Marc Eckstein, who helped treat the injured at Los Angeles County-University of Southern California Medical Center.

There was light to moderate smoke when firefighters entered the one-story building in the city's Toy District and went on the roof — normal procedures to try to quickly knock down any flames.

Los Angeles Fire Chief Ralph Terrazas said one of the firefighters inside the building thought things didn't seem right — the pressure from the smoke and heat coming from the rear of the building were increasing. He directed everyone to get out, and they quickly started exiting the building as it was rocked by the explosion.

Firefighters on the roof scrambled down ladders with their protective coats on fire. The wall of flames shot out the building and burned seats inside a fire truck across the street.

More than 200 firefighters rushed to the scene, and dozens of engines, trucks and rescue vehicles clogged the streets. The fire spread to several nearby buildings, but firefighters were able to douse it in about an hour.

Scott said the building was a warehouse for SmokeTokes, which he described as a supplier for makers of "butane honey oil." Butane is an odorless gas that easily ignites, and it's used in the process to extract the high-inducing chemical THC from cannabis to create a highly potent concentrate also known as hash oil. The oil is used in vape pens, edibles, waxes and other products.

A call to SmokeTokes went unanswered on Sunday, and the company's voicemail was full.

On its website, SmokeTokes advertises a variety of products including "puff bars," pipes, "dab" tools, vaporizers, "torches and butane," and cartridges. The company says it is "an international distributor and wholesaler of smoking and vaping products, and related accessories."

Prange, the LAFD spokesman, said carbon dioxide and butane canisters were found inside the building but that it was still not clear what caused the blast.

Adam Spiker, executive director of the cannabis industry group Southern California Coalition, said he didn't know what activities were taking place inside the building. However, if the business was using butane in cannabis extraction it would be illegal because the city has never issued a license for that type of operation.

Because of safety concerns, such businesses are typically restricted to industrial areas and kept away from urban centers.

"If they were doing volatile extraction with butane ... they couldn't be legal in the city of LA to do those types of activities," Spiker said.

He said the coalition was unaware of the business having any type of license and "something about this doesn't pass the smell test."

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Information so far “puts up a lot of alarm bells,” Spiker said.

In 2016, there was another major fire at a business called Smoke Tokes at a nearby address. The Los Angeles Times reported at the time that it took more than 160 firefighters to put out the blaze and that they encountered pressurized gas cylinders that exploded in the fire.

No one was injured in the fire. It was unclear whether that business and the one that burned Saturday were connected.

Associated Press writers Michael Blood and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

US, European leaders weigh reopening risks without a vaccine

By ELANA SCHOR, MIKE STOBBE and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — On a weekend when many pandemic-weary people emerged from weeks of lockdown, leaders in the U.S. and Europe weighed the risks and rewards of lifting COVID-19 restrictions knowing that a vaccine could take years to develop.

In separate stark warnings, two major European leaders bluntly told their citizens that the world needs to adapt to living with the coronavirus and cannot wait to be saved by a vaccine.

“We are confronting this risk, and we need to accept it, otherwise we would never be able to relaunch,” Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte said, acceding to a push by regional leaders to allow restaurants, bars and beach facilities to open Monday, weeks ahead of an earlier timetable.

The warnings from Conte and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson came as governments worldwide and many U.S. states struggled with restarting economies blindsided by the pandemic. In the U.S., images of crowded bars, beaches and boardwalks suggested some weren’t heeding warnings to safely enjoy reopened spaces while limiting the risks of spreading infection.

Britain’s Johnson, who was hospitalized last month with a serious bout of COVID-19, speculated Sunday that a vaccine may not be developed at all, despite the huge global effort to produce one.

“There remains a very long way to go, and I must be frank that a vaccine might not come to fruition,” Johnson wrote in the Mail on Sunday newspaper.

President Donald Trump, by contrast, promised Americans a speedy return to normalcy that sounded far more optimistic than most experts say is realistic.

“We’re looking at vaccines, we’re looking at cures and we are very, very far down the line,” he said while calling into a charity golf tournament broadcast Sunday broadcast on NBC. “I think that’s not going to be in the very distant future. But even before that, I think we’ll be back to normal.”

Trump said events would likely resume with small crowds — if any — but hopes that, by the time the Masters Tournament is played in November, the crowds can return.

Health experts, however, say the world could be months, if not years, away from having a vaccine available to everyone, and they have warned that easing restrictions too quickly could cause the virus to rebound.

With 36 million newly unemployed in the U.S. alone, economic pressures are building even as authorities acknowledge that reopening risks setting off new waves of infections and deaths.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell expressed optimism Sunday that the U.S. economy could begin to recover in the second half of the year, assuming there isn’t a second wave. But he suggested that a full recovery won’t likely be possible before the arrival of a vaccine.

In an interview with CBS’s “60 Minutes,” Powell said that, once the outbreak has been contained, the economy should be able to rebound “substantially,” while warning it would take much longer for the economy to regain its health than it took for it to collapse.

The coronavirus has infected over 4.7 million people and killed more than 315,000 worldwide, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University that experts say under counts the true toll of the pandemic. The U.S. has reported over 89,000 dead and Europe has seen at least 160,000 deaths.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms. For some, especially older adults

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and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness and lead to death.

Some experts noted recent infection surges in Texas, including a 1,800-case jump Saturday, with Amarillo identified as a growing hot spot. Texas officials said increased testing was playing a big role — the more you look for something, the more you find it. Many are watching hospitalizations and death rates in the weeks ahead to see exactly what the new Texas numbers really mean.

But Texas was one of the earliest states to allow stores and restaurants to reopen, and Dr. Michael Saag at the University of Alabama at Birmingham called Texas “a warning shot” for states to closely watch any surges in cases and have plans to swiftly take steps to stop them.

“No one knows for sure exactly the right way forward, and what I think we’re witnessing is a giant national experiment,” said Saag, an infectious diseases researcher.

In the U.S., many states have lifted stay-at-home orders and other restrictions, allowing some types of businesses to reopen.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, a Republican, told CNN on Sunday that he was concerned to see images of a crowded bar in Columbus, on the first day that outdoor dining establishments were allowed to reopen.

“We made the decision to start opening up Ohio, and about 90% of our economy is back open, because we thought it was a huge risk not to open,” he said. “But we also know it’s a huge risk in opening.”

The Isle of Palms, one of South Carolina’s most popular beaches, saw a rush of visitors this weekend—with Mayor Jimmy Carroll calling Saturday the busiest day he has seen in his more than 60 years there. But police said almost everyone on the beach and in the ocean was staying a safe distance apart.

Houses of worship are beginning to look ahead to resumption of in-person services, with some eyeing that shift this month. But the challenges are steeper in states with ongoing public health restrictions.

In Elgin, Illinois, Northwest Bible Baptist Church had sought to welcome back worshipers on Sunday, preparing to scan people’s temperatures and purchasing protective equipment. But that was postponed after local authorities raised questions.

The church’s preparations were “more than what they’d had to do if they were at Home Depot or Lowe’s or Walmart,” said Jeremy Dys, a counsel at First Liberty Institute, the legal nonprofit representing Northwest Bible Baptist. “Somehow people going to church are incapable, it’s insinuated, of safely gathering.”

Underscoring the tradeoffs involved in resuming such gatherings, officials in California’s Butte County announced Friday that a congregant had tested positive for the virus after attending a Mother’s Day church event that drew more than 180 people.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has suggested that early predictions were overblown. On Monday, Florida restaurants will be allowed to operate at 50% capacity, as can retail shops, museums and libraries.

Paula Walborsky, a 74-year-old retired attorney in Tallahassee, Florida, has resisted the temptation to get her hair done and turned down dinner invitations from close friends. But when one of her city’s public swimming pools reopened by appointment, she decided to test the waters.

“I was so excited to be back in the water, and it just felt wonderful,” Walborsky said.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo got tested for the coronavirus on live television Sunday. Any New Yorkers experiencing flu-like symptoms or those returning to work can now get tested, Cuomo said.

“We’re all talking about what is the spread of the virus when you increase economic activity. Well, how do you know what the spread of the virus is? Testing, testing, testing,” he said.

Kunzelman reported from Silver Spring, Maryland. Associated Press writers Bobby Caina Calvin in Tallahassee, Florida; Michael R. Sisak in New York; and AP writers around the world contributed.

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

Harvick wins at Darlington as NASCAR returns to racing

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

DARLINGTON, S.C. (AP) — This was a 400-mile drive unlike any other in modern day NASCAR.

The grandstands were completely empty. There wasn't a single tailgate inside the track. Everyone wore face coverings — some with the team logos, others opting for plain disposable medical masks. It was nothing close to the corporate sponsorship, pomp and patriotic traveling circus that symbolizes NASCAR.

But when the engines fired at Darlington Raceway following a 10-week layoff during the coronavirus pandemic, it turned into a regular old race.

Kevin Harvick beat Alex Bowman to win NASCAR's first race back, a spectacle closely watched to see if the largest motorsports series in the United States could successfully return to the track.

"I just want to thank everybody from NASCAR and all the teams for letting us do what we do," Harvick said. "I didn't think it was going to be that different, then we won and it's dead silent out here. We miss the fans."

It was a crucial gamble for NASCAR, which had to get back to the track to stave off financial ruin. With races on hold, no money was coming into the sport whatsoever and the NASCAR business model can not sustain the lack of revenue.

NASCAR developed a health plan approved by officials in both South Carolina and North Carolina and scheduled seven races over the next 11 days at two tracks. As other states began to open, the series tacked more races to fill the calendar with 20 events across seven Southern states between now and June 21. There will be no spectators at least through that date.

This first event was called the "The Real Heroes 400" and dedicated to health care workers fighting the coronavirus pandemic. The names of health care workers across the country were substituted for the drivers' name above the door on each of the 40 cars.

Harvick's car honored Dr. Joshua Hughes, an emergency medicine physician in the Charlotte area.

"Josh is one of my really good friends, I spend a lot of time talking to him through this pandemic and really have heard how those doctors are affected with everything they have going on with their personal life and whether they're sick, not sick, how they should treat people," Harvick said. "I'm just really honored and really thankful for all of our front line workers, not only our doctors, but grocery stores, truck drivers, fire fighters, police departments — you name it.

"All of you front line workers are the reason that we're here today and our country is actually still running."

The health care workers then virtually gave the command to start the engines.

"Our drivers, race teams and officials have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to get back to the race track and we want to assure you that we have taken the return to racing very seriously," NASCAR President Steve Phelps wrote in a letter to fans released Sunday morning.

The industry had to be extremely careful because to even get to the Coca-Cola 600 next week at Charlotte Motor Speedway, NASCAR had to get it right at Darlington.

Steve O'Donnell, executive vice president of NASCAR, was pleased with the collective effort from the industry.

"We didn't have to tell anyone or remind anyone to wear a mask," O'Donnell said. "It felt a little odd with the garage area because it was scaled down in terms of personnel, but all in all I think it went really well."

Teams were required to submit rosters in advance with only 16 members allotted per car. Names were on a list at a checkpoint at the end of a gravel road just off Harry Byrd Highway and everyone who passed through had their temperature checked and logged before they could enter.

NASCAR did not have to turn anyone away, and all 40 drivers were cleared to race. NASCAR has declined to do COVID-19 testing to ensure those tests go to those in need, but competitors are supposed to log who they come into contact with, not return to the race shop after being at the track and continue to follow CDC guidelines on social distancing.

Among those to make it inside were Ryan Newman, back for the first time since he suffered a head injury exactly three months ago in a wreck on the final lap of the Daytona 500. Newman missed only three

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races because of NASCAR's shutdown and finished 15th in his return.

Also in the field was Matt Kenseth, who at 48 was the oldest driver at Darlington and he raced for the first time since the 2018 season finale. Kenseth was brought out of retirement by Chip Ganassi when Kyle Larson was fired for using a racial slur during an iRacing event that kept NASCAR occupied when racing was on hold. Kenseth finished 10th.

The odd and empty setting was the backdrop for some typical NASCAR mishaps. Seven-time champion Jimmie Johnson crashed while leading on the final lap of the first stage, a better result than poor Ricky Stenhouse Jr., who barely made it out of the second turn before he crashed.

Stenhouse never finished a single lap and finished last.

And even without fans allowed on the property, a small grass fire still broke out behind a section of the track. Gray smoke billowed during a caution, which isn't that odd a sight at a NASCAR race.

Bowman, who signed a one-year contract extension with Hendrick Motorsports on Saturday, was second. Kurt Busch, winner of the closest finish in Darlington history, was third for Ganassi.

Chase Elliott gave Hendrick two cars in the top-four. Denny Hamlin was the highest-finishing Toyota driver at fifth for Joe Gibbs Racing, one spot ahead of teammate Martin Truex Jr.

Tyler Reddick, a rookie with Richard Childres Racing, was seventh at "The Track Too Tough To Tame."

Erik Jones, winner of the Southern 500 here last September, was eighth and John Hunter Nemechek was the second rookie inside the top-10 at one of the most technical tracks on the circuit. It was the first top-10 for Front Row Motorsports on a track other than a superspeedway in three years.

It was the 50th career victory for Harvick, in a Ford for Stewart-Haas Racing. A previous winner at Darlington, Harvick led 159 of the 293 laps.

Harvick tied Hall of Famers Junior Johnson and Ned Jarrett for 12th on NASCAR's all-time wins list.

NASCAR's elite Cup Series next races Wednesday night at Darlington, which is hosting three events in four days before the sport shifts to Charlotte.

Powell: Recovery may begin by summer, will likely be slow

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell expressed optimism Sunday that the U.S. economy can begin to recover from a devastating recession in the second half of the year, assuming the coronavirus doesn't erupt in a second wave. But he suggested that a full recovery won't likely be possible before the arrival of a vaccine.

In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes," Powell noted that the economy was fundamentally healthy before the virus struck suddenly and forced widespread business shutdowns and tens of millions of layoffs. Once the outbreak has been contained, he said, the economy should be able to rebound "substantially."

Powell offered an overall positive message while warning that it would take much longer for the economy to regain its health than it took for it to collapse with stunning speed.

"In the long run, and even in the medium run," the chairman said, "you wouldn't want to bet against the American economy. This economy will recover. And that means people will go back to work. Unemployment will get back down. We'll get through this."

Powell pointed out that the downturn wasn't a result of deep-seated financial instabilities, like the housing meltdown and the excessive risk-taking among banks that ignited the Great Recession. Rather, it resulted from an external event — a pandemic — that required a shutdown of the economy. That may mean, he said, that "we can get back to a healthy economy fairly quickly."

In the meantime, though, American workers are enduring their worst crisis in decades. More than 36 million people have applied for unemployment benefits in the two months since the coronavirus first forced businesses to close down and shrink their workforces. The unemployment rate, at 14.7%, is the highest since the Great Depression, and is widely expected to go much higher.

In the interview with CBS, Powell played down comparisons to the Depression. While acknowledging that unemployment could peak near the Depression high of 25%, he noted that U.S. banks are far healthier

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now and that the Fed and other central banks are much more able and willing to intervene to bolster economies than they were in the 1930s.

Still, Powell cautioned that it would take time for the economy to return to anything close to normal. A recovery "could stretch through the end of next year," he said. And a vaccine would likely be necessary for Americans to feel safe enough to return to their normal economic behavior of shopping, traveling, eating out and congregating in large groups — activities that fuel much of the economy's growth. Most health experts have said that a vaccine won't be ready for use for 12 to 18 months at least.

"Certain parts of the economy will find it very difficult to have really a lot of activity," Powell said. "The parts that involve people being in the same place, very close together. Those parts of the economy will be challenged until people feel really safe again."

The Fed chairman said he and other central bank officials, in conversations with businesses, labor leaders, universities and hospitals, have picked up on "a growing sense that the recovery may take some time to gain momentum."

"That would mean," he added, "that we will start our recovery and get on that road, and that'll be a good thing, but that it'll take some time to pick up steam."

Powell reiterated his view that both Congress and the Fed must be prepared to provide additional financial support to prevent permanent damage to the economy from widespread bankruptcies among small businesses or long-term unemployment, which typically erodes workers' skills and social networks. Congress has already approved roughly \$3 trillion in rescue aid for individuals and businesses. But states and localities are in need of federal money to avoid having to cut jobs and services, and legislation to provide that money remains at an impasse in Congress.

If necessary, Powell said, the Fed could expand any of the nine emergency lending programs it has launched since the viral outbreak began to harm the economy — or create new ones. In March, the central bank slashed its benchmark interest rate to near zero as stock markets plunged and bond markets froze. The Fed has also intervened by buying \$2.1 trillion in Treasuries and other bonds in an effort to keep interest rates low and smooth the flow of credit.

The Fed could also provide more explicit guidance on how long it will keep rates pegged at nearly zero and the extent of its bond-purchase programs, Powell said. Doing so would give banks and other companies more confidence that borrowing rates will stay lower for longer.

But the chairman reiterated that the Fed isn't considering cutting rates into negative territory, which President Donald Trump has repeatedly urged. The issue of negative rates flared up in recent weeks when futures markets essentially bet that the Fed would take that step early next year, as some other central banks have done.

"There're plenty of people who think negative interest rates are a good policy," Powell said. "But we don't really think so at the Federal Reserve."

Trump says back to normal in golf means big crowds, no masks

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

President Donald Trump's idea of golf getting back to normal is having thousands of fans who aren't wearing masks in attendance and "practically standing on top of each other."

Trump joined the NBC broadcast Sunday of "TaylorMade Driving Relief," a Skins game involving Rory McIlroy and Dustin Johnson against Rickie Fowler and Matthew Wolff. It was the first live golf on television since the COVID-19 pandemic shut down golf and other sports on March 12.

The PGA Tour plans to return on June 11 at the Charles Schwab Challenge in Fort Worth, Texas. The tour has said it will not have fans for at least a month.

"After that, hopefully, it will be back," Trump said in his interview with NBC host Mike Tirico. "We really want to see it back to normal so when we have all these thousands, tens of thousands of people going to your majors and going to golf tournaments, we want them to be having that same experience. We don't want them having to wear masks and be doing what we've been doing for the last number of months."

Because that's not getting back to normal.

"We want to be back to normal where you have the big crowds, and they're practically standing on top of each other and they're enjoying themselves, not where they're worried," he said. "But in the meantime, they do the social distancing, and they practice that. And they've been doing really well. The country is ready to start moving forward."

No fans or media were allowed for the Skins match at Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, Florida. The same policies will be in place next Sunday at nearby Medalist for a charity match of Tiger Woods and Peyton Manning against Phil Mickelson and Tom Brady.

Trump said he knows most of the PGA Tour players and has played with many of them. That includes McIlroy three years ago. McIlroy criticized Trump on the McKellar Journal podcast this week for politicizing the pandemic and says he would not play golf with him again.

Tirico raised McIlroy's name as being among those who have played with Trump and what they talk about on the golf course. The president didn't bite on McIlroy's recent comments.

"A lot of them are very political, actually," Trump said. "Some like my politics very much, and probably some don't. I guess the ones that don't, I don't get to see as much."

5 Iran tankers sailing to Venezuela amid US pressure tactics

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Five Iranian tankers likely carrying at least \$45.5 million worth of gasoline and similar products are now sailing to Venezuela, part of a wider deal between the two U.S.-sanctioned nations amid heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington.

The tankers' voyage came after Venezuela's socialist leader Nicolás Maduro already turned to Iran for help in flying in chemicals needed at an aging refinery amid a gasoline shortage, a symptom of the wider economic and political chaos gripping Latin America's one-time largest oil producer.

For Iran, the tankers represent a way to bring money into its cash-starved Shiite theocracy and put its own pressure on the U.S., which under President Donald Trump has pursued maximalist campaigns against both nations.

But the strategy invites the chance of a renewed confrontation between the Islamic Republic and America both in the Persian Gulf, which saw a series of escalating incidents often involving the oil industry last year, and wider afield.

"This is like a new one for everyone," said Capt. Ranjith Raja, an analyst who tracks oil shipments by sea at the data firm Refinitiv, of the gasoline shipments. "We haven't seen anything like this before."

All the vessels involved belong to Iranian state-owned or state-linked companies, flying under the Iranian flag. Since a pressure campaign on Iranian vessels began, notably with the temporary seizure of an Iranian tanker last year by Gibraltar, the country's ships have been unable to fly flags of convenience of other nations, a common practice in international shipping.

The ships all appear to have been loaded from the Persian Gulf Star Refinery near Bandar Abbas, Iran, which makes gasoline, Raja said. The ships then traveled around the Arabian Peninsula and through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea, according to data collected from the ship's Automatic Identification System, or AIS, which acts as a tracking beacon.

One of the vessels, the Clavel, listed its AIS destination as Caracas beginning May 12, according to log data from ship-tracking website MarineTraffic.com. The vessel later changed its destination as "TO ORDER" two days later, though the ship remains on a route that will see it leave the Mediterranean Sea and be in position to sail on to Venezuela.

Another tanker, the Forest, changed its AIS destination to "S. AMERICA TO ORDER" on May 14.

Three others, the Faxon, the Fortune and the Petunia, all appear on routes that could take them to Venezuela. Given the crushing U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran, also-sanctioned Venezuela appears to be the country that would have nothing to lose from accepting the shipments. Raja said Refinitiv had no data on any Iranian gasoline shipment ever going to South America before.

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TankerTrackers.com, a website focused on the oil trade at sea, first reported the ships likely were heading to Venezuela.

The capacity of the five ships is some 175,000 metric tons. On the open market, the gasoline and product carried within them would be worth at least \$45.5 million, though Iran likely reached a discounted, non-cash deal with Caracas given the circumstances the two nations face, Raja said.

As news about the tankers grew, an Iranian news agency called Nour, believed to have ties to the country's Supreme National Security Council, published an item on its website early Saturday trying to link a U.S. military exercise in the Caribbean to the tankers. That council includes members of Iran's civilian government, its military and its paramilitary, hard-line Revolutionary Guard.

"If the United States, like pirates, intends to create insecurity on international highways, it will take a dangerous risk that will certainly not go unnoticed," the agency warned in its brief report.

The Nour item, later picked up by other semiofficial news agencies in Iran, follows a pattern by Tehran of issuing veiled threats through such reports even as officials don't directly acknowledge them.

Quoted by a website affiliated to Iranian state television, Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei on Saturday said he did not have any information on the ships.

"We have to sell our oil and we have access to its paths," Rabiei said. "Iran and Venezuela are two independent nations that have had trade with each other and they will" in the future.

But that all changed late Sunday, when Iran's Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres saying the U.S. "piracy" threatened the "disruption of Iran's fuel transmission to Venezuela." Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, issued a similar warning to the Swiss ambassador in Tehran, who looks out for American interests there.

It remains unclear how the U.S. will respond to the tankers. On Thursday, the U.S. Treasury, State Department and Coast Guard issued an advisory warning the maritime industry of illegal shipping and sanctions-dodging tactics by countries including Iran.

The advisory repeated an earlier promise of up to \$15 million for information disrupting the Guard's finances. It also warned anyone "knowingly engaged in a significant transaction for the purchase, acquisition, sale, transport or marketing of petroleum" faced U.S. sanctions.

U.S. Army Maj. Rob Lodewick, a Pentagon spokesman, declined to comment on the Iranian vessels. He referred questions to the State Department, which did not immediately respond.

Analysts already have been warning about the growing chance for a renewed confrontation between the U.S. and Iran, whose government downplayed and then struggled for weeks with the coronavirus pandemic.

In April, the U.S. accused Iran of conducting "dangerous and harassing" maneuvers near American warships in the northern Persian Gulf. Iran also had been suspected of briefly seizing a Hong Kong-flagged oil tanker just before that.

Iran seized ships last summer and the U.S. accuses it of attacking tankers in the region amid tensions over Trump unilaterally withdrawing America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018.

Associated Press writers Nasser Karimi and Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran, and Joshua Goodman in Miami contributed to this report.

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

Small free libraries offering solace amid virus shutdowns

By **MICHELLE A. MONROE** and **RUSSELL CONTRERAS** Associated Press

Christine Gale Reynolds worked at the public library in Yosemite National Park before it closed in March when California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued shutdown orders to slow the spread of the coronavirus. So, she filled the back of her car with donated books and began her own mobile library.

"I know this may not be legal, conventional, or ethically sound, and yet it has worked for many, and I feel of use," she said. She physically distances while making her stops and sanitizes the books.

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Across the United States, volunteers are reporting a jump in little free libraries as readers look to pass the time. Made of wood or brick, and placed in front of parks or in the trunk of a car, the libraries have seen their small spaces overwhelmed with books.

Whether it's "Love in the Time of Cholera" by Gabriel García Márquez or children's books or Macbeth, the libraries provide some their only interaction of the day outside of the home.

Since 2009, tens of thousands of little free libraries have sprung up in the U.S. and more than 100 countries. The small spaces operate by donations and through volunteers. In rural areas, where broadband internet is sparse, the little free libraries may be only place to find a Toni Morrison novel.

In March, the Hudson, Wisconsin-based Little Free Library nonprofit group unveiled its 100,000th book-sharing box — donated to the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans in a historic Latino neighborhood in Houston.

The free libraries have become so popular in recent weeks the Little Free Library group issued recommendations to stewards on helping keep the spaces clean by using disinfectant and following U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

"We have definitely seen an increase in use," said John Sweet, who helps oversee a free library in Bend, Oregon. He said volunteers check their free library weekly, and the selection is always different than the week before; sometimes there are even jigsaw puzzles.

Janelle Will of Akron, Michigan, said her tiny farm village of 300 people doesn't have a public library, but its free library remains busy. "I am using my stash to keep it filled and Lysol the books before placing them in the library," she said.

Only around 1,000 people live in the Yosemite Valley where entertainment options are limited and some residents say Gale Reynolds' mobile library — and her friendly chats — offer a needed break.

"I live in a rural area, so internet is not a guarantee, so time that some people might fill with Netflix or other online streaming services is not an option for me. I turned to books to fill that gap," said Connor Timpone, who lives in El Portal, east of Yosemite Valley. "Books have been a bright spot through these past few weeks for me."

In the mountain community of Placitas, New Mexico, the little free library outside a food co-op was packed this month with DVD copies of "Better Call Saul" — the popular prequel to AMC's "Breaking Bad," which was filmed in nearby Albuquerque. Boston's little libraries in historic black neighborhoods had children's books and household supplies.

Rita Harkins Dickinson, a retired educator in Phoenix, can't recall ever seeing so many people peek at the little library in her front yard, including parents with very young children.

"Since more people are walking, I think they're noticing it," Dickinson said. "We have more families and more people who look to be retired."

Kerri Kaplan, a fifth-grade teacher in Phoenix, built a public bookcase for her front yard years ago and says more people have been selecting and donating books since the pandemic.

"I used to have to stock it more myself and now it runs itself," Kaplan said.

Greig Metzger, executive director of the Little Free Library nonprofit, said the spaces also have transformed into a new purpose. Readers are leaving canned goods and other needed items to assist fellow neighbors during the economic downturn and uncertainty.

"They've allowed neighbors to help one another without getting physically close," Metzger said.

Tara La O Garcia, a teacher in Phoenix, said that's why she publicized her little free library in front of her school. It's used by neighbors and some nearby homeless people. "I also put in school supplies, snacks, toys, and puzzles so that families have things to do at home that are not on a screen," she said.

"My mom," she said, "has even made cotton washable masks to put inside."

Monroe reported from Phoenix. Contreras reported from Rio Rancho, New Mexico. ____
Associated Press writer Terry Tang contributed to this report from Phoenix.

US military's mystery space plane rockets back into orbit

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The U.S. military's mystery space plane rocketed into orbit again Sunday, this time with an extra load of science experiments.

It's the sixth flight of an X-37B, a solar-powered plane that's flown by remote control without a crew.

Officials aren't saying how long the spacecraft will remain in orbit this time or the purpose of the mission. But a senior vice president for X-37B developer Boeing, Jim Chilton, noted each mission has been progressively longer.

The previous mission lasted a record two years, with a touchdown shrouded in darkness at NASA's Kennedy Space Center last year.

The winged spacecraft resembles NASA's old shuttles, but is just one-quarter the size at 29 feet (9 meters) long. The one just launched features an extra compartment for experiments, including several for NASA and the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, making it the biggest science load yet for an X-37B.

The Air Force has two of these reusable space planes. Their home base is a former space shuttle hangar at Kennedy.

"You could say that the X-37B stands on the shoulders of the space shuttle," Chilton said. "From a common shape to a common home."

Since the first flight in 2010, the secretive space planes had logged a combined 2,865 days in orbit as of Sunday.

"If you add up all the missions, just under eight years in orbit and 1 billion miles, so a lot of traveling by this machine," Chilton said during the launch broadcast.

Delayed a day by bad weather, this marked just the second rocket launch for the newly established Space Force. In March, it hoisted a national security satellite.

United Launch Alliance, which provided the Atlas V rocket, declared success 1 1/2 hours after liftoff. It dedicated Sunday's launch to the health care workers and others who are working on the front lines of the pandemic.

The company said it followed health advice for the launch. Many of the flight controllers wore masks and were spread out.

Precautions were less evident along area causeways, where spectators parked to watch the Atlas soar. Thick, low clouds spoiled the show.

The Cape Canaveral Air Force Station has an exceptionally fast turnaround for its next launch.

Before dawn Tuesday, SpaceX will attempt to launch another batch of its Starlink satellites for global internet service. It will be SpaceX's last flight before its first astronaut launch, scheduled for May 27 from next-door Kennedy Space Center.

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.

'Delusional' Martin Shkreli denied prison release by judge

NEW YORK (AP) — A judge rejected the request of convicted pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli to be let out of prison to research a coronavirus treatment, noting that probation officials viewed that claim as the type of "delusional self-aggrandizing behavior" that led to his conviction.

U.S. District Judge Kiyo Matsumoto said in a nine-page ruling Saturday that the man known as the "Pharma Bro" failed to demonstrate extraordinary and compelling factors that would require his release under home confinement rules designed to move vulnerable inmates out of institutions during the pandemic.

The low-security prison in Allenwood, Pennsylvania, where the 37-year-old Shkreli is locked up has reported no cases of coronavirus among inmates and staff, and there's no evidence in his medical files to

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suggest a childhood bout with asthma continues to pose a significant health problem, Matsumoto wrote. "Disappointed but not unexpected," Shkreli's lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, said.

Shkreli is serving a seven-year prison sentence for a 2017 conviction for lying to investors about the performance of two hedge funds he ran, withdrawing more money from those funds than he was entitled to get, and defrauding investors in a drug company, Retrophin, by hiding his ownership of some of its stock.

A judge ordered Shkreli to forfeit \$7.3 million.

Brafman filed court papers last month asking federal authorities to release him for three months and allow him to live at his fiancé's New York City apartment so he could do laboratory work "under strict supervision."

In a research proposal posted online, Shkreli called the pharmaceutical industry's response to the pandemic "inadequate" and said researchers at every drug company "should be put to work until COVID-19 is no more."

He wrote that his background "as a successful two-time biopharma entrepreneur, having purchased multiple companies, invented multiple new drug candidates" would make him a valuable asset.

Matsumoto rejected that, relaying concerns of probation officials that Shkreli's claim that he could develop a cure for coronavirus that "so far eluded the best medical and scientific minds in the world working around the clock" is "delusional self-aggrandizing behavior."

Shkreli first gained notoriety by buying the rights to a drug used to treat an infection that occurs in some AIDS, malaria and cancer patients and raising the price from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill. He is also known for attacking critics on social media and offering a bounty to anyone who could give him one of Hillary Clinton's hairs.

In Detroit, NYC, kindness comes one slice of pizza at a time

By **LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — Before the pandemic, Shalinder Singh spent Sundays at his gurdwara, helping serve a community meal for 300 people or more at the Sikh place of worship in suburban Detroit.

Now, he's all about pizza.

Singh and his family have paid for and delivered hundreds of pies to hospitals, police stations and fire departments since the gurdwara suspended in-person services.

They wanted to carry on a tenet of their faith: helping others through langar, the communal meal shared by all who come.

"It just popped up in my mind, this is the time to take care of the heroes in the front," said Singh, the 40-year-old owner of a pet products company. "I spoke to a couple of doctors and they said pizza is the best because they're working 12 to 16 hours and they don't have time to sit and eat."

The Singhs, including 12-year-old Arjun and 14-year-old Baani, have delivered more than 1,000 pizzas since early April, with no plans to slow down. They drive as much as an hour to spread their pizza love once a week, as Singh continues to run his business, which is classified as essential.

"We're trying to go to areas that aren't getting much food," Singh said.

In New York, 25-year-old Japneet Singh, a fellow Sikh, also thought of pizza for under-resourced hospitals and overworked, minimum wage employees in the crosshairs of the virus.

After college graduation and some time in corporate life, he most recently worked as a field supervisor for the U.S. Census Bureau and drove an Uber on the side while searching for his passion.

Then the virus struck, shutting down his work. In the South Ozone Park neighborhood of Queens, Singh's heart went out to the desperate staff at Elmhurst Hospital Center and other hospitals overwhelmed by COVID-19.

"I figured you know what, I'm sitting home," he said. "Food always makes things better, so I asked one of my friends who works at Elmhurst Hospital, what can we do? He was like, pizza would be great. Ever since then, we haven't looked back."

Japneet Singh began delivering in late March; he too estimates he's distributed 1,000 pies or more. He

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makes two or three runs a week to hospitals throughout the city, and to the others in the struggle.

"There's other people on the front line, like grocery workers. We've been to a Walmart, police precincts, FDNY stations. We recently started feeding the homeless," he said.

Singh has enlisted a couple of friends willing to help deliver the food, but he's most in need of donations; he's paid for pizzas out of his own pocket, but it's not enough.

"We started putting out little clips on social media and that's how people have found us to donate," he said. Social media has been so great. I make a post and ask, "Where should we go next?"

He's raised nearly \$2,000. He's been working with the owner of two Papa John's pizzerias in Queens and Brooklyn who's been discounting pies and donating some as well.

Store workers have been especially grateful.

"These are minimum-wage workers," Singh said. "If we can put a smile on their faces with just a slice of pizza, why can't we do just one small act of kindness, you know?"

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.

Biden's VP search puts spotlight on how long he'll serve

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden has longed to win the White House for more than three decades. If he finally makes it there after November's election, he's already talking about leaving.

In an effort to ease concerns about his age, the 77-year-old presumptive Democratic nominee has said he wouldn't seek reelection if his mental or physical health declined. He has also referred to himself as a "transition candidate," acting as a bridge to a younger generation of leadership.

Biden is rarely known for sticking to a script, and the comments are evidence of his candid style. But they're also contributing to intense speculation about who is best positioned to lead the party after him.

"We do have a longer bench as Democrats, a younger bench in terms of elected leadership all across the country," said Democratic strategist L. Joy Williams, chairwoman of Higher Heights PAC, which promotes and supports African American women as candidates and officeholders.

Biden has not ruled out running for a second term, in part because such an explicit pledge would immediately render him a lame duck in Washington, where political capital will be needed to manage the coronavirus recovery.

But the question of his long-term prospects looms over his candidacy, especially as he considers his options for vice president.

While someone like Elizabeth Warren could broaden Biden's appeal among progressives, the 70-year-old Massachusetts senator wouldn't be the face of a new generation many in the party are seeking. That might be an advantage for younger contenders, such as California Sen. Kamala Harris, 55, or Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, 59.

It's an awkward dynamic for Biden, whose lead in the Democratic primary coincided with the onset of a pandemic, making it harder to establish himself as the party's unquestioned leader. He can ill afford chatter about who might succeed him when he still faces a competitive race against President Donald Trump in the fall.

There are few historic precedents for a president opting against reelection. None has passed up a chance at a second term after just four years in the White House since shortly after Reconstruction. President Lyndon B. Johnson declined to seek a second, full term in 1968, but was already in office five years by then because of John F. Kennedy's assassination.

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There's also no guarantee that Biden's running mate will be the immediate president-in-waiting he envisions. Biden has pledged to pick a woman, but virtually no one under active consideration is likely to satisfy all Democrats. That raises the prospect of a primary battle in 2024 if he steps aside.

Republican pollster Chris Wilson said Biden might elevate several younger Democrats to Cabinet positions to deliberately set up "almost a hand-picked primary pool rather than a single candidate he tries to hand things off to."

That, Wilson said, "would still be the kind of legacy-building move he seems to be interested in."

Biden might also change his mind and decide to run for reelection if he unseats Trump. That still might not insulate him from a progressive primary challenge, though.

"Even if Biden wins and says he's going to run in 2024, he's absolutely going to be challenged from within the party," said Eric Hauser, who was press secretary for Bill Bradley's primary run in 2000 against Al Gore, who had been Bill Clinton's vice president for eight years and was seen by many as his natural successor. "The left has felt like it got hoodwinked twice, in '16 and now. They feel overlooked."

Gilberto Hinojosa, chairman of the Texas Democratic Party, said Biden's choice of running mate will have to fill twin roles. That person would need to continue to move the country away from the Trump era "if something were to happen while he's still in office" or later "if Biden decides to retire and pass the baton."

"I think the stakes are already really high, no matter how you look at it," Hinojosa said.

Republicans could also face similar tumult. If Trump secures a second term, Vice President Mike Pence would seem to be a natural successor. But there are plenty of other Republicans with presidential ambitions who could be more attractive if Trump becomes unpopular at the end of a second term, which often happens to presidents after eight years in office.

George H.W. Bush is the only sitting vice president in modern history to be elected president. The only other examples are Martin Van Buren in 1836, and Thomas Jefferson and John Adams before that.

"Mike Pence would be inheriting eight years of a tsunami," Hauser said of Trump's legacy.

For all the speculation, if Biden is elected, he could decide to seek another term in 2024 in part because the lure of the White House is one of the greatest forces in politics — especially for someone ambitious enough to be on his third presidential bid since 1988.

"Once you're president, it's very tempting to keep power," said Julian Zelizer, a history and public affairs professor at Princeton University who has written about single-term presidents. "It could very well be a genuine idea right now. But we just don't see people relinquish power very easily."

Virus heads upriver in Brazil Amazon, sickens native people

By DAVID BILLER and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

MANAUS, Brazil (AP) — In the remote Amazon community of Betania, Tikuna tribe members suspect the coronavirus arrived this month after some returned from a two-hour boat trip down the Solimoes River to pick up their government benefit payments.

Dozens subsequently got headaches, fevers and coughs. Two died. And the five government medical workers for the community of about 4,000 are not treating the sick because they lack protective equipment and coronavirus tests, said Sinésio Tikuna, a village leader.

So the Tikuna rely on their traditional remedy for respiratory ailments: Inhaling clouds of smoke from burning medicinal plants and beehives.

The Tikuna's plight illustrates the danger from the coronavirus as it spreads to rainforest areas where tribe members live in close quarters with limited medical services. Most are reachable only by boat or small aircraft.

"We're very worried, mainly because help isn't arriving," Sinésio Tikuna said in a telephone interview.

Brazil has Latin America's highest COVID-19 death toll, with more than 15,000 as of Sunday. The country's hardest hit major city per capita is in the Amazon — Manaus, where mass graves are filling up with bodies.

As Sinésio Tikuna described in an interview his belief that beehive smoke saved four sick tribe members, there was no one at a Manaus hospital to help a feverish woman, struggling to breathe, make it inside

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the emergency room. A police officer put her on a gurney, wheeling it inside with an Associated Press photographer's help.

The indigenous people dwelling up the Solimoes and Negro rivers that merge in Manaus to form the Amazon River tried for weeks to seal their reserves off from the virus, pleading for donations while awaiting government deliveries of food so they could remain isolated. It didn't come for many, indigenous advocates said.

The Upper Solimoes basin has 44 tribal reserves and has emerged as the Brazilian Amazon's indigenous infection hotspot. Testing is extremely limited, but shows that at least 162 of the area's approximately 76,000 indigenous people have been infected and 11 have died. There are more than 2,000 confirmed infections in parts of the area not overseen by the government's indigenous health care provider.

In a Tikuna village named Umariacu near the border with Peru and Colombia, the first three COVID-19 deaths were elderly tribe members infected by younger members who left town to receive government welfare payments and trade fish and produce for chicken and other food, said Weydson Pereira, who coordinates the region's indigenous government health care.

"Our biggest anguish today is the indigenous people who aren't staying in their communities and coming in and out of town. Today the safest place for them is inside their villages," Pereira said this month, infected and isolating at home with his infected wife and daughter.

Two weeks of tribal quarantine for the region would have provided time to identify and isolate cases, but "unfortunately, that hasn't happened," he said.

In the same area, people of Kokama ethnicity have been unable to get medical treatment from health system in the small city of Tabatinga or from the government's indigenous care provider, federal prosecutors said in a lawsuit filed this week seeking to expand Tabatinga's hospital.

That hospital's 10 ventilators are in use for coronavirus patients and the nearest intensive care is 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) downriver in Manaus, also filled with patients, Pereira said.

Manaus' lack of coronavirus treatment prompted Pedro dos Santos, the leader of a slum named Park of Indigenous Nations, to drink tea made of chicory root, garlic and lime to combat a high fever that lasted 10 days. A 62-year-old neighbor of Bare indigenous ethnicity needed an ICU bed, but none were available and he died, said the man's son, Josué Paulino.

Some frightened residents of Manaus, population 2.2 million, are fleeing but they may be asymptomatic carriers and could spread the virus elsewhere, said Miguel Lago, executive director of Brazil's Institute for Health Policy Studies, which advises public health officials.

About 575 miles (925 kilometers) up the Negro River from Manaus is the community of Sao Gabriel Cachoeira, where people of 23 indigenous ethnicities make up more than 75 percent of the population.

About 46,000 live in the urban area and on rural reserves with frequent back-and-forth transit, said Juliana Radler, an advisor for the Socio-Environmental Institut, an environmental and indigenous advocacy group.

Sao Gabriel Cachoeira quickly reacted to the COVID-19 threat within a week of the World Health Organization's pandemic declaration by cutting off riverboat and plane arrivals in late March — except for essential goods and soldiers.

But Radler said some Sao Gabriel Cachoeira residents stuck in Manaus headed home on supply ships — disembarking nearby and sneaking into town under cover of darkness. About 150 others made the voyage on a triple-decker ferry named the Lady Luiza.

When it arrived days later, authorities tried but failed to turn passengers away. No quarantine areas were available and some ferry passengers may have brought the virus to Sao Gabriel Cachoeira, Radler said.

Brazil's Navy authorized the ferry's trip and passengers were desperate to go home because "they felt exposed and vulnerable" in Manaus, the Lady Luiza's owner said on Facebook.

By mid-April, many residents had what they believed was a strong flu. The community's COVID-19 committee used radio broadcasts, sound trucks and pamphlets to issue warnings about the virus in Portuguese and indigenous languages including Tukano, Nheengatu and Baniwa.

One of the first confirmed coronavirus cases was a teacher of Baniwa ethnicity who died after being

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taken to Manaus for treatment. For most people COVID-19 causes moderate symptoms like fever, but it can result in death.

As of this week, Sao Gabriel Cachoeira had 292 confirmed infections and nearby indigenous reserves had registered their first cases.

All six functioning ventilators in the hospital were in use and remote tribal health centers were short of supplies, Radler said.

"We need a field hospital as fast as possible, in the next 20 days," she said. "If not, it will be a catastrophe, a true catastrophe."

Billler reported from Rio de Janeiro.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, May 18, the 139th day of 2020. There are 227 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 18, 1980, the Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington state exploded, leaving 57 people dead or missing.

On this date:

In 1863, the Siege of Vicksburg began during the Civil War, ending July 4 with a Union victory.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Plessy v. Ferguson, endorsed "separate but equal" racial segregation, a concept renounced 58 years later by Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

In 1910, Halley's Comet passed by earth, brushing it with its tail.

In 1911, composer-conductor Gustav Mahler died in Vienna, Austria, at age 50.

In 1920, Pope John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyla (voy-TEE'-wah) in Wadowice (vah-duh-VEET'-seh), Poland.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure creating the Tennessee Valley Authority.

In 1934, Congress approved, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed, the so-called "Lindbergh Act," providing for the death penalty in cases of interstate kidnapping.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces occupied Monte Cassino in Italy after a four-month struggle with Axis troops.

In 1953, Jacqueline Cochran, 47, became the first woman to break the sound barrier as she piloted a Canadair F-86 Sabre jet over Rogers Dry Lake, California.

In 1967, Tennessee Gov. Buford Ellington signed a measure repealing the law against teaching evolution that was used to prosecute John T. Scopes in 1925.

In 1973, Harvard law professor Archibald Cox was appointed Watergate special prosecutor by U.S. Attorney General Elliot Richardson.

In 1981, the New York Native, a gay newspaper, carried a story concerning rumors of "an exotic new disease" among homosexuals; it was the first published report about what came to be known as AIDS.

Ten years ago: Grilled by skeptical lawmakers, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar acknowledged his agency had been lax in overseeing offshore drilling activities, and that might have contributed to the disastrous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. A suicide bomber detonated his vehicle near a U.S. convoy in Afghanistan, killing 18 people, including six troops — five from the U.S., one from Canada. Following a 2009 party switch, Sen. Arlen Specter was defeated in Pennsylvania's Democratic primary, ending his re-election bid.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama ended long-running federal transfers of some combat-style gear to local law enforcement in an attempt to ease tensions between police and minority communities, saying equipment made for the battlefield should not be a tool of American criminal justice. An 11-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said a three-member panel of the same court should not have forced YouTube to take down an anti-Muslim film that sparked violence in the Middle

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East and death threats to actors.

One year ago: American diplomats warned that commercial airliners flying over the Persian Gulf risked being targeted by "miscalculation or misidentification" from the Iranian military amid heightened tensions between the Islamic Republic and the U.S. (A Ukrainian jetliner would be accidentally shot down by Iran's Revolutionary Guard eight months later, killing 176 people) After being bumped and interfered with in the Kentucky Derby, which led to the disqualification of first-place Derby finisher Maximum Security, War of Will bounced back to win the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Priscilla Pointer is 96. Actor Robert Morse is 89. Actor Dwayne Hickman is 86. Baseball Hall of Famer Brooks Robinson is 82. Actress Candice Azzara is 79. Bluegrass singer-musician Rodney Dillard (The Dillards) is 78. Baseball Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson is 74. Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., is 72. Country singer Joe Bonsall (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 72. Rock musician Rick Wakeman (Yes) is 71. Rock singer Mark Mothersbaugh (Devo) is 70. Actor James Stephens is 69. Country singer George Strait is 68. Actor Chow Yun-Fat is 65. International Tennis Hall of Famer Yannick Noah is 60. Rock singer-musician Page Hamilton is 60. Contemporary Christian musician Barry Graul (MercyMe) is 59. Contemporary Christian singer Michael Tait is 54. Singer-actress Martika is 51. Comedian-writer Tina Fey is 50. Rock singer Jack Johnson is 45. Country singer David Nail is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer Darryl Allen (Mista) is 40. Actor Matt Long is 40. Actor Allen Leech is 39. Christian-rock musician Kevin Huguley (Rush of Fools) is 38. Christian singer Francesca Battistelli is 35. Actor Spencer Breslin is 28. Actress Violet Beane is 24. Actress Hala Finley is 11.

Thought for Today: "Never do anything you wouldn't want to explain to the paramedics." — Author unknown.