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The Groton Area Elementary Fence facing Broadway St. got a new look on Thursday. This photo by Alyssa Lord posted on the Groton Elementary PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) Facebook Page.

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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#109 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The new case and death numbers are not showing much change today.

We're at 2,033,400 cases in the US. New case numbers increased slightly, still above 20,000 today. NY leads with 385,669 cases, holding below 1000 new cases for a fourth day. NJ has 165,816 cases, also steady for a fourth day and back below 500. Remaining top-10 states are as follows: CA – 143,603, IL – 131,731, MA – 104,667, TX – 83,684, PA – 81,944, FL – 69,061, MI – 65,627, and MD – 60,823. These ten states account for 64% of US cases. We have 2 more states over 50,000. 3 more states have over 40,000 cases, 3 more states have over 30,000 cases, 7 more states have over 20,000 cases, 11 more have over 10,000, 5 more + DC and PR over 5000, 6 more + GU over 1000, 3 more over 100, and VI + MP under 100.

Here's the latest on movement in new case reports. Those states with substantial numbers of cases which are not showing much change include GA, MS, LA, OK, IA, NH, AL, and GU. States where new case reports are increasing include CA, AZ, TX, TN, FL, WA, NC, and SC. States where new case reports are decreasing include NY, PA, NJ, MI, IL, MD, MA, and VA. We'll watch the states showing increases and hope those with decreases continue the decline.

There have been 113,961 deaths in the US. Today the number of new deaths is pretty steady, still under 1000. NY has 30,431, NJ has 12,443, MA has 7492, IL has 6388, PA has 6187, MI has 5985, CA has 4941, and CT has 4146. All of these states are reporting fewer than 100 new deaths today; 4 of them are under 50. There are 6 more states over 2000 deaths, 7 more states over 1000 deaths, 8 more over 500, 12 more + DC and PR over 100, and 9 + GU, VI, and MP under 100.

I often go back to previous updates to check something I had said or explained in the past, and something that frequently strikes me as I do is how much we know now that we didn't know even a few weeks ago—and how much we thought we knew that turned out to be wrong, or at least not entirely right. This isn't a sign of anything bad going on; it's just the way science works. We start out with some ideas about a phenomenon, and then we correct and clarify and rethink as more information becomes available. The reason science is effective so much of the time is that scientists never really think anything's settled; they keep trying to understand and explain and learn more, and in the process, they get closer and closer to right as time goes on. That can be frustrating for observers because it sounds like they're always waffling; but what's really going on is they don't like to commit until they know. And knowing sometimes comes slowly. Today, I read an article that compiled some of the things we got wrong about this coronavirus early on, and I thought, in the interest of showing you just how that works, I'd share some of the items from it with you. So here goes:

(1) We were told masks wouldn't help and might make things worse; besides, we were supposed to save them for health care workers who are at risk of exposure. Turns out that we don't need to have fancy medical-grade masks to get benefit. And an early study that concluded masks do nothing to stop droplets (a major source of transmission) turned out to be wrong and was retracted. But you see that's how science works: When you mess up, you retract your work and publicly admit you're wrong. Keeps us all on the right track most of the time. And we now know simple homemade masks do offer protection, mostly for the people around us. So they're not only worth it; they can have a significant impact on transmission. Oh, one thing we had right back then: We are still supposed to save the medical-grade asks for health care workers; that part hasn't changed.

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(2) We thought all of the cases coming to the US were coming from China. Nope. There were introductions from Europe too, plenty of them, maybe even more than from China.

(3) We thought mortality rates might be really high like the other serious coronaviruses that cause SARS and MERS. Early on, we were seeing numbers from Italy like 13%. Turns out they're much lower; today's best estimates are around 0.4%. This is still four times the influenza mortality rate, but it's a whole lot better than we'd feared. Now with the numbers of people we're seeing infected, 0.4% is still a whole lot of funerals, and it is important to keep in mind that vulnerable people like the elderly still have horrifying death rates. It is not, however, as bad as we were expecting.

(4) We thought this was a respiratory disease. It is, but what we didn't know is that it is so much more. We are seeing symptoms involving many body systems: gastrointestinal, neurologic, cardiovascular. This is not only, maybe even mostly not, a respiratory disease.

(5) We thought children were safe. There were very few children who became ill, and we were months in before the first child died. There haven't been anything like the death rates we see in adults, but we now know children can die from this. And we have this whole inflammatory syndrome we're seeing in children that is very serious, occasionally fatal. So no, kids are not completely protected. Their odds are miles better than adults', but they're not exactly safe.

I could name another handful of things we didn't have just right at the beginning. We keep gathering new information and figuring out what it tells us about this virus and how we can deal with it. That's what science is for.

The evidence on face masks continues to pile up. This time we have research published Wednesday in the Proceedings of the Royal Society A by Cambridge and Greenwich Universities in the UK. Their findings are that widespread mask use combined with social distancing and some restrictions are a way to manage the pandemic while economic activity reopens. Richard Stutt, a leader of the team at Cambridge, said, "Our analyses support the immediate and universal adoption of facemasks by the public." I wish I could tell you that we'll have a chance to discover this through experience here in the US; but we all know that's not going to happen as long as our fellow Americans value their freedom to infect you more than they value your life. Nothing says, "I don't care if you die," like going into public without a mask. Sigh.

We keep hearing how this virus is going to go away this summer like the flu. I get asked about this a lot. And honestly, we don't know for sure: It might get a little better, but it's not looking all that good.

Yes, the flu is a respiratory viral infection and it goes away in the spring and comes back in the winter. Why is that? A few things operate here: Cold air irritates our respiratory mucous membranes, which makes them more susceptible to virus infections like flu. We also hang out more indoors—all cooped up with other people—in the winter, which increases opportunities for transmission. Some viruses are inactivated faster at higher temperatures and humidity, and many of them are sensitive to sunlight as well, which should make summer a lot less congenial season for them. And then there's vitamin D, which helps to regulate your immune response. Most of us have diets that are sort of marginal for vitamin D content, so most of our vitamin D is made in our skin when it is exposed to sunlight; that's going to happen mostly in the summer when we're out in the sun with our skin exposed. We're not sure of the role of vitamin D in protecting us from viruses, but there may be something there. And there's pollen in the air in the spring and summer; turns out those grains might act like a filter, picking up virus particles from the air. It also appears that exposure to pollen activates your immune system, even if you are not actually allergic; this

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increased activity might make you just a little bit more able to respond to a virus.

Despite all that, we do not yet know how this particular virus will respond to the change of seasons. So we're not sure what will happen this summer with Covid-19; it hasn't been with us long enough to be sure one way or the other. We've seen conflicting data: from China, indications that temperature, humidity, and daylight had no effect on transmission there; from other countries, an effect. That means more study is needed. And meanwhile, experts tell us we shouldn't be relying on summer to save us. After all, some hot, sunny places are having big outbreaks right now, Brazil, for example. Open question, so we need to stay cautious until we know more. Don't take the onset of summer as a free pass to go everywhere without caution.

We've spend a lot of time in the past week or so talking about vaccines, so I thought this might be a good time to talk treatment. We're all aware there is only one medication currently approved as a therapeutic, and it's no cure. Remdesivir simply shortens the course of serious disease, a help, but not a home run. And while there really isn't a home run on the horizon, there are some other things coming along.

There is convalescent plasma. We've talked about this before, and you may recall that the blood of recovered individuals is going to contain antibodies against this virus. So if we take blood from volunteers who've recovered and separate out the plasma, we can then use that in treatment. This sort of thing has a long history, but it doesn't work for every disease; so we're still studying its effectiveness for Covid-19. Clinical trials are underway, and we'll know more soon. It helps to remember, however, that the availability of convalescent plasma is limited by the number of recovered people willing to donate plasma, and the fact that the donor plasma must be matched for blood type with the recipient to prevent complications. Also, we should note that antibodies given this way will not last as long as antibodies you make for yourself; with time, your immune system will recognize them as foreign and set about eliminating them. So while any protection this confers would be immediate, it will not last beyond a few months at best. Nonetheless, if it works, it would be an enormous help to prevent serious disease in people who've been exposed, health care workers, for example, and maybe as a therapeutic as well.

Several antiviral drugs developed for other viral infections have been tested against SARS-CoV-2, but so far, remdesivir has been the only success. There is something new on the horizon called EIDD-2801. This was developed at a non-profit biotech at Emory University, and it appears to show some efficacy against other coronaviruses. Some big drug companies have signed on, and we have clinical trials with Covid-19 underway in the UK. If this works, it will be one more tool—and it can be taken orally, whereas remdesivir must be given intravenously. That makes administration a whole lot less complicated.

Then there are monoclonal antibodies. We've talked about these several times. These are the lab-made antibodies produced in tissue cultures so that the solution you get is pure antibody of just one type, instead of the mixture of all kinds of antibodies we get out of a person or other animal. We've been using monoclonal antibodies for all kinds of conditions for several years now, and there are several such treatments in development right now. One is in clinical trials, and another is ready to begin. They're being tested as prophylaxis and as therapy, both for mild and serious disease. A word of warning: These therapies tend to be very, very expensive, which means they may not have wide applicability.

There is a large class of drugs that operate as immune modulators to tamp down an overreacting immune system. We've talked about the cytokine storm, that wildly overreacting immune response that produces serious damage in the lungs and other tissues which sometimes occurs in patients with Covid-19. Immune modulators would help to bring that sort of thing under control. Cytokine storms are not unique to this virus, so for several years we've had a number of drugs which can serve that purpose. Physicians have been trying to work out which of them and what dosages may help in these patients.

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We've also talked about some high-tech efforts to identify other potential treatments, from that super-computer attempt to match viral processes with current drugs, which is still receiving plenty of research attention, to development efforts aimed at entirely new drugs designed specifically to act against some viral process. I'm going to mention something I've brought up before and remind us all that, while it seems like it's been simply forever we've been waiting for good news on this front, the actual pace of progress on this virus is nothing short of astonishing.

I'm going to talk like an old person for a minute here because I have a "back in my day" story I think is relevant (and because I am an old person and that's what we do). I remember studying molecular genetics back in the early '70s as an undergraduate student, sitting in a classroom, dutifully taking notes about this cutting-edge technique for something called genetic sequencing that was going to revolutionize genetics. It was going to enable us for the first time ever to map out the entire genetic code of an organism—the exact chemical structure of its DNA so we could better understand what made it tick. The methods that were under development at the very time I was studying them were slow and laborious, requiring top-notch laboratory expertise, but we believed they held such promise. Our professor told us that one day we would be able to sequence the entire human genome, that is, identify the precise composition of every single gene on every single chromosome. I remember some years later, after I'd moved into my career, keeping up with a gargantuan undertaking called The Human Genome Project, a 13-year, multinational collaborative effort to do just that. This was a monumental endeavor, but it worked and the techniques advanced. We got really good at genetic sequencing so it didn't take years to sequence an organism.

And then, about seven months ago, a new virus, one no one had ever seen before, showed up in a city in China, and within a couple of months, we had its entire genome because, nowadays, you pretty much feed the organism's genetic material into a machine, push a few buttons, and go for coffee. (I oversimplify here, but it really is an automated process now.) From there, the pace of research—and progress—has been phenomenal. For those of us not involved in the research effort, our job is to hold things together on the ground until the science catches up.

We have so many tools at our disposal to tackle this pandemic, from the tried and true public health measures many of us have been choosing to ignore—things like mask-wearing, hand hygiene, distancing, tracing, and isolation—to whiz-bang technologies like gene sequencing, monoclonal antibody production, and genetic vaccines. If we will just use the tried-and-true to hold things back until the whiz-bang can provide better answers, we can limit the damage, keep more people alive, and come through this. Thing is, this plan requires us to take active measures to protect one another and to hold our society together so the virus doesn't take any more from us than it already has.

Tell you the truth, I am honestly not sure whether we're up to the task. My level of optimism varies from day to day; but I know for sure that task starts with individual decisions made by individual people in individual situations every single individual day. We can do just one thing, can't we?

If you are reading this, you have been served by strangers. You have been served by people who have come before you, people who have invented, educated, made safe, and otherwise built a world in which you can relax in your home reading the shiny new, just-written words of a stranger exhorting you to pass it along. Because now it is your turn to serve, and you can best serve by taking care of those around you, by protecting them from infection and also from isolation and loneliness and need and despair. While we wait for the whiz-bang, let's do the tried and true, and let's show some caring for one another. You don't outgrow your obligation to serve. Ever. Take it from an old person who hasn't managed to do it yet. We need one another.

Stay well. I'll be back.

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SD Dept. of Tourism Update

Dear Tourism Friends,

As you know, the Department of Tourism, in collaboration with the Governor's Office, state and local government agencies, National Park Service and Department of the Interior, continues to plan for South Dakota's Mount Rushmore Fireworks Celebration on July 3. There will be limited attendance for the event, and the ticket lottery closed on Monday, June 8, with a total of 129,557 applications for the 7,500 tickets available. Needless to say, there was no lack of interest in this event! Lottery winners will be notified by Recreation.gov via email this Friday, June 12.

There are still many items being worked on and finalized. One of the details we are working on is a plan to broadcast or livestream the event for those who did not win a ticket. As soon as we have additional information on this, we will share it with you.

All of us in the Department of Tourism, and everyone involved in the event, are beyond excited to host such a wonderful celebration of America's birthday. We look forward to hosting a safe, fun, inspiring and patriotic event for South Dakotans and visitors alike, and we can't wait to see Mount Rushmore National Memorial, highlighted by fireworks, being shown across the globe!

For those of you receiving questions from visitors and media, we've developed a list of FAQs that you can use as necessary. Additional information and event details can be found on TravelSouthDakota.com, and inquiries can be directed to RushmoreFireworks@state.sd.us.

We will be in touch with more information as soon as possible.

All our best,

Jim & Team

Jim Hagen
Secretary of Tourism

Faulkton principal to lead activities association

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

BROOKINGS — Faulkton Area High School Principal Craig Cassens has been elected chairman of the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors. Brookings Activities Director Randy Soma will serve as vice chairman.

The election took place during the SDHSAA board of directors meeting in Pierre on Thursday. While board members met in person in Pierre, due to COVID-19 concerns the public and member schools were allowed to monitor the meeting via the internet.

When Cassens calls his first meeting to order in August, he will have three new board members. School board member Marty Weismantel of the Groton Area School District will represent the association's small school group. Weismantel ran for the position unopposed.

Serving on the board as the Division I, large school, member will be Rapid City Central Principal Michael Talley. Talley defeated Sioux Falls Washington Principal Dan Conrad on a membership vote of 84 to 62.

There will be a run-off in July for the position of East River at-large board member between Avon Superintendent Tom Culver and Chester Area Superintendent Heath Larson. Culver earned 70 votes and Larson 33. Also receiving votes were superintendents Kelly Glodt of Pierre, 32, and Jeff Kusters of Frederick, 17. There will be a run-off because association rules call for the winning candidate to receive the majority of votes cast.

Member schools also approved an amendment to the association's constitution that changes the time required for team practices prior to the start of a season from two weeks to five days. Weather and other circumstances often cause the association to give out waivers shortening the length of time required for practices prior to the start of a sport.

The amendment was approved on a vote of 143-11 from member schools.

—30—

Souvenir vendor contract goes to Iowa firm

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

BROOKINGS — Fine Designs Inc. of Grimes, Iowa, was awarded a three-year contract as the South Dakota High School Activities Association's souvenir vendor.

The SDHSAA board of directors took the action during a meeting Thursday in Pierre. The board met in Pierre but due to COVID-19 concerns, member schools and the public were allowed to monitor the meeting via the internet.

The offer from Fine Designs covers the three academic years starting July 1, 2020, and ending June 30, 2023. The company bid a minimum guarantee of \$75,000 plus 35% of sales for each dollar of sales over \$350,000 per contract year. The bid specifications called for at least a minimum guarantee of \$60,000.

SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos said the bid process generated interest among vendors, but the bid from Fine Designs was the only one the association received. One of the board goals for the year is finding new revenue sources that can be shared with member schools.

Swartos said the goal of the association is to use the money generated by the contract to help pay the expenses of school districts that host state tournaments. He said the association sought a "significant amount of money to put into those hosting fees without raising ticket prices."

In the past, schools have been in charge of souvenir sales at the state events they hosted. Board member Randy Soma of Brookings said host schools will enjoy not having the extra work of arranging T-shirt sales for state events.

Swartos said last year the host schools earned a \$15,000 profit on T-shirt sales. When explaining the reason for the change to schools, Swartos said, "We're turning down \$75,000 for \$15,000."

Activities Association tweaks summer contact rules

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

BROOKINGS — With winter and spring high school sports canceled due to the coronavirus, Thursday the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors took action to increase the amount of time that athletes have for workouts in the summer.

The board took action Thursday during a meeting in Pierre. While the board met in person, member schools and the public could monitor the meeting via the internet.

This year's summer contact period was approved at a special May meeting to run from June 1 until July 31. Approved during the special meeting was a detailed three-phase plan for running workouts while trying to avoid coronavirus infections.

SDHSAA rules call for a moratorium on summer workouts from July 1 through July 7 to accommodate family vacations centered on the Independence Day holiday.

SDHSAA Chairman Moe Ruesink of Sioux Valley said he wanted to shorten the moratorium period to "ease the pain of the end of winter and spring sports." He suggested changing the moratorium for only this year to July 3 through July 5.

Board member Randy Soma of Brookings said the change would add time for more workouts but make life difficult for school districts.

"We have all kinds of stuff that goes on in that moratorium," Soma said, noting that this year the time would also be used for cleaning facilities before workouts start again.

"This time was put in for a break for our student-athletes and for families," said board member Craig Cassens of Faulkton.

Board member Brian Maher said school districts could enforce a stricter moratorium than the one proposed by Ruesink, but he acknowledged that it would come with some difficulty.

"We do put schools in a bind when you say, 'You don't have to follow this; you can be more restrictive,'" Maher said.

The motion to shorten the moratorium also included lengthening the summer contact period by two days to include Aug. 1 and 2, a Saturday and Sunday. SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos said some schools had asked about the possibility of athletes taking part in a national track meet planned for Sioux Falls that weekend.

Other schools asked about sending athletes to a national golf tournament in North Carolina. South Dakota athletes would not be allowed to compete unless there was a change to the summer contact rules.

The board approved the changes on a vote of 5-4.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	June 3	June 4	June 5	June 6	June 7	June 8	June 9
Minnesota	25,508	25,870	26,273	26,980	27,501	27,886	28,224
Nebraska	14,611	14,866	15,117	15,379	15,543	15,634	15,752
Montana	523	525	539	541	540	545	548
Colorado	26,788	27,060	27,360	27,615	27,848	28,001	28,183
Wyoming	701	703	709	721	726	734	748
North Dakota	2646	2679	2706	2745	2816	2861	2880
South Dakota	5067	5162	5247	5277	5367	5438	5471
United States	1,831,821	1,851,520	1,872,660	1,898,401	1,920,061	1,938,931	1,961,185
US Deaths	106,181	107,175	108,211	109,137	109,802	110,481	111,007
Minnesota	+300	+362	+403	+707	+521	+385	+338
Nebraska	+266	+255	+251	+262	+164	+91	+118
Montana	+4	+2	+14	+2	-1	+5	+3
Colorado	+211	+272	+300	+255	+233	+153	+182
Wyoming	+1	+2	+6	+12	+5	+8	+14
North Dakota	+21	+33	+27	+39	+71	+45	+19
South Dakota	+33	+95	+85	+30	+90	+71	+33
United States	+20,451	+19,699	+21,140	+25,741	21,660	+18,870	+22,254
US Deaths	+1,016	+994	+1,036	+926	+665	+679	+526
	June 10	June 11	June 12				
Minnesota	28,523	28,869	29,316				
Nebraska	15,883	16,025	16,315				
Montana	554	561	563				
Colorado	28,347	28,499	28,647				
Wyoming	760	768	793				
North Dakota	2901	2941	2980				
South Dakota	5523	5604	5665				
United States	1,979,971	2,000,464	2,023,347				
US Deaths	112,006	112,924	113,820				
Minnesota	+299	+346	+447				
Nebraska	+131	+142	+290				
Montana	+6	+7	+2				
Colorado	+164	+152	+148				
Wyoming	+12	+8	+25				
North Dakota	+21	+40	+39				
South Dakota	+52	+81	+62				
United States	+19,786	+20,493	+22,883				
US Deaths	+999	+918	+896				

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June 11th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent
from State Health Lab Reports

There were four more deaths recorded in South Dakota, bringing the death total to 73. There were no new deaths in North Dakota.

Union County has its first death while Brown, Minnehaha and Pennington county each registered a new death. There was one death in the 40-49 age group, one in the 60-69 age group and two in the 80+ age group and there were two males and two females.

There were 16 counties with positive cases and 14 with only recovered cases. Brown County had no new positives, which is a first in a very long time. .

On the community impact map, Clay County has been upgraded to substantial community spread. Day County and Edmunds County are now on the fully recovered list.

Brown County:

Active Cases: -7 (37)
Recovered: +6 (266)
Total Positive: 0 (305)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (16)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +87 (2006)
Percent Recovered: 87.2% (2.0 increase)

South Dakota:

Positive: +61 (5665 total)
Negative: +998 (56079 total)
Hospitalized: +11 (514 total) - 87 currently hospitalized (14 less than yesterday)
Deaths: +4 (73 total)
Recovered: +91 (4664 total)
Active Cases: -34 (928)
Percent Recovered: 82.3% up 0.7

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Bennett +3 (225), Butte +7 (334), Campbell 43, Haakon +5 (165), Harding 33, Jones +1 (19), Mellette +1 (88), Perkins -3 (71), Potter +1 (143), unassigned -362 (5525).

Beadle: +13 positive, +19 recovered (238 of 411 recovered)
Brookings: +1 recovered (19 of 26 recovered)
Brown: +6 recovered (266 of 305 recovered)
Brule: +1 positive (1 of 3 recovered)
Buffalo: +1 positive, +3 recovered (15 of 31 recovered)
Charles Mix: +1 positive, +3 recovered (15 of 21 recovered)
Clay: +7 positive, +1 recovered (15 of 50 recovered)
Codington: +1 positive (34 of 43 recovered)
Corson: +2 positive (3 of 8 recovered)
Davison: +7 recovered (22 of 30 recovered)
Day: +1 recovered (13 of 13 recovered)
Dewey: +1 positive (0 of 2 recovered)
Edmunds: +1 recovered (4 of 4 recovered)

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Hamlin: +1 recovered (6 of 9 recovered)
 Hand: +1 positive (2 of 6 recovered)
 Jerauld: +1 recovered (33 of 40 recovered)
 Lake: +1 recovered (10 of 13 recovered)
 Lawrence: +1 positive, +1 recovered (11 of 12 recovered)
 Lincoln: +1 positive, +3 recovered (232 of 259 recovered)
 Lyman: +2 positive (12 of 32 recovered)
 Meade: +2 recovered (19 of 28 recovered)
 Minnehaha: +14 positive, +22 recovered (3136 of 3444 recovered)
 Moody: +1 recovered (17 of 19 recovered)
 Oglala Lakota: +1 recovered (22 of 45 recovered)
 Pennington: +16 positive, +12 recovered (174 of 351 recovered)
 Stanley: +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 of 11 recovered)
 Todd: +1 positive (24 of 45 recovered)
 Turner: +1 recovered (23 of 25 recovered)
 Union: +1 recovered (83 of 105 recovered)
 Yankton: +1 recovered (48 of 58 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Added , Day, Edmunds): Day 13-13, Deuel 1-1, Edmunds 4-4, Grant 13-13, Gregory 1-1, Spink 5-5, Sully 1-1, Tripp 6-6, Walworth 5-5.

The N.D. DoH & private labs report 3,375 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 39 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 2,980.

State & private labs have reported 123,082 total completed tests.
 2,515 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	646	11%
Black, Non-Hispanic	935	17%
Hispanic	960	17%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	674	12%
Other	652	12%
White, Non-Hispanic	1798	32%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	6
Brown	2
Jerauld	1
Lake	1
McCook	1
Meade	1
Minnehaha	52
Pennington	7
Todd	1
Union	1

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	29	23	196
Beadle	411	238	997
Bennett	0	0	225
Bon Homme	8	7	476
Brookings	26	19	1193
Brown	305	266	2006
Brule	3	1	338
Buffalo	31	15	281
Butte	0	0	334
Campbell	0	0	43
Charles Mix	21	15	380
Clark	6	4	245
Clay	50	15	707
Codington	43	34	1453
Corson	8	3	92
Custer	1	0	260
Davison	30	22	1267
Day	13	13	286
Deuel	1	1	238
Dewey	2	0	612
Douglas	4	3	244
Edmunds	4	4	226
Fall River	6	3	376
Faulk	15	3	65
Grant	13	13	352
Gregory	1	1	190
Haakon	0	0	165
Hamlin	9	6	236
Hand	6	2	153
Hanson	3	0	92
Harding	0	0	33
Hughes	21	17	794
Hutchinson	8	6	540

Hyde	3	1	66
Jackson	4	1	65
Jerauld	40	33	206
Jones	0	0	19
Kingsbury	5	2	312
Lake	13	10	440
Lawrence	12	11	969
Lincoln	259	232	3338
Lyman	32	12	393
Marshall	4	3	160
McCook	7	5	376
McPherson	3	1	115
Meade	28	19	842
Mellette	0	0	88
Miner	3	2	137
Minnehaha	3444	3136	15739
Moody	19	17	373
Oglala Lakota	45	22	1219
Pennington	351	174	4575
Perkins	0	0	71
Potter	0	0	143
Roberts	39	32	737
Sanborn	13	12	159
Spink	5	5	433
Stanley	11	9	102
Sully	1	1	36
Todd	45	24	600
Tripp	6	6	223
Turner	25	23	470
Union	105	83	919
Walworth	5	5	274
Yankton	58	48	1772
Ziebach	2	1	88
Unassigned****	0	0	5525

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	2700	40
Male	2965	33

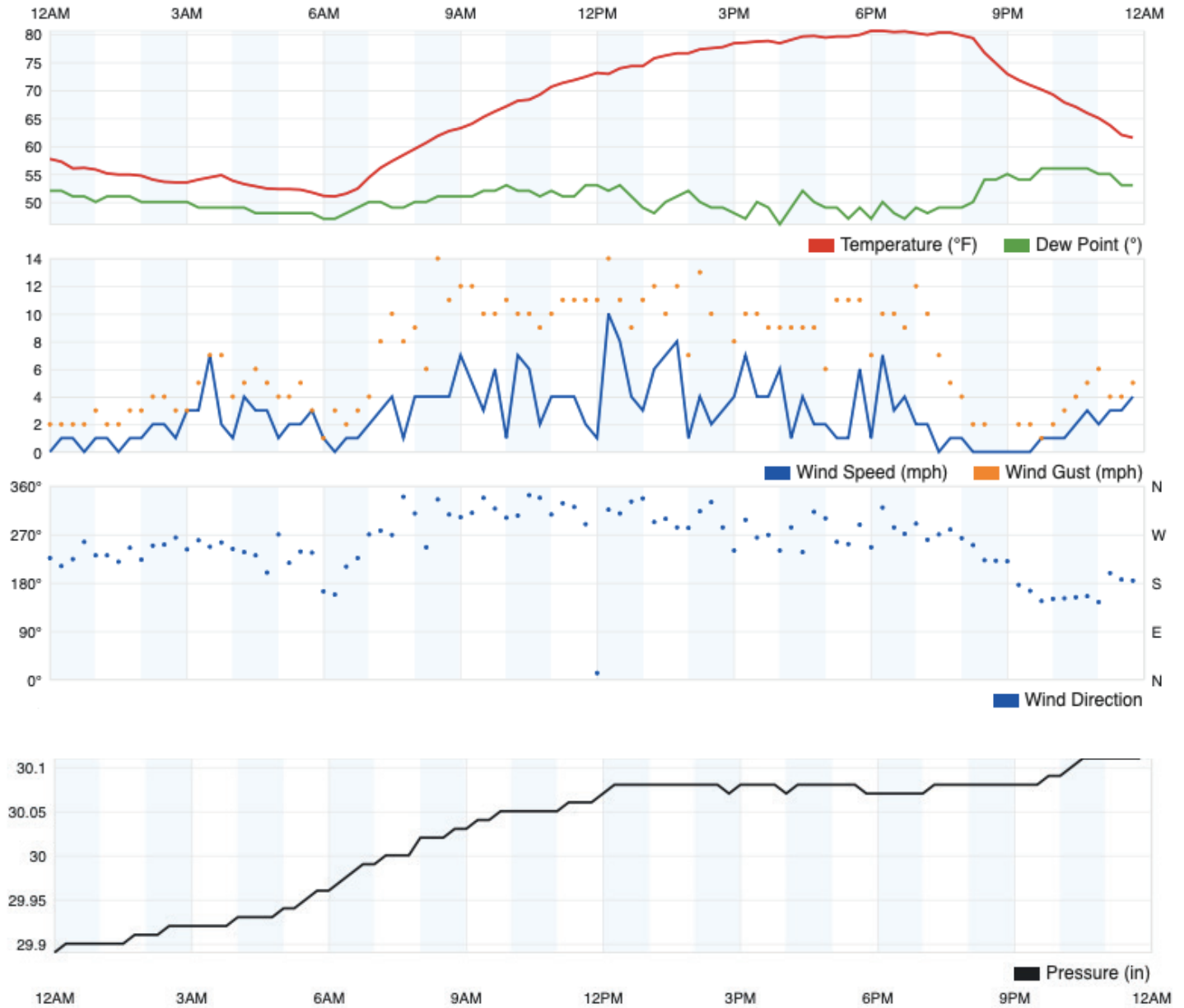
CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	570	0
20-29 years	1140	1
30-39 years	1258	3
40-49 years	950	5
50-59 years	908	10
60-69 years	510	12
70-79 years	167	6
80+ years	162	36

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Sunny

High: 80 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 60 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 85 °F

Saturday
Night



Partly Cloudy
and Breezy
then Partly
Cloudy

Low: 65 °F

Sunday



Mostly Cloudy
and Breezy

High: 85 °F

Dry and Breezy Weekend



Today *Breezy*

78 to 88°

Winds out of the east gusting 15-25 mph



Saturday *Windy*

78 to 88°

Windy all day with gusts up to 30-40 mph in the afternoon



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Aberdeen, SD

6/12/2020 4:18 AM



Dry conditions are expected through the weekend, though a breezy Friday will turn into a windy Saturday with gusts up to 30-40 mph by Saturday afternoon.

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Today in Weather History

June 12, 1924: A tornado moved southeast from the southwestern edge of Lake Kampeska, passing southwest of Watertown. Two barns were destroyed, and 20 smaller farm buildings were heavily damaged. This tornado was estimated to have F2 strength.

June 12, 1983: Lightning struck and killed two cows near Miller in Hand County. Lightning also hit a home six miles north of Aberdeen, breaking a ceramic statue, and blow out light bulbs. Another home in Aberdeen was struck by lightning, rupturing a gas line and starting the house on fire. Also, heavy rains up to seven inches fall around the area. Some storm total rainfall amounts include; 2.00 inches at 2NW of Stephan; 2.40 inches in Miller; 3.03 at 4 miles west of Mellette; and 6.30 inches in Orient.

June 12, 1994: In Hand County, a thunderstorm caused an estimated 3 million dollars in crop damage. Hail, the largest being baseball size, was reported in drifts of three to four feet high. About 70 thousand acres of cropland and pastures were destroyed. Pheasants, ducks were killed by the hail and many cattle injured. Many windows were broken in homes, holes were punched in mobile homes, damaged occurred to contents of dwellings from hail which entered through windows, and many vehicles were extensively damaged.

June 12, 2013: A line of thunderstorms moving northeast across the region brought damaging wind gusts from 60 to 80 mph to parts of central and northeastern South Dakota. Many branches along with several trees were downed. Some buildings were also damaged with a couple of buildings destroyed. An estimated eighty mph wind destroyed a cabin on the east shore of the Missouri River and north-northwest of Pierre. A hundred foot by seventy-five-foot storage building was flattened south of Doland in Spink County. Tractors and planters and other equipment in the building were damaged.

1915: An estimated F4 tornado moved northeast from northwest of Waterville, Iowa crossing the Mississippi River two miles south of Ferryville, Wisconsin. A man and his daughter were killed in one of three homes that were obliterated southwest of "Heytman," a small railroad station on the Mississippi River. 60 buildings and eight homes were destroyed in Wisconsin. This tornado caused approximately \$200,000 in damage. In addition to this tornado, another estimated F4 tornado moved northeast across Fayette and Clayton Counties in northeast Iowa. One farm was devastated, the house and barn leveled. Heavy machinery was thrown 300 yards. Clothing was carried two miles.

1948: The Columbia River Basin flood peaked on this date in the Northwest. The flood produced the highest water level in the basin since the flood there in 1894. The damage estimate for the 1948 flood was \$101 million, and 75 lives were lost.

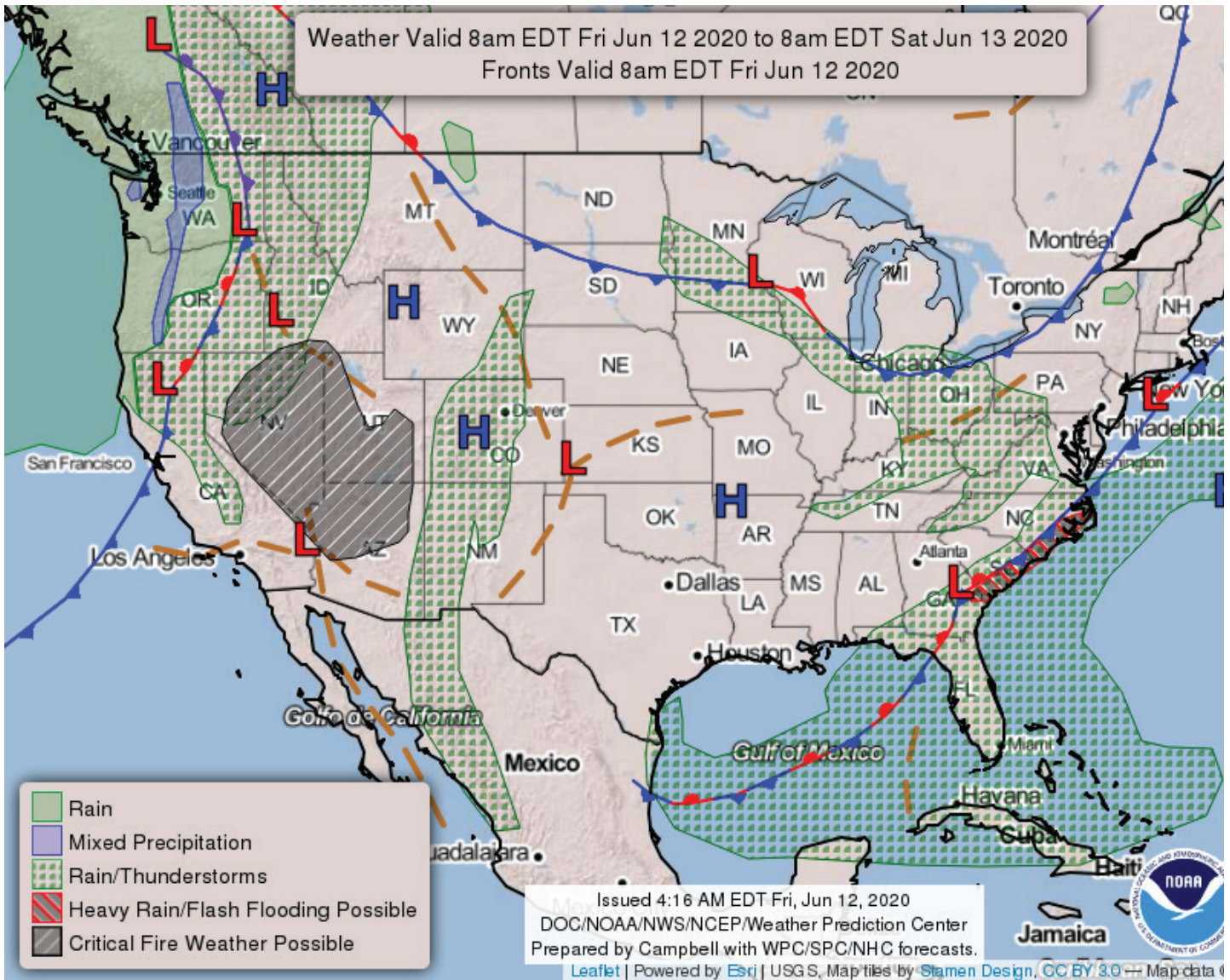
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 81 °F at 7:37 PM
Low Temp: 51 °F at 6:01 AM
Wind: 14 mph at 8:25 AM
Precip: 0.00

Record High: 103° in 1956
Record Low: 37° in 2012
Average High: 76°F
Average Low: 53°F
Average Precip in June.: 1.30
Precip to date in June.: 1.75
Average Precip to date: 8.44
Precip Year to Date: 6.38
Sunset Tonight: 9:23 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45 a.m.



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WHERE DO I BEGIN?

A company was well known for its highly effective sales personnel. They were able to outperform all of their competitors by their volume of sales, the new customers they attracted, and the loyalty of their old ones.

Once, during an interview, a professor asked the personnel director what he did to attract so many outstanding people to his company. After thinking for a moment he replied, "We give them a water test."

The professor was surprised. He thought he knew of every pre-employment test available. So he asked, "What is the water test?"

"Well," he responded, "before we hire anyone, we take them into a room where the faucet is running, the sink is overflowing, and water is pouring onto the floor. We offer the person a mop and say 'Mop up the water.' If they begin to mop up the water without turning off the faucet, we know they are poor problem-solvers and decision-makers and they would not be good employees. So, we don't hire them."

Too often Christians try to "clean" up their lives without turning "off" old habits and behaviors that lead to sin. If we want to become who God wants us to become, we must turn away from every temptation that can distract, defeat, or destroy us. We can solve the problem of sinning if, when we are tempted, we turn from it and pray, and avoid the appearance of evil.

Prayer: We ask, Heavenly Father, for Your Holy Spirit to "sound an alarm" and get our attention when we face temptation and sin. Give us Your courage to resist! Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Stay away from every kind of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:22

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2020 Groton Baseball Schedule

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
June 13	Jr. Legion	Northville	Groton	4:00 (2)
June 14	Jr. Legion	Lake Norden	Groton	3:00 (1)
June 14	Legion	Lake Norden	Groton	5:00 (1)
June 15	Jr. Teener	Fredrick	Groton	5:30 (2)
June 15	Jr. Legion	Claremont	Claremont	5:00 (1)
June 15	Legion	Claremont	Claremont	6:30 (1)
June 17	Legion	Redfield	Groton	6:00 (2)
June 18	Jr. Legion	Northville	Northville	6:00 (2)
June 19	Jr. Teener	Webster	Groton	6:00 (2)
June 22	Jr. Teener	Clark	Clark	6:00 (2)
June 23	Jr. Legion	Claremont	Groton	6:00 (1)
June 23	Legion	Claremont	Groton	8:00 (1)
June 24	Jr. Legion	Faulkton	Faulkton	6:00 (2)
June 25	Jr. Teener	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)
June 26	Legion	Clark	Groton	5:30 (2)
June 27	Jr. Teener	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	2:00 (2)
June 27	Legion	Redfield	Redfield	2:00 (1)
June 28	Jr. Teener	Northville	Groton	4:00 (2)
June 29	Jr. Legion	Redfield	Groton	6:00 (2)
June 29	Legion	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)
June 30	Jr. Legion	Northville	Northville	6:00 (2)
July 1	Jr. Teener	Lake Norden	Groton	5:30 (2)
July 1	Legion	Northville	Northville	6:00 (2)
July 2	Jr. Teener	Clark	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 6	Jr. Legion	Clark	Groton	5:30 (2)
July 7	Legion	Redfield	Redfield	6:00 (2)
July 10	Jr. Legion	Faulkton	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 14	Jr. Legion	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	5:30 (1)
July 14	Legion	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	7:00 (1)
July 15	Jr. Legion	Redfield	Redfield	6:00 (2)
July 15	Legion	Webster	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 20	Jr. Legion	Clark	Clark	6:00 (2)
July 20	Legion	Northville	Groton	6:00 (2)

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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

The Latest: Columbus statue taken down in Camden, New Jersey

By The Associated Press undefined

TOP OF THE HOUR:

- Columbus statue taken down in Camden, New Jersey
- Kentucky bans use of 'no knock' warrants, names ordinance after Breonna Taylor
- Georgia man facing upgraded charges for ramming his ATV into an Atlanta policeman during a protest.
- Group of Minneapolis police officers say they're ready to back police chief's promised overhaul of the department.
- Lafayette Park fencing near White House being taken down.

CAMDEN, N.J. — A New Jersey city near Philadelphia has taken down a statue of Christopher Columbus, joining others across the country.

The city of Camden released a statement Thursday evening calling the statue in Farnham Park a "controversial symbol" that has "long pained residents of the community."

Protesters mobilized by the death of George Floyd at the hands of police have called for the removal of statues of Columbus. They say the Italian explorer is responsible for the genocide and exploitation of native peoples in the Americas.

Video from local news outlets showed the statue coming down Thursday night. The city's statement says "a plan to reexamine these outdated symbols of racial division and injustices" is overdue. The majority of Camden residents are people of color.

Statues of Columbus have also been toppled or vandalized in cities such as Miami; Richmond, Virginia; St. Paul, Minnesota, and Boston, where one was decapitated.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The use of controversial "no-knock" warrants has been banned in Louisville, and the new ordinance named for Breonna Taylor, who was fatally shot after officers burst into her home.

The city's Metro Council unanimously voted Thursday night to ban the controversial warrants after days of protests and calls for reform.

Taylor, who was studying to become a nurse, was shot eight times by officers conducting a narcotics investigation on March 13. No drugs were found at her home.

"I'm just going to say, Breonna, that's all she wanted to do was save lives, so with this law she will continue to get to do that," Taylor's mother, Tamika Palmer, said after the law was passed. "She would be so happy."

The law bans the use of the warrants by Louisville Metro officers. Police typically use them in drug cases over concern that evidence could be destroyed if they announce their arrival. Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul also introduced federal legislation Thursday that would ban the use of no-knock warrants nationwide.

ATLANTA — Charges have been upgraded against a 42-year-old man accused of deliberately running his ATV into an Atlanta police officer during a protest of police brutality and the death of George Floyd.

In a statement Thursday, Atlanta police spokesman Carlos Campos said Avery Goggans, of Stone Mountain, faces new charges of aggravated assault, aggravated battery and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

Campos said the new charges were filed because Goggans had tried to hit two other officers at different intersections before he rammed into Officer Maximilian Brewer in downtown Atlanta on the night of May 30. Brewer suffered significant injuries to his legs.

Goggans was initially charged with DUI, reckless driving, possession of marijuana and other traffic offenses including serious injury by vehicle, Campos said.

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HOUSTON — Two statues that pay tribute to the Confederacy will be removed from Houston city parks, Mayor Sylvester Turner announced Thursday.

The statue of a Confederate soldier called "Spirit of The Confederacy" will be moved from Sam Houston Park to the Houston Museum of African American Culture. Ann Stern, president of a museum benefactor, says the statue will be able to be interpreted in a way that promotes an inclusive and anti-racist community.

A statue of a Confederate artillery commander prominent in the naval victory against two Union vessels in the Battle of Sabine Pass will be moved from Hermann Park to the Sabine Pass Battleground State Historical Site near Port Arthur, Texas.

The relocations were recommended by a city task force Turner appointed to consider the issue.

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Kentucky's governor has asked a state commission to vote to remove a statue of Jefferson Davis from the Capitol's Rotunda, a day after another statue of the Confederate president was toppled by protesters in Virginia.

Gov. Andy Beshear's request comes amid a rapidly unfolding protest movement to pull down Confederate monuments around the U.S. after the death of George Floyd, a black man who died in police custody in Minnesota.

The Davis statue is one of several in the Rotunda and is located not far from a bronze likeness of Abraham Lincoln. Both Civil War adversaries were born in Kentucky.

The Democratic governor calls the statue a divisive symbol, saying it has to go, and expects a vote Friday in favor of moving it.

MINNEAPOLIS — A group of Minneapolis police officers is condemning the officer charged with murder in George Floyd's death and say they're ready to back the police chief's promised overhaul of the department.

Fourteen officers signed an open letter Thursday addressed to "Dear Everyone — but especially Minneapolis citizens."

The letter said Officer Derek Chauvin "failed as a human" and "stripped George Floyd of his dignity and life."

Chauvin is charged with second-degree murder in Floyd's May 25 death for pressing his knee into Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes as he lay handcuffed. The letter makes no mention of three other officers charged with aiding and abetting.

The officers signing the letter said they represent "hundreds" of other officers.

NEW ORLEANS — The New Orleans police chief steadfastly defended his department's use of tear gas against protesters last week and said tried to forcefully cross a police line and cross a Mississippi River bridge.

Under sharp questioning Thursday from New Orleans City Council members, Superintendent Shaun Ferguson said from 100 to 200 protesters had tried to force the issue when police blocked passage on an approach to the bridge.

Ferguson said during an online meeting that violence erupted after the protesters tried to break the front line.

The virtual meeting was held as about 300 people gathered outside City Hall for a "Defund the Police" rally.

Police abuse has long resounded in New Orleans, where the deaths of unarmed civilians at the hands of police following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 led to federal investigations and court-ordered reforms.

MINNEAPOLIS — Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz said at a news conference Thursday afternoon that there will be legal consequences for the people who lassoed and pulled down a statue of Columbus on the Minnesota State Capitol grounds in St. Paul on Wednesday evening.

But lieutenant governor Peggy Flanagan, a Native American from the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, made clear that she was glad to see it go. She chairs a board with oversight over the Capitol grounds and had

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been trying for years to get it removed.

She later said the explorer's legacy was "setting in motion generations of violence, rape and genocide against indigenous people. Placing a statue of a historical figure on the Minnesota State Capitol grounds confers an honor to their legacy. There is no honor in the legacy of Christopher Columbus," she said.

WASHINGTON — Workers on Thursday began removing the tall black chain-link fence from the north side of Lafayette Park, allowing access to the historic protest space directly in front of the White House.

A senior member of DC Mayor Muriel Bowser's staff tweeted video Thursday afternoon showing the fence being removed in sections. Bowser's government has repeatedly requested the removal.

The fence was erected late at night on June 1, a few hours after U.S. Park Police and other security forces used smoke bombs, pepper pellets and officers on horseback to violently clear peaceful protesters so President Donald Trump could stage a brief photo opportunity in front of St. John's, a historic church that had been damaged in the protests.

The fence instantly became a forum for hundreds of signs, portraits and pieces of protest art. Earlier this week volunteers began removing and preserving the artwork and signs.

The National Park Service confirmed the removal of the fencing around the park's perimeter but said some temporary fencing would remain until damaged areas can be repaired.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — An Alabama comedian who spoke at a rally following the police killing of George Floyd was arrested on a charge of inciting a riot by police who contend he helped spark a night of violent unrest in Birmingham.

Jermaine Johnson surrendered to police on the misdemeanor charge on Tuesday and paid a \$500 bond before being released, his lawyer, Emory Anthony, told al.com.

Anthony said he was surprised that police decided to charge Johnson, who's known for his videos about the University of Alabama football team.

Johnson spoke at a peaceful rally in a downtown park on May 31 before a crowd went a few blocks away to Linn Park, where a Confederate monument was badly damaged. People later spread out through the area, smashing windows, setting fires and looting despite cautionary words in Johnson's speech.

The damaged obelisk was removed.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — The South Dakota town where George Floyd's uncle lives is seeing a renewed controversy over its police department logo amid calls for the removal of the Confederate flag across the country.

Floyd's uncle Selwyn Jones tells the Rapid City Journal that he'd like his hometown of Gettysburg to change the logo that adorns police cars and officer patches. It's been in place since 2009 and features an American flag alongside a Confederate flag.

Mayor Bill Wuttke says he will not remove the flag from the logo and maintains it represents history. He says the reason it was put on had nothing to do with racism.

SEATTLE — Police have largely withdrawn from an area of the Capitol Hill neighborhood in Seattle that has been transformed into a festival-like scene of murals, street merchants and a rotating group of public speakers.

The "Capital Hill Autonomous Zone" sprung up after police on Monday removed barricades near the East Precinct and basically abandoned the structure after officers used tear gas, pepper spray and flash bangs over the weekend to disperse demonstrators they said were assaulting them with projectiles during demonstrations in the wake of the death of George Floyd.

Across several blocks, dozens of people now show up to listen to speakers calling for police reform, racial justice and compensation for Native American groups on whose land the city was founded.

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BOSTON — Statues and historic sites in Boston that are seen as symbols of oppression are being targeted for change.

Mahtowin Munro, a spokeswoman for United American Indians of New England, said in a statement Thursday that a park with a statue of Christopher Columbus "should be a public place that feels welcoming to everyone in Boston, not a place that is a tribute to a genocidal monster."

Mayor Marty Walsh told protesters he's open to at least considering a name change for Faneuil Hall, where rebellious colonists plotted independence from Britain. The meeting hall and its marketplace are major tourist draws and were built with financing from merchant Peter Faneuil, who owned and traded slaves.

Activists are lobbying to have the site renamed to honor Crispus Attucks, a black man widely considered to be the first American casualty of the Revolutionary War. Kevin Peterson, founder of the New Democracy Coalition that's pushing for the name change, calls the building "a symbol of white supremacy."

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Thursday that he supports the statue of Christopher Columbus that stands in the middle of Columbus Circle in Manhattan.

Cuomo, who is Italian-American, says he understands "the feelings about Christopher Columbus and some of his acts, which nobody would support."

But Cuomo says the statue has come to represent and signify appreciation for the Italian American contribution to New York," and for that reason he supports it.

MADISON, Wis. — The mayor of Madison has apologized for a private message to the city's police force in which she sympathized with officers dealing with civil unrest that followed the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

The private video was made public Tuesday when it was posted on Facebook and drew criticism from social justice advocates.

On Wednesday, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway apologized publicly saying she failed to make it clear in her message to police that black lives matter, the State Journal reported.

Peaceful protests in Madison following Floyd's death May 25 were marred by several nights of looting and break-ins near the Capitol.

MIAMI — The head of Florida's largest police department says his agency will stop using chokeholds.

Alfredo Ramirez, director of the Miami-Dade Police Department, says the applied carotid triangle restraint won't be used, and the decision was based on feedback from the community and policing professionals.

He says: "As a progressive agency, we must remain in a constant state of review and open to emerging best practices and community feedback."

Demonstrators around the U.S. have been calling for police reforms following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

In 2014, Eric Garner died in New York City after being placed in a chokehold by a police officer.

MIAMI — Miami police say seven people have been arrested for vandalizing statues of Christopher Columbus and Juan Ponce de León.

The arrests happened Wednesday when several police cars pulled up and had a confrontation with protesters, the Miami Herald reported. Some demonstrators in Bayfront Park had spray painted statues of Columbus and Ponce de León with "George Floyd," "BLM" (Black Lives Matter) and a hammer and sickle.

Miami police say officers who responded to the scene were assaulted and a car was damaged. Video from the Herald shows police chasing protesters and several being shoved by police, some to the ground.

Police say in a new release there's "zero tolerance" for property damage or hurting the public or officers.

Richard Dombroff, a demonstrator, told officers with a bullhorn, "We've been peaceful all week long and you just broke that peace."

The rally was held to honor 18-year-old Israel "Reefa" Hernandez, who died after police used a stun gun

on him in 2013.

US judge denies tribe's bid to halt virus relief funding

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — A federal judge in the nation's capital has denied a request from a Native American tribe in Kansas to halt further distribution of coronavirus relief funds for tribal nations.

The Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation recently sued the U.S. Treasury Department, alleging it was shortchanged in an initial distribution of \$4.8 billion. The tribe, whose reservation is north of Topeka, said the Treasury Department should have relied on the tribe's own enrollment data, rather than population data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The HUD data showed the tribe had 883 citizens. The tribe argued it should have received \$7.65 million dollars more based on its enrollment figure of more than 4,840.

The Treasury Department has said it used HUD data because it would correlate with the amount of money tribal governments have spent responding to the coronavirus pandemic. Tribal data doesn't distinguish between members who live on and off reservations, the agency said.

The Treasury Department intends to start distributing the remaining \$3.2 billion from a coronavirus relief package approved in March to tribes no later than Monday.

U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta held a hearing Thursday on the Prairie Band's request to keep the Treasury Department from moving forward. He ruled later that he had no jurisdiction over the matter because Congress gave the Treasury secretary discretion in how to dole out the funding.

"The CARES Act thus contains no 'statutory reference point' by which to judge the secretary's decision to use HUD's population data set, as opposed to some other," Mehta wrote.

The judge also faulted the tribe for filing its lawsuit more than a month after the Treasury Department said it would use HUD data following a request for tribes to submit enrollment figures.

Carol Heckman, an attorney for the Prairie Band, said the tribe doesn't use the HUD database and did not immediately understand the Treasury Department's methodology. She said reports by Harvard researchers who dug into the HUD data showed the tribe it was underrepresented.

Mehta is scheduled to hear arguments in a related case Friday. It is centered on whether Alaska Native corporations are eligible for a share of the \$8 billion set aside for tribes in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act that Congress approved in March.

Mehta earlier ruled to limit distribution to tribal governments while he decides the eligibility question.

Meatpacking rebounds but high prices and backlogs to persist

By JOSH FUNK and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Meat production has rebounded from its low point during the coronavirus pandemic when dozens of plants were closed, but experts say consumer prices are likely to remain high and it will take months to work through a backlog of millions of pigs and cattle, creating headaches for producers.

Earlier this week, beef, pork and poultry plants were operating at more than 95% of last year's levels, which was up from about 60% in April at the height of plant closures and slowdowns, according to the U.S. Agriculture Department. That increased production came as companies took steps to protect workers, such as adding plastic partitions between work stations and staggering shifts, that are essential but could slow down the work. The safety measures and bonuses to incentivize workers have increased costs.

And while worker advocates stress that companies must be vigilant to avoid more coronavirus infections, those steps will likely mean higher prices at grocery stores. Even if plants became more efficient, there is a lag of several weeks between when wholesale prices drop and when consumers start to see the change.

Grocery stores, which absorbed some of the meat price increases this spring, also may not pass along all the price cuts as they try to restore their profit margins.

"Don't expect prices to fall in half just because wholesale prices have declined dramatically," said Lee

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Schulz, a livestock economist at Iowa State University.

Besides adopting measures to keep workers healthy, Kansas State University agricultural economist Glynn Tonsor said meat processors have also boosted production by operating plants more on Saturdays, rather than just weekdays, and by saving time by producing larger cuts of meat. That means grocery stores or consumers may have to cut a pork loin down into pork chops instead of that work being done at meat plants, for example.

But to work through the beef and pork backlogs quickly, meat processors may have to find ways to boost production higher than last year's levels, said Will Sawyer, a protein economist at Cobank, an agribusiness bank. Before the pandemic, meatpacking plants had been expected to produce more than they did last year.

Even as production levels climb, it will likely take all summer and maybe into the fall to work through the backlog of more than 1 million cattle and more than 2 million pigs that was created this spring when dozens of plants were closed. That will continue to create problems for farmers and ranchers who are struggling to find space for all those animals and face low prices because of the supply glut.

Mike Drinnin, who owns feedlots in Nebraska, said everyone involved in raising and feeding cattle felt the squeeze when so many beef and pork processing plants were idled, because fewer cattle were being bought by processors. More cattle are remaining in pastures and feedlots longer than normal while ranchers try to slow their growth rate to give themselves more flexibility.

"It's been a long, long, hard haul here since March and all this kind of started," said Drinnin, who serves on the board of the Nebraska Cattlemen trade group. "It's just been quite the struggle for everybody."

Pig farmers have been hit especially hard by the backlog because of the tight capacity on their farms. It has led some to euthanize pigs to create space in their barns.

"As farmers we're always trying to plan for the future, and it's just impossible right now," said Mike Paustian, the president of the Iowa Pork Producers Association. "The only thing that's certain is that this problem is not going to go away anytime soon."

Largely because poultry plants are more automated, they didn't see as many virus outbreaks and closures, with production only falling about 5%, Sawyer said. The plants that did close temporarily were also smaller than some of the beef and pork plants that closed.

As meat plants scale up to full capacity, companies still must ensure that plants don't again become hotbeds of infections, said Mark Lauritsen, director of the food processing and meatpacking division for the United Food and Commercial Workers International union. The union represents roughly 80% of the country's beef and pork workers and 33% of its poultry workers.

"We're still seeing outbreaks," Lauritsen said. "It's a strange virus because it's hard to say where it will pop up next."

Lauritsen said many plants where hundreds of employees became infected have reopened since implementing safety measures. But other plants, like a JBS beef plant in Hyrum, Utah, are just now seeing outbreaks. The plant, where mass testing revealed that 287 employees had COVID-19 this week, has had to slow some of its operations, but it remains open.

The union estimates that 13,150 U.S. meatpacking plant workers been infected or exposed to the coronavirus and 57 have died of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

As plants scale up to full capacity, Lauritsen said he's concerned they will ease up on safety measures.

Worker shortages also still seem to be a problem at some plants, with many employees cautiously returning to work. One labor staffing company in Arkansas, TEC Staffing Services, has held "drive thru hiring events" for poultry plants, seeking to fill hundreds of open positions.

Marisol Avelar, who works at a JBS pork plant in Worthington, Minnesota, said dozens of people are missing every day from her shift on the production line. When she was called back to work last month after the plant temporarily closed, her fears were somewhat assuaged by the safety measures the company had taken. She's still nervous, though, because of talk about infected workers.

"The company has done a lot of work trying to keep everyone safe, but people have continued getting infected," she said.

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Associated Press writer Stephen Groves contributed to this story from Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

South Dakota reports 4 COVID-19 deaths, 61 new cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota recorded four more deaths from COVID-19, along with 61 new cases, health authorities reported on Thursday.

The Department of Health reported deaths in Brown, Pennington, Minnehaha and Union counties. One person in their 40s, one person in their 60s and two people over 80 died. The state has tallied 73 deaths from COVID-19.

The tally of cases during the pandemic rose to 5,665, but 82% of those have recovered. There are 928 people with active infections in the state, and 87 are hospitalized.

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

The economic fallout from the global pandemic showed signs of letting up as the number of new claims for unemployment benefits decreased during the week of May 31 to June 6. 817 people filed claims for unemployment for the first time, according to the Department of Labor and Regulation.

20,512 total people in South Dakota were receiving unemployment benefits on May 30, representing 4.9% of all eligible employees in the state.

Calls renewed to remove Confederate flag from police patch

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota town where an uncle of George Floyd lives is seeing renewed calls to change its police logo that features a U.S. flag alongside a Confederate flag.

Floyd's uncle Selwyn Jones told the Rapid City Journal that he would like his hometown of Gettysburg, named after the Civil War battle that was a turning point for the Union army in defeating the Confederacy, to change the logo that adorns police cars and officer's patches. It's been in place since 2009.

But Gettysburg Mayor Bill Wuttke said he has no plan to change the logo, insisting it has nothing to do with racism and that the logo represents the community's history. The town was founded by Civil War veterans, mostly from the Union. Local historians say they are aware of only one Confederate veteran who settled there.

Protests over Floyd's death in Minneapolis have led to a movement to get rid of vestiges of the Confederacy that fought to preserve slavery over 150 years ago. NASCAR on Wednesday banned the flag from its races, and protesters have called for the removal of monuments to Confederate soldiers and slaveholders, sometimes toppling or defacing them.

Activists have called for Gettysburg to change the logo before, such as in 2015 after the shooting deaths of nine people at a historically black church in Charleston, South Carolina. Jones, who was in Houston this week for Floyd's funeral, said he thought the current movement could be an impetus for change. He moved to Gettysburg three years ago and operates a hotel there.

The town of 1,200 in central South Dakota near the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation is 94% white, according to U.S. census data.

Floyd died May 25 after a white police officer pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for several minutes even after the handcuffed black man stopped moving and pleading for air.

The Confederate flag also has been flown in Rapid City recently by people trying to intimidate Black Lives Matter protesters. Republican Gov. Kristi Noem has said the presence of the flag is "disappointing."

Scott Barksdale, who designed the patch for the Gettysburg Police Department, told the Associated Press in 2015 that the logo is "a way of showing these people put the past behind them."

But Lynn Hart, who is black and a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, said the racism exhibited by the Confederate flag is still a reality. He pointed out that the Gettysburg Police Department patch is sold on eBay and could be used by racist people to send a message that black people are not welcome in the state.

"Can you imagine being a black person and getting pulled over at night with that flag on an officer's

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uniform?" Hart said. "You are going to be scared to death."

Case against airman accused of killing infant transferred

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The case against an Ellsworth Air Force Base airman accused of fatally injuring his infant son will be transferred from state court to the military justice system.

James Cunningham, 26, is charged with second-degree murder in the March death of the five-month-old baby at their Rapid City home.

Lara Roetzel, chief deputy at the state's attorney office, says the Air Force has the power to take jurisdiction in cases involving its personnel, even if the crime happened off base.

Roetzel said military court is comparable to civilian court, while military prisons are tougher than South Dakota institutions.

Air Force Lt. Joshua Sinclair tells the Rapid City Journal that Cunningham was transferred from the Pennington County Jail to Ellsworth and if convicted would be sent to a military prison.

Cunningham is charged with murder under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for engaging in an act that is "inherently dangerous to another" and shows a "wanton disregard of human life," said Sinclair.

He said the maximum punishment upon conviction is life in prison without parole, a dishonorable discharge, reduction to the lowest enlisted grade and forfeiture of all pay. Cunningham, if convicted, would have faced a mandatory punishment of life without parole under South Dakota law.

Sinclair said Cunningham can use a military defense lawyer or hire his own civilian attorney.

Lebanese central bank to inject dollars as currency tumbles

By FADI TAWIL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's money changers said the country's central bank agreed Friday to inject fresh dollars into the market to prop up the national currency following a night of protests spurred by the dramatic plunging of the Lebanese pound.

The protests, which degenerated into attacks on several bank branches, and the tumbling of the currency prompted an emergency Cabinet meeting Friday.

Despite previous efforts to control the currency depreciation, the Lebanese pound sold for more than 6,000 to the dollar Thursday on the black market, down from 4,000 in recent days. The pound had maintained a fixed rate of 1,500 to the dollar for nearly 30 years.

Mahmoud Halawa, head of the money changers union, said the central bank governor promised to inject a sufficient amount of dollars into the market for importers and regular citizens. Security forces would also crack down on the black market or any money changers selling above a set rate of 3,940 to the dollar, Halawa said.

It was not clear whether there are enough dollars available to stop the local currency depreciation. Halawa said fresh dollars would mostly come from money transfer bureaus.

The currency crash comes during a historic economic and financial crisis facing the small Mediterranean country and appeared to reflect the growing shortage of foreign currency. It also signaled panic over new U.S. sanctions that will affect neighboring Syria in the coming days and a lack of trust in the government's management of the crisis.

Protesters poured into the streets Thursday over the rising dollar price in a country dependent on imports and where people have for years used the dollar and the local currency interchangeably.

The demonstrators shut down roads in several parts of the country and burned tires.

In central Beirut, they pelted police and soldiers with rocks and smashed some storefronts, drawing volleys of tear gas. Some protesters set fire to a private bank nearby.

In the country's north and south, others threw stones at the offices of some private banks in an expression of anger at their perceived role in deepening their economic malaise.

"Three glass windows were broken in the front and the back, the fridge and the phones. And they broke the photocopy machines and the chairs. ... I am not sure yet what is the estimated material loss," said the

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owner of a travel agency in downtown Beirut.

Security forces reopened blocked roads early Friday and calm was restored. Prime Minister Hassan Diab canceled his schedule and called for an emergency meeting to discuss the crisis. Riad Salameh, the central bank governor who has been singled out by Diab for his mishandling of the situation, was taking part.

The renewed demonstrations amid calls for Diab's resignation are a huge challenge for the prime minister who took over after his predecessor, Saad Hariri, resigned amid nationwide protests late last year. Diab's government is supported by the Shiite group Hezbollah and its allies and has been weakened by the crisis. Other protesters called for Salameh to resign.

The heavily indebted Lebanese government has been in talks for weeks with the International Monetary Fund after it asked for a financial rescue plan but there are no signs of an imminent deal.

Lebanon's financial problems predate the virus pandemic that put the country in lockdown for months, further compounding the crisis. Years of corruption and mismanagement have left Lebanon with depleted resources, while shrinking investment in the war-riddled region and falling remittances from Lebanese abroad only increased the shortage of foreign capital.

Associated Press writers Sarah El Deeb and Zeina Karam contributed.

Stock markets pick up after heavy Wall Street rout

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

Stock markets picked up on Friday after a day of losses in Asia and following Wall Street's heavy sell-off the day before on worries over a possible second wave of coronavirus cases.

Dow and S&P 500 futures were up 2.2% and 1.9%, respectively, indicating some stabilization after the Dow on Thursday fell by almost 7%.

France's CAC 40 in Paris rose 1.7% to 4,897, while Germany's DAX added 0.8% to 12,067. Britain's FTSE 100 was up 1.1% to 6,141, recovering from early losses on news that the British economy contracted by 20.4% in April, wiping out nearly two decades worth of growth.

Losses were milder in global markets than in the U.S. on Thursday, partly because markets in the region have not seen the same massive gains in recent weeks: outbreaks of the virus, travel disruptions and business shutdowns remain apparent and hopes for a quick rebound more modest.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 plunged on the open but ended down only 0.8%, at 22,305.48.

South Korea's Kospi lost 2% to 2,132.30. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 skidded 1.9% to 5,847.80. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.7% to 24,301.38, while the Shanghai Composite was little changed, shedding 1 point to 2,919.74.

It is unclear if Thursday's drop in the U.S. reflected a fundamental reassessment of the economic outlook or rather a one-off drop as traders cashed in on the markets recent gains.

"Wall Street analysts are pointing to the gap between fundamentals and valuation saying it was long overdue, and finally, the market listens," Stephen Innes of AxiCorp said in a commentary

"Regardless of what side of the fence you are on, you must concede we are at a critical inflection point where we will have to see which channel opens up and where the next 5% move will take us," he said.

Thursdays bout of selling came as reports showed U.S. cases climbing in nearly half the 50 states.

In Japan, daily newly confirmed cases have fallen to double-digit levels, workers are returning to work and stores are reopening. But without a strong U.S. recovery the global economy can hardly expect to pick up strongly.

"It appears that worries about a 'second wave' of infections have hit, with a swell in the number of cases in states like Arizona and Texas giving cause for concern," said Riki Ogawa at Mizuho Bank's Asia and Oceania Treasury Department, noting U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has said the U.S. can't afford another lockdown.

In other trading, benchmark U.S. crude oil rebounded, gaining 20 cents to \$36.54 per barrel in electronic

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trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell \$3.26 to settle at \$36.34 a barrel on Thursday. Brent crude oil picked up 27 cents to \$38.82 a barrel.

The dollar rose to 107.42 Japanese yen from 106.86 yen. The euro gained slightly to \$1.1303 from \$1.1294.

Syria economic meltdown presents new challenge for Assad

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — In scenes not witnessed for years in government-controlled parts of Syria, dozens of men and women marched through the streets this week, protesting a sharp increase in prices and collapse of the currency, some even calling for the downfall of President Bashar Assad and his ruling Baath party.

"He who starves his people is a traitor," some of the protesters chanted at the protest in the southern city of Sweida.

In Syria nowadays, there is an impending fear that all doors are closing. After nearly a decade of war, the country is crumbling under the weight of years-long Western sanctions, government corruption and infighting, a pandemic and an economic downslide made worse by the financial crisis in Lebanon, Syria's main link with the outside world.

Syria faces near complete isolation as the toughest U.S. sanctions yet start to come into effect next week. While Assad may have won the military war against his opponents with the help of allies Russia and Iran, he now faces an even bigger challenge of governing while more than 80% of his people live in poverty.

In government-held areas, prices go up several times a day, forcing many shops to close, unable to keep up with the chaos. This week the Syrian currency dropped to a record 3,500 pounds to the dollar on the black market — compared to 700 at the beginning of the year. Some staples such as sugar, rice and medicine are becoming hard to find.

"The Syrian economy has spiraled out of control and the regime cannot control the Syrian pound anymore," said Osama Kadi, a Canada-based Syrian economic adviser.

The pain is likely to grow under the new U.S. sanctions, which Washington says aim to punish Assad and his top lieutenants for crimes committed during the country's conflict.

Effectively, the sanctions prevent anyone around the world from doing business with Syrian officials or state institutions or participate in the war-ravaged country's reconstruction. They also target anyone involved in smuggling to Syria, mostly from Iraq and Lebanon.

The U.S. has already imposed sanctions on Assad and a number of his top officials. The new authority, known as the U.S. Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, allows foreign companies to be targeted, including in neighboring Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

"This legislation will close all the doors on the Syrian regime and any person that deals with it," said Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese citizen who is a member of the Caesar Act team, a group that advises U.S. authorities on implementing the sanctions.

The first wave of sanctions will be imposed on June 17. Three other stages will follow before the end of August, he said.

Caesar is the code name of a Syrian forensic photographer who graphically exposed the brutality of the government crackdown by smuggling out thousands of photos of torture victims.

Experts say the new sanctions will be a heavy blow to a country where eight out of 10 people make less than \$100 a month, according to the United Nations. The Syrian government called the sanctions "economic terrorism."

Some of the repercussions have already been profound.

Bread prices increased nearly 60% in the rebel-held northwestern province of Idlib, even though the territory with a population of over 3 million is not included in the new sanctions. Its population, many of them unemployed and living in displaced camps, have also been hit hard by the collapse of the pound, since it is the main currency used in Idlib.

As a result, protests erupted this week calling for the ouster of the "Salvation Government" administering Idlib, led by al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

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The Syrian pound — which had been at 47 to the dollar at the start of the conflict — had held steady at around 500 to the dollar from 2014 until last year.

It started crumbling from a number of factors: the coronavirus lockdown, Lebanon's financial crisis, new rules requiring use of the Syrian pound and a feud between Assad and his cousin Rami Makhoul, one of Syria's richest men.

The Syrian government has lost major income from resources in areas outside its control, including oil fields in the east held by U.S.-backed fighters and farmlands that produced much of the country's wheat.

Most damaging, perhaps, has been the financial turmoil in Lebanon. Banks there have served as a gateway to the world for Syrian businessmen, officials and average people. Now Lebanon's tight capital controls lock away billions of dollars in their accounts.

"Lebanon was not only Syria's economic get-out-of-jail card, but it is the beating heart of Syria's business community," Danny Makki, a Britain-based Syrian journalist and political analyst, wrote recently for the Middle East Institute.

Lebanon is also panicking about losing Syria, particularly the electricity it still buys from the war-torn country. In recent weeks, the Lebanese army has begun closing some smuggling routes to and from Syria where fuel, diesel, medicine and other goods flow.

Syria and its allies say the Caesar Act aims at starving the Syrian people. The U.S. Embassy in Syria — closed since the beginning of the conflict — tweeted on Sunday: "The regime's destructive war has crushed the Syrian economy, not U.S. or EU sanctions."

Amid the turmoil, Assad fired Prime Minister Imad Khamis on Wednesday in a move that appeared aimed at deflecting public anger. Khamis told parliament this week that the government was discussing with allies ways to boost the pound's value. He said the government was also taking steps to avoid any shortage of pharmaceuticals.

Samer Aftimos, a pharmacist in Damascus, said shortages are already taking place, in part because of people hoarding medicine. Drug companies have stopped supplying some medicines, he said.

Syrian legislator Muhannad Haj Ali, who has been under European and American sanctions for years, said Syria survived past economic crises and will overcome the Caesar Act.

"What the terrorists and the Americans couldn't take on the battlefield, where we paid with our blood and wounds, they won't be able to gain politically, no matter how much pressure they exert," he said.

Associated Press writer Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria contributed reporting.

5 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. HISTORICAL FIGURES REASSESSED AROUND GLOBE The movement to pull down Confederate monuments around the U.S. in the wake of George Floyd's death extends to statues of slave traders, imperialists, conquerors and explorers around the world.

2. 'WE HAVE GLIMMERS OF HOPE' Scientists are beginning a new study to tell if the blood plasma of COVID-19 survivors might help prevent infection in the first place.

3. EXPERTS: POLICE UNDERTRAINED IN USE OF FORCE Instructors and researchers say officers lack adequate training on how and when to use force, leaving them unprepared to handle tense situations.

4. 'I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD WATCH MY MOTHER GO LIKE THIS' Like elsewhere in the world, the coronavirus has made honoring the dead in India a hurried affair, largely devoid of the rituals that give it meaning for mourners.

5. CHIEFS LEAD VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE The Super Bowl champions are putting together the program in response to the social unrest that has gripped the nation.

Downplaying virus risk, Trump gets back to business as usual

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — At the White House, aides now routinely flout internal rules requiring face masks. The president's campaign is again scheduling mass arena rallies. And he is back to spending summer weekends at his New Jersey golf club.

Three months after President Donald Trump bowed to the realities of a pandemic that put big chunks of life on pause and killed more Americans than several major wars, Trump is back to business as usual — even as coronavirus cases are on the upswing in many parts of the country.

While the nation has now had months to prepare stockpiles of protective gear and ventilators, a vaccine still is many months away at best and a model cited by the White House projects tens of thousands of more deaths by the end of September.

Amid renewed fears of a virus resurgence, financial markets — frequently highlighted by Trump as a sign of economic recovery — suffered their worst drop since March on Thursday.

At the White House, though, officials played down the severity of the virus surge and sought to blame it on factors beyond Trump's forceful push to reopen the economy, which he's counting on to help him win reelection.

"The data shows that we are moving in the right direction as a nation," said Surgeon General Jerome Adams, who stressed the country has a positive testing rate under 6%.

Still, Adams cautioned at a roundtable with Trump in Texas that while the country has flattened the curve on virus cases, "that doesn't mean that COVID has gone away, that it's any less contagious, that it's any less deadly to vulnerable communities."

The White House was a late adopter of many of the safety proposals it recommended, eager to project a sense of normalcy even as it relied on strong testing capacity not available to the rest of the nation. Now Trump, who watched the human and economic toll of the virus take the wind out of his campaign sails, sees even greater urgency in returning to how things were — no matter the state of the virus.

At the White House, the coronavirus task force has dramatically scaled back both its visibility and its operations. It now meets once or twice a week on an as-needed basis instead of every day.

White House officials say that, because response systems have already been put in place and a strategy developed, there's no longer a need for a whole-of-government response. Still, the president receives regular briefings, and the vice president gets briefed multiple times a day.

Yet Trump has taken to talking about the pandemic in the past tense — an "invisible enemy" conquered — rather than one still ravaging a nation that has, in recent weeks, also been consumed by mass protests following George Floyd's killing by police.

Within the White House complex, many staffers have been flouting directions issued last month to limit their entry to the West Wing and advising "everyone who enters the West Wing to wear a mask or facial covering" unless they are sitting at their desks and at least 6 feet (1.8 meters) away from colleagues. The directive came after two White House officials — the vice president's press secretary and a presidential valet — tested positive for the virus, sending panic waves through the building.

Weeks later, staff members are frequently seen walking around the West Wing without masks. That includes at meetings with the president, such as a Wednesday roundtable with African American supporters. White House staff have also declined to wear masks on Air Force One, even in close proximity to the president.

Vice President Mike Pence, for his part, tweeted — and then deleted -- a photo of himself posing with staff huddled together at the reelection campaign's headquarters. No one appeared to be wearing a mask. The White House and campaign did not respond to requests for comment.

The visual return to normalcy comes as the country surpassed 2 million COVID-19 cases this week, with new hot spots emerging in battleground states like Arizona and cases rising in nearly half of states, according to an Associated Press analysis. Though some states that have moved quickly to reopen have not seen a surge, others have seen escalations.

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Yet Trump has continued to travel — even to states that still have restrictions — and announced this week that he'll resume his signature campaign rallies beginning next Friday in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The state, which was among the earliest to begin loosening coronavirus restrictions, has a relatively low rate of infection but has seen cases rising.

"They've done a great job with COVID, as you know, the state of Oklahoma," Trump said Wednesday.

Campaign officials chose the location knowing Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt would raise no objections. Stitt's most recent reopening phase places no limits on the size of group gatherings. The campaign hopes the location will all but guarantee a large crowd, since Oklahoma is one of the most Republican states in the nation and Trump has never held a rally there as president.

Still, the reality could not be completely ignored.

"By clicking register below, you are acknowledging that an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present," Trump's campaign advised those signing up for the rally. "By attending the Rally, you and any guests voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19 and agree not to hold Donald J. Trump for President, Inc." liable for illness or injury.

Trump is also planning events in Arizona and Florida — states where cases are on the upswing. In Arizona, hospitals have been told to prepare for the worst as hospitalizations have surged.

Trump this month decided that he would no longer hold the marquee event of the Republican National Convention — his acceptance speech — in North Carolina after the state refused to guarantee that he could fill an arena to capacity with maskless supporters. It's being moved to Jacksonville, Florida.

For the White House, the priority is regaining economic momentum.

Associated Press writer Jonathan Lemire in New York contributed to this report.

Historical figures reassessed around globe after Floyd death

By **SARAH RANKIN** and **DAVID CRARY** Associated Press

The rapidly unfolding movement to pull down Confederate monuments around the U.S. in the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of police has extended to statues of slave traders, imperialists, conquerors and explorers around the world, including Christopher Columbus, Cecil Rhodes and Belgium's King Leopold II.

Protests and, in some cases, acts of vandalism have taken place in such cities as Boston; New York; Paris; Brussels; and Oxford, England, in an intense re-examination of racial injustices over the centuries. Scholars are divided over whether the campaign amounts to erasing history or updating it.

New Zealand's fourth-largest city removed a bronze statue of the British naval officer Capt. John Hamilton, the city's namesake, on Friday, a day after a Maori tribe asked for the statue be taken down and one Maori elder threatened to tear it down himself. The city of Hamilton said it was clear the statue of the man accused of killing indigenous Maori people in the 1860s would be vandalized. The city has no plans to change its name.

At the University of Oxford, protesters have stepped up their longtime push to remove a statue of Rhodes, the Victorian imperialist who served as prime minister of the Cape Colony in southern Africa. He made a fortune from gold and diamonds on the backs of miners who labored in brutal conditions.

Oxford's vice chancellor Louise Richardson, in an interview with the BBC, balked at the idea.

"We need to confront our past," she said. "My own view on this is that hiding our history is not the route to enlightenment."

Near Santa Fe, New Mexico, activists are calling for the removal of a statue of Don Juan de Oñate, a 16th-century Spanish conquistador revered as a Hispanic founding father and reviled for brutality against Native Americans, including an order to cut off the feet of two dozen people. Vandals sawed off the statue's right foot in the 1990s.

In Bristol, England, demonstrators over the weekend toppled a statue of 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston and threw it in the harbor. City authorities said it will be put in a museum.

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Across Belgium, statues of Leopold II have been defaced in half a dozen cities because of the king's brutal rule over the Congo, where more than a century ago he forced multitudes into slavery to extract rubber, ivory and other resources for his own profit. Experts say he left as many as 10 million dead.

"The Germans would not get it into their head to erect statues of Hitler and cheer them," said Mireille-Tsheusi Robert, an activist in Congo who wants Leopold statues removed from Belgian cities. "For us, Leopold has committed a genocide."

In the U.S., the May 25 death of Floyd, a black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee to his neck, has led to an all-out effort to remove symbols of the Confederacy and slavery.

The Navy, the Marines and NASCAR have embraced bans on the display of the Confederate flag, and statues of rebel heroes across the South have been vandalized or taken down, either by protesters or local authorities.

On Wednesday night, protesters pulled down a century-old statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia, the former capital of the Confederacy. The 8-foot (2.4-meter) bronze figure had already been targeted for removal by city leaders, but the crowd took matters into its own hands. No immediate arrests were made.

It stood a few blocks away from a towering, 61-foot-high (18.5-meter-high) equestrian statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee, the most revered of all Confederate leaders. Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam last week ordered its removal, but a judge blocked such action for now.

The spokesman for the Virginia division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, B. Frank Earnest, condemned the toppling of "public works of art" and likened losing the Confederate statues to losing a family member.

Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney, who has proposed dismantling all Confederate statues in the city, asked protesters not to take matters into their own hands for their own safety. But he indicated the Davis statue is gone for good.

"He never deserved to be up on that pedestal," Stoney said, calling Davis a "racist & traitor."

Elsewhere around the South, authorities in Alabama got rid of a massive obelisk in Birmingham and a bronze likeness of a Confederate naval officer in Mobile. In Virginia, a slave auction block was removed in Fredericksburg, and protesters in Portsmouth knocked the heads off the statues of four Confederates.

The monument is believed to be located where a slave whipping post once stood, and removing it is a small step in the right direction, Portsmouth activist and organizer Rocky Hines said.

"It's not a history that we as a nation should necessarily be proud of. For us, the history is a lot of history of slavery and hatred," he said. "It's bothered people for a long time."

In Washington, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said it is time to remove statues of Confederate figures from the U.S. Capitol and take their names off military bases such as Fort Bragg, Fort Benning and Fort Hood.

President Donald Trump on Wednesday rejected the idea of renaming bases. But Republicans in the Senate, at risk of losing their majority in the November elections, aren't with Trump on this. A GOP-led Senate panel on Thursday approved a plan to take Confederate names off military installations.

Supporters of Confederate monuments have argued that they are important reminders of history; opponents contend they glorify those who went to war against the U.S. to preserve slavery.

The Davis monument and many others across the South were erected decades after the Civil War during the Jim Crow era, when states imposed tough new segregation laws, and during the Lost Cause movement, in which historians and others sought to recast the South's rebellion as a noble undertaking, fought to defend not slavery but states' rights.

For protesters mobilized by Floyd's death, the targets have ranged far beyond the Confederacy. Statues of Columbus have been toppled or vandalized in cities such as Miami; Richmond; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Boston, where one was decapitated. The city of Camden, New Jersey, removed a statue of Columbus. Protesters have accused the Italian explorer of genocide and exploitation of native peoples.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who is Italian American, said he opposes removal of a statue of Columbus in Manhattan's Columbus Circle.

"I understand the feelings about Christopher Columbus and some of his acts, which nobody would support," he said. "But the statue has come to represent and signify appreciation for the Italian American

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contribution to New York. So for that reason I support it.”

Historians have differing views of the campaigns.

“How far is too far, in scrubbing away a history so that we won’t remember it wrong – or, indeed, have occasion to remember it at all?” asked Mark Summers, a University of Kentucky professor. “I’ve always felt that honor to the past shouldn’t be done by having fewer monuments and memorials, but more.”

Scott Sandage, a historian at Carnegie Mellon University, noted that Americans have a long tradition of arguing over monuments and memorials. He recalled the bitter debate over the now-beloved Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial in Washington when the design was unveiled.

“Removing a memorial doesn’t erase history. It makes new history,” Sandage said. “And that’s always happening, no matter whether statues go up, come down, or not.”

Rankin reported from Richmond, Virginia, and Crary reported from New York. Associated Press reporters around the United States and world contributed.

LA-area homelessness spike could get worse post-coronavirus

By **CHRISTOPHER WEBER** Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The number of homeless people counted across Los Angeles County jumped 12.7% over the past year to more than 66,400 and authorities fear that figure will spike again once the full impact of the coronavirus pandemic is felt.

The majority of those experiencing homelessness were found within the city of Los Angeles, which saw a 13.6% increase to 41,209, according to data released Friday by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.

The increase was registered one year after the previous tally also found a 12% jump in the county with one of the nation’s highest concentrations of residents living on the streets. California has an estimated 150,000 homeless people, the most in the nation.

The crisis is apparent in downtown Los Angeles, where hundreds of people reside in makeshift shanties that line entire blocks in the notorious neighborhood known as Skid Row. Tents regularly pop up on the pavement outside City Hall. And increasingly encampments can be found under freeway overpasses in suburban areas.

January’s annual count came before the COVID-19 outbreak paralyzed the economy and pushed scores of people into unemployment — many of whom were already spending nearly half their earnings on rent in a city with a severe shortage of affordable housing.

“These are folks who are one missed paycheck, one family tragedy, healthcare crisis, car accident — whatever it is — away from losing their housing,” Heidi Marston, the homeless services authority’s new director, said this week.

It’s estimated that the county needs more than a half million new affordable housing units to meet current demand, according to a 2020 report by the California Housing Partnership.

Los Angeles County instituted a moratorium on evictions amid the pandemic. Marston fears that when it expires at the end of June, many more will find themselves without homes.

If there’s one bright spot among the bleak figures, Marston said, it’s that the coronavirus is forcing officials to get better at moving people inside rapidly. Some 6,000 homeless residents have been sheltered since the outbreak began, she said.

More than half of those were moved into hotels under Project Roomkey, a state program established to get those most vulnerable to COVID-19 off the streets temporarily. The rooms are reserved for those 65 and older and those with existing medical conditions.

The number of those sheltered amid the pandemic is so far less than half the stated goal of 15,000, and county officials have conceded the process was more complicated than anticipated.

Black people make up 34% of those experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles County, despite representing just 8% of the overall population, according to the data.

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"Homelessness is without question a byproduct of racism," Marston said.

The crisis can't be dealt with on the streets without also confronting systemic bias in criminal justice, zoning policies, lending practices and child welfare, said Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

The county's Homeless Services Authority said it helped nearly 22,770 people move into permanent housing during 2019 — a pace that would have helped rapidly end homelessness if economic pressures had not simultaneously pushed thousands more out of their homes.

"Every day we're helping 207 people find housing, only to have them replaced by 227 new individuals who fall into homeless. That's every single day," Ridley-Thomas said.

To reduce homelessness, communities must overcome resistance to the placement of housing and shelters, Marston said.

"We need folks more broadly to say yes" to allowing facilities and services in their neighborhoods, she said.

Of those counted who became homeless for the first time in 2019, the majority cited economic hardship as the primary cause, the authority said. The second most commonly named reason was unstable social networks.

Four years ago, Los Angeles voters approved a tax hike and \$1.2 billion housing bond to make a decade's worth of massive investments to help solve the homeless crisis. That bond money has been committed to build more than half of the 10,000 new housing units planned countywide over 10 years.

Elise Buik, CEO of United Way of Greater Los Angeles, called the measure a down payment. But she said additional strategies were required, including an infusion of private funding. Buik also urged state lawmakers to pass a bill that would require residential properties in some areas to include 20% affordable housing.

Officials estimate 41% of people experiencing homelessness in the county are mentally ill or coping with substance abuse problems.

"City Hall is not reacting to this on any kind of emergency scale. And it is an emergency on our streets," said Estela Lopez of the Downtown Industrial Business Improvement District. "Sometimes I think those of us downtown are the only ones not numb to the scale of the problem."

The Skid Row area is "the front line" for homelessness in the city, where violence is common, drugs are prevalent and the smell of human waste permeates the air, she said.

The district's business members, mainly fish and produce vendors, pay additional property tax for on-demand power-washing of sidewalks and a private security force that mediates disputes and clears people congregating at companies' front doors and loading docks.

The Los Angeles County count found a 19% increase in homeless youth, defined as those 18 to 24, and a 20% jump in people 62 or older.

About 67% of all people on the streets of metro Los Angeles are male, around 32% are female, and about .4% identify as transgender or gender non-conforming.

Pulling down statues of racists? Africa's done it for years

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Queen Victoria, Cecil Rhodes, King Leopold. Statues honoring these leaders of colonial rule have been pulled down over the years in Africa after countries won independence or newer generations said racist relics had to go.

New campaigns in the U.S. and Europe are now following Africa's lead. Monuments to slave traders and colonial rulers have become the focus of protests around the world, driven by a reexamination of historical injustice after the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in the U.S.

No protests have been spotted this week around the remaining statues in Africa, but several have faced furious demonstrations in the past.

A boisterous student-led campaign pressed the University of Cape Town to remove a statue of Cecil Rhodes from the school's entrance in April 2015. The statue had been defaced and covered in excrement by students protesting against the colonial leader who supported white minority rule in South Africa and the colonization of the southern African territories named for him, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, which

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later became independent Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Students celebrated as a crane lifted the statue off its base. Now the statue is covered by a tarpaulin at a local army base.

Another statue of Rhodes was toppled in Zimbabwe in July 1980, a few months after the country became independent. When the statue was downed in the capital — then known by its colonial name, Salisbury, now Harare — demonstrators cheered and pounded it with a hammer.

A statue of Britain's Queen Victoria in Nairobi, Kenya, was knocked down and beheaded in 2015 by unknown vandals. The headless statue lies next to its plinth in a downtown square.

"This statue reminds me of the suffering our forefathers went through in the hands of colonialists and whenever we see them, the memories are fresh," Nairobi resident Samuel Obiero said. "We need to get rid of them. All over the world they must be brought down and all people who suffered due to colonialism need to also be saved from all these kinds of memories."

In Congo, a statue honoring colonial ruler King Leopold II of Belgium — a copy of the statue that is now the focus of demonstrations in Belgium — was pulled down decades ago. Erected in 1928, it was ordered taken down by then-dictator Mobutu Sese Seko seven years after independence in 1960.

The statue made a return in 2005 with an updated plaque, intended by authorities to serve as a reminder of the horrors of colonial rule. Public outcry was so great that it was taken down a day later.

Now it stands in a park of colonial monuments set up on the grounds of the Institute of National Museums set up by the U.N. mission in Congo. Although the park is technically open to the public, access is limited because of its proximity to the president's residence in the capital, Kinshasa. The park also has statues of explorers Henry Morton Stanley and David Livingstone.

There have been so many protests against the statue of Paul Kruger, an early white ruler of South Africa, in the capital, Pretoria, that fencing has been erected to keep people away from it. "Killer Killer" is prominently painted on its base.

"It just reminds me of, like, what's written over there, 'Killer Killer,'" said Rogue Wanga, a 19-year-old street vendor. "Those people were killers literally. And they never liked us. I feel like we should replace it. Maybe a fountain or a Madiba (Nelson Mandela) statue wouldn't hurt."

A different view came from student Sambeso Soxa, 23.

"I think maybe maybe we could put, like, a statue of someone else next to it. You know, maybe (black rights activist) Steve Biko next to the statue, maybe above it to show that we've gone past now," Soxa said.

"But I don't think we should necessarily take it down, ... because it's a reminder of something that happened in the past and something we should avoid in future," he said.

South African author William Gumede said pulling down statues is just the first step in a process.

"It's important for these symbols of injustice to be pulled down," Gumede said. "This has been going on for decades, and we are grappling with ridding ourselves of these monuments to domination."

African countries must find ways to celebrate their own heroes, "not just politicians but artists, social justice activists and many others," said Gumede, who is also chairman of the Democracy Works Foundation, which promotes good governance in Africa.

"Pulling down statues of colonialist is not enough," he said. "We must put forward positive representations of our history, representations that instill pride in our identity."

Nqobile Ntshangase in Pretoria, South Africa; Josphat Kasire in Nairobi, Kenya; and Jean-Yves Kamale in Kinshasa, Congo, contributed.

Experts: Police 'woefully undertrained' in use of force

By MARTHA BELLISLE Associated Press

BURIEN, Wash. (AP) — Seattle officers hold down a protester, and one repeatedly punches him in the face. In another run-in, officers handcuff a looting suspect on the ground, one pressing a knee into his neck — the same tactic used on George Floyd.

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The officers were captured on videos appearing to violate policies on how to use force just days after Floyd died at the hands of Minneapolis police, setting off nationwide protests.

With calls for police reforms across the U.S., instructors and researchers say officers lack sufficient training on how and when to use force, leaving them unprepared to handle tense situations. Better training can't fix all the issues facing the nation's police departments, but experts believe it would have a big impact.

"The skills are not taught well enough to be retained and now the officer is scrambling to find something that works," said William Lewinski, executive director at Minnesota-based Force Science Institute, which provides research, training and consulting to law enforcement agencies.

Its two-year study of three large U.S. police academies says skills like using a baton or taking down an aggressive offender deteriorate dramatically within two weeks.

A recent Associated Press investigation found that a lack of firearms training has resulted in unintentional shootings by law enforcement. It's the same problem with use-of-force techniques, Lewinski said.

"Police officers across the country are woefully undertrained," said Sean Hendrickson, an instructor at Washington state's police academy in suburban Seattle.

The AP was invited to the facility to see use-of-force training, a component of a 2012 federal agreement to reform the Seattle Police Department after officers were found to routinely use excessive force. The academy is considered one of the more progressive in the country for trying to mirror what officers will face on the streets.

There's classroom work, and cadets learn to combine skills by play-acting scenarios. In an old building decorated to look like an apartment, one officer plays the offender and others try to deescalate tensions, take away his weapon and put him in handcuffs.

In a parking lot, officers pair off. One wears padding on their shins and the other practices swinging a baton, hitting low on the legs.

They also learn to arrest someone who's fighting back. An instructor plays the suspect, with one officer bear-hugging his legs and another wrapping his arms around him to take him to the ground. That officer presses against him chest to chest until he "wears himself out," instructor Rich Lee said.

Then they flip him over, still holding his legs, with an officer's knee in the center of his back as they handcuff him.

Police in the Seattle videos didn't use those techniques. No one held the suspects' legs and one officer had his knee on a suspect's neck until his partner pushed it off.

In Washington state, cadets must complete 720 hours of training, "but those skills start to degrade immediately," Hendrickson said. Some states only require 400 to 500 hours of academy training and require 24 hours or less of training once they're on the job. Often, follow-up training is online, not hands-on.

"There's no profession that trains so little but expects so much," Lewinski said.

But not all officers can be taught, he acknowledged. When it came to Derek Chauvin, the officer charged in Floyd's death, "I'm not sure that training would have made a difference," Lewinski said. "What he did was definitely criminal."

Protesters are demanding reforms ranging from cutting funding to banning chokeholds. There's been success in some states, such as California, where the governor ordered the police training program to stop teaching a neck hold that blocks blood flowing to the brain.

A measure introduced this week in Congress would limit legal protections for police, create a national database of excessive-force incidents and address training.

"A profession where you have the power to kill should be a profession where you have highly trained officers that are accountable to the public," U.S. Rep. Karen Bass, a California Democrat and chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, told reporters.

Reforming police use-of-force training was a major issue in 2014 and 2015, following the deaths of several black men at the hands of police, including Eric Garner, Michael Brown and others. In New York City, where Garner died, the nation's largest police department retrained all patrol officers, dismantled how beat cops did their jobs and moved to a community policing model where officers were encouraged get to know their precincts and focus on deescalation.

It looked like police reform was gaining traction nationwide, but as the 2016 election took the spotlight, the effort faded, especially after the Justice Department shifted its civil rights priorities.

Most academies bombard officers with one subject, like communication, and then move to the next topic, like use of force, without integrating those skills, making them easy to forget, Force Science studies say.

An example of successfully using training can be seen in a video of a security guard who took two stolen AR-15's from some young men during the Seattle protests. The guard with military training hired to protect several journalists secured one gun and then calmly walked up to the second suspect, took the firearm out of his hands and unloaded it.

"His movements were very deliberate, even under those stressful circumstances," Hendrickson said. "When you've done it enough times, that's going to dictate how smooth you're able to take control. He didn't have to think about those skills."

Lacking skills leads to bad reactions, Hendrickson said.

"I've been in situations where I'm frantic and the other officer is cool, calm and collected," he said. "How did they do that without screaming? It all comes back to training. When we lack confidence, a lot of times we raise our voice, start swearing. It's all about fear."

Jerrell Wills, manager of the applied-skills division at the Washington academy, said racial tension is a reason he wants to improve how officers are taught.

A black man who's been in law enforcement for 30 years, Wills said he's been racially profiled and had people threaten to call the police for no good reason. Now, he worries about his sons.

"That's why the work we do is so important," Wills said. "Because I care about this industry, my community and my African American community."

Indian capital's crematoriums overwhelmed with virus dead

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — When Raj Singh's 70-year-old mother died from the coronavirus in India's capital, he took comfort in the prospect of a proper cremation, the funeral rite that Hindus believe releases the soul from the cycle of rebirth.

But instead of chanting sacred Vedic hymns and sprinkling holy water from the Ganges River, all Singh could do was place his mother's wrapped corpse on a wooden pyre and along with a handful of relatives watch it burn.

"I never thought I would watch my mother go like this," he said.

Like elsewhere in the world, the novel coronavirus has made honoring the dead in New Delhi a hurried affair, largely devoid of the rituals that give it meaning for mourners. Cemeteries and crematoriums are overwhelmed, so there isn't much time for ceremony, and even if there were, the government limits the number of people allowed at funerals and those in attendance must maintain distance and wear masks.

"The whole grieving process has been interrupted," said Pappu, who goes by only one name and lights the funeral pyres at Nigambodh Ghat, New Delhi's biggest crematorium.

New Delhi has officially reported close to 1,100 deaths from the coronavirus, but cemeteries and crematoriums in the city say the actual number is several hundred higher. Hospital morgues are beyond capacity, and with summer temperatures reaching 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) some bodies are being kept on thick ice slabs.

"In the beginning, I used to carry only one body. Now, helpers at the morgue will stack as many bodies as they can fit in my van," said Bhijendra Dhigya, who drives a hearse from one New Delhi hospital to the crematorium.

The spike in deaths in New Delhi comes amid a broader virus surge throughout India, where authorities are reporting some 10,000 new infections each day and more than 300 deaths. Nevertheless, India lifted most of the remaining restrictions from its 10-week lockdown on June 8, the same day it recorded what at the time was its highest single-day death toll from the virus.

On Friday, India's nationwide caseload overtook Britain to become the fourth highest in the world with

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297,535 confirmed cases and 8,498 deaths, according to the Health Ministry. But that is just the known cases. Like elsewhere in the world, the actual number of infections is thought to be far higher for a number of reasons including limited testing.

New Delhi's health centers are under immense strain and the state government's deputy chief minister, Manish Sisodia, said this week that a state health department model has projected a worst case scenario in which the number of infections in the capital — already at nearly 35,000 — could reach 550,000 by the end of July.

In the worst case scenario, Sisodia said New Delhi would need 80,000 hospital beds, far more than the roughly 9,000 hospital beds currently available for virus patients. The state government is considering taking hotels and sports stadiums to use as field hospitals.

The capital's Nigambodh Ghat crematorium has handled more than 500 coronavirus cremations since the beginning of the outbreak. When some of its gas-fueled incinerators broke down, there was no one willing to repair them, so the staff reverted to traditional wooden pyres.

Even with working hours extended, there has been no time for individual cremation ceremonies and exhaustive rituals with incense, garlands of marigold and chanting.

The crematorium is now largely quiet except for the distinct snap and crackle of the burning wood and the din of sirens from ambulances bringing more bodies.

The virus has upended Muslim burial rituals in the city as well.

Islamic burials normally involve a simple ceremony. Before the body is laid to rest, it is washed. Those attending the funeral are allowed to have a look at the face of the dead and a prayer is performed, followed by a sermon from a cleric. Then close family members help place the body in a grave.

Now bodies arrive at New Delhi's largest Muslim cemetery in hearses manned by crews in hazmat suits. Bodies aren't washed and mourners can't view them. There are no sermons.

The cemetery has already seen more than 200 burials of COVID-19 victims and with bodies steadily arriving, the grounds are filling fast.

On a recent day at the burial of a 22-year-old man who died of the virus, a backhoe dug a grave as four relatives said a speedy prayer. The body was then lowered into the grave by ropes.

Mohammad Shameem, a gravedigger who now oversees the burials, shook his head in disapproval as the backhoe quickly carved out another grave.

"That's not how burials should happen," he said.

Face masks with windows mean more than smiles to deaf people

By JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Michael Conley felt especially isolated these past few months: A deaf man, he was prevented from reading lips by the masks people wore to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

But then he met Ingrid Helton, a costume designer who sewed him a solution — masks with plastic windows for hearing people to wear, allowing lip readers to see mouths move.

She has started a business to provide the windowed masks, and she's not alone. A half-dozen startups are doing the same. They have been inundated with orders -- and not only from friends and family of the roughly 48 million Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"You can tell so much by a facial expression, so it's proving that it can be helpful to everybody," Helton said.

Teachers want them for English learners struggling without being able to see native speakers pronounce words. Hospitals and businesses want them to help improve communication, and so everyone can see the smiles of their workers.

"We have retailers who say, 'We want to protect our employees but our customers need to see their smile and put customers at ease,'" said Dr. Anne McIntosh, a hearing-impaired doctor and founder of Safe n' Clear in North Carolina. The company's surgical mask with a fog-resistant window, The Communicator,

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was the first to be approved by the FDA.

The Communicator was developed before the pandemic to address a problem that lip readers have long faced in trying to understand masked workers in hospitals. The problem has been worsened by the pandemic; many interpreters for hearing-impaired people have been unable to go into medical facilities because of the highly contagious coronavirus.

But as masks have proliferated outside hospitals, so have the miseries of deaf people.

Conley, a San Diego museum worker, suddenly found himself cut off from the world. Unable to see mouths, he could not understand or even know when people were speaking to him. He was anxious to go to the pharmacy for his medication or the grocery store for food.

He paced outside his favorite neighborhood restaurant for 45 minutes, wondering what he would do if a masked worker asked questions after he gave his takeout order. Luckily once he walked in, the female employee recognized him and immediately pulled down her mask to talk. He was touched.

But not everyone knows him. He carries pieces of paper with him to be able to ask people to write down what they were saying -- eliminating the need to remove a mask -- but that means touching the same paper, and it can be uncomfortable asking others to do that.

One young man bagging his groceries refused.

"It makes you lose your confidence," said Conley, who has been deaf since birth. "It takes its toll."

After he told co-worker Chris LaZich about the challenges, she sought help from her friend Helton, the San Diego Opera costume shop manager known for making extravagant outfits out of almost anything.

Helton got busy sewing. And soon, she started her company, Happy Laugh Masks.

Conley has been moved that so many people have come together to help him regain his independence.

Several of his colleagues at the Fleet Science Center plan to don Helton's masks when the museum reopens. He and LaZich recently met to try out a prototype.

"I'm having no trouble reading your lips," Conley told LaZich, who stood 6 feet away in accordance with social distancing rules.

Through her mask's window, she flashed him a smile.

While nonstop news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, have tales of kindness. "One Good Thing" is a series of AP stories focusing on glimmers of joy and benevolence in a dark time. Read the series here: <https://apnews.com/OneGoodThing>

Gunman sought in deputy shooting killed, 3 officers wounded

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A man recently released from jail in Central California was shot and killed at the end of a 36-hour hunt that followed the shooting of a sheriff's deputy and other attacks that wounded three other law enforcement officers.

Mason James Lira, 26, was killed Thursday afternoon after he emerged from a brushy riverbed in Paso Robles where he'd hidden all night, climbed a steep hillside and ran toward a vineyard, authorities said.

He had two stolen handguns and investigators found a box of ammunition, Paso Robles Police Chief Ty Lewis said.

He clearly had been planning to attack police, possibly for days, the chief said.

The specific motive for the attacks was under investigation but one thing was clear, San Luis Obispo County Sheriff Ian Parkinson said: "He did want to shoot law enforcement."

Lira's father told The Associated Press he thinks the shooting at the police station might have been a suicide attempt.

Jose Lira said his son had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, Asperger's syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He said his son has been in and out of jail and treatment centers, didn't take his medication and often thinks he is a special agent or a soldier.

"He lives in a fantasy world," Jose Lira said. "He doesn't have a beef with the police."

The series of attacks began before dawn Wednesday when a gunman opened fire on the police station

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in Paso Robles, a wine and tourist town with little crime.

County sheriff's Deputy Nicholas Dreyfus, 28, was hit in the face when he and his partner answered a call for aid. Dreyfus underwent surgery Thursday and was in guarded condition.

The attack followed the close-range shooting of a 58-year-old homeless man who was found on some railroad tracks nearby and evidence at the scene linked both shootings to the handguns found in Lira's possession, Paso Robles Police Chief Ty Lewis said.

"I know that the community has felt a lot of angst and a lot of fear," he said. "And I'm glad that this is finally over."

Lira had been released from a jail in the Monterey area on June 3 after being arrested on suspicion of making criminal threats and resisting arrest, Parkinson said.

He may have been in the Paso Robles area for a week, and was seen at some local businesses, the police chief said.

He is believed to have stolen the handguns in a commercial burglary in San Luis Obispo the day before the police station attack, authorities said.

He also may have visited a large crawlspace under a downtown movie theater that was accessed by a storm drain and may have been the site of a transient camp, Lewis said.

Ammunition was found there and Lira may have intended to retrieve some of it for more attacks on police, authorities said.

"I think ... he intended to continue," Parkinson said.

Over the course of the search, Lira opened fire from ambush several times and managed to evade hundreds of law enforcement officers, authorities said.

"Every time that law enforcement got near to him, he engaged them in gunfire," Lewis said.

The search began after the police station attack. Wednesday night, he was spotted again. He hid in an apartment building, fired at officers at a gas station but managed to escape into the riverbed, authorities said.

Overnight, police, San Luis Obispo County sheriff's deputies, an FBI SWAT team and other law enforcement surrounded an area of the riverbed where Lira was believed to be hiding. They believed they had contained him and planned to begin a systematic search Thursday, Parkinson said.

"We knew we had to search a very large area with a very dangerous person" and authorities didn't want him escaping into nearby neighborhoods, he said.

But shortly after 2 p.m., Lira came out of hiding and fired at surrounding officers. An Arroyo Grande police sergeant took a bullet through his calf, Parkinson said.

Two hours later, he emerged again, crawled up an embankment and up a short but steep hill and began to run to a neighboring vineyard, the sheriff said.

He was shot. During the shooting, Parkinson said a California Highway Patrol officer took a bullet to his protective vest and a Kings County sheriff's deputy who got out of an armored vehicle to rescue him was shot above the knee, Parkinson said.

All three wounded officers were expected to recover, he said.

Along with the handguns, a box of ammunition was found, Parkinson said.

Authorities had urged family or friends of the suspect to convince him to surrender and avoid further bloodshed.

The sheriff said that Lira shot at officers from a distance so they never were able to talk to him to de-escalate the situation.

"This was not by any means a happy ending," Parkinson said. "This was not a win. This was an end to something we wish had never happened. The only fortunate thing about it is the community is safe tonight."

Florida migrant towns become coronavirus hot spots in US

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON Associated Press

IMMOKALEE, Fla. (AP) — When much of the world was staying at home to slow the spread of the new coronavirus, Elbin Sales Perez continued to rise at 4:30 a.m. to report to his landscaping job in a rural Florida town.

Now, a couple of months later, as state-imposed restrictions are lifted and Floridians begin to venture out, the Guatemalan immigrant is ill and isolated at home with his wife and children in Immokalee, a poverty-stricken town in the throes of one of the sharpest COVID-19 upticks in the state.

“We had to work. If we don’t, then who does it?” said Sales Perez, 31, who noted that his job was deemed essential. “We had to battle every day with the threat of the virus looming, until we caught it.”

Immokalee is among several immigrant communities in Florida — and numerous rural areas across the U.S. — that have recently experienced outbreaks of the coronavirus. Once thought likely to be spared because of their remote locations and small populations, such communities have seen spikes in infections while having fewer resources to deal with them.

Per capita, Florida ranks relatively low in its rate of new COVID-19 cases, at about 31st in the country, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. But the state has seen an upswing in new COVID-19 cases since it began gradually lifting restrictions on businesses and movement last month, especially in the past week. The increase may at least partly be due to expanded testing. Still, the uptick has been pronounced in some communities, including Immokalee.

The secluded town of 25,000 north of the Everglades has reported more than 1,000 cases, outpacing in recent weeks the rate of infection in Orlando, which has a population 10 times bigger and is home to a busy international airport. The number of total cases in Immokalee has surpassed those in Miami Beach, with more than 900, and St. Petersburg, which has more than 800, according to state health department statistics.

Meanwhile, the percentage of tests that have come back positive in Collier County, home to Immokalee, is the highest in the state among counties that have tested more than 5,000 people.

Sales Perez knows many people who have gotten sick in this rural town known for its tomato farms. A close friend got ill, the friend’s brother was hospitalized and a cousin of the two brothers died with the virus.

Outbreaks have also erupted in other impoverished and immigrant communities in rural Florida, such as Indiantown, a small community with a large population of Guatemalan and Mexican immigrants northwest of West Palm Beach, and Belle Glade, a predominantly black town south of Lake Okeechobee.

Efforts to conduct broad local testing in Immokalee did not begin in earnest until early May, just when officials began lifting restrictions statewide to restart the economy. It wasn’t for lack of trying: The non-profit Coalition of Immokalee Workers had requested tests in March, at the same time authorities had set up mass testing sites elsewhere in the state.

With no response from the state, the coalition contacted international aid group Doctors Without Borders, which sent a COVID-19 response team in April. Team members found that farmworkers were traveling in crowded buses and had no easy access to testing. Some drove 45 minutes to get tested in Fort Myers and Naples.

“They are in high-volume areas in trailers with multiple people and that puts them at a higher risk for spreading the disease easily,” said Dr. Adi Nadimpalli, who coordinated the group’s arrival in Florida.

Dr. Seth Holmes, a physician and medical anthropologist at UC Berkeley who is volunteering with the group, said it has been evident since early May that the virus was “spreading like wildfire.” There was a lack of contact tracing — identifying the people with whom an infected person has been in contact — and overcrowded living conditions were likely contributing to the spread, he said.

Holmes was critical of the state for not starting mass testing sooner — and of the way it eventually began: He noted that vehicles with flashing lights sat at the entrance to the first testing site, scaring away some farmworkers who do not have legal permission to be in the country.

As part of its outreach to the community, Doctors Without Borders set up mobile clinics in the evenings

and on weekends and called in team members who speak Spanish and Haitian Creole. Kristine Hollingsworth, a spokeswoman for the state Health Department in Collier County, said that in the past week the state has hired people from the community to conduct outreach and has been broadcasting public service announcements from car loudspeakers in Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Mam, an ancient Maya language.

On Monday, there were signs of progress: At the town's health department offices, truck drivers dropped off groups of landscapers and construction workers who followed a path bordered with yellow caution tape to get tested for the virus. Others waited outside for proof of their positive results so they could show bosses and ask for sick pay.

This week, health authorities expanded testing from weekends to weekdays after seeing hundreds lining up in the Florida heat two Sundays in a row.

Flora Garcia, 38, took her three children after learning her husband, a roofer, tested positive.

"We are worried as we hear a lot of people are getting sick," she said, holding her 4-year-old daughter's hand. "Mostly, she worries me because she is little, and I don't know how to protect her from this."

Researchers ask if survivor plasma could prevent coronavirus

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

Survivors of COVID-19 are donating their blood plasma in droves in hopes it helps other patients recover from the coronavirus. And while the jury's still out, now scientists are testing if the donations might also prevent infection in the first place.

Thousands of coronavirus patients in hospitals around the world have been treated with so-called convalescent plasma — including more than 20,000 in the U.S. — with little solid evidence so far that it makes a difference. One recent study from China was unclear while another from New York offered a hint of benefit.

"We have glimmers of hope," said Dr. Shmuel Shoham of Johns Hopkins University.

With more rigorous testing of plasma treatment underway, Shoham is launching a nationwide study asking the next logical question: Could giving survivors plasma right after a high-risk exposure to the virus stave off illness?

To tell, researchers at Hopkins and 15 other sites will recruit health workers, spouses of the sick and residents of nursing homes where someone just fell ill and "they're trying to nip it in the bud," Shoham said.

It's a strict study: The 150 volunteers will be randomly assigned to get either plasma from COVID-19 survivors that contains coronavirus-fighting antibodies or regular plasma, like is used daily in hospitals, that was frozen prior to the pandemic. Scientists will track if there's a difference in who gets sick.

It if works, survivor plasma could have important ramifications until a vaccine arrives — raising the prospect of possibly protecting high-risk people with temporary immune-boosting infusions every so often.

"They're a paramedic, they're a police officer, they're a poultry industry worker, they're a submarine naval officer," Shoham ticked off. "Can we blanket protect them?"

The new coronavirus has infected more than 7 million people worldwide and killed more than 400,000, according to official tallies believed to be an underestimate. With no good treatments yet, researchers are frantically studying everything from drugs that tackle other viruses to survivor plasma — a century-old remedy used to fight infection before modern medicines came along.

The historical evidence is sketchy, but convalescent plasma's most famous use was during the 1918 flu pandemic, and reports suggest that recipients were less likely to die. Doctors still dust off the approach to tackle surprise outbreaks, like SARS, a cousin of COVID-19, in 2002 and the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, but even those recent uses lacked rigorous research.

When the body encounters a new germ, it makes proteins called antibodies that are specially targeted to fight the infection. The antibodies float in plasma — the yellowish, liquid part of blood.

Because it takes a few weeks for antibodies to form, the hope is that transfusing someone else's antibodies could help patients fight the virus before their own immune system kicks in. One donation is typically divided into two or three treatments.

And as more people survive COVID-19, there are increasing calls for them to donate plasma so there's

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enough of a stockpile if it pans out. In addition to traditional infusions, donations can be combined into a high-dose product. Manufacturer Grifols is producing doses of that "hyperimmune globulin" for a study expected to start next month.

Convalescent plasma seems safe to use, Dr. Michael Joyner of the Mayo Clinic reported last month. His team tracked the first 5,000 plasma recipients in a Food and Drug Administration-sponsored program that helps hospitals use the experimental treatment, and found few serious side effects.

Does it help recovery? A clue comes from the first 39 patients treated at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital. Researchers compared each plasma recipient to four other COVID-19 patients who didn't get plasma but were the same age, just as sick and being given the same amount of oxygen. People who received plasma before needing a ventilator were less likely to die than non-plasma recipients, said Dr. Sean Liu, the study's lead author.

"We really tried to target patients who were early in their course, preferably within the first one to two weeks of their disease," Liu said.

"Being a doctor during this time, you just feel helpless," Liu added, stressing that more rigorous study was needed but he was glad to have tried this first-step research. "Watching people die is, it's heartbreaking. It's scary and it's heartbreaking."

But results of the first strictly controlled study were disappointing. Hospitals in the hard-hit Chinese city of Wuhan were comparing severely ill patients randomly assigned to receive plasma or regular care, but ran out of new patients when the virus waned.

With only half of the 200 planned patients enrolled, more plasma recipients survived but researchers couldn't tell if it was a real difference or coincidence, according to a report in the Journal of the American Medical Association last week.

The real proof will come from ongoing, strict studies that compare patients assigned to get either survivor plasma or a dummy treatment.

Further complicating the search for answers, COVID-19 survivors harbor widely varying levels of antibodies. And while researchers want to use what Hopkins' Shoham calls "the high-octane stuff," no one knows the best dose to test.

"About 20% of recovered patients and donors have very strong immunity," estimated Dr. Michele Donato of Hackensack University Medical Center, who is studying how long they retain that level of protection.

Those are the people researchers want to become repeat donors.

"It's, I think, our job as humans to step forward and help in society," said Aubrie Cresswell, 24, of Bear, Delaware, who has donated three times and counting.

One donation was shipped to a hospitalized friend of a friend, and "it brought me to tears. I was like, overwhelmed with it just because the family was really thankful."

AP video journalist Kathy Young contributed to this report.

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Authorities: Suspect in ambush on California deputy is dead

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A gunman believed to have shot a Central California sheriff's deputy and targeted others in a series of attacks was shot dead Thursday after confrontations that wounded three other law enforcement members, authorities said.

Mason James Lira, 26, was killed after he emerged from a brushy riverbed in Paso Robles, climbed a steep hillside and ran toward a vineyard, authorities said.

He had two stolen handguns and investigators found a box of ammunition, Paso Robles Police Chief Ty Lewis said.

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He clearly had been planning attacks on law enforcement, possibly for days, the chief said.

Over the course of about 36 hours, Lira opened fire in an ambush and managed to evade hundreds of law enforcement officers, authorities said.

"Every time that law enforcement got near to him, he engaged them in gunfire," Lewis said at an evening news conference.

The manhunt for Lira began at dawn Wednesday, when authorities said he opened fire on the Paso Robles police station. Two sheriff's deputies heard gunshots and responded but didn't see the attacker until they were outside their patrol car and under fire.

Deputy Nicholas Dreyfus, 28, was hit in the face. His partner fired back and dragged Dreyfus behind a police car. Dreyfus, who was able to radio that he'd been shot, underwent surgery Thursday and was in guarded condition.

While scores of officers searched for Lira, they received a report of a body near a train station and found a 58-year-old man shot to death on the tracks. He appeared to be a transient who was camping out overnight. Police believe Lira was responsible for the killing.

Lira's father told The Associated Press he thinks the shooting at the police station might have been a suicide attempt.

Jose Lira said his son had been diagnosed with schizophrenia, Asperger's syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He said his son has been in and out of jail and treatment centers, didn't take his medication and often thinks he is a special agent or a soldier.

"He lives in a fantasy world," Jose Lira said. "He doesn't have a beef with the police."

Wednesday night, Paso Robles police got a report of shots being fired and spotted a man who appeared to be Lira but he fled into a nearby apartment complex, Lewis said.

Officers surrounded the complex but Lira managed to escape through a long, overgrown riverbed. At one point, he was spotted and shot at officers before retreating back to the riverbed, authorities said.

Overnight, police, San Luis Obispo County sheriff's deputies, an FBI SWAT team and other law enforcement surrounded an area of the riverbed where Lira was believed to be hiding and they planned to begin a systematic search Thursday, Sheriff Ian Parkinson said.

"We knew we had to search a very large area with a very dangerous person" and they didn't want him escaping into nearby neighborhoods, he said.

But shortly after 2 p.m., Lira came out of hiding and fired at surrounding officers. An Arroyo Grande police sergeant took a bullet through his calf, Parkinson said.

Two hours later, he emerged again, crawled up an embankment and up a short but steep hill and began to run to a neighboring vineyard, the sheriff said.

He was shot. During the shooting, Parkinson said a California Highway Patrol officer took a bullet to his protective vest and a Kings County sheriff's deputy who got out of an armored vehicle to rescue him was shot above the knee, Parkinson said.

All three wounded officers were expected to recover, he said.

Two handguns and a box of ammunition were found, Parkinson said, adding that the guns apparently were stolen during a commercial burglary on Tuesday.

The guns were linked to the death of the transient and shooting of the sheriff's deputy in Paso Robles, the police chief said.

Also found was a box of ammunition, with more in a crawlspace under a Paso Robles movie theater that was reached by a storm drain, Lewis said.

Lira may have been living in town for days before the attack, he said, and was seen at several places in the days before the first shooting.

Lira had been arrested in the Monterey area last month on suspicion of making criminal threats and resisting arrest but was released on June 3 after serving jail time, Parkinson said.

Parkinson said investigators were still trying to determine a specific motive for what he called planned and "cowardly" attacks.

"He did want to shoot law enforcement," he said.

'It's broken': Fears grow about patchwork US election system

By STEVE PEOPLES and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The chaos that plagued Georgia's primary this week is raising concerns about a potential broader failure of the nation's patchwork election system that could undermine the November presidential contest, political leaders and elections experts say.

With less than five months to go, fears are mounting that several battleground states are not prepared to administer problem-free elections during the pandemic.

The increasingly urgent concerns are both complex and simple: long lines disproportionately affecting voters of color in places like Atlanta with a history of voter suppression; a severe shortage of poll workers scared away by coronavirus concerns; and an emerging consensus that it could take several days after polls close on Election Day to determine a winner as battleground states struggle with an explosion of mail voting.

"We want a democracy in the United States we can showcase for the world, and right now it's broken and on full display," said Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

Officials across the political spectrum have raised concerns, but there is a contrast in the level of urgency by party, and even by race.

Democrats want to send billions of dollars to overburdened state and local election systems and expand in-person early voting and universal no-excuse mail balloting. Republicans, reluctant to inject the federal government into state elections, have resisted such efforts and instead call on local elections officials, who in urban areas are often Democrats, to fix the problems themselves.

President Donald Trump is also fighting states' plans to expand voting by mail, raising repeated concerns with no evidence about voter fraud.

Civil rights activist Al Sharpton said he has lost confidence in the nation's voting system, particularly across states where federal protections that ensured minority voters weren't disenfranchised have been swept away.

"You're almost back to the Confederates against the Union," Sharpton said.

He offered a simple message to people of color and those who run elections this fall: "If you do not vote and protect the vote, then you are helping to keep the knee on our necks."

Election officials are expressing optimism as they scramble to address glaring problems. Amid continued pandemic concerns, many don't have enough poll workers to staff voting sites, the capacity to train new workers in states featuring new equipment or the ability to efficiently process the surge in mail ballots.

The challenges have led to extraordinarily long lines, particularly in urban areas.

The final Las Vegas voter wasn't able to cast a ballot until 3 a.m. Wednesday, eight hours after polls were supposed to close. Some Atlanta voters brought lawn chairs to wait in lines that exceeded five hours.

Wait times of two hours or more were reported in recent weeks across Philadelphia, Milwaukee and Washington, D.C.

Beyond lines, the mail voting boom has caused unprecedented reporting delays.

Pennsylvania officials were still counting mail ballots from the state's June 2 election on June 11. Because of a court order, Wisconsin didn't begin to release results of its April 7 primary until six days after polls closed.

Former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, said he's confident in the state's voting system and blames any issues on the "incompetence" of municipal election officials. The criticism was in line with that of Georgia's chief elections officer, a Republican who blamed the election leaders of two Democratic-controlled counties for most of the problems in Tuesday's primary.

That highlights a complicated reality across America. Each state has its own set of complicated ballot-access laws, adopted by the party in power at the statehouse and implemented by local governments

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with little to no federal oversight.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, a Republican, said he's working to ensure Ohio has adequate poll workers. He's tweaking a program allowing high school seniors to be poll workers, encouraging companies to give workers a paid day off and advocating state agencies that don't already offer days off for poll workers to do so.

LaRose condemned those in both parties who have warned of voting challenges.

"What worries me is when someone with bad intentions can take a story about elections problems and then use it intentionally to try to cause people to self-disenfranchise, which is about the ugliest thing I can imagine," he said.

In Michigan, absentee voting surged in the March presidential primary following a 2018 constitutional amendment that expanded the option. Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, recently drew Trump's ire by announcing that all 7.3 million registered voters would be mailed absentee ballot applications in the August and November elections. Michigan saw record turnout for local elections in May after a similar move.

Benson said there were no plans to consolidate polling locations in November, but she noted that polling sites may only be able to handle half their regular volume because of social distancing and safety requirements. Social distancing rules in metro Atlanta limited the number of people who could be in a polling place at one time, contributing to long lines.

The state has reached out to large employers, colleges and sports teams for additional poll workers.

In Pennsylvania, Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar, a Democrat, called on state officials to change rules that block them from beginning to count mail ballots before 7 a.m. on Election Day.

She could not promise that Pennsylvania would post its final results the night of the election: "Close races can take a while."

Boockvar was also hopeful that conditions in November would be very different than they were last week, when the state held primary elections during the pandemic.

Some Pennsylvania counties used new paper trail machines for the first time; they were dealing with a new state law to allow no-excuse mail-in balloting; and massive protests raged across the state's largest cities.

"The confluence of factors was obviously the biggest challenge here. My expectation is the absence of all those things happening at once will be hugely helpful," Boockvar said.

Others aren't so sure.

Guy Cecil, chairman of Priorities USA, the nation's most influential pro-Democrat super PAC, questioned "whether or not the richest, most powerful country in the history of humankind can actually get people into a room to check a box and then get out in an expeditious manner."

"Right now," he said, "on many counts, we're failing on that."

Peoples reported from Montclair, N.J. Associated Press writers Julie Carr-Smyth in Columbus, Ohio; David Eggert in Lansing, Mich.; and Mark Scolforo in Harrisburg, Pa., contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that Pennsylvania's secretary of state called on state officials to change rules blocking them from beginning to count mail ballots at 7 a.m. on Election Day, not at poll close.

Trump rally on Juneteenth in Tulsa called 'slap in the face'

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Black community and political leaders are calling on President Donald Trump to at least change the date of an Oklahoma rally kick-starting his return to public campaigning, saying that holding the event on Juneteenth, the day that marks the end of slavery in America, is a "slap in the face."

Trump campaign officials discussed in advance the possible reaction to the Juneteenth date, but there are no plans to change it despite fierce blowback.

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California Sen. Kamala Harris and Tulsa civic officials were among the black leaders who said it was offensive for Trump to pick that day — June 19 — and that place — Tulsa, an Oklahoma city that in 1921 was the site of a fiery and orchestrated white-on-black attack.

“This isn’t just a wink to white supremacists — he’s throwing them a welcome home party,” Harris, a leading contender to be Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden’s running mate, tweeted of Trump’s rally plans.

“To choose the date, to come to Tulsa, is totally disrespectful and a slap in the face to even happen,” said Sherry Gamble Smith, president of Tulsa’s Black Wall Street Chamber of Commerce, an organization named after the prosperous black community that white Oklahomans burned down in the 1921 attack.

At a minimum, Gamble Smith said, the campaign should “change it to Saturday the 20th, if they’re going to have it.”

Trump announced the rally plan Wednesday afternoon. It comes as his harsh law-and-order stance appears to fall increasingly out of sync with a growing concern over police abuse of African Americans after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Trump campaign officials defended the rally.

“As the party of Lincoln, Republicans are proud of the history of Juneteenth,” said Katrina Pierson, senior adviser to the Trump campaign. “President Trump has built a record of success for Black Americans, including unprecedented low unemployment prior to the global pandemic, all-time high funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and criminal justice reform.”

The Trump campaign was aware in advance that the date for the president’s return to rallies was Juneteenth, according to two campaign officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly about internal discussions and spoke on condition of anonymity.

When the date was discussed, it was noted that Biden had held a fundraiser a year ago on Juneteenth. Although choosing June 19 was not meant to be incendiary, some blowback was expected, the officials said. But the campaign was caught off guard by the intensity, particularly when some linked the selection to the 1921 massacre.

Scheduling the highly anticipated comeback rally in Oklahoma, a state Trump won easily in 2016, raised eyebrows.

The campaign picked Tulsa’s BOK Center, with a listed seat capacity of 19,199. The arena’s Facebook page shows organizers calling off shows there by country singer Alan Jackson and other performers into mid-July, citing the coronavirus pandemic.

Arena marketing director Meghan Blood said Thursday that she didn’t know yet about any plans for social distancing or other coronavirus precautions for Trump’s rally, which would be one of the larger public gatherings in the U.S. at this stage of the outbreak.

Campaign officials said safety decisions would be made in coordination with local authorities. A disclaimer on the ticket registration website said attendees voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19 and agree not to hold the campaign liable for any illness.

The campaign officials said the Trump campaign picked Oklahoma because arrangements could be made quickly, for a variety of reasons: Oklahoma has a Republican, Trump-friendly governor; the state is not seeing huge numbers of coronavirus cases; and the arena was “turn-key” and could easily be opened for the rally. Moreover, the rally will be held up the turnpike from a district held by Rep. Kendra Horn, one of the Democrats the GOP feels is vulnerable this fall.

Campaign officials also wanted to hold the rally where they could all but guarantee a big crowd despite coronavirus concerns, according to the officials. Oklahoma is one of the most Republican states in the nation and Trump has not held a rally there as president, so it will likely deliver an enthusiastic audience eager to see him, the officials believed.

Tulsa, an oil center along the Arkansas River, has had its own marches, viral videos and troublesome police actions during this month’s unrest.

On Tuesday, Tulsa police released video and said they were investigating officers who handcuffed and

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arrested two black teenagers for jaywalking. Video of the June 4 incident showed officers pinned one of the two unidentified teens stomach-down on the ground.

"Get off me! I can't breathe! I can't breathe! I can't breathe!" one teen shouts in the police video.

"You can breathe just fine," the officer replies.

On Monday, a Tulsa police major played down police shootings of African Americans nationally by telling a radio show that statistically, "we're shooting African Americans about 24% less than we probably ought to be, based on the crimes being committed."

And on Wednesday, the same day Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum welcomed news of Trump's rally pick as evidence of the city's progress against COVID-19, Bynum apologized for remarks about a 2016 police killing of a black man. Bynum had said the killing was "more about the really insidious nature of drug utilization than it is about race."

Nationally, as research brings to light more about the 1921 massacre, Tulsa increasingly is associated with the rampage in which white Tulsans razed a thriving black business community, killing as many as 300 people. Long dismissed by generations of white Tulsans as a race "riot," the May 31-June 1 events were marked this year by community memorials.

Oklahoma's black Democratic Party chairwoman also condemned Trump's rally plan. "A day set aside to commemorate the freedom of enslaved people must not be marred by the words or actions of a racist president," Alicia Andrews said.

Community groups had earlier canceled a main Tulsa Juneteenth celebration because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Some black Tulsans said they planned to turn out for public protests of Trump on that day. "There's definitely going to be demonstrating," Gamble Smith said.

Lemire reported from New York City. Associated Press writer Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

For Ellison, Floyd case brings pressure -- and opportunity

By KATHLEEN HENNESSEY Associated Press Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Keith Ellison has been a civil rights activist, a defense attorney, a cable-TV favorite, a rabble-rouser in Congress, a party operator and an occasional provocateur on Twitter.

But he's only rarely been a prosecutor — until now.

The Minnesota attorney general is at the helm of the George Floyd murder case, certain to be among the most scrutinized in the country and already the flashpoint behind an emerging national movement to root out racism in the criminal justice system.

Ellison, the first African American elected to his job, is now tasked with nothing less than making that system work.

Expectations are high, with many people finding it hard to imagine a failure to convict the four officers charged in Floyd's death.

"What we need is accountability from a top lawyer like Keith Ellison to put these cops in jail. Keith can get the job done," said Clarence Castile, a Minnesota advocate for police reform whose nephew, Philando Castile, was killed by an officer in 2016. "Goddamn it, he better get the job done."

Ellison has made clear he feels the pressure. He repeatedly warns that "winning a conviction will be hard" and notes he'll leave the prosecuting to lawyers experienced in securing convictions. Still, he's seized on his role overseeing the prosecution to make himself the public face of the case and a central voice in a national conversation.

"This is a soul search for the whole nation," Ellison said in a recent Associated Press interview.

Police-involved deaths are typically handled by county prosecutors. But Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman, who is white and has little track record of prosecuting police, was viewed skeptically by many in the black community.

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When Freeman didn't immediately charge the four officers involved in Floyd's death, Floyd's family and others lobbied Gov. Tim Walz to give the case to another prosecutor. Freeman agreed to a joint investigation — with Ellison in the lead.

Critics immediately raised concerns. Some pointed to a 2018 tweet in which Ellison held a copy of "The Antifa Handbook" — a guide to radical protest — and taunted President Donald Trump.

Ellison is "well known for politicizing issues but will need to rein in his past inclinations to conduct his job fairly on behalf of the public," state Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka said.

Ellison, 56, has been brushing off such criticism since he won the state office in 2018, after a 12-year stint in Washington where he was the first Muslim elected to Congress and was sworn in using Thomas Jefferson's Quran.

Ellison spent much of his time in the Democratic minority, with a platform to try to pull his party to the left. He was a regular guest on cable TV and a prominent booster for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential bid.

He jumped into the party's ideological fight in 2016, mounting a losing bid for the chairmanship of the Democratic National Committee. The bitter fight with centrists resurfaced Ellison's decades-old comments supporting Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam. Ellison has since disavowed the group.

If Ellison's national reputation was as a progressive purist, his work as attorney general has been more tempered. While pursuing a liberal policy agenda — calling himself "the people's lawyer" — he's also sought some consensus on police reforms in a state that has been riven by a string of police shootings.

Last year, he organized a group of activists, law enforcement groups, a prosecutor and judge to tour the state to listen to communities about policing and devise some proposals.

The effort was a notable outreach to police, said Matt Gottschalk, director of public safety in Corcoran, a Minneapolis suburb, who represented the board of directors for the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association in the group.

"There hasn't been a recent attorney general that has politicized police officers' actions as much as he has in campaigning," Gottschalk said, "But he's had the right conversations with law enforcement since."

Ellison's ties to Minneapolis' African American community run deep. He moved from Detroit to Minnesota for law school and stayed, working as an organizer, activist and defense attorney. Always a good talker, he hosted a talk show on a black radio station — adding debates about welfare reform and police brutality, he has said, to the jazz and gospel programming. He won a seat in the state House before going to Congress.

The Floyd case could bring some tensions with progressives who have long viewed Ellison as an uncompromising ally. Ellison is among Democratic politicians who have distanced themselves from calls to defund the police, though he has expressed some sympathy with supporters of that idea — including his son, Jeremiah Ellison, a member of the Minneapolis City Council.

"What I will say is that the people who called for it are making a valid case for serious transformation," Ellison told the AP. "And they should be listened to rather than dismissed, right? You know, they're not talking about leaving people on their own. They're talking about a greater level of safety and security and human rights."

One of the most important things Ellison can do now is use his credibility to manage expectations, said Susan Gaertner, a former prosecutor for St. Paul's Ramsey County.

"There's an expectation that this case, this prosecution, can amend for 400 years of racial injustice and that is simply too much to expect from a single criminal case," she said.

Ellison has pleaded for patience. But he's not downplayed the weight of this moment, as Americans reckon with racism in policing, health care and other institutions.

Ellison said he sees parallels between the disproportionate number of black Americans killed by police and the disproportionate number of black Americans suffering from COVID-19. It's a connection that's personal to Ellison, whose 82-year-old mother died from the virus.

Clida Martinez Ellison, the daughter of a voting rights activist, taught her children to "stand for justice," he said.

"We're doing that," he said.

Associated Press writers Carrie Antlfinger in Milwaukee and Amy Forliti contributed to this report.

Asia shares drop after Wall Street rout as virus cases rise

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

Asian shares were moderately lower Friday after an overnight rout on Wall Street as investors were spooked by reports of rising coronavirus cases in the U.S.

Fear that a so-called "second wave," is already coming has punctured bubbling optimism that a quick economic recovery was already underway. That pushed the Dow Jones Industrial Average down almost 7% on Thursday.

However, Wall Street futures pointed to a steady open on Friday, with the contract for the S&P 500 up 1% and that for the Dow industrials up 1.1%.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 dipped by 2.2% but was trading 1.5% lower at 22,131.14 by midmorning.

South Korea's Kospi lost 2.5% to 2,122.62. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 skidded 1.8% to 5,851.90. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 1.2% to 24,195.52, while the Shanghai Composite dipped 0.7% to 2,899.16.

Losses were milder in Asia than in the U.S. partly because markets in the region have not seen massive gains in recent weeks: outbreaks of the virus, travel disruptions and business shutdowns remain apparent and hopes for a quick rebound more modest.

Although daily newly confirmed cases in Japan have fallen to double-digit levels, workers are returning to work and stores are reopening, without a strong U.S. recovery there are scant expectations for an escape from recession, analysts say.

"It appears that worries about 'second wave' of infections have hit, with a swell in the number of cases in states like Arizona and Texas giving cause for concern," said Riki Ogawa at Mizuho Bank's Asia and Oceania Treasury Department, noting U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has said the U.S. can't afford another lockdown.

"Reports of positive cases from the global protest marches are probably also unearthing fears that a 'second wave' may squander the costly curve flattening efforts taken earlier," Ogawa said.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 6.9%, or 1,861.82 points, to 25,128.17. The S&P 500 dropped 5.9% to 3,002.10, its worst day since mid-March when stocks went through repeated harrowing falls as the virus lockdowns began.

The Nasdaq composite, which rose above 10,000 for the first time a day earlier, lost 527.62 points, or 5.3%, to 9,492.73.

The S&P 500 rallied 44.5% between late March and Monday, erasing most of its losses tied to the pandemic. Skeptics have been saying the rally was overdone.

As businesses reopen and people emerge from stay-at-home orders, cases are climbing in nearly half the states, according to an Associated Press analysis.

"Not surprisingly, a lack of preventative behavior has led to a resurgence in COVID-19 cases around the country, and the stock market is having another gut check," said Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer for Independent Advisor Alliance.

Investor optimism for a speedy recovery was also dimmed by the Federal Reserve, which warned Wednesday that the road to recovery from the worst downturn in decades would be long and vowed to keep rates low for the foreseeable future. It estimated that the economy will shrink 6.5% this year, in line with other forecasts, before expanding 5% in 2021. It also expects the unemployment rate at 9.3%, near the peak of the last recession, by the end of this year. It's now 13.3%.

Those factors, along with the recent run-up in stock prices, set the stage for the wave of selling Thursday.

Small company stocks are bearing the brunt of the selling, a signal that investors are becoming more pessimistic about a broad recovery in the economy. The Russell 2000 index fell 111.17 points, or 7.6%, to 1,356.22. European and Asian markets also fell.

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Bond yields also fell, a sign of increasing caution among investors who shifted more money into government bonds.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury was at 0.68% Friday after sliding to 0.66% from 0.74% late Wednesday, a big move. Last Friday it briefly rose above 0.90%. It started the year at 1.92%.

Emergency rescue efforts by the Fed and Congress helped arrest the market's staggering 34% skid in February and March.

Investors are still waiting for more data to see whether surges spike in COVID-19 cases signal a possible second wave of the infections, said Charlie Ripley, senior investment strategist for Allianz Investment Management.

"We think the recovery is largely underway, but there is still some considerable uncertainty on the path we have ahead," Ripley said.

The Labor Department said Thursday that about 1.5 million people applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week, another sign that many Americans are still losing their jobs even as the economy begins to gradually reopen. The latest figure marked the 10th straight weekly decline in applications for jobless aid since they peaked in mid-March when the coronavirus hit hard. Still, the pace of layoffs remains historically high.

In other trading, benchmark U.S. crude oil fell \$1.32 to \$35.02 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell \$3.26 to settle at \$36.34 a barrel Thursday. Brent crude oil fell \$1.07 to \$37.48 a barrel.

The dollar was almost unchanged at 106.86 Japanese yen. The euro rose to \$1.1296 from \$1.1294.

AP Business Writers Alex Veiga and Damian J. Troise contributed.

Trump fumes as protesters stake out festive zone in Seattle

By TED WARREN and ALI SWENSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Following days of violent confrontations with protesters, police in Seattle have largely withdrawn from part of a neighborhood where protesters have created a festival-like scene that has President Donald Trump fuming.

Trump taunted Gov. Jay Inslee and Mayor Jenny Durkan about the situation on Twitter and said the city had been taken over by "anarchists." "Take back your city NOW. If you don't do it, I will," Trump tweeted.

The president continued his complaints in a Thursday interview with the Fox News Channel. "If we have to go in, we're going to go in," Trump said. "These people are not going to occupy a major portion of a great city."

The "Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone" stretches over a couple city blocks and sprung up after police on Monday removed barricades near the East Precinct and basically abandoned the structure after officers used tear gas, pepper spray and flash bangs over the weekend to disperse demonstrators they said were assaulting them with projectiles.

The president has sparred before with Inslee and Durkan — both liberal Democrats. Inslee previously sought his party's presidential nomination.

Inslee tweeted Thursday that state officials will not allow threats of military violence from the White House. "The U.S. military serves to protect Americans, not the fragility of an insecure president," he tweeted.

The zone set up by protesters stretches a portion of Capitol Hill, where dozens of people show up to listen to speakers calling for police reform, racial justice and compensation for Native groups on whose land the city of Seattle was founded.

Signs proclaim "You are entering free Capitol Hill" and "No cop co-op" along sidewalks where people sell water and other wares. On Thursday, speakers used a microphone to discuss their demands and how to address the police presence after they visited the precinct during the day. Down the street, artists continued painting a block-long "Black Lives Matter" mural on the street.

"The people that you see here have all come together because we see injustice in our system and we

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want to be part of the solution," said Mark Henry Jr. of Black Lives Matter.

Henry said Trump's rant about the gathering was unfounded. "Donald Trump can call us a terrorist if he likes to, but what you see out here is people coming together and loving each other," he said.

Over the weekend, police were sharply criticized by City Council members and other elected leaders. Since officers dialed back their tactics, the demonstrations have largely been peaceful.

Police officials say they are looking to reopen the precinct. At a news conference Wednesday, Assistant Chief Deanna Nollette said the barriers were removed from the front of the building after it became a flashpoint between officers and protesters.

Nollette said the precinct has been boarded up because of credible threats that it would be vandalized or burned. She offered no details about the threats and no fires have been reported at the site.

She said protesters have set up their own barricades, which are intimidating some residents.

Police Chief Carmen Best posted a video message to officers Thursday in which she said the decision to leave the Capitol Hill precinct wasn't hers and she was angry about it. She also reiterated that police had been harassed and assaulted during protests.

"Ultimately, the city had other plans for the building and relented to severe public pressure," Best said.

At a Thursday news conference neither Best nor Durkan made it clear who decided that police should leave the precinct.

Durkan said regarding Trump's statements about Seattle that one of the things the president will never understand is that listening to community is not a weakness, but a strength.

"A real leader would see nationwide protest, the grief in so many communities of color, particularly our black communities, and the call to be an anti-racist society, as an opportunity for America. An opportunity to build a better nation," she said.

Protesters have said they want to see the precinct turned into a community center or used for purposes other than law enforcement.

City Councilwoman Kshama Sawant disputed accounts of violence or intimidation by protesters within the area on Capitol Hill and said it was more like a street fair with political discussions and a drum circle.

"The right wing has been spreading rumors that there is some sort of lawlessness and crime taking place at the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, but it is exactly the opposite of that," said Sawant, a socialist and a critic of Durkan and the police.

Sawant said she wants the precinct to be "converted into a public resource that will actually be helpful to society."

Associated Press writer Lisa Baumann contributed from Seattle.

Historical figures reassessed after George Floyd's death

By SARAH RANKIN and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

The rapidly unfolding movement to pull down Confederate monuments around the U.S. in the wake of George Floyd's death has extended to statues of slave traders, imperialists, conquerors and explorers around the world, including Christopher Columbus, Cecil Rhodes and Belgium's King Leopold II.

Protests and, in some cases, acts of vandalism have taken place in such cities as Boston; New York; Paris; Brussels; and Oxford, England, in an intense re-examination of racial injustices over the centuries. Scholars are divided over whether the campaign amounts to erasing history or updating it.

At the University of Oxford, protesters have stepped up their longtime push to remove a statue of Rhodes, the Victorian imperialist who served as prime minister of the Cape Colony in southern Africa. He made a fortune from gold and diamonds on the backs of miners who labored in brutal conditions.

Oxford's vice chancellor Louise Richardson, in an interview with the BBC, balked at the idea.

"We need to confront our past," she said. "My own view on this is that hiding our history is not the route to enlightenment."

Near Santa Fe, New Mexico, activists are calling for the removal of a statue of Don Juan de Oñate, a

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16th-century Spanish conquistador revered as a Hispanic founding father and reviled for brutality against Native Americans, including an order to cut off the feet of two dozen people. Vandals sawed off the statue's right foot in the 1990s.

In Bristol, England, demonstrators over the weekend toppled a statue of 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston and threw it in the harbor. City authorities said it will be put in a museum.

Across Belgium, statues of Leopold II have been defaced in half a dozen cities because of the king's brutal rule over the Congo, where more than a century ago he forced multitudes into slavery to extract rubber, ivory and other resources for his own profit. Experts say he left as many as 10 million dead.

"The Germans would not get it into their head to erect statues of Hitler and cheer them," said Mireille-Tsheusi Robert, an activist in Congo who wants Leopold statues removed from Belgian cities. "For us, Leopold has committed a genocide."

In the U.S., Floyd's death May 25 under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer has led to an all-out effort to remove symbols of the Confederacy and slavery.

The Navy, the Marines and NASCAR have embraced bans on the display of the Confederate flag, and statues of rebel heroes across the South have been vandalized or taken down, either by protesters or local authorities.

On Wednesday night, protesters pulled down a century-old statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia, the former capital of the Confederacy. The 8-foot (2.4-meter) bronze figure had already been targeted for removal by city leaders, but the crowd took matters into its own hands. No immediate arrests were made.

It stood a few blocks away from a towering, 61-foot-high equestrian statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee, the most revered of all Confederate leaders. Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam last week ordered its removal, but a judge blocked such action for now.

The spokesman for the Virginia division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, B. Frank Earnest, condemned the toppling of "public works of art" and likened losing the Confederate statues to losing a family member.

Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney, who has proposed dismantling all Confederate statues in the city, asked protesters not to take matters into their own hands for their own safety. But he indicated the Davis statue is gone for good.

"He never deserved to be up on that pedestal," Stoney said, calling Davis a "racist & traitor."

Elsewhere around the South, authorities in Alabama got rid of a massive obelisk in Birmingham and a bronze likeness of a Confederate naval officer in Mobile. In Virginia, a slave auction block was removed in Fredericksburg, and protesters in Portsmouth knocked the heads off the statues of four Confederates.

The monument is believed to be located where a slave whipping post once stood, and removing it is a small step in the right direction, Portsmouth activist and organizer Rocky Hines said.

"It's not a history that we as a nation should necessarily be proud of. For us, the history is a lot of history of slavery and hatred," he said. "It's bothered people for a long time."

In Washington, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said it is time to remove statues of Confederate figures from the U.S. Capitol and take their names off military bases such as Fort Bragg, Fort Benning and Fort Hood.

President Donald Trump on Wednesday rejected the idea of renaming bases. But Republicans in the Senate, at risk of losing their majority in the November elections, aren't with Trump on this. A GOP-led Senate panel on Thursday approved a plan to take Confederate names off military installations.

Supporters of Confederate monuments have argued that they are important reminders of history; opponents contend they glorify those who went to war against the U.S. to preserve slavery.

The Davis monument and many others across the South were erected decades after the Civil War during the Jim Crow era, when states imposed tough new segregation laws, and during the Lost Cause movement, in which historians and others sought to recast the South's rebellion as a noble undertaking, fought to defend not slavery but states' rights.

For protesters mobilized by Floyd's death, the targets have ranged far beyond the Confederacy. Statues of Columbus have been toppled or vandalized in cities such as Miami; Richmond; St. Paul, Minnesota;

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and Boston, where one was decapitated. Protesters have accused the Italian explorer of genocide and exploitation of native peoples.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who is Italian American, said he opposes removal of a statue of Columbus in Manhattan's Columbus Circle.

"I understand the feelings about Christopher Columbus and some of his acts, which nobody would support," he said. "But the statue has come to represent and signify appreciation for the Italian American contribution to New York. So for that reason I support it."

Historians have differing views of the campaigns.

"How far is too far, in scrubbing away a history so that we won't remember it wrong – or, indeed, have occasion to remember it at all?" asked Mark Summers, a University of Kentucky professor. "I've always felt that honor to the past shouldn't be done by having fewer monuments and memorials, but more."

Scott Sandage, a historian at Carnegie Mellon University, noted that Americans have a long tradition of arguing over monuments and memorials. He recalled the bitter debate over the now-beloved Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington when the design was unveiled.

"Removing a memorial doesn't erase history. It makes new history," Sandage said. "And that's always happening, no matter whether statues go up, come down, or not."

Crary reported from New York. Associated Press reporters around the United States and in Europe contributed.

Hong Kong's increasing divide portends a tumultuous future

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Protesters in Hong Kong got its government to withdraw extradition legislation last year, but now they're getting a more dreaded national security law. And the message from Beijing is: Protest is futile.

One year ago Friday, protesters took over streets and blocked the legislature, preventing lawmakers from starting debate on the extradition bill. The youthful crowd clashed with police, who deployed tear gas and pepper spray in a portent of the months of protest that lay ahead.

Thousand of rounds of tear gas later, the movement has been quieted — in part by the coronavirus — but the anger has only grown. In its wake, the polarization has deepened between the city's disenchanting youth and its government. And the resolve of the central government in Beijing to crack down on dissent, as evidenced by the coming national security law for the territory, has hardened.

"Emotions are running high because these young protesters see no future," said Willy Lam, a commentator and adjunct professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "There are no communication channels between the protesters and either the (Hong Kong) government or Beijing. And the protesters see no future for themselves, because they know they can't change the mind of (Chinese President) Xi Jinping."

The divide signals an uneasy and possibly tumultuous future for the semi-autonomous territory, which is part of China yet has its own laws and greater freedoms than the mainland under a "one-country, two systems" framework that is supposed to guarantee it a high level of autonomy until 2047.

Protests may be smaller this year, analysts said, as police round up more protesters and the impending national security law scares others from coming out. As well, some energy will be diverted to campaigning for legislative elections in September in which the pro-democracy opposition is likely to make gains.

Organizers postponed a demonstration planned for Friday to mark the first anniversary of the blocking of the legislature, citing the coronavirus limit of public gatherings to eight people. It has been tentatively rescheduled for June 19, when the emergency rule is due to be lifted.

Fundamentally, the two sides are on divergent paths. As protester frustration mounts, the risk is they will become more radicalized, said Joseph Cheng, a political scientist and veteran pro-democracy activist. He notes new slogans at recent protests touting independence for Hong Kong. "These are slogans I won't use," he said.

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A growing movement to leave China would play into the hands of Beijing, which has long broad-brushed the protesters as violent rioters bent on independence. Maintaining China's territorial integrity is one of the central tenets of the ruling Communist Party, and secessionist activities are one of the crimes to be covered by the security law.

"Maybe that is the key message of this new national security bill," said Regina Ip, a pro-Beijing lawmaker in Hong Kong. "Not to arrest large numbers of people, but really to send the message that you are part of China and if you want your two systems to continue, you'd better not do anything that could harm the overall well-being of the nation."

The Hong Kong government is required by its mini constitution to enact a national security law, and Ip was secretary for security the only time it tried in 2003. The bill was dropped after major protests, and no administration has tried since because of public opposition.

The protests have given the central government, long frustrated by Hong Kong's inability to adopt such a law, the pretext to bypass Hong Kong's legislature and the anti-government protesters in the city 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) south of Beijing.

China is expected to enact the new national security law, or laws, by the end of the summer and possibly later this month. The specifics remain under wraps, but one provision that has alarmed some would allow Chinese security agencies to set up in Hong Kong.

"I am quite upset at the Chinese Communist Party for what they have done and for what they are going to implement," Anderson Tseng, a 22-year-old clerk, said after the decision to go forward was ratified by China's ceremonial legislature last month. "I guess most us are quite frustrated too."

For China, the law is necessary to maintain the "one country" part of the framework that governs Hong Kong. For activists, the law and its imposition by the central government undermine the "two systems," the semi-autonomy given to the city.

Lam, the commentator, said that unlike a few years ago, the central government has given up any pretense of not being directly involved in Hong Kong's affairs. "Beijing has become upfront," he said. "It has become very open about the fact that it is interfering in Hong Kong affairs. It wants total control."

He added that Hong Kong's leader, Carrie Lam, is widely seen as doing Beijing's bidding rather than advocating for the people of Hong Kong and conveying their views to national officials.

She withdrew the extradition bill only after three months of protest showed no signs of letting up and has refused to negotiate on the four other demands of the protesters. Beijing officials have publicly backed her hard-line position, which has undermined public support for her and is widely expected to work against pro-Beijing candidates in the September elections.

But analysts say it is unlikely the pro-democracy opposition will end up with a majority, because only half the legislature's seats are chosen by popular vote. Fully democratic elections for the legislature and the city's leader are one of the remaining protest demands.

That dream seems ever more distant as Beijing ratchets up its control over Hong Kong. Protests only induce the central government to tighten its grip further, which in turn sparks more protests in what has become a downward spiral.

"It is going to be one country, one system," Cheng said, in what has become a popular refrain of activists. "Some people will leave Hong Kong, but the anger is there. The frustration is there and there will be maybe another outburst when opportunities come again."

African Americans point to racial biases in economics

By JOSH BOAK AP Economics Writer

BALTIMORE (AP) — The field of economics is facing an upheaval, with African American scholars decrying bias in the profession and presenting evidence that leading journals have failed to publish sufficient research that documents racial inequalities.

This tumult reflects racial dynamics at a delicate moment set against the backdrop of protests over the police killing of George Floyd that have thrust varying forms of bias into public consciousness. Though videos have illustrated police brutality against African Americans and others, the extent of racially driven

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economic problems is often less recognized.

President Donald Trump has cited the 5.8% unemployment rate for African Americans before the pandemic struck as evidence of improving racial equality. Yet that figure was nearly twice as high as the unemployment rate for whites. And it overlooks data on housing, wealth and student debt that point to vast racial inequalities. Leading research has shown that racial discrimination has not only slowed economic gains for black Americans but also depressed prosperity for America as a whole.

"We're not tapping into the wealth of talent that we have," said Lisa Cook, an economist at Michigan State University who hosted a webinar this week that illustrated how segregation and racially motivated violence had, among other things, held back patent filings by African Americans. Because racism has diminished the role of black Americans in innovation, her research shows that the United States is effectively losing 4.4% of gross domestic product annually.

Cook asserted that all Americans should be concerned about the problem because without sufficient innovation, "our living standards are under threat."

Widespread racial disparities are evident in the economics profession itself. A survey last year by the American Economic Association found that a startling 47% of African-Americans reported being discriminated against or treated unfairly because of their race, compared with just 4% of whites. Only 0.6% of doctoral degrees in economics and 2% of bachelor's degrees in economics went to African American women in 2017.

Some leading gatekeepers of policy and economic research have appeared to downplay or even deny the problems bred by the legacies of slavery, segregation and mass incarceration.

"I don't believe there's systemic racism in the U.S.," Larry Kudlow, director of the White House National Economic Council, told reporters Wednesday.

Harald Uhlig, a professor at the University of Chicago and the top editor of the Journal of Political Economy, tweeted recently that activists who are seeking to defund police departments because of the violence committed against African-Americans were "flat-earthers."

In 2017, Uhlig wrote a blog post suggesting that football players could dress in "Ku Klux Klan" garb to expose the hypocrisy of free speech advocates who support the right of football players to take a knee during the national anthem to protest racism. Many economists are now calling on Uhlig to resign as the journal's editor.

Research about race has largely been excluded from the top five economic journals. Of the 7,567 research papers published in those journals between 1990 and 2018, just 29 dealt with race and ethnicity, according to an analysis by Dania Francis and Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman published Thursday by Newsweek.

"This is a moment for self-reflection within the economics profession, and we have a real possibility to make lasting, impactful change," said Francis, a professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston. "However, change is always difficult, often met with resistance and can be especially divisive when it involves addressing racial disparity."

The lack of academic research published in top journals contrasts with evidence that racial inequality is a pervasive economic problem. Federal Reserve figures show that the net worth of a median African American household is equal to just 10 cents for every dollar of wealth for white households.

Academic economists have been grappling with a range of challenges to their profession, including a rising consideration of social issues that complicate some fundamental economic models taught to college students.

Harvard University's Raj Chetty, who pioneered the use of tax data to assess economic mobility, is teaching a class driven by data rather than by what might be called abstract principles. Chetty's research with colleagues has found troubling racial disparities, such as job booms in Atlanta and Charlotte, North Carolina, that largely excluded African Americans who grew up in those areas.

Michigan State University's Cook has said that one remedy would be to provide more career paths to African American economists at universities, think tanks and the editorial boards of top research journals. The lack of career paths makes it harder to persuade African Americans to study economics.

"They're not hiring black people in departments," Cook said. "Where are they supposed to go?"

Biden gets more aggressive as 2020 campaign heats back up

By WILL WEISSERT and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Joe Biden is adopting an increasingly aggressive stance as he looks to break out of a monthslong campaign freeze imposed by the coronavirus outbreak.

Over the course of 24 hours, the presumptive Democratic nominee sharpened his rhetoric against President Donald Trump, warning he could try to steal the election. His campaign organized a petition pressing Facebook to boost its efforts to prevent the spread of misinformation. And he released a plan to restart an economy slammed by the coronavirus in a way that he says won't make Americans choose between their health and livelihoods.

The quick succession of developments signals Biden's growing desire to become more assertive. He's betting that he can build momentum by offering a contrast to Trump's leadership as the country is gripped by the pandemic, economic turmoil and unrest stemming from racial injustice and police brutality.

"Trump has basically had a one-point plan: Open businesses," Biden said Thursday at an economic roundtable in Philadelphia, where he announced a plan to reopen the economy. "It does nothing to keep workers safe, to keep businesses able to stay open, and secondly it does very little to increase consumer confidence."

If elected, Biden promised to guarantee testing and protective equipment for people called back to work, while prohibiting discrimination against elderly Americans and others at high risk of contracting the virus. He also wants to use federal funds to ensure paid leave for anyone who falls ill or cares for those who do.

He proposed a national contact tracing workforce or "job corps" of at least 100,000 to call people who test positive, track down their contacts and get them into quarantine. That figure aligns with an estimate from the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Health experts agree that contact tracing is crucial to slowing the spread of the virus and that there aren't enough public health workers today to achieve what's needed.

Biden also pledged a "Nationwide Pandemic Dashboard," where Americans could check the virus' spreading by zip code. Josh Michaud, associate director of global health policy with the Kaiser Family Foundation in Washington, said it remains unclear "if that information would be timely and accurate enough to reflect true levels of risk in a way that would be helpful to individuals, businesses and institutions in each community."

Still, "It might be helpful to have such information to better target resources and identify the most at risk communities on a more fine grain level," Michaud said. "As we have seen done in a few places like different New York City boroughs."

Biden backed more funding for schools and child care centers as they reopen and the creation of a "safe shopper" program meant to make returning consumers less wary of getting sick.

He referenced the potentially eye-popping price tag of all that, joking, "There goes that big spending Democrat again" but added, "If we don't do this, we're going to be in deep, deep, deeper trouble economically."

As the plan was being released, his campaign circulated an online petition urging Facebook to strengthen its misinformation rules. Social media giant Twitter has already drawn Trump's ire by imposing stricter limits on how he and others use the social media network.

"We're sending Facebook a letter demanding that the company change its policies to crack down on misinformation in ads and ensure a fair election," the petition reads. Facebook responded that "the people's elected representatives should set the rules, and we will follow them."

"There is an election coming in November and we will protect political speech," the company said in a statement "even when we strongly disagree with it."

As his campaign strikes at Facebook, Biden is also dramatically increasing spending on the platform. It outlaid millions of dollars on ads that are themed around the protests sweeping the country and Trump's response to them.

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After remaining at home for months, Biden has begun holding public events within driving distance of his house in Delaware. But his more aggressive approach has so far not extended to resuming large campaign rallies.

That is in contrast to Trump, who flew to Dallas on Thursday for a \$10 million fundraiser and says he'll begin holding a series of rallies starting next week in Oklahoma. Biden's campaign says it will resume normal campaign travel and events when public health officials and authorities say it's safe.

Melissa Reed, a spokesperson for Trump Victory in Pennsylvania, said voters "don't want to return to the stagnant economic growth under the Obama-Biden Administration, they want a Great American Comeback under President Trump." The president's reelection campaign also criticized Biden for offering a plan to jump start the economy "six weeks too late."

Biden's economic proposals and Facebook criticism followed him saying Trump will attempt to "steal" November's election.

"My single greatest concern: This president's going to try and steal this election," Biden said on "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah," which aired Wednesday night. "This is a guy who said all mail-in ballots are fraudulent, voting by mail, while he sits behind the desk in the Oval Office and writes his mail-in ballot to vote in the primary."

Biden said he'd considered what would happen if Trump refused to vacate the presidency in the event he wasn't reelected, before suggesting that the military could step in to ensure a peaceful transition of power.

"I am absolutely convinced they will escort him from the White House with great dispatch," he said.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany responded that Biden was making "a ridiculous proposition."

Trump argues that absentee voting, which many states are expanding to avoid large crowds at polling places during the coronavirus outbreak, increases the possibility of fraud. There is little evidence to support that assertion, and Trump himself has voted by mail in the past.

Still, a chaotic Tuesday primary in Georgia may foreshadow a messy November election. Biden said on the "Daily Show" that his campaign would hire lawyers to observe balloting in "every district in the country."

Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Carla K. Johnson in Washington state contributed to this report.

Military chief: Wrong to walk with Trump past park protest

By **ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Army Gen. Mark Milley, the nation's top military officer, added to the already extraordinary tension between the Pentagon and President Donald Trump on Thursday, declaring he'd been wrong to stride in uniform with Trump past protesters who had been cleared from Lafayette Square to a photo op at a church.

Milley said his presence in combat fatigues amid protests over racial injustice "created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics."

"I should not have been there," the Joint Chiefs chairman said in remarks to a National Defense University commencement ceremony.

Milley's statement risked the wrath of a president sensitive to anything hinting of criticism of events he has staged. Pentagon leaders' relations with the White House already were tense after a disagreement last week over Trump's threat to use federal troops to quell civil unrest triggered by George Floyd's death in police custody.

After Defense Secretary Mark Esper knocked down that idea of using active-duty troops against American citizens, Trump castigated him in a face-to-face meeting. And the president had blistering criticism for his first defense secretary, Gen. Jim Mattis, after Mattis condemned Trump's Lafayette Square action.

The public uproar following Floyd's death has created multiple layers of tension between Trump and senior Pentagon officials. In yet another dispute, Esper and Milley let it be known through spokesmen this week

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that they were open to a "bipartisan discussion" of whether 10 Army bases named for Confederate Army officers should be renamed as a gesture dissociating the military from the racist legacy of the Civil War.

On Wednesday, Trump said he would never allow the names to be changed, catching some in the Pentagon by surprise.

The Marine Corps last week moved ahead with a ban on public displays of the Confederate Army battle flag on its bases, and the Navy this week said it plans a similar ban for its bases, ships and planes. Trump has not commented publicly on those moves, which do not require White House or congressional approval.

The president's June 1 walk through the park to pose with a Bible at a church came after authorities used pepper spray and flash bangs to clear the historic square and surrounding streets of largely peaceful protesters demonstrating in the aftermath of Floyd's death. Milley's comments Thursday were his first public statements about the walk with Trump, which the White House has hailed as a presidential "leadership moment" akin to Winston Churchill inspecting damage from German bombs in London during World War II.

Milley said Thursday, "My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics."

"As a commissioned uniformed officer, it was a mistake that I have learned from, and I sincerely hope we all can learn from it."

After protesters were cleared away, Trump led an entourage that included Milley, Esper, Attorney General William Barr and others to St. John's Episcopal Church, where he held up a Bible for photographers and then returned to the White House.

Esper has not said publicly that he erred by being with Trump at that moment. However, he told a news conference last week that when they left the White House he thought they were going to inspect damage in the Square and at the church and mingle with National Guard troops in the area.

Milley used his commencement address, which was presented as a video message in line with social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic, to raise the matter of his presence with Trump in Lafayette Square. He introduced the subject to his audience of military officers and civilian officials in the context of advice from an Army officer and combat veteran who has spent 40 years in uniform.

He said all senior military leaders must be aware that their words and actions will be closely watched.

"And I am not immune," he said, noting the photograph of him at Lafayette Square. "That sparked a national debate about the role of the military in civil society." He expressed regret at having been there and said the lesson to be taken is that all in uniform are not just soldiers but also citizens.

"We must hold dear the principle of an apolitical military that is so deeply rooted in the very essence of our republic," he said. "It takes time and work and effort, but it may be the most important thing each and every one of us does every single day."

Milley also expressed his outrage at the Floyd killing and urged military officers to recognize it as a reflection of centuries of injustice toward African Americans.

"What we are seeing is the long shadow of our original sin in Jamestown 401 years ago," he said, referring to the year in which the first enslaved Africans arrived on the shores of colonial Virginia.

Milley said the military has made important progress on race issues but has much yet to do, including creating the conditions for a larger proportion of African American officers to rise to the military's senior ranks. He noted that his service, the Army, has just one African American four-star general, and mentioned that the Air Force is about to swear in the first-ever African American service chief.

One of Trump's Republican supporters, Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, said he agreed with Milley's comments – "in both substance and spirit."

Graham, a former Air Force lawyer, wrote on Twitter that Milley is "a tremendous military leader who understands the long tradition of maintaining an apolitical nonpartisan military."

Alarming rise in virus cases as states roll back lockdowns

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — States are rolling back lockdowns, but the coronavirus isn't done with the U.S. Cases are rising in nearly half the states, according to an Associated Press analysis, a worrying trend that could intensify as people return to work and venture out during the summer.

In Arizona, hospitals have been told to prepare for the worst. Texas has more hospitalized COVID-19 patients than at any time before. And the governor of North Carolina said recent jumps caused him to rethink plans to reopen schools or businesses.

There is no single reason for the surges. In some cases, more testing has revealed more cases. In others, local outbreaks are big enough to push statewide tallies higher. But experts think at least some are due to lifting stay-at-home orders, school and business closures, and other restrictions put in place during the spring to stem the virus's spread.

The increase in infections pulled stocks down sharply Thursday on Wall Street, dragging the Dow Jones Industrial Average more than 1,800 points lower and giving the S&P 500 its worst day in nearly three months. The infections deflated recent optimism that the economy could recover quickly from its worst crisis in decades.

The virus is also gradually fanning out.

"It is a disaster that spreads," said Dr. Jay Butler, who oversees coronavirus response work at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "It's not like there's an entire continental seismic shift and everyone feels the shaking all at once."

That is also happening globally. Places that suffered early on such as China, Italy and Spain have calmed down but Brazil, India and other countries that were spared initially are seeing large increases. The world is seeing more than 100,000 newly-confirmed cases every day, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

The virus first landed on the U.S. coasts, carried by international travelers infected abroad. For months, the epicenter was in northeastern states. More recently, the biggest increases have been in the South and the West.

The AP analyzed data compiled by The COVID Tracking Project, a volunteer organization that collects coronavirus testing data in the United States. The analysis found that in 21 states as of Monday, the rolling seven-day average of new cases per capita was higher than the average seven days earlier.

Some worry the situation may get worse as social distancing restrictions lift and more people gather. One concern is that large recent racial justice protests across the country might spark at least some spread of the virus.

Another: President Donald Trump this week said he's planning to hold rallies that may draw thousands of people. He will hold them in four states — Arizona, Florida, Oklahoma, and Texas. All of them are among the states with rising cases identified in the AP analysis.

Here's what's driving increases in some of the states with notable upticks:

ARIZONA

Republican Gov. Doug Ducey ended Arizona's stay-at-home order on May 15 and eased restrictions on businesses. Arizona residents who were cooped up for six weeks flooded Phoenix-area bar districts, ignoring social distancing guidelines.

The state began seeing a surge of new cases and hospitalizations about 10 days later.

"It seems pretty clear to me that what we're seeing is directly related to the end of the stay-at-home order," said Will Humble, executive director of the Arizona Public Health Association.

It wasn't just that the order ended: There were no requirements to wear face masks, no major increases in contact tracing to spot and stop evolving outbreaks, and no scale-up of infection control at nursing homes, he said.

"Those are missed opportunities that, if implemented today, could still make a big difference," said Humble, a former director of the state Department of Health Services.

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Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego has criticized the governor for failing to highlight the "seriousness of the growing public health emergency."

Testing has been increasing in Arizona, which raises the chance of finding new cases. But the proportion of tests coming back positive has also been on the rise.

The AP analysis found Arizona had a rolling average of fewer than 400 new cases a day at the time the shutdown was lifted, but it shot up two weeks later and surpassed 1,000 new cases a day by early this week. Hospitalizations have also risen dramatically, hitting the 1,200 mark last week.

The state also passed another grim milestone last week, recording its 1,000th death.

Meanwhile Arizona hospitals reported they were at 83% of capacity Tuesday, which could force the cancellation of elective surgeries. An executive order Ducey issued in April said hospitals wanting to resume elective surgeries had to have at least 20% of their beds available.

NORTH CAROLINA

In North Carolina, more testing plus more people out and about during reopening seem to be the main drivers of recent case upticks, said Kimberly Powers, an associate professor of epidemiology at the University of North Carolina.

On Saturday, the state recorded its highest single-day increase, with 1,370. While testing has grown in the last two weeks, so has the rate of tests coming back positive.

"These trends moving in the wrong direction is a signal we need to take very seriously," said North Carolina's top health official, Mandy Cohen, who along with Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper has urged the public to take precautions to protect themselves.

But some state residents are not on board.

"I think they should start opening stuff a little bit more," said Jason Denton, an electrician from Greenville who said one of his main concerns was getting to the gym.

"That's like my therapy," he said.

TEXAS

Few states are rebooting faster than Texas, where hospitalizations surged past 2,100 on Wednesday for the first time during the pandemic. That's a 42% increase in patients since Memorial Day weekend, when beachgoers swarmed Texas' coastline and a water park near Houston opened to big crowds in defiance of Republican Gov. Greg Abbott's orders.

Texas' percentage of tests coming back positive has also jumped to levels that are among the nation's highest. State officials point to hot spots at meatpacking plants and prisons in rural counties, where thousands of new cases have cropped up, but have not offered explanations for a rise in numbers elsewhere.

Abbott, who has recently begun wearing a mask in public, has shown no intention of pumping the brake on reopening a state where protesters in May pressured him to speed up the timeline on getting hair salons back in business.

On Friday, Texas is set to lift even more restrictions and let restaurant dining rooms reopen at nearly full capacity.

ALABAMA

In Alabama, outbreaks in nursing homes and poultry plants helped drive state numbers upward. On Wednesday, the state recorded its largest number of new cases in a day, 849. The previous high was 640 on June 5.

The capital, Montgomery, has become an emerging hot spot, said State Health Officer Scott Harris.

"I think reopening the economy gave a lot of people the wrong impression ... that, 'Hey everything is fine. Let's go back to normal,'" Harris said. "Clearly, it is not that way. Really, now more than ever we need people to stay 6 feet apart, wear face coverings and wash their hands."

Montgomery hospital intensive care units are as busy as during flu season.

"I can assure you that Montgomery's cases are not going down, and if our community does not take this seriously, the virus will continue to spread, and at some point, our medical capacity will reach its limit," Dr. David Thrasher, director of respiratory therapy at Jackson Hospital, said in a statement.

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ARKANSAS

Arkansas has also seen increases — in cases, hospitalizations and the percentage of tests that come back positive. But the state's situation is a complicated story of different outbreaks at different times, said Dr. Nate Smith, director of the Arkansas Department of Health.

After a peak in April, levels were low until spikes began about three weeks ago — mainly in the cities of Rogers and Springdale in the northwest and in De Queen further south. The cases have been concentrated among Hispanics and those who work in chicken production facilities, which never were closed.

Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson on Wednesday said the state will move into a new phase of reopening, starting Monday.

LOOKING AHEAD

Experts are wondering what will happen in the next week or so, in the wake of nationwide protests following the death of George Floyd at the hands of police.

The protests were outdoors, which reduces the likelihood of virus spread, and many participants have worn masks and taken other precautions. But it's a lot of people close together, chanting, singing and yelling. "Hopefully we won't see a big spike. But those data aren't in yet," Humble said.

Associated Press reporters Bob Christie in Phoenix; Paul Weber in Austin, Texas; Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Arkansas; Kim Chandler in Montgomery, Alabama; Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Alabama; and Bryan Anderson and Allen G. Breed in Raleigh, North Carolina contributed.

Amid pandemic, scores of US Catholic schools face closure

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

Catholic schools have faced tough times for years, but the pace of closures is accelerating dramatically amid economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, sparking heartbreak and anger in scores of affected communities.

"It's not a pretty picture right now," said Sister Dale McDonald, public policy director of the National Catholic Educational Association, which says about 100 schools have announced in recent weeks that they won't reopen this fall. McDonald fears that number could more than double in the coming months.

Most of the closures are occurring at the elementary level, but also on the list are a number of venerable and beloved high schools including some that produced some famous alumni.

The Institute of Notre Dame, a girls' school in Baltimore founded in 1847, is due to close on June 30, to the dismay of alumnae like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Immaculate Conception Cathedral School of Memphis, Tennessee, another girls' institution, is also shutting down after 98 years; it's where Priscilla Beaulieu finished her senior year while dating husband-to-be Elvis Presley.

Closures in New Jersey include Hammonton's St. Joseph High School, which has won more than 20 state football championships, and Cristo Rey high school in Newark, which was highly praised for its work helping students from low-income families go to college. Founded in 2007, Cristo Rey says every one of its graduates from the last 10 years had been accepted at colleges.

This year's closures will reduce the number of Catholic K-12 schools in the United States to about 6,000, down from more than 11,000 in 1970, according to the Catholic education association. Overall enrollment has plummeted from more than 5 million in the 1960s to about 1.7 million now.

"The loss of Catholic schools is a loss to America," said Mary Pat Donoghue, executive director of the Catholic Education office of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

She said the impact would be particularly severe in low-income inner city neighborhoods, generally populated mostly by blacks and Hispanics,

"No one in the non-public school sector has done better there than Catholic schools," she said.

The long-term enrollment decline has resulted from demographic changes, parents' difficulty affording tuition and competition from public and other private schools.

Factors related to the pandemic have only aggravated the problems.

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Donoghue said many families have recently lost jobs and feel they can no longer pay tuitions averaging nearly \$5,000 for elementary schools and more than \$11,000 for high schools. Meanwhile, parishes that operate many of the schools lost much of their weekly collections after in-person services were halted.

Another factor: Spring is the prime season for school fundraisers, and many of those events had to be canceled.

McDonald, of the National Catholic Education Association, said uncertainty is now a huge problem. School officials are unsure what social-distancing requirements and financial circumstances they will face in the fall, while parents don't know if their school will still be afloat.

"Superintendents want to know what they're getting into," McDonald said. "Parents don't want to commit to what they don't know. It's a huge mess."

Several of the recent closure announcements sparked community campaigns to try to save the schools.

In Hammonton, where the regional diocese ordered Saint Joseph and the parish's elementary school shuttered, after both suffered large drops in enrollment in recent years, a coalition of alumni and community members stepped in.

They offered to buy the elementary school building and the high school sports fields and operate a private school independently of the diocese, but that was rejected.

In Baltimore, the May 5 announcement about the Institute of Notre Dame came without warning, angering students, parents and alumni, and forcing the 161 freshmen, sophomores and juniors currently enrolled to scramble to find spots elsewhere.

Dubbing itself Saving IND, an alumni-led group obtained hundreds of signatures on an online petition supporting efforts to keep the school open. School officials have discouraged the campaign, saying the closure plans are final to declining enrollment and the need for millions of dollars for building repairs and other costs.

According to the school's official history, it provided shelter to black people escaping slavery along the Underground Railroad and served as a medical facility during the Civil War and the 1918 flu pandemic.

"It taught us what we needed to learn academically, and it taught us values," said Pelosi, whose mother also attended the school, in an interview with C-SPAN after the closure was announced by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. "Hot chocolate after Mass, that was a thing I remember with great joy."

Another casualty is Quigley Catholic High School, which has served the Pittsburgh suburbs of Beaver County since opening in Baden in 1967 with an enrollment of 440. It distinguished itself with a public speaking curriculum that led to seven state titles at an annual mock trial competition.

But the Pittsburgh diocese had projected an enrollment of just 93 students for the next school year, meaning it was time to shut the doors for good.

On Quigley's website, members of the school community were asked to share their memories "before Quigley Catholic fades into the sunset."

More than 80 alumni and parents responded, recalling athletic triumphs and favorite teachers. One alumnus told of drinking his first beer in the parking lot.

Quigley's guidance counselor, Sister Bridget Reilly, and her assistant, Marge Berckmiller, were at their office this week working to send the transcripts of students to other high schools they hope to attend in the fall.

Each worked at Quigley for about 35 years, and they made no effort to hide their sadness.

"It's going to leave an empty spot in all of our hearts," said Berckmiller, who met her husband when they both attended Quigley.

Reilly recalled learning about the closure in a Zoom meeting with school officials.

"We turned our videos off," she said. "I'm so happy I did, because I just broke down."

Associated Press video journalist Jessie Wardarski in Baden, Pennsylvania, contributed to this report.

Kelly Clarkson seeks divorce from husband of nearly 7 years

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kelly Clarkson has filed for divorce from her husband of nearly seven years, Brandon Blackstock.

The singer, talk show host and judge on "The Voice" filed court papers to end the marriage under her married name Kelly Blackstock on June 4 in Los Angeles.

The 38-year-old Clarkson and the 43-year-old Blackstock have a 5-year-old daughter and a 4-year-old son. Clarkson cited irreconcilable differences as the reason for the split and requested that she not be required to pay Blackstock spousal support.

The filing asks that the singer's legal last name be restored to Clarkson and it indicates that the couple had a prenuptial agreement.

The two wed in October 2013 in the first marriage for Clarkson and the second for Blackstock.

Blackstock, a talent manager who is the son of Clarkson's former manager, has two children from his first marriage.

Messages seeking comment from the couple's representatives on Thursday were not immediately returned.

Protesters topple Jefferson Davis statue in Virginia capital

By SARAH RANKIN and JONATHAN DREW Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Protesters pulled down a century-old statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis in the former capital of the Confederacy, adding it to the list of Old South monuments removed or damaged around the U.S. in the wake of George Floyd's death.

The 8-foot (2.4-meter) bronze figure on Richmond's grand Monument Avenue had been all but marked for removal by city leaders in a matter of months, but demonstrators took matters into their own hands Wednesday night, tying ropes around its legs and toppling it from its stone pedestal onto the pavement.

A crowd cheered and police looked on as the monument — installed by a Confederate heritage group in 1907 — was towed away.

There were no immediate reports of any arrests.

The toppling came on the same day NASCAR banned Confederate flags — a common sight for decades in a sport steeped in Southern tradition — at its races. Also this week, the streaming service HBO Max temporarily removed the 1939 movie "Gone With the Wind," criticized for romanticizing slavery and the Civil War-era South, to add historical context.

In the weeks since Floyd's death under a white Minneapolis police officer's knee set off protests and sporadic violence across the U.S. over the treatment of black people, many Confederate monuments have been damaged or taken down, some toppled by demonstrators, others removed by local authorities.

Authorities in Alabama got rid of a massive obelisk in Birmingham and a bronze likeness of a Confederate naval officer in Mobile. In Virginia, a 176-year-old slave auction block was removed in Fredericksburg, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy took down a statue in Alexandria.

The movement has extended around the world, with protesters decrying monuments to slave traders, imperialists and explorers, including Christopher Columbus, Cecil Rhodes and Belgium's King Leopold II.

The Davis monument was a few blocks away from a 12-ton, 61-foot-high equestrian statue of the most revered Confederate of them all, Gen. Robert E. Lee, that the state of Virginia is trying to take down. Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam last week ordered its removal, but a judge on Monday blocked such action for at least 10 days.

The spokesman for the Virginia division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, B. Frank Earnest, condemned the toppling of "public works of art" and likened losing the Confederate statues to losing a family member.

"The men who served under Robert E. Lee were my great-grandfathers or their brothers and their cousins. So it is my family," he said. "What if a crowd of any other group went and found the symbols of someone they didn't like and decided to tear them down? Everybody would be appalled."

He added: "I don't know why it's acceptable, why people who are descended from the Confederate

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Army and the Confederate soldiers, it's accepted in this country that you can do anything to us you want."

Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney had recently announced he would introduce an ordinance in July to remove the Davis monument and statues of other Confederates, including Gens. Stonewall Jackson and J.E.B. Stuart. A new state law that goes into effect this summer undoes protections for Confederate monuments and lets local governments decide what to do with them.

Stoney tweeted Thursday that he will push to quickly dismantle the other monuments. Both he and the governor asked protesters not to do it themselves.

"For the sake of public safety, I ask the community to allow us to legally contract to have the remaining ones removed professionally, to prevent any potential harm that could result from attempts to remove them without professional experience," Stoney said.

While it wasn't clear what would happen to the toppled Davis statue, the mayor indicated it is gone for good.

"He never deserved to be up on that pedestal," the mayor said, calling Davis a "racist & traitor."

At the monument site on Thursday, Stacy Burrs said: "It shouldn't have taken this long to get to where it is now."

"If it were me, the whole thing would just be razed," said Burrs, a black man who served on a mayoral commission a few years ago that recommended taking down the statue.

Longtime Richmond resident Karen Mizrach, who is white, suggested replacing the statues along Monument Avenue with fountains, gardens or parks, saying: "It's ridiculous that these monuments are such a focal point of the city."

"I think it is part of history. But I think we can leave it in history," she said, "and we need to move forward and do something different with our streets and our monuments."

Also Wednesday night, protesters in Portsmouth, Virginia, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) away, knocked the heads off the statues of four Confederates and pulled one of the statues to the ground after the City Council scheduled a hearing on the monument's fate for the end of July. Mayor John Rowe said police didn't intervene because that could have escalated the situation.

A protester was hit in the head and knocked unconscious as the monument fell. He was hospitalized with what police said were life-threatening injuries.

James Boyd, the Portsmouth NAACP chapter president, said that "people are just tired of being sick and tired" and that the monument represents more than 400 years of oppression.

On Tuesday, protesters in Richmond tore down a statue of Columbus, set it on fire and pitched it into a lake.

Supporters of Confederate monuments have argued that they are important reminders of history, while opponents contend they glorify those who made war against the U.S. to preserve slavery.

The Davis monument and many others across the South were erected decades after the Civil War during the Jim Crow era, when states imposed tough new segregation laws, and during the Lost Cause movement, in which historians and others sought to recast the South's rebellion as a noble undertaking, fought to defend not slavery but states' rights.

Drew reported from Durham, North Carolina. Associated Press writers Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia, and Alan Suderman in Richmond, Virginia, contributed to this report.

Final tests of some COVID-19 vaccines to start next month

LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

The first experimental COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. is on track to begin a huge study next month to prove if it really can fend off the coronavirus, while hard-hit Brazil is testing a different shot from China.

Where to do crucial, late-stage testing and how many volunteers are needed to roll up their sleeves are big worries for health officials as the virus spread starts tapering off in parts of the world.

Moderna Inc. said Thursday the vaccine it is developing with the National Institutes of Health will be tested in 30,000 people in the U.S. Some will get the real shot and some a dummy shot, as scientists

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carefully compare which group winds up with the most infections.

With far fewer COVID-19 cases in China, Sinovac Biotech turned to Brazil, the epicenter of Latin America's outbreak, for at least part of its final testing. The government of São Paulo announced Thursday that Sinovac will ship enough of its experimental vaccine to test in 9,000 Brazilians starting next month.

If it works, "with this vaccine we will be able to immunize millions of Brazilians," said São Paulo's Gov. Joao Doria.

Worldwide, about a dozen COVID-19 potential vaccines are in early stages of testing. The NIH expects to help several additional shots move into those final, large-scale studies this summer, including one made by Oxford University that's also being tested in a few thousand volunteers in Brazil.

There's no guarantee any of the experimental shots will pan out.

But if all goes well, "there will be potential to get answers" on which vaccines work by the end of the year, Dr. John Mascola, who directs NIH's vaccine research center, told a meeting of the National Academy of Medicine on Wednesday.

Vaccines train the body to recognize a virus and fight back, and specialists say it's vital to test shots made in different ways — to increase the odds that at least one kind will work.

Sinovac's vaccine is made by growing the coronavirus in a lab and then killing it. So-called "whole inactivated" vaccines are tried-and-true, used for decades to make shots against polio, flu and other diseases — giving the body a sneak peek at the germ itself — but growing the virus is difficult and requires lab precautions.

The vaccine made by the NIH and Moderna contains no actual virus. Those shots contain the genetic code for the aptly named "spike" protein that coats the surface of the coronavirus. The body's cells use that code to make some harmless spike protein that the immune system reacts to, ready if it later encounters the real thing. The so-called mRNA vaccine is easier to make, but it's a new and unproven technology.

Neither company has yet published results of how their shots fared in smaller, earlier-stage studies, designed to check for serious side effects and how well people's immune systems respond to different doses.

Even before proof that any potential vaccine will work, companies and governments are beginning to stockpile millions of doses so they can be ready to start vaccinating as soon as answers arrive.

In the U.S., a program called "Operation Warp Speed" aims to have 300 million doses on hand by January. Under Brazil's agreement with Sinovac, the Instituto Butantan will learn to produce the Chinese shot.

AP journalist Marcelo Silva de Sousa contributed to this report.

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Wait to reopen? Some NYC shops run out of patience

By **JAKE SEINER** and **KATHY WILLENS** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In a city famous for its lack of patience, some businesses have jumped ahead on what's supposed to be a slow and methodical emergence from coronavirus lockdown.

Stores in parts of the New York City have already started to allow customers inside to shop, even though the phased reopening that began Monday only allows retailers to sell merchandise via curbside pickup for now.

At least a dozen customers perused racks of women's clothing Wednesday inside Mini-Max in Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhood.

Shoppers mostly self-policed for social distancing, which wasn't difficult given the store's size, but the only restriction applied by owner, Albert Abeal, was that customers must wear masks.

"We just opened. Everybody's hungry for merchandise," said Abeal, who has owned the store for about 20 years. He said business this week had essentially returned to normal, although he didn't expect that to last. "They didn't buy clothes for so long. It's going to slow down in a week."

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Abel said he believed he was allowed to have customers inside because it sold face masks and alcohol, although the latter did not appear to be on display. Food and beverage stores have always been exempt from the state's closure rules.

Other shops in the neighborhood were also letting in customers.

Mutali Sing, owner of J&M Sneaker, stood at his shop's door and encouraged customers to call ahead for curbside pickup, but said he's had trouble enforcing the policy.

"Once they see you are open, they think you are open like normal, like you can walk in and do the browsing," he said.

He's hardly in a position to turn them away -- not with his landlord demanding he continue paying his \$8,000 monthly rent.

Customers are not supposed to be permitted indoors at most retailers until phase two of reopening, which could come as early as June 22, although Mayor Bill de Blasio has said it could be delayed until July.

The cautious return to business is intended to prevent a resurgence of the coronavirus, which has killed at least 22,000 people in the city. While the number of new infections has dropped dramatically, it has not stopped entirely. Through the end of last week, hundreds of people were continuing to test positive each day.

In other parts of New York state, businesses are further along in the reopening plan. Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Thursday that several regions in the center and north of the state would be allowed to go to the third phase, which, among other things, allows restaurants to welcome patrons to their dining rooms again, though with reduced occupancy.

Cuomo said the state has gotten some complaints about businesses not abiding by social distancing rules. "Please follow the guidelines and do what is permissible to do," he said.

Around 2,000 people remained hospitalized statewide with the virus, which caused 36 deaths Wednesday, Cuomo said.

As the pressure on hospitals has eased, the financial pressure on merchants has mounted. Opening for many is an act of desperation.

Eddie Zahoor, owner of Cap & Clothing Sports Inc., is letting a maximum of two customers into his small sports apparel shop, also in Brooklyn's Sunset Park section. He's giving away masks to customers if they don't have them and has a bottle of hand sanitizer next to the front door.

Zahoor had hoped for a rush of shoppers when he opened Monday for the first time since March 20 but said business has been slow. He applied for three government grants but was denied for all of them — something that stays top of mind for him as he considers how to follow government guidelines for reopening.

He hasn't paid rent in three months and is trying to pay back those bills in installments.

"My landlord keeps pushing me," he said. "I told him, 'Just wait.'"

Jay Han at Honey Fashion is feeling similar pressure. He's managing the shop owned by his wife, Grace Kim, while she takes care of their children. Han opened Honey Fashion's doors fully on Tuesday, hoping to do enough business to offset significant financial pressures.

"Our landlord said, 'See you in court,'" he said. "Oh my God, that's not fair. They don't care about the retailer. What's the government's plan? What about the small business owners? How can I live? I don't understand. I'm still waiting to see if they're going to help us or not."

Lafayette Park near White House: A soapbox for social unrest

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration's use of smoke bombs and pepper balls to rout civil rights demonstrators from Lafayette Park near the White House has emboldened protesters and added a new chapter to the site's storied history as soapbox for social and political unrest.

"Gas us. Shoot us. Beat us. We're still here," said a sign hung on the tall black fence erected to wall off the park after law enforcement officers clashed with demonstrators protesting the death of George Floyd, a black man who died in police custody in Minneapolis.

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Lia Poteet, a 28-year-old resident of Washington, D.C., who was injured during the demonstration, has already returned to the area to demonstrate again.

"I'm still going back to Lafayette Square because it is the epicenter of our democracy," Poteet said.

She said an officer knocked her down with his riot shield, kicked her in the stomach and hit her with his baton, causing bruising on her torso and personal areas. As she and the other protesters were coughing from the smoke, two flash bangs exploded at her feet, she said.

The park, just steps from Trump's front yard, was where an enslaved woman named Alethia Browning Tanner used \$1,400 she earned from selling vegetables in the park to buy her freedom in 1810. Back then, the 7-acre plot was called the President's Park. In 1824, it was landscaped and named for Marquis de Lafayette, a French general who was friends with George Washington and fought in the Revolutionary War.

Civil War soldiers camped there and hung their laundry to dry on the park's statue of Andrew Jackson. Women protested for the right to vote in the 1910s. In the 1940s, women in dresses and hats peacefully protested against lynchings. "Lynching in America is a disgrace. Must it Continue?" said one sign.

In past decades, the park has been the stage for protesters decrying wars in Vietnam and Iraq. Demonstrators have rallied for and against the Equal Rights Amendment, and fought for gay and lesbian rights.

On any given day individuals or small groups set up shop in Lafayette Park to protest anything from Russian interference in the presidential election to visiting foreign leaders to China's persecution of the Falun Gong religious movement.

In 1981, William Thomas began an anti-nuclear vigil on the park sidewalk, believed to be the longest continuous anti-war protest in U.S. history. When he died in 2009, other protesters manned the tiny tent and banner that said: "Live by the bomb, die by the bomb."

Civil rights is again the topic of the day, but skirmishes between police and protesters over the issue haven't been common.

"I do not know of any clashes in Lafayette Park during civil rights protests," said Peter Levy, history professor at York College of Pennsylvania and author of "The Great Uprising: Race Riots in Urban America During the 1960s."

In 1968, police clashed with protesters at a march for economic justice for the poor, held after the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., but that was closer to the Lincoln Memorial, he said. Anti-Vietnam War demonstrators clashed with troops outside the Pentagon in 1967, 1969 and 1970. Police action didn't deter demonstrators from returning, and Levy said he doesn't think it will keep protesters away from Lafayette Park either.

"In fact, the opposite might take place, with President Trump's clearing of the park making it somewhat sacred ground for protesters in the future, who will see it as a new symbol of dissent," Levy said.

Law enforcement officials say dozens of officers were injured during protests in the park on Monday, June 1, and the previous weekend. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a suit on behalf of protesters and the Black Lives Matter organization in Washington against Trump, Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Attorney General William Barr and other law enforcement officials. The suit calls the action to shut down the Lafayette Square demonstration a "manifestation of the very despotism against which the First Amendment was intended to protect."

Park protesters have gotten different receptions from previous occupants of the Oval Office.

White House butler John H. Johnson served up hot coffee, not smoke bombs, to protesters in the park in February 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy, according to the White House Historical Association.

During the Gulf War, anti-war demonstrators gathered in the park and protesters beat drums and buckets well into the night, reportedly keeping President George H.W. Bush awake. Police tried to outlaw the drums by deeming them "structures," which are banned in the park.

"By keeping their toes under the buckets, the drummers persuaded police their instruments could not be so classified," according to a story in the American Bar Association Journal in April 1991. "Police then arrived with decibel meters to enforce noise limits."

Garrett Bond of Mount Rainier, Maryland, said he had no inkling that the police would turn on protesters at

the recent demonstration. As he fled, Bond, 26, saw a man leaning against a pillar in the front of St. John's Church. He was bleeding from the face with what Bond believed was a rubber bullet lodged in his chin.

"It got him right under his bottom lip," Bond said, describing the police action as "unprovoked" and "unnecessary." As he tried to help the injured man, Bond said, he saw a law enforcement officer in full riot gear jumping over hedges and sprinting toward them. Bond and others led the man away to seek medical attention.

On Wednesday, Lakeisha Dames, who also lives in nearby Maryland, brought her 7-year-old daughter to see the posters and artwork posted on fences that had prevented people from exercising their First Amendment rights at the doorstep of the White House. The park was reopened to the public Thursday, and National Park Service crews were power-washing graffiti off buildings and statues and using blow torches and paint to touch up bronze busts.

"I had to come down because I wanted my daughter to see history in the making," Dames said, adding that she hoped the posters posted on the fences would someday be displayed at a national museum. "Definitely needs to be commemorated and memorialized there."

Associated Press writer Nathan Ellgren contributed to this report.

Trump picks Tulsa for return of signature campaign rallies

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is planning to hold his first rally of the coronavirus era on June 19 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And he says he's planning more events in Florida, Texas and Arizona as well.

Trump made the announcement as he met with a handful of African American supporters Wednesday afternoon for a roundtable discussion.

Trump's signature rallies often draw tens of thousands of people but have been on hiatus since March 2 because of the coronavirus pandemic, which has now killed more than 110,000 people in the U.S.

"A beautiful new venue, brand new. We're looking forward to it," Trump said during a White House event. "They've done a great job with COVID, as you know, the state of Oklahoma."

The rally will take place on Juneteenth, the commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Tulsa has its own troubling history on race. Its once-thriving African American business community was decimated in 1921, when a racist white mob killed hundreds of black residents. Black residents attempted to rebuild in the decades that followed, only to see their work erased during urban renewal of the 1960s.

Trump's campaign has been eager to resume rallies as it tries to move past the pandemic, even as cases continue to rise in some parts of the country. He has focused most of his rallies this year on battleground states, although Oklahoma is reliably Republican.

Trump carried Oklahoma by more than 36 percentage points in 2016, more than doubling the vote the total of his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton.

Oklahoma was among the earliest states to begin loosening coronavirus restrictions, with salons, spas and barbershops reopening in late April. Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt's most recent reopening phase places no limits on group gathering sizes as of June 1 and leaves the decision about how closely to adhere to social distancing guidelines up to business owners and local officials.

Stitt said the state was honored that the president was visiting.

"The President is making Oklahoma his first campaign stop since March 2, and his visit here confirms Oklahoma is the national example in responsibly and safely reopening," Stitt said in a statement issued Wednesday by his office.

State health officials say 47 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Tulsa County on Tuesday, the most recent county data available. That brought the overall total of cases reported to the county to 1,308. The number of current active cases was put at 274, an 13% increase from Monday. One new death brought the county's COVID-19 death toll to 61.

In a statement, Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum said the city was still working to confirm details about the Trump

visit and the rally venue.

Campaign officials did not respond to questions about why Tulsa was chosen and what safety precautions would be taken for those who attend.

Trump's reelection prospects will greatly turn on how the country grades his administration's response to the coronavirus as well as its response to the death of George Floyd, a black man who died while in police custody after an officer pressed his knee onto Floyd's neck for more than 8 minutes.

A Trump campaign spokesperson tweeted a movie trailer-style video earlier Wednesday that advertised: "This month we're back."

Associated Press writers Kat Stafford in Detroit and Terry Wallace in Dallas contributed to this report.

This story was first published on June 10, 2020. It was updated on June 11, 2020 to correct an error that 973 people have died from COVID-19 in Tulsa County. State health officials report the death toll stood at 61 on Wednesday.

Unemployment woes a mounting strain on Trump in Florida

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN** Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — When the tourists stopped coming in March, so did Lorin Lynch's paychecks from a Tampa Bay hotel. She burned through her savings while awaiting financial relief from Florida's unemployment office. It took nearly three months before the 26-year-old single mother finally got a check.

Even as Florida reopens for business, Lynch is still fuming over an unemployment system that was among the country's slowest to respond to the economic calamity triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. The state's own statistics show that about 40% of the 2.2 million claims it received remain unpaid.

Even with unemployment checks now arriving, Lynch said, "I'm honestly terrified about how I'm going to feed my son each day and what's going to happen next."

That frustration is a problem for Florida Republicans as they try to secure their state again for President Donald Trump. Trump's path to winning reelection is exceedingly narrow without Florida's 29 electoral votes. The broken unemployment insurance system raises the prospect that thousands of out-of-work Floridians will bring their anger to the voting booth in a state where races are decided by the slimmest of margins.

"I've been a Trump supporter, but I'm kind of questioning everything," said Lynch, who voted for him in 2016 when she lived in Minneapolis. She was initially impressed by his business acumen, she said, but is now questioning his leadership in crisis.

Much of her anger is directed at Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Trump ally. DeSantis has acknowledged that the unemployment system known as CONNECT was like a "jalopy in the Daytona 500" being "left in the dust."

To stem criticism and the political fallout, DeSantis beefed up staffing and ordered additional servers to help rescue the beleaguered system. He claims the system is now functioning and blames user error and fraudulent claims for some of the unpaid benefits.

As of Wednesday, state data showed more than 880,000 claims remain unpaid, while 1.2 million Floridians have received unemployment benefits totaling nearly \$5 billion.

In Washington, the Senate's top Democrat, Chuck Schumer, has asked the Labor Department for an internal investigation. Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, recently assailed the system in a TV interview.

"We have to make the unemployment system function, and your state isn't very functional," he told WFTV in Orlando, taking a shot at DeSantis. "And that relates to management of the system."

Florida's unemployment woes add to the troubles for Trump five months from Election Day. Polling shows social unrest, the pandemic and the economic fallout have eroded his support among older people and in key battleground states.

Democrats in Florida have been handed a cudgel, said Aubrey Jewett, a University of Central Florida associate professor who co-wrote "Politics in Florida."

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"There is a large pool of voters who might have their votes swayed because of this issue. The question is how many," Jewell said.

Protesters tried to draw attention to the system's woes Wednesday by holding rallies in Tallahassee, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa and other communities.

Some of the hardest-hit counties lie along the state's crucial Interstate 4 corridor, stretching from Orlando to Tampa Bay. In Orange County, home to Disney World, nearly a fourth of the workforce lost jobs. In nearby Osceola County, about a third of workers are unemployed.

Hundreds of thousands of Floridians in the Democratic strongholds of Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Broward counties were also left reeling by job losses, and Democrats have begun highlighting the unemployment fiasco to boost party turnout.

Florida, like other states, has begun lifting the restrictions that caused its economy to sputter and unemployment to surge. In April, Florida's unemployment rate hit 12.9%, up from 2.8% in February. Figures for May haven't yet been released.

On Thursday, the U.S. Department of Labor reported new jobless claims in Florida continued to fall as restaurants and retailers began calling people back to work. Some 110,000 Floridians filed for new jobless claims last week, according to the federal government, down from more than 207,000 claims the week before.

"It's one of those things where once the issue is solved, it's going to disappear," said Florida Republican Party chairperson Joe Gruters. "I don't think anybody ever expected the wave of unemployment applications at the same time the way it did during this crisis."

Gruters' mother was among those who couldn't get an unemployment check.

"Someone should go to jail over that," Gruters tweeted in April.

Trump has blamed Democrats for any "lateness" in payments, saying he "told them this would happen, especially with many states which have old computers," he tweeted in April. He did not elaborate.

Republicans have since turned to promising a rapid rebound. "They've already built the best economy in Florida's history once, and they will do it again after they are reelected this November," the Republican National Committee said.

But Democrats aren't likely to let it go. They've sought to cast the issue as the result of a long-standing Republican effort to weaken the social safety net in Florida.

They point to changes made under the previous governor, Republican Rick Scott, who won election to the U.S. Senate in 2018. Under his watch, Florida cut the number of weeks people could collect benefits and put it on a sliding scale — from 12 to 23 weeks — depending on the state's unemployment rate.

Claimants in Florida currently get aid for up to 12 weeks -- tied with North Carolina for the shortest period of any state.

Other changes made it more difficult for some to apply, including by eliminating paper applications and stiffening the required proof that recipients were actively looking for work. Critics say the changes were aimed at reducing payments, as well as artificially deflating unemployment numbers.

Carolina Nunez is registered as a Republican but in recent years has supported Democrats. When she lost her paychecks in March and struggled to claim benefits, she blamed Republicans.

So did her husband, Chris Kee, a sheriff's deputy in central Florida, who voted for DeSantis in 2018 and for Trump in 2016.

Despite uncertainty spawned by the coronavirus and anti-police brutality protests, Kee and Nunez are sure of one thing: They won't be voting for Trump in November.

"We hear one thing coming from our governor and people who share his views, saying everything is fixed," he said. "But everyone else who is going through the system, or is trying to receive benefits, is saying otherwise."

Associated Press writer Kelli Kennedy in Miami contributed to this report.

Black Lives Matter goes mainstream after Floyd's death

By DAVID CRARY and AARON MORRISON Associated Press

For much of its seven-year existence, the Black Lives Matter movement has been seen by many Americans as a divisive, even radical force. Its very name enraged its foes, who countered with the slogans "Blue Lives Matter" and "All Lives Matter."

Times have changed — dramatically so — as evidenced during the wave of protests sparked by George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police. Black Lives Matter has gone mainstream — and black activists are carefully assessing how they should respond.

A few examples of the changed landscape:

Sen. Mitt Romney, a Republican stalwart, joined a Black Lives Matter march. Some NASCAR drivers, whose fan base includes legions of conservative whites, embraced the phrase. So did NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred and executives of all 30 major league teams. The mayor of Washington ordered the words painted in large letters on a street near the White House. Now, Black Lives Matter Plaza turns up in driving directions from Google Maps.

Like many black activists, Sakira Cook is pleased by such developments but also cautious. She and others worry that businesses and politicians will hijack the slogan without any real commitment to doing the hard work needed to fight racism.

"Black Lives Matter is not just a rallying cry," said Cook, director of the Justice Reform Program at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

"It actually means you have to start to interrogate the systemic racism and inequalities that exist in our society and help to dismantle them. You must make sure you're not co-opting this for your own purposes."

The Black Lives Matter movement emerged amid anger over the acquittal of George Zimmerman, the Florida man who shot and killed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in 2012.

As a slogan, "Black lives matter" soon became as widely heard at protests as "No justice, no peace."

Nationally, the phrase was praised for its clarity and attacked as strident and hostile toward police. But support grew as the list of slain black people got longer: Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile.

"When we started Black Lives Matter, it was really to have a larger conversation around this country about its relationship to black people," said Patrisse Cullors, one of three black women who founded the Black Lives Matter Global Network, with chapters throughout the U.S. and in Britain and Canada. "What keeps happening, time and time again, is we're witnessing black people die on camera, and there is little to no accountability."

While large donations poured into the new, loose-knit group of black-led grassroots organizations, prominent figures within the movement were subjected to years of rebukes and threats from police, their unions and elected officials.

Cullors said she and others were dismissed as too militant to be taken seriously by many of the individuals and corporations in the mainstream that now embrace their message.

In 2018, news reports revealed that the FBI's counterterrorism division had begun tracking anti-police threats from black activists in the wake of deadly ambushes on police officers in New York, Texas and Louisiana. Many Black Lives Matter activists feared it was a repeat of the Cointelpro era, when the FBI illegally conducted surveillance and sabotage against civil rights groups and other organizations suspected of having links to the Communist Party in the 1950s and '60s.

Today, the Black Lives Matter movement boasts a following of millions across social media platforms. A coalition known as the Movement for Black Lives, formed in 2014, now includes more than 150 affiliate organizations that have organized around such causes as defunding police departments and reinvesting in struggling black communities.

Its agenda focuses heavily on overhauling police training, the use of force and the punishment of rogue officers. The movement is also pressing to erase economic inequality and disparities in education and health care.

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"There are hundreds of thousands of black visionaries around the world that are doing the work that people keep saying, 'Oh, that's never going to happen. ... Not in this lifetime,'" Cullors said. "And look what happened. Something gets unlocked, and because we've already laid the seeds, we've already had the conversations, the people doing the work get to bear the fruit."

Although the current surge of support for the movement is vindicating, it's not sufficient to realize the original vision, Cullors said.

Malik Shabazz, president of Black Lawyers for Justice, praised "Black lives matter" as "one of the most brilliant and creative phrases of our generation," one that has won acceptance well beyond the movement.

"There's a danger it will become co-opted and mainstreamed," he said. "But right now, anyone in our struggle would be happy more people are using it."

Shabazz said it is important for black people to remain at the forefront of the movement, even as more Americans of other races voice support.

"It's up to us that we don't get happy with a couple of weeks of protest and demonstrations," he said. "This is a good start. We just have to dig in and stay for the long haul. "

Khalilah Brown-Dean, a political science professor at Quinnipiac University who has written about inequality and criminal justice reform, said uttering the slogan is easy. What comes next matters more.

"It's much more important for public officials and policymakers to inculcate that belief into the very fabric of how they lead and govern," she said. "Painting a street, marching in a rally, or wearing kente cloth are only useful if these symbolic acts translate into substantive action."

The counter-slogans that emerged in 2014-15 — "Blue Lives Matter" and "All Lives Matter" — have surfaced only sporadically in the past two weeks. Plans for a Blue Lives Matter rally in Las Vegas were scrapped after the city's police department refused to help promote it.

"All Lives Matter," from the start, angered some black activists who said it minimized the entrenched racism faced by black people.

Last week, longtime Sacramento Kings TV broadcaster Grant Napear resigned after tweeting "ALL LIVES MATTER" when asked his opinion on the Black Lives Matter movement. On Saturday, the top editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer resigned amid a furor over the headline "Buildings Matter, Too."

1.5 million more laid-off workers seek unemployment benefits

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — About 1.5 million laid-off workers applied for U.S. unemployment benefits last week, evidence that many Americans are still losing their jobs even as the economy appears to be slowly recovering with more businesses partially reopening.

The latest figure from the Labor Department marked the 10th straight weekly decline in applications for jobless aid since they peaked in mid-March when the coronavirus hit hard. Still, the pace of layoffs remains historically high.

The total number of people who are receiving unemployment aid fell slightly, a sign that some people who were laid off when restaurants, retail chains and small businesses suddenly shut down have been recalled to work.

The figures are "consistent with a labor market that has begun what will be a slow and difficult healing process," said Nancy Vanden Houten, an economist at Oxford Economics. "Still, initial jobless claims remain at levels that at the start of the year might have seemed unthinkable."

Last week's jobs report showed that employers added 2.5 million jobs in May, an unexpected increase that suggested that the job market has bottomed out.

But the recovery has begun slowly. Though the unemployment rate unexpectedly declined from 14.7%, it is still a high 13.3%. And even with the May hiring gain, just one in nine jobs that were lost in March and April have returned. Nearly 21 million people are officially classified as unemployed.

Even those figures don't capture the full scope of the damage to the job market. Including people the government said had been erroneously categorized as employed in the May jobs report and those who lost

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jobs but didn't look for new ones, 32.5 million people are out of work, economists estimate. That would have raised May's unemployment rate to 19.7%.

Thursday's report also shows that an additional 706,000 people applied for jobless benefits last week under a new program for self-employed and gig workers that made them eligible for aid for the first time. These figures aren't adjusted for seasonal variations, so the government doesn't include them in the official count.

The weekly reports on applications for unemployment benefits track layoffs. But they don't directly account for hiring, which can offset layoffs. The surprise job gain in May suggests that some employers are recalling laid-off workers.

Private real-time data also points to steady, if modest, rehiring. Data from Kronos, whose software tracks workers' hours, shows that the number of shifts worked has recovered steadily since bottoming in mid-April. Shifts worked have risen 25% since then, recovering nearly half the work that was lost to the pandemic-induced business shutdowns.

"The growth in shifts worked ... indicates that furloughed employees are being called back to work as each state opens up," said Dave Gilbertson, a Kronos executive.

Twenty-four states reported a rise in applications for jobless aid last week, up from just four the week before, though the state data isn't adjusted for seasonal trends so it can be volatile. California, New York and Massachusetts reported sharp increases. Florida, Georgia and Texas, some of the earliest states to reopen their economies, reported large declines.

In February, the economy fell into a deep recession, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the association of economists that is the official arbiter of recessions. The Federal Reserve estimated Wednesday that the economy will shrink 6.5% this year. That would be, by far, the deepest annual contraction on records dating to World War II.

Even as restaurants, bars and gyms reopen, they are doing so at lower capacity. And consumer spending on such services remains far below what it was before the viral outbreak.

Unemployment benefits are providing significant support for jobless Americans, with total payments having reached \$94 billion in May — six times the previous record set in 2010 just after the previous recession. This time, the benefits include an additional \$600 a week from the federal government.

But that extra benefit is set to end July 31, and the Trump administration opposes extending it. Its opposition has set up a possible clash with House Democrats, who have approved legislation to extend the \$600-a-week in federal benefits for an additional six months.

Republicans in Congress argue that the extra \$600, which comes on top of state benefits that average about \$375 nationwide, means many of the unemployed are receiving more money from jobless benefits than they earned at their old jobs. Republicans argue that this discourages people from returning to work.

Studies suggest that roughly two-thirds of the recipients are receiving total unemployment aid that exceeds their previous paychecks. But many workers are also wary about returning to their old jobs for fear of contracting the virus. And recipients who receive aid can lose their benefits if they turn down job offers.

Karin Jensen of Concord, California, has been out of work since being laid off from a managerial position with Men's Wearhouse in late March. Jensen, 27, says she plans to return to her job whenever she is called back and is grateful that her company is continuing employee health care in the meantime.

Jensen acknowledged that receiving the extra \$600 has made her less eager to return to work because she is among recipients whose total benefits exceed their former income. But she's also worried about returning to retail work.

"I'd be in close contact with people," Jensen said. "We have to measure customers, actually touch them. There's no way we could do any minimum social distancing if we were to return to business as usual. I'm more than a little uneasy about it."

AP Writer John Flesher in Traverse City, Michigan, contributed to this report.

As protests grow, Belgium faces its racist colonial past

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

TERVUREN, Belgium (AP) — When it comes to ruthless colonialism and racism, few historical figures are more notorious than Leopold II, the Belgian king who held Congo as his personal property and may have been responsible for the deaths of millions of Congolese more than a century ago.

Yet across Belgium, the monarch's name is still found on streets and tunnels. Cities are dotted with his statues and busts, even as evidence of his misdeeds has piled up over the decades.

Now a reckoning seems to be at hand.

The protests sweeping the world after George Floyd's death in the U.S. have added fuel to a movement to confront Europe's role in the slave trade and its colonial past. Leopold is increasingly seen as a stain on the nation over which he reigned from 1865 to 1909. Demonstrators want him removed from public view.

In just the last week, a long-running trickle of dissent that resulted in little more than occasional vandalism has turned into a torrent, with statues of Leopold defaced in a half-dozen cities. In the port town of Antwerp, where much of the Congolese rubber, minerals and other natural riches entered the nation, one statue was burned and had to be removed for repairs. It is unclear whether it will ever come back.

"When you erect a statue, it lauds the actions of who is represented. The Germans would not get it into their head to erect statues of Hitler and cheer them," said Mireille-Tsheusi Robert, president of the Congolese action group Bamko-Cran, which wants all Leopold statues removed from Belgian cities. "For us, Leopold has committed a genocide."

On Wednesday, an internet petition to rid the capital, Brussels, of any Leopold statue swept past 70,000 signatures. Also this week, regional education authorities promised history course reforms to better explain the true character of colonialism. And at the University of Mons in southern Belgium, academic authorities removed a bust of the king, saying they wanted to make sure "nobody could be offended by its presence."

Similar efforts are unfolding in Britain, where at least two statues of prominent figures connected to the slave trade have been taken down by protesters or city officials. London's mayor has promised a review of all monuments. In the U.S., protesters tore down a statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis along Richmond, Virginia's famed Monument Avenue on Wednesday night. The death of Floyd has prompted similar Confederate monument removals around the nation.

In Kinshasa, a replica of the main Leopold statue in Brussels had already been relegated to a museum park ages ago. The equestrian bronze was first erected in 1928, but seven years after independence from Belgium in 1960 it was ordered taken down by then dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. In 2005, authorities put it back up, intending it to serve as a reminder of the horrors of colonial rule — with an updated plaque. Only a day later, though, it was removed following a public outcry. For the last decade, it has sat in a park of colonial monuments.

Leopold ruled Congo as a fiefdom, forcing many of its people into slavery to extract resources for his personal profit. His early rule, starting in 1885, was famous for its brutality, which some experts say left as many as 10 million dead.

After his ownership of Congo ended in 1908, he handed the central African country over to the Belgian state, which continued to hold sway over an area 75 times its size until the nation became independent in 1960.

Leopold has come to symbolize the racism and inequality citizens of Congolese descent have had to endure. Next to the royal palace stands an equestrian statue with Leopold gazing solemnly toward the horizon. On Wednesday, his hands and eyes were covered with red paint, and expletives were spray-painted on the side of the monument.

Maximilian Christiaens, an architect with a Congolese mother and Belgian father, who came to see the statue after the defacing, realizes the issue is part of his identity. Since Congo achieved independence, Belgium's Congolese population has swelled to about 230,000 in a nation of 11 million.

"You know, we feel at home here, but seeing symbols like this in the city and all over the country gives us the opposite signal," Christiaens said. He would like to see them torn down.

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A similar struggle is playing out in the majestic woods east of Brussels in Tervuren, where the palatial Royal Museum for Central Africa stands. It was built over a century ago to glorify Leopold's colonial exploits and to convince Belgium citizens that their country was delivering civilization to the heart of wild Africa.

Museum Director Guido Gryseels fully understands the challenges and the sensitivities, especially after a Leopold statue was defaced in the gardens outside the museum last week. He has sought to shift the museum's views on colonialism into a contemporary reassessment of a flawed past. This week, the Black Lives Matter logo was displayed on digital screens at the museum entrance.

As part of a major renovation he oversaw, Gryseels consigned the racist statues of Congolese and the glorifying busts of the Belgian military to the "depot" of outdated sculptures in the museum's cellars.

"We wanted to keep them somewhere so that the visitors could still see, so that we could explain: 'This is how we looked at Africa before,'" Gryseels said.

Upstairs, in the grand rooms, the only bust of Leopold on display is made of ivory and aims to explain how the plunder of the country extended to the wholesale slaughter of elephants.

As a listed architectural treasure, Leopold's royal double L monogram is still plastered all over the building. But Congolese artists have been asked to make a counterpoint, and in the main hall now stands a sculpture of a skull of a Congolese chief who was beheaded by a Belgian. In front of statues that could not be moved because they were protected, there are now transparent drapes with images criticizing Belgian actions in Congo.

"It would have been impossible 30 years ago, but there is a step forward," Robert said. Still, she said the changes do not go far enough and the museum needs to better embrace Congolese in its management structure.

Just about everybody acknowledges that Belgian society needs to take a hard look at its past. The Catholic church, the dominant force in education during much of Belgium's existence, was at worst an active participant in colonialism, at best a passive bystander. And since many Belgians had family members who went to Congo to seek their fortunes, there is a sense of unease in confronting the history of racism and exploitation.

"The amnesia is linked to the money the Belgians made in Congo," Robert said.

For many years, Belgian colonial authorities peddled the idea that the king went to Congo to stop the slave trade, Gryseels said, when it was really "a pretext to make big economic gains."

Jean-Yves Kamale in Kinshasa contributed.

Read all AP stories about protests against racism and police brutality at <http://apnews.com/GeorgeFloyd>

Floyd killing finds echoes of abuse in South Africa, Kenya

By **GERALD IMRAY** and **TOM ODULA** Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Collins Khosa was killed by law enforcement officers in a poor township in Johannesburg over a cup of beer left in his yard. The 40-year-old black man was choked, slammed against a wall, beaten, kicked and hit with the butt of a rifle by the soldiers as police watched, his family says.

Two months later, South Africans staged a march against police brutality. But it was mostly about the killing of George Floyd in the United States, with the case of Khosa, who died on April 10, raised only briefly.

"We also lost our loved one. South Africa, where are you?" Khosa's partner, Nomsa Montsha, asked in a wrenching TV interview Friday, eight weeks after she held his hand as he died while waiting for an ambulance.

Her words, in a soft, steady voice, were a searing rebuke of the perceived apathy in South Africa over Khosa's death. The army exonerated the soldiers in a report that concluded he died from a blunt force head injury that was no one's fault. His family is still seeking a criminal case.

Floyd's death also emboldened a small number of people in Kenya to march and tell their own stories of

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injustice and brutality by police.

Despite racial reconciliation that emerged after the end of the apartheid system, poor and black South Africans still fall victim to security forces that now are mostly black. The country is plagued by violent crime, and police often are accused of resorting to heavy-handed tactics.

Journalist Daneel Knoetze, who looked into police brutality in South Africa between 2012 and 2019, found that there were more than 42,000 criminal complaints against police, which included more than 2,800 killings — more than one a day. There were more than 27,000 cases of alleged assault by police, many classified as torture, and victims were “overwhelmingly” poor and black, he said.

“It is clear that in South Africa, 26 years of democracy have not as yet ensured that black lives matter as much as white lives,” said a statement last week from the Nelson Mandela Foundation, which promotes the vision of the anti-apartheid leader and the country’s first black president.

Angelo Fick, who researches issues of human rights and equality, said white people are policed differently from blacks in South Africa in what he calls “the echoes of apartheid.”

Khosa’s family said his beating death followed accusations by the soldiers that he was drinking a beer in his yard, which was not illegal even though buying alcohol was prohibited at the time because of South Africa’s strict coronavirus lockdown.

The sale of tobacco also is illegal during the lockdown, and middle-class whites discovered buying cigarettes have gotten off with a warning from police.

Montsha described how the soldiers, while beating Khosa, struck her with sjamboks, the heavy whips wielded by security forces during the apartheid era. Police and soldiers still carry the notorious weapons.

“The old house. You put new furniture in but it’s still the old house,” Fick said of the security forces.

In Kenya, the police force has for two decades been ranked the country’s most corrupt institution. It’s also Kenya’s most deadly, killing far more people than criminals do, according to human rights groups.

In the last three months in Kenya, 15 people, including a 13-year-old boy, have been killed by police while they enforce a curfew, according to a watchdog group. Human rights activists put the figure at 18.

The boy, Yasin Hussein Moyo, was shot in the stomach by police in March as he stood on the balcony of his home. Police have blamed a “stray bullet,” but witnesses say the officers deliberately started shooting at the boy’s apartment building as they patrolled the neighborhood during the curfew.

Kenya’s culture of an oppressive colonial police force is still intact, said Peter Kiama, the executive director of the Independent Medico Legal Unit, which tracks police abuse. There also is a security system that has sought to subdue opposition to the government and, in turn, has become corrupt.

“There is a symbiotic relationship,” Kiama said.

When Kenya created two organizations nearly a decade ago to monitor and hold police accountable, the members of one of them found a severed human head in their new offices on the first day of work. Just in case the message wasn’t clear, there also was a piece of paper with the words: “Tread carefully.”

Kiama’s organization says 980 people have been killed by police in Kenya since 2013, and 90 percent of those were execution-style slayings.

Despite the decades of injustice and brutality, activists say there is no groundswell of public support for change in South Africa and Kenya, two of the biggest economies in Africa.

“I gave up on police violence being an issue around which one could get any kind of attention from politicians, or anyone,” said David Bruce, an expert on South African law enforcement for 20 years.

In her interview on national TV, Montsha looked at the camera and asked South Africans why no one was standing up for Khosa.

“We are crying out loud,” she said.

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Odula reported from Nairobi, Kenya.

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Stolen Banksy honoring Bataclan victims found in Italy

By ANDREA ROSA Associated Press

L'AQUILA, Italy (AP) — Italian authorities on Thursday unveiled a stolen artwork by British artist Banksy that was painted as a tribute to the victims of the 2015 terror attacks at the Bataclan music hall in Paris.

L'Aquila prosecutors said the work was recovered on Wednesday during a search of a home in the countryside of Tortoreto, near the Adriatic coast in the Abruzzo region's Teramo province. It had been "hidden well" in the attic, prosecutors said.

No arrests have been made.

French officials last year announced the theft of the piece, a black image appearing to depict a person mourning that was painted on one of the Bataclan's emergency exit doors.

Ninety people were killed at the Bataclan on Nov. 13, 2015, when Islamic extremists invaded the music hall, one of several targets that night in which a total of 130 people died.

Authorities said they were still investigating how the artwork arrived in Italy, and the role of any Italians potentially involved. They said the discovery was the fruit of a joint Italian-French police investigation.

At a news conference Thursday in L'Aquila, a French embassy liaison officer, Maj. Christophe Cengig, said the Bataclan owners were informed that the work had been recovered.

"It belongs to the Bataclan, it belongs to all of France in a sense," he said. The owners, he added, "were thrilled, very happy."

L'Aquila Prosecutor Michele Renzo said authorities believed the motivation for the theft was financial, not ideological.

Some Chinese nationals were living in the Tortoreto home, but they appeared unaware that the work was there. Teramo Carabinieri Col. Emanuele Pipola said someone else had access to the attic.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, June 12, the 164th day of 2020. There are 202 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 12, 1994, Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman were slashed to death outside her Los Angeles home. (O.J. Simpson was later acquitted of the killings in a criminal trial but was eventually held liable in a civil action.)

On this date:

In 1630, Englishman John Winthrop, leading a fleet carrying Puritan refugees, arrived at the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where he became its governor.

In 1898, Philippine nationalists declared independence from Spain.

In 1942, Anne Frank, a German-born Jewish girl living in Amsterdam, received a diary for her 13th birthday, less than a month before she and her family went into hiding from the Nazis.

In 1963, civil rights leader Medgar Evers, 37, was shot and killed outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. (In 1994, Byron De La Beckwith was convicted of murdering Evers and sentenced to life in prison; he died in 2001.)

In 1964, South African black nationalist Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life in prison along with seven other people, including Walter Sisulu, for committing sabotage against the apartheid regime (all were eventually released, Mandela in 1990).

In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Loving v. Virginia*, unanimously struck down state laws prohibiting interracial marriages.

In 1978, David Berkowitz was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for each of the six "Son of Sam" .44-caliber killings that terrified New Yorkers.

In 1981, major league baseball players began a 49-day strike over the issue of free-agent compensation.

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(The season did not resume until Aug. 10.) "Raiders of the Lost Ark," directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones, was first released.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan, during a visit to the divided German city of Berlin, exhorted Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev to "tear down this wall."

In 1997, baseball began regular-season interleague play, ending a 126-year tradition of separating the major leagues until the World Series. (In the first game played under this arrangement, the San Francisco Giants defeated the Texas Rangers 4-3.)

In 2004, former President Ronald Reagan's body was sealed inside a tomb at his presidential library in Simi Valley, California, following a week of mourning and remembrance by world leaders and regular Americans.

In 2016, an American-born Muslim opened fire at the Pulse nightclub, a gay establishment in Orlando, Florida, leaving 49 people dead and 53 wounded before being shot dead by police.

Ten years ago: A French fishing vessel rescued 16-year-old Abby Sunderland from her crippled sailboat in the turbulent southern Indian Ocean, ending the California teen's attempt to sail around the world solo. Ethnic riots wracked southern Kyrgyzstan, forcing thousands of Uzbeks to flee their homes. Daniel Nava hit the first pitch he saw as a big leaguer for a grand slam — only the second player to do it — leading the Boston Red Sox to a 10-2 rout of the Philadelphia Phillies.

Five years ago: Joyce Mitchell, a worker at the maximum-security Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, New York, was arrested on charges of helping two convicted killers escape; Mitchell later pleaded guilty to promoting prison contraband and was sentenced to 2-1/3 to seven years in prison.

One year ago: President Donald Trump said if a foreign power offered dirt on his 2020 opponent, he'd be open to accepting it, telling ABC News, "There's nothing wrong with listening." (Two days later, Trump shifted gears, saying that "of course" he would go to the FBI or the attorney general to report such an offer.) Maine Gov. Janet Mills signed legislation that legalized medically assisted suicide; Maine became the eighth state to allow terminally ill people to end their lives with prescribed medication. U.S. Catholic bishops voted to create a new national sex-abuse hotline run by an independent entity; it would field allegations that bishops committed abuse or covered it up. The St. Louis Blues won their first Stanley Cup, beating the Boston Bruins 4-1 in Game 7 of the NHL finals.

Today's Birthdays: Songwriter Richard M. Sherman is 92. Jazz musician Chick Corea is 79. Sportscaster Marv Albert is 79. Singer Roy Harper is 79. Pop singer Len Barry is 78. Actor Roger Aaron Brown is 71. Actress Sonia Manzano is 70. Rock musician Bun E. Carlos (Cheap Trick) is 69. Country singer-musician Junior Brown is 68. Singer-songwriter Rocky Burnette is 67. Actor Timothy Busfield is 63. Singer Meredith Brooks is 62. Actress Jenilee Harrison is 62. Rock musician John Linnell (They Might Be Giants) is 61. Actor John Enos is 58. Rapper Grandmaster Dee (Whodini) is 58. Actor Paul Schulze is 58. Actor Eamonn Walker is 58. Actress Paula Marshall is 56. Actress Frances O'Connor is 53. Rock musician Bardi Martin is 51. Actor Rick Hoffman is 50. Actor-comedian Finesse Mitchell is 48. Actor Mel Rodriguez is 47. Actor Jason Mewes is 46. Actor Michael Muhney is 45. Blues musician Kenny Wayne Shepherd is 43. Actor Timothy Simons is 42. Actor Wil Horneff is 41. Singer Robyn is 41. Rock singer-musician John Gourley (Portugal. The Man) is 39. Actor Dave Franco is 35. Country singer Chris Young is 35. Actor Luke Youngblood is 34. Actor Ryan Malgarini is 28.

Thought for Today: "It is easier to love humanity as a whole than to love one's neighbor." — Eric Hoffer, American philosopher (1902-1983).

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